

# Independent Mind

Higher  
Education and  
Public Libraries:  
Partnerships  
Research

November 2018

A report for Arts Council England  
prepared by Katie Pekacar



*‘The library service can make connections with higher education so that learning continues like a ribbon through people’s lives and to prevent universities drifting away from local communities’*

Claire Pickering, Senior Library Officer,  
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# 1. Executive summary

- **There is strong interest in partnerships** among public libraries and higher education institutions: 96 per cent of public libraries and 88 per cent of higher education institutions were interested in partnerships. This is higher than the prevalence estimated by strategic library and higher education bodies consulted as part of the research.
- However, the research uncovered some **negative perceptions of public libraries** among higher education institutions: 59 per cent of higher education respondents thought that public libraries lack the resource to support partnerships.
- Despite this perception, there is **ample evidence of partnerships** already in existence between higher education institutions and public libraries: nearly three quarters of public libraries and over half of higher education institutions who responded to the survey report current or recent partnerships.
- The type of **partnerships currently being undertaken are extremely wide ranging** but those most commonly reported include: public engagement events and activities in the library building; using library collections for research purposes; and higher education staff and students volunteering in public libraries.
- The evidence suggests that **existing partnerships are generally viewed as having a positive impact**. However, partnerships are often ad hoc and based on individual relationships rather than strategic arrangements, which may explain why the prevalence of partnerships is higher than that estimated by strategic national bodies.
- **Public libraries and higher education institutions use different language** to describe their priorities:
  - o public libraries focus on opportunities to engage more and new audiences, raise the profile of their organisation and bring in volunteers with new skills to support library services
  - o higher education institutions are primarily focused on public engagement to support research impact and their civic responsibilities to benefit local communities
- Despite the differences in language and motivation, **there is significant overlap between the priorities of public libraries and higher education institutions**, especially in relation to activities and events to engage and benefit local people in the public library space.
- There is **less general interest in strategic and high investment projects such as sharing infrastructure, resources and collections and co-location**, however there are case study examples of successful projects which have had strong benefits for institutions and local populations.
- **The greatest barrier to partnership is lack of resource for both public libraries and higher education institutions** and infrastructure and strategic partnerships

are perceived to require greater resource than other partnerships. This is followed by differences in organisational priorities and lack of project ideas to progress. Among higher education institutions, lack of familiarity with public libraries and perceptions that they do not have the resources to support partnerships are also barriers.

- **There is strong interest in being signposted** to sources of partnership funding, regional networking events and seed funding to develop partnerships among both higher education institutions and public libraries.
- The evidence also suggests that **national frameworks for activities**, such as festivals (e.g. the Festival of Learning, Being Human Festival, etc) and national networks that can provide an easy entry route into partnerships (such as the Living Knowledge Network, the British Library Business and IP Centres [BIPC] and STEM Ambassadors Network, etc) could provide opportunities for new partnerships to develop.
- **Case studies and guidance for partnership development may be helpful** in the context of the other support measures that have been mentioned but they are unlikely to increase the prevalence of partnership by themselves because of the critical importance of resource in supporting partnerships.
- For partnerships to be more long term, strategic and ambitious, **memoranda of understanding and partnership frameworks** should be adopted and senior staff in public libraries and higher education institutions should be engaged in and supportive of partnership working.
- There is **potential for a national strategic framework** between higher education and public libraries or the cultural sector more widely, although the scope and key stakeholders for this would need to be defined.
- There is **potential for the Single Digital Presence to act as a platform to support national higher education and public library partnerships through resource sharing**, for example by building on Access to Research and the Single Sign On project to share digital resources between institutions.
- **Further education institutions should be considered as an important additional stakeholder** in any work to develop partnerships between public libraries and higher education. The case studies show that three-way partnerships are common and the quantitative data shows similar enthusiasm among public libraries for further education partnerships as for higher education partnerships and similar motivations for engaging in partnership. However, more work is required to identify relevant national representative or strategic bodies for further education colleges.
- **These findings closely mirror other research** which has been undertaken for Arts Council England into museum and university partnerships<sup>1</sup> and for Carnegie Trust UK into third sector and university partnerships.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/9955/1/MUPI per cent20Literature per cent20Review per cent20and per cent20Research per cent20Report per cent20FINAL.pdf](http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/9955/1/MUPI%20Literature%20Review%20and%20Research%20Report%20FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/interaction/>

# 2 Aims and objectives of this research

## 2.1 Project Objectives

Arts Council England has commissioned this research project to identify:

- the capacity and appetite within local authority services and higher education institutions to generate meaningful partnerships
- what brokering requirements may be necessary to initiate and maintain partnerships
- the opportunities for shared digital and physical resources

## 2.2 Research Objectives

To meet these project objectives, the research explored the following areas of enquiry:

- What, if any, partnerships exist between higher education institutions and local authority library services in England, and what form do these partnerships take, including:
  - o How has this partnership developed?
  - o Is the geographic positioning of the higher education institution important to this relationship?
  - o Is there a shared access to resources – digital or physical?
  - o To what extent have partnerships provided new opportunities for community engagement?
- o To what extent have partnerships allowed for the provision of increased library services?
- o What, if any, is the financial requirement of instigating and maintaining this relationship, and upon whom does this requirement fall?
- Where no partnerships are present, within a representative sample of higher education institutions and local authority library services, is there sufficient capacity and appetite to generate partnerships?
- What are the potential benefits of collaborative working?
- What are the obstacles to developing partnerships?
- How can Arts Council England, the Libraries Taskforce, and Libraries Connected help to facilitate partnerships where partners have indicated a willingness to work collaboratively?
- Can innovative ways of working, such as the Living Knowledge Network, and Access to Research, be used as models for higher education partnerships?

# 3 ● Research approach and methodology

The research adopted an iterative approach, using desk research, a call out for information and fact-finding interviews to identify the most promising areas for the case studies to focus on, followed by 10 in-depth case studies involving at least two telephone interviews each. The information from the case study interviews was used to design the questions for the quantitative survey.

## Desk research and fact finding

- Review of existing literature on partnerships between libraries, cultural sector and HEIs
- 12 interviews conducted between April 2018-August 2018
- Call for case studies put out through Library Innovators and Libraries Connected networks
- 2 x workshops at Libraries Connected Seminar 2018

## 10 case studies

- 30 min-1 hr telephone interviews with at least 1 representative of the library service and 1 representative of Higher Education
- Written up into 1-2 page case studies and fact checked
- Case studies were collected between April 2018-July 2018

## Survey with HEIs & public library services

- 10-15 minute survey administered online
- Publicised through a range of networks, blogs, social media and newsletters
- Survey live from 2nd July 2018 – 6th August 2018

A list of stakeholders interviewed is available in the appendix, along with the discussion guide for the case study interviews and the quantitative questionnaires.

### Technical note

In drafting the case studies, telephone interviews were conducted with 24 different individuals, to ensure a range of data points and perspectives on the partnerships. Every case study included a discussion with at least one representative from a public library and one representative from a higher education institution.

The quantitative survey received 52 responses from public library services and 42 responses from individuals working in higher education institutions, across a range of disciplines.

Because the total population of public library services is small (151) it is difficult to achieve high rates of statistical accuracy without achieving responses from over 80 per cent of the total population. In relation to the higher education institution sample, the total population is difficult to calculate because of the heterogenous nature of the sample and the different job roles included. Therefore, levels of statistical accuracy and confidence intervals are relatively low and the quantitative evidence should be treated as indicative rather than definitive.

In the charting base, sizes vary because there was an attrition rate of approximately 20 per cent during the online survey with more respondents answering the early questions than the later ones.



# 4 ● Policy context: Public libraries, higher education, further education and local government

## Public Libraries

There is currently a **rapidly changing sector landscape** for public libraries, with a variety of governance and delivery models being explored across the country in a challenging financial environment.

**Arts Council England is the Library Development Agency** in England. In the most recent round of National Portfolio funding it created six new public library National Portfolio Organisations, including **Libraries Connected** which is the new Sector Support Organisation for public libraries.

The **Libraries Taskforce**, the collective body supporting the public library sector, undertakes a range of research and strategy work. It encourages library services to strengthen partnership so that learning organisations can complement each other's work to support learners.

**Funders across the sector have increasingly been joining together** to support programmes of mutual interest. These include (among others):

- A **Single Digital Presence** for public libraries currently being scoped by the British Library, jointly funded by Arts Council England and Carnegie Trust UK
- **Engaging Libraries**: a project jointly funded by Wellcome Trust and Carnegie Trust UK is exploring new approaches to supporting health and wellbeing in public libraries
- **The Living Knowledge Network** is a cultural network of libraries jointly funded by

the British Library and Arts Council England. It is currently being piloted in 23 major libraries across the UK in collaboration with the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales, and encourages shared resources, skills and ideas

In addition, the British Library is rolling out **Business and IP Centres**, offering support to SMEs and start-up businesses in local areas. Business and IP Centres are currently operating in 10 central libraries across the country and are being piloted in a further three locations.

## Higher Education

There are currently **two frameworks which are key drivers of university partnerships** because they are the national mechanisms for determining university performance:

- **Research Excellence Framework (REF)**: this is about the quality of research being undertaken and is assessed through research outputs, impact, and the research environment
- **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**: this is about quality of teaching and is measured on a university-wide basis. The TEF rating is made against three criteria: Teaching Quality; Learning Environment; and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

**The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)** is currently being developed. A consultation on the proposed approach to measuring the framework will launch shortly and the KEF is planned to be implemented in 2019. The

KEF is being designed to measure knowledge exchange performance at an institutional level. This will include partnering with public bodies such as public libraries, archives and museums. The KEF will be measured annually at an institutional level using a set of metrics that are planned to go beyond commercialisation. The two perspectives on the KEF metrics that will be most relevant to public libraries are:

- public and community engagement
- contributions to the local area

**HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) has recently been abolished** and its responsibilities have been split between:

- UK Research and Innovation, within which sits Research England: they have responsibility for REF and KEF for universities in England
- The Office for Students: they have responsibility for TEF

A new **Commission on Civic Universities** has been set up to explore the role that universities can play in supporting local communities, economies and civic society. The concept of the civic university, or anchor institution, are the key terms that higher education employs in discussing the role of universities in local communities and economies.

These developments are leading to an increased focus on partnership working and public engagement. **The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement** (NCCPE) was founded in 2008 to coordinate and catalyse good practice in this area, and is funded by a consortium of funders including Wellcome, UKRI and Research England. The NCCPE recently coordinated an Arts Council funded project, the Museum-University Partnership Initiative (MUPI),<sup>3</sup> to broker more effective partnerships between small and medium sized museums and higher education institutions.

## Local Government

**Leading Places** is a two-phase national pilot led by the LGA, HEFCE and health partners to explore ways in which local government can work with higher education institutions.

- The pilots explored the cultural differences between higher education institutions and local authorities and the most effective ways to work together to achieve positive outcomes for local communities and economies.
- Public libraries were not included in the pilot phases, however this was not an active omission.

**Local Industrial Strategies** are the new partnership platforms for local economic development.

- LGA is looking into how its Leading Places work, which brought together local authorities and higher education institutions, can feed into the Local Industrial Strategies work.

## Further Education

**Further education institutions** are also experiencing changes which may make them more open to partnerships with public libraries. The government ran a major consultation into post-18 education and funding in the spring of 2018. The findings of the review are yet to be published, but it may mean that in future, many further education colleges may become higher education institutions.

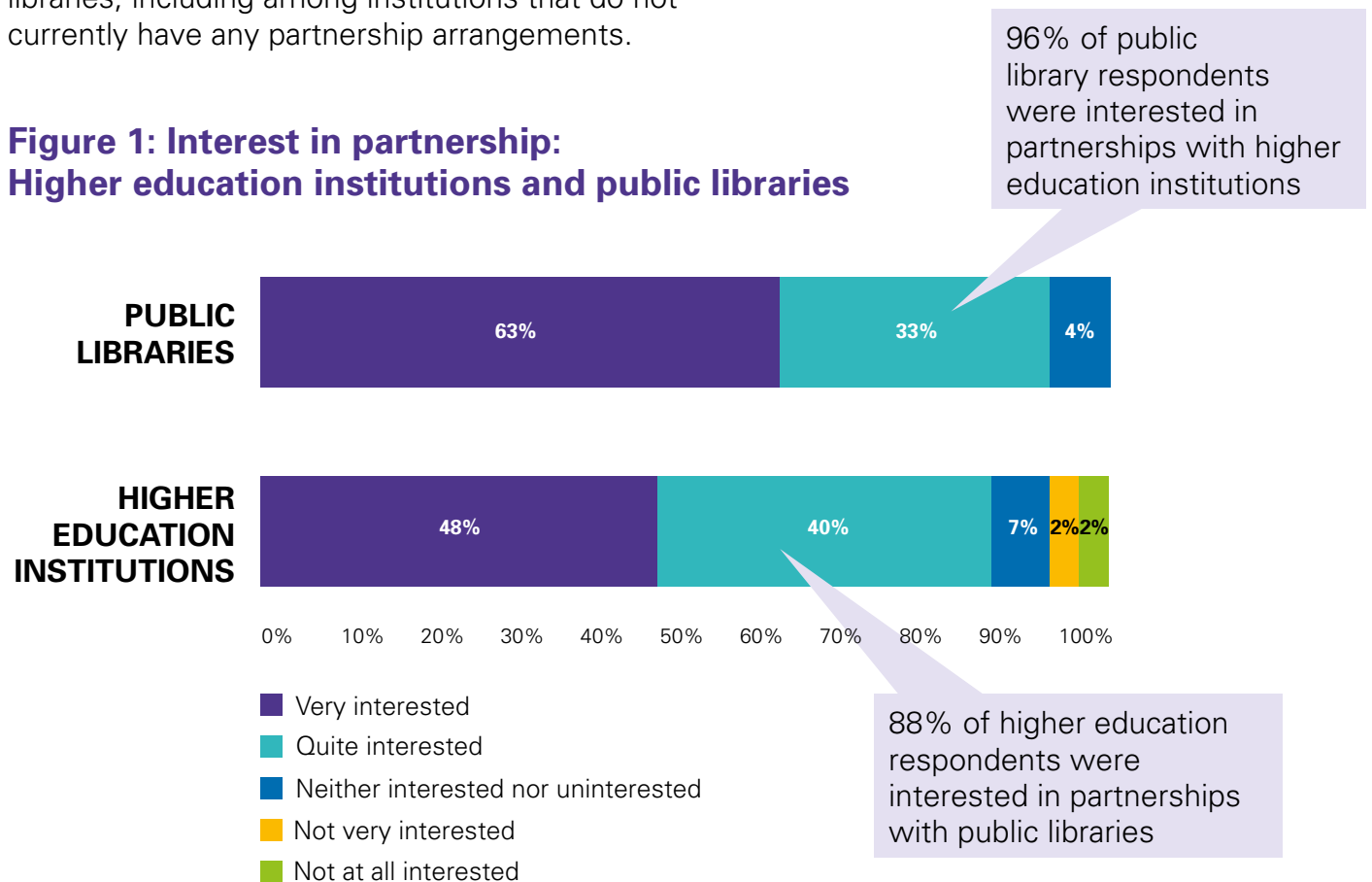
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/completed-projects/museum-university-partnership-initiative>

# 5 ● Main findings

## 5.1 Appetite for partnerships

There was widespread interest in and appetite for partnerships between higher education and public libraries, including among institutions that do not currently have any partnership arrangements.

**Figure 1: Interest in partnership: Higher education institutions and public libraries**



Q4 of higher education survey: "Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with the public library service for your University/ Department?"

Q4 of Public Libraries survey: "Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with higher education institutions (e.g universities) for your library service?"

Base: All higher education respondents (42); All Public Library respondents (52)

This finding was supported by the stakeholder interviews. However, despite the general interest in partnerships, both stakeholders and some case study participants identified perceptions among academic institutions of public libraries as less well funded institutions under strain. The quantitative survey tested whether those attitudes were having a negative effect on interest in partnership.

Among higher education respondents to the quantitative survey, perceptions of public libraries as potential partners were relatively positive:

- 91 per cent agreed that public libraries can be useful partners for higher education and 86 per cent thought that public libraries provide access to a broad local population
- 90 per cent disagreed that public libraries were too small to be relevant partners for their institution

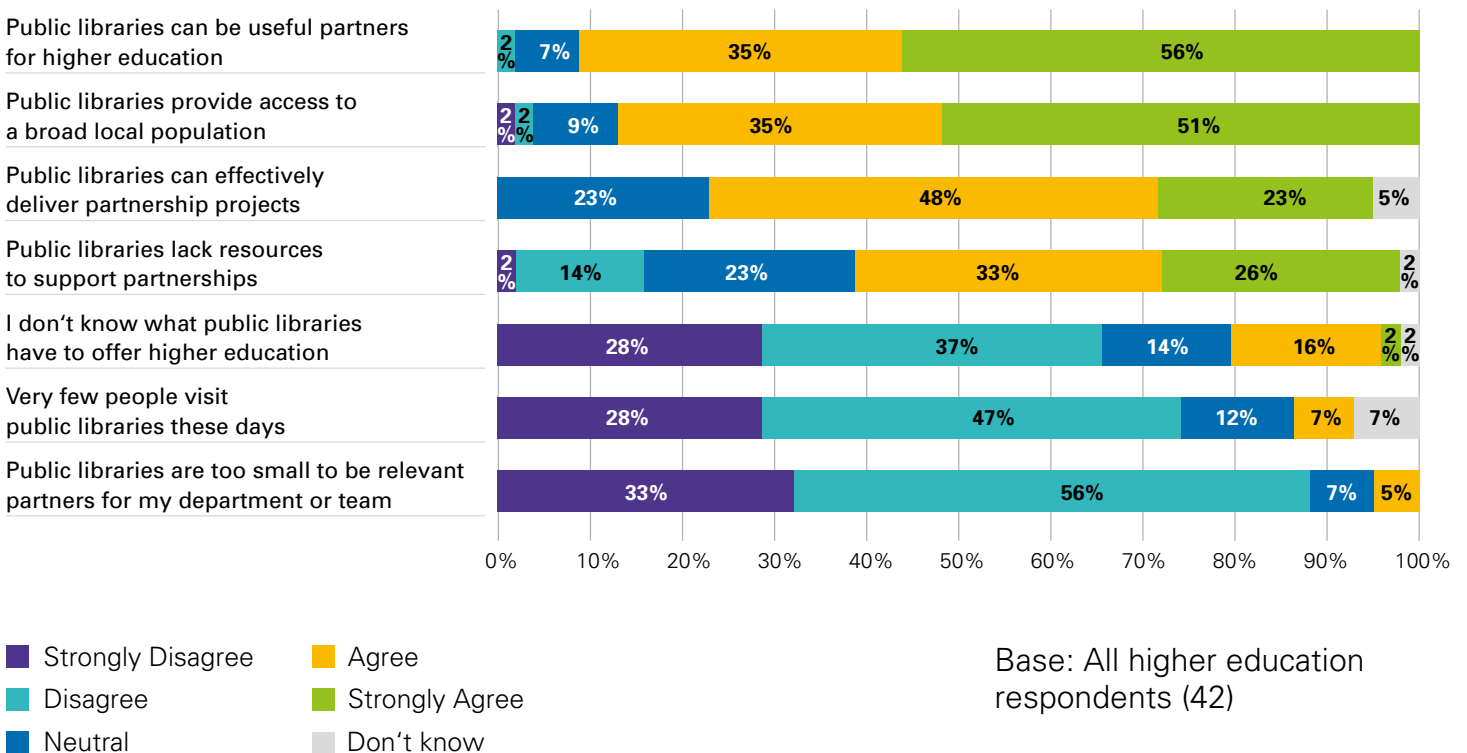
- however, 59 per cent also agreed that public libraries lack the resources to support partnerships

This suggests that while perceptions of public libraries remain relatively positive among higher education, there is some awareness of the resource constraints public libraries are operating within and the perception that this may be making public libraries less willing to invest in partnerships. The evidence of interest in partnerships from the quantitative survey (see figure 1) suggests this is not the case for the third of public library services in England who completed the survey – which indicates the need to address this issue by sending out strong messages that public libraries are open to partnerships with higher education.

59% of higher education respondents agree that public libraries lack resources to support partnerships

### Figure 2: Perceptions of public libraries among higher education institutions

Q5: Please select whether you agree or disagree with these statements about public libraries:



## 5.2 Prevalence of existing partnerships

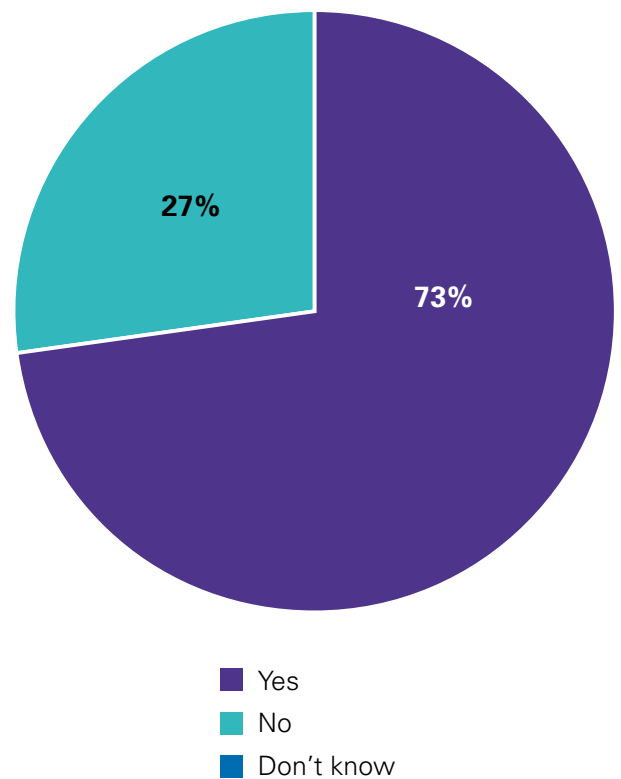
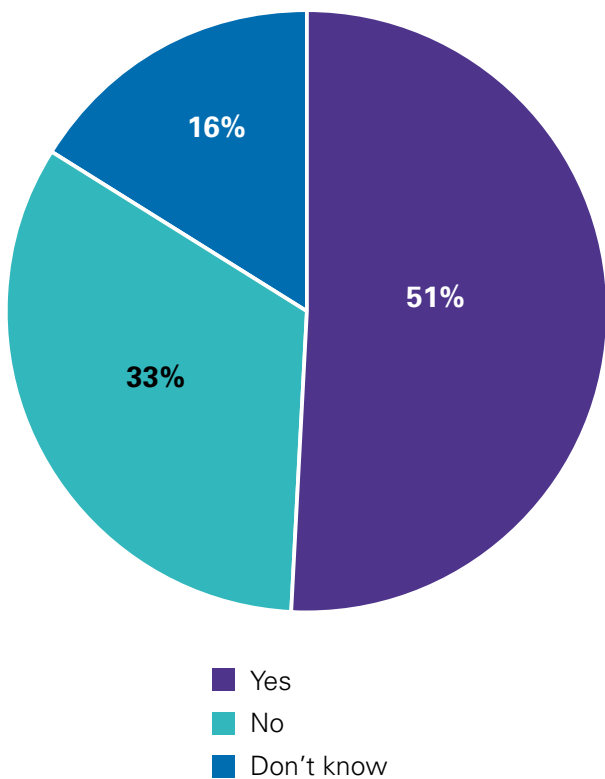
Some stakeholders had the perception that there were very few existing partnerships between public libraries and higher education. However, at least 20 examples of projects and partnerships were put forward by members of the public libraries’ innovation network when a request for information was put forward. The quantitative survey findings support the indications from the call for

evidence that partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries are relatively wide-spread. Just over one third of library services responded to the survey, and of these 73 per cent had experienced a recent partnership with higher education. Among higher education, around a half of all respondents knew of a recent partnership with public libraries, although around one in six were not sure if their department had recently partnered or not.

**Figure 3: Prevalence of partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries**

Q6: In the past two years has your team/ department had any partnerships with public library services?

Q6: In the past two years has your library service had any active partnerships with higher education (e.g. universities?)



Base: All higher education respondents (42)

Base: All Public Library respondents (52)

### 5.3 Characteristics of existing partnerships

The initial call for evidence demonstrated that the types of partnerships between public libraries and higher education are many and varied. They may also include a range of other partners, particularly further education colleges (see more information on these partnerships in Appendix 3).

The majority of partnerships are undertaken between senior managers or specialist librarians in the public library service (although often not heads of service) and:

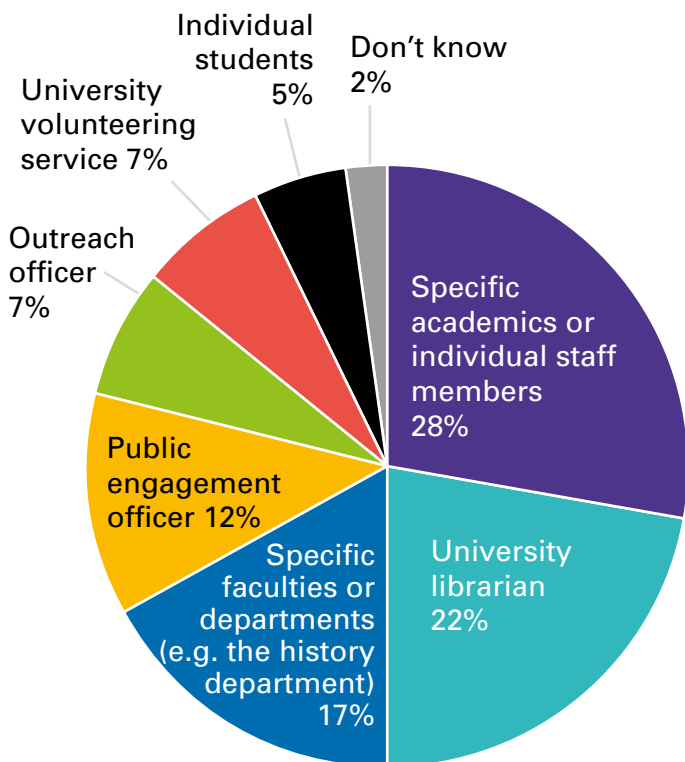
- individual academics undertaking research projects

- business schools
- university departments (e.g. the history department)
- university librarians
- public engagement officers
- the university volunteering service
- outreach teams

There were examples of partnerships submitted via the call for evidence that involved different actors in the university, however these were less common. The quantitative survey supports these findings:

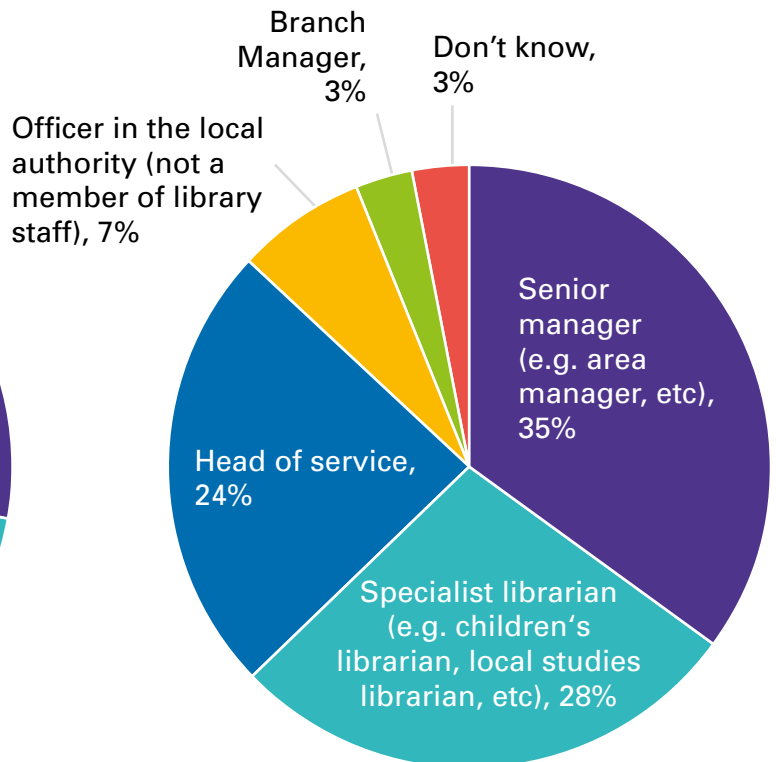
**Figure 4: Main contacts for partnerships in public libraries and higher education institutions**

Q11: Who is the main contact in the higher education institution for public library partnerships?



Base: All public library and higher education institution respondents who have had partnerships (60)

Q12: Who is the main contact in the public library service for higher education institution partnerships?



Base: All public library and higher education institution respondents who have had partnerships (60)

Because higher education institutions are large and complex institutions, there are currently few partnerships which involve the strategic management team in the higher education institution and public libraries. However, there are a few examples of this kind of partnership – see the case study below about The Hive in Worcester. Where this kind of partnership exists it also support joint bids for research and project activities, which is the case at The Hive and also at Libraries Unlimited in Devon (detailed case studies for both of these institutions are included in Appendix 1).

### Case study 1: The Hive, Worcester



**The Hive is a unique partnership between a public library service (Worcestershire) and a higher education institution (the University of Worcester) which jointly planned and manages a shared public library, archive, community services and university library building.**

*'The Hive is an engine for social change, innovation for a moral purpose. We know what we're doing and why we're doing it and we all share in the common aim of widening opportunities for learning –*

*it's not who you are, it's what you want to do'. (Anne Hannaford, Director of Arts and Culture, University of Worcester)*

*'Not everyone has the opportunity to plan and build a building like The Hive, but it's the commitment to a shared service, joint ambition and equality of partnership that makes it work'. (Laura Worsfold, Business Development Manager, The Hive)*

For the detailed case study, please see Appendix 1.

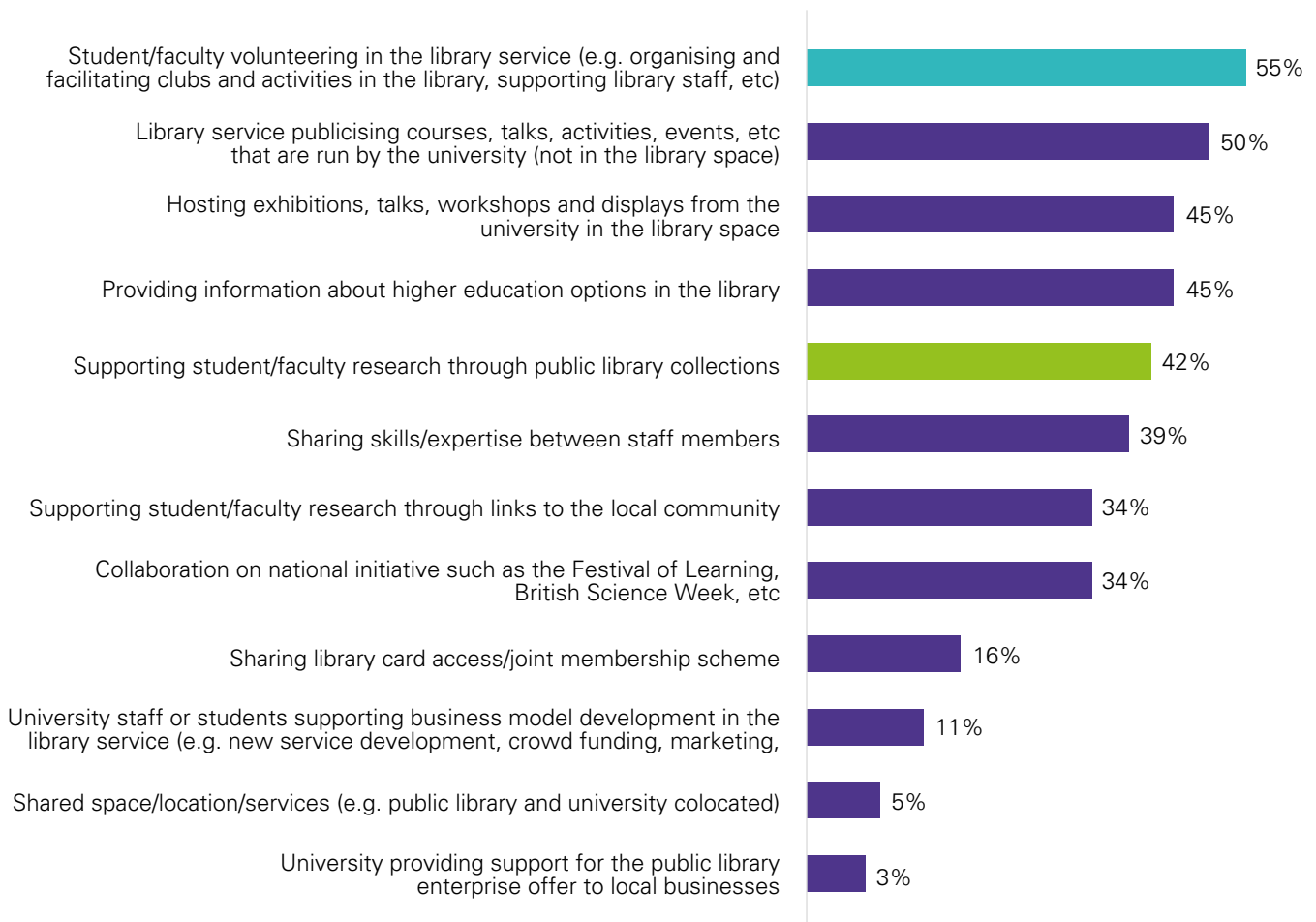
Reflecting the wide variety of university stakeholders who are involved in projects with public libraries across the country, the types of projects and partnerships supported are also many and varied.

When asked what types of partnerships their institutions had undertaken in the past two years, higher education institution and public library respondents mentioned similar activities; however they did not mention them at the same rate of prevalence. While 55 per cent of public libraries mentioned student and faculty volunteering, only 18 per cent of higher education institutions mentioned it.

The most prevalent activity mentioned by higher education institutions was using public library collections for research purposes (54 per cent), but this was only mentioned by 42 per cent of public libraries. However, public libraries as venues for talks, workshops and displays was equally mentioned by both higher education institutions and public libraries (45 per cent). One type of partnership that appears to be surprisingly prevalent is skill sharing between public libraries and higher education institutions. 45 per cent of higher education institutions mentioned this while 39 per cent of public libraries also mentioned it.

### Figure 5: Types of existing partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries

Q7: What type(s) of partnership has your library service had with higher education?



Base: All public library respondents who have had partnerships with universities (38)



Q7: What type(s) of partnership has your university/department had with public libraries?



Base: All university respondents who have had partnerships with public libraries (22)

**Student/faculty volunteering**

Student and faculty volunteering was mentioned by several library services in responses to the call for evidence. There are also examples in the case studies of public libraries working with university volunteering services to advertise opportunities and find specific expertise that may not be available in the wider local community. In many cases, student and faculty volunteering is focused on STEM activities in libraries, and particularly digital making.

## Case study 2: Surrey Library Service and the University of Surrey



The University of Surrey has partnered with Surrey Library Service to support public engagement and new creative digital activities in libraries.

Volunteers have supported the public library service in a number of ways, including in marketing and fundraising activities, and the library also provides volunteers for the university's digital making on campus.

*'Our work with the university gives us the expertise to offer exciting activities that we couldn't do on our own. Through this we're changing the way the public see libraries, making better use of our space and bringing more people into the library'.* (Helen Leech, Digital Service Manager, Surrey Library Service)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.

(Image courtesy of Surrey Library Service)

### Using the library collections for research

Discussions with higher education stakeholders, particularly those representing academic libraries, highlighted the importance of this offer from public libraries. Public libraries with special collections are of specific interest to academics working in higher education institutions, although local studies collections are also valued. These collections can be used both in academic research projects and as a tool for teaching students.

When the case studies were discussed in more depth, it became apparent that while academics may start by using collections for research, their

interactions with the public library service often bring up more opportunities. In particular, public libraries' connections with local communities and their ability to access local history groups or lay researchers with similar interests to the academic was highlighted. The opportunity to showcase research findings and connect people with little-known collections in public libraries through exhibitions, talks and displays was also mentioned. However, the most successful examples of these types of collaboration used the public librarians' knowledge of what would interest the local populations to guide the topics and approaches used in public engagement activities.

### Case study 3: Wakefield library service and the University of Leeds



*'It was one of the best things to involve the public library in this project. It has been very important for recovering and sharing a forgotten history with the people we wanted to reach and for bringing the topic to those who wouldn't have come across it otherwise. The library service showed a different kind of enthusiasm and really*

*helped to draw attention to the project'.*  
(Claudia Sternberg, Senior Lecturer, School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, University of Leeds)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.

(Image: courtesy of Claudia Sternberg, the University of Leeds)

#### Using the library service for talks, workshops and displays

Both the call for evidence and the quantitative survey demonstrate the potential for public libraries as flexible venues for public engagement activities from higher education. Public libraries can also enable higher education institutions to reach people who would not necessarily attend talks or lectures in the university setting.

Talks, workshops and displays can include showcasing students' work. An example of this can be found in the case study about The Hive (see Appendix 1). This case study includes information about how The Hive hosts students' end of year shows and provides them with opportunities to design and curate exhibitions for the public.

The evidence from the case studies suggests that often public libraries do not currently receive direct funding for their public engagement activities, even where external grant funding has been achieved by the higher education institution for the project. Although there are some examples of public libraries being named recipients in grant applications, this is often because a strong relationship has built up through previous unfunded activities. It is worth noting that Arts Council England does fund public engagement activities through its Project Grants funding stream and that this would be available to public libraries working with higher education institutions.

Some specific examples include:

- **Wakefield Library** was the venue for Leeds University's In The Wrong Place at the Wrong Time project exhibition and a showcase event which brought together stakeholders and visitors from Wakefield, Yorkshire and abroad. The event included the exhibition opening, a book launch, display of a commissioned artwork, talks and an artist-led zine workshop. A programme can be found [here](#). Through the partnership the library service were able to present expert talks in the public library space and offer opportunities for people to find out more about a history of local and transnational dimension.
- In 2015 Dr Thomas Roebuck from the University of East Anglia worked with **Norfolk Libraries** staff on the Unlocking the Archive project to develop new ways for the public to interact with rare books from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries held in the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library through 'Hands-on Drop-in' events involving members of the public, library staff and students and academics from UEA. Over 250 members of the public attended. In 2017 this partnership developed further through a project called New Impressions: Redesigning Norwich's Renaissance Books. Local graphic designers and artists were invited to create their own interpretations of books in the collection. These were then presented in an interactive exhibition in the public library. The exhibition is now available online via the new Unlocking the Archive website.
- **Libraries Unlimited** has developed a partnership with the new Wellcome Centre for the Culture and Environments of Health (WCCEH). The partnership has involved Exeter Library providing spaces and support to enable the WCCEH to engage with the diverse audiences that the library attracts. The partnership has involved a collaboration between a PhD student from the centre and a member of library staff developing a new publication called *A Catalogue of Cures* which focused on the little-known resources held by the library in its stack collection on the theme of medical history. Recent engagement focused on a major public engagement activity, including talks, workshops and celebration events to mark the 70th birthday of the NHS. The chief executive of Libraries Unlimited sits on the International External Advisory Board for the WCCEH and is the only non-academic to do so.
- **Oldham Libraries** have partnered with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) on their [Graphic Lives project](#). Dr Sarah McNichol, a research associate at MMU, ran a workshop to an audience of people who had moved to Oldham from Bangladesh and attended the library's Comic Con in May 2018.
- **The University of Portsmouth** (see image and quotations below) partnered with Portsmouth Libraries to provide access to their picture collection for blind and partially sighted people, employing digital technology and traditional crafts to use sound, touch and movement to bring the images from their Conan Doyle collection, which includes 40,000 2D and largely inaccessible archived resources.



(Image: courtesy of the Conan Doyle Collection, Portsmouth Libraries)

*'The library service received a bespoke exhibition designed and built as part of a university research and development project, so the project was created at a fraction of the cost, as well as the fascination aspect of seeing it materialise before our eyes – something we also recorded and put on our website'.*

(Laura Weston, Education and Learning Officer, Conan Doyle Collection, Portsmouth Libraries)

*'As a library, they understood the power of presenting ideas. It allowed for much more creative freedom and a much more fulfilling project process. It allowed the story IN the pictures to be told, not the story OF the pictures'.*

(Dr Brett Stevens, Director of Creative Technologies Postgraduate Programmes, University of Portsmouth)

## Skill sharing

Skill sharing is still a key element of public library and higher education institution partnerships, principally through partnerships with higher education libraries. Despite the fact that higher education libraries and public libraries serve very different constituencies and require different skill sets, there are still many areas where skill sharing is both relevant and an efficient use of resources.

Libraries often welcome partnerships and volunteers from higher education institutions because they bring new skills to the service. For example:

- **creative digital skills**, e.g. supporting makerspaces and making activities
- **communications and marketing skills**, e.g. running or supporting social media accounts
- **fundraising and business development skills**, e.g. supporting public library services to develop business models for new facilities such as makerspaces

Higher education institutions can welcome public library expertise in the following areas:

- **public engagement skills** – supporting higher education institutions to run successful events
- **community knowledge and local research skills** – public libraries often have close knowledge of local communities, heritage groups and local studies collections that can support academic research and activities
- **volunteer management skills** – public libraries have extensive experience of working with volunteers

South West Regional Library Services (SWRLS) is a regional consortium of higher education, further education, school, health and public libraries which meet regularly to share practice and which also has a small budget to support joint project working and skills development. Certain higher education librarians also lead their own bespoke skill sharing activities with local public libraries.<sup>4</sup> In some cases this can be seen as a way of providing public impact and/or support to the public library sector when budgets are squeezed. However, in other instances it can be a mutual skills exchange.

The skills shared are not necessarily traditional librarianship skills: customer service, volunteer management and public engagement skills are also being shared between public libraries and the higher and further education sectors.

<sup>4</sup> One example of this, mentioned by SCONUL, is the activities of Debbi Boden Angell, Director of ILS at York St John University.

## Case study 4: Kirklees Public Library Service, Kirklees College and the University of Huddersfield

**A strategic local partnership to share expertise and information with a focus on customer service.**

Since the beginning of 2018, public library service staff have mystery shopped both the university and the college. This has provided useful information for the college and university, and professional development opportunities for the public library staff. The public library service has not been mystery shopped yet because it is still undergoing transformation, however there are plans for reciprocal visits in the future. In the meantime the group has identified opportunities to

mystery shop each other's events and the library service will receive mystery shopping as part of this.

*'There are lots of ways this relationship could develop in the future. Every time we meet we always have lots of ideas and things just snowball out of that. The learning exchange event will engage the senior library team which should help expand the partnership further'.*  
(Julie Peel, Assistant Area Manager, Kirklees Library Service)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1

## Outreach

Outreach activities, where public libraries promote pathways to further and higher education or provide access courses that could lead to further study are happening in public libraries, although they are less common than research, volunteering or public engagement activities.

Some library services provide information points in libraries that are in key target postcodes for greater higher education participation. Wakefield Libraries is currently partnering with Go Higher West Yorkshire to trial this approach to outreach in communities. In other cases public libraries may host access courses that are developed together with local university outreach teams to ensure they are appealing and relevant to local communities. Again, providing access to public libraries and populations in key widening participation postcodes is vital to the success of these partnerships.

Even in cases where no specific outreach activities are taking place, higher education and public library staff talked about the importance of local people being familiar with their local higher education institutions and engaging with representatives from these institutions on a regular basis as an important way to break down barriers to participation, as well as any negative perceptions people may have about higher education in low participation neighbourhoods and towns.

Public engagement activities and higher education volunteers (e.g. in makerspaces) can create familiarity and dialogue between local communities and people who work in higher education, which in turn may support outreach even where no specific outreach activities are taking place.

## Case study 5: Medway Library Service and the University of Kent

The University of Kent offer short access courses to members of the public in partnership with Medway Libraries to widen participation in education

*'It is a positive relationship and we really work well together. The library service advises on course content, times and locations. In return we get some really popular learning activities for local people and the university are meeting their target of engaging the local community'.*

(Erika Collison, Medway Libraries)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.



## Sharing IT infrastructure

Although sharing IT infrastructure was not mentioned by public libraries in the quantitative survey, it was mentioned by 14 per cent of higher education respondents.

This may not be a widespread activity, however there is more than one example of IT infrastructure being shared, including a shared Library Management System between Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance and the London Libraries Consortium. The Hive in Worcester has a single LMS and catalogue and a shared library card system that is valid across the public library network in Worcestershire. The case study below demonstrates how simple a shared access/library card system can be used to implement across institutions with different LMS and different types of library cards.

An interview with Jisc also brought up the potential for wide alignment of IT infrastructure where higher education protocols and authentication tools are adopted in the public library sector. See the case study in the next section for more detail on this. There is also potential for this kind of collaboration to be foreseen and supported by the Single Digital Presence in the future, if this project is taken forward. Greater sharing of IT infrastructure could also support more opportunities for the public to engage in remote and distance learning and short courses.

## Case study 6: University of the West of England and South Gloucestershire Libraries



**Grant funding and pre-existing relationships fostered by SWRLS enabled shared library cards across the public library and university library systems**

*‘Because we already knew each other well through SWRLS it was easier for us to trust each other and engage in a more ambitious project’.*

(Martin Burton, Community Cultural Services Manager, South Gloucestershire Library Service)

*‘Don’t be risk averse, don’t worry about being overrun if you open your university library up to the public. It can support strategic plans for public engagement and strengthen your ties with the local community’.*

(Jackie Chelin, Deputy Director of Library Services, University of West of England)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.





(Image courtesy of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council)

### Colocated services

Colocated or shared services were mentioned by a small minority of respondents in both the HE and public libraries survey. However, there are at least two examples of colocated services in England that this research has been able to uncover:

- **The Hive in Worcester** (see case study 1 and the longer case study in the appendix)
- **The Forum: Southend Library** is a shared building between the council, the University of Essex and South Essex College. It opened four and a half years ago with joint funding and holds book stock from all three partners

In addition, **Barking Learning Centre** houses a public library and further education college and **Dagenham College** has a small public library in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

### Potential for national partnerships

There is some national co-ordination of partnerships that could be described as public library and higher education partnerships. There are two projects which currently fall under this category:

- **Access to Research**, which provides access to academic journals on computers in the public library building
- **Single Sign On**: this pilot project to simplify public access to digital reference resources provided by public libraries also outlines the potential for national co-ordination of shared infrastructure (see below)

## Case study 7: Jisc and SCL, including Bournemouth Library service



**Single Sign On is an innovation project using higher education infrastructure to improve access to online resources in public libraries**

*'Jisc are collaborating with the public library on several initiatives such as: working with the British Library to progress 'Single Digital Presence';*

*and implementation of the eduroam network which would enable access to their national online resources for university students and staff'.*

(Richard Sanders, Project Manager, Jisc)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.

The call for evidence also revealed the ways in which public libraries and higher education are already partnering through national initiatives. These include the Festival of Learning, the Being Human Festival, the British Library Living Knowledge Network and BIPC and the STEM Ambassadors initiative. Some brief examples of this include:

- **Surrey Library Service** supplementing its creative digital volunteers through the STEM Ambassadors network. The library service attended Innovate Guildford, a networking event in the local area, and made contact with STEM Ambassadors there. STEM Ambassadors is a scheme that pairs up professionals and academics working in STEM subjects with community organisations and schools to promote
- **Bournemouth Libraries** and **South Gloucestershire Libraries** separately use the Festival of Learning to deliver public engagement activities from local universities via the public library network.
- The University of East Anglia's public engagement project with **Norfolk Libraries** is anchored around the annual AHRC Being Human festival.

## Case study 8: Nottingham City Libraries, Nottingham Trent University's The Hive, and University of Nottingham's Ingenuity Network

**Nottingham City Libraries has started partnerships with local university business and innovation centres to support its Start Up Days and its offer to local businesses as it pilots a British Library Business and IP Centre in the central library**

*'I've been surprised by how keen the universities have been to work with public libraries on our enterprise offer. I've come to understand that they have a remit of doing more work in and connecting with the wider community. It's just about aligning our goals and understanding where they cross over'.*

(Ruth Hawley, Library Lead – Economic, Health and Wellbeing, Nottingham City Libraries)

*'We see potential for future partnerships – we are being urged to widen our remit across Nottingham and the library service can help us deliver this because it is an unthreatening environment. The Business and IP Centre is a big plus to the business support environment'.*

(Philip Clarke, Enterprise Adviser, The Hive, Nottingham Trent University)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.

### Distance learning and MOOCs

Public libraries could provide a location for people to receive distance learning or study remote short courses offered by higher education institutions. Libraries Connected identified MOOCs as a potential development opportunity for public libraries when the Learning Offer was launched in 2015. A pilot project supporting public libraries to offer MOOCs together with Future Learn ran between September 2015 and January 2016, which resulted in some public libraries supporting MOOCs.

## 5.4 Motivations for and benefits of partnership

### Public library motivations for partnership with higher education

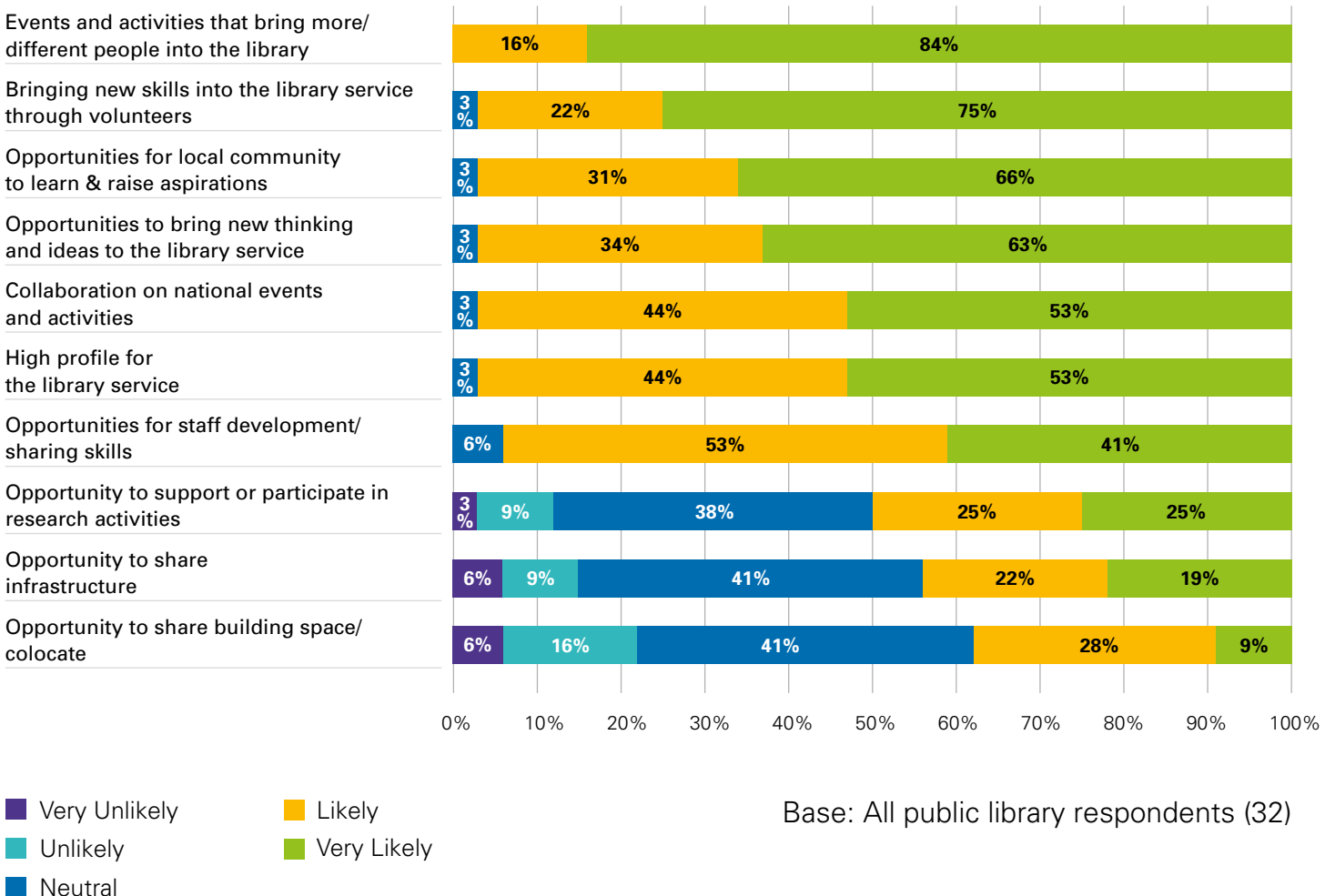
The motivations that could encourage public libraries to engage in partnerships with higher education are diverse and varied. Even among those who do not report partnerships at present there is significant interest in:

- events and activities that bring more people into the library, including national events and initiatives

- volunteers from higher education bringing new skills into the library workforce
- opportunities for local communities to learn and raise aspirations
- opportunities to bring new thinking and ideas into the library service and for staff development and skill sharing
- activities that will raise the profile of the library service with decision-makers

### Figure 6: Public library motivations for partnership

What would motivate public libraries to engage in higher education partnerships?



## Higher Education motivations for partnership with public libraries

Stakeholder interviews and the case study research revealed that the priorities described by higher education are different to those mentioned by public libraries in relation to partnership. These include:

- **public engagement/research impact** – this is primarily understood in relation to the REF which requires higher education institutions to submit impact case studies, demonstrating how their work has created positive impacts outside of the academic environment
- **civic engagement** – allowing universities to contribute to the local economy through engagement and support of local communities, often in relation to business development and learning opportunities
- **outreach** – including widening participation in specific low participation post codes and areas (an agenda promoted by the Office for Students)
- **teaching** – with opportunities to support the TEF, this relates to providing opportunities for students to learn in new and engaging environments, and may also relate to practical 'real world' applications of learning. This was less commonly mentioned, although The Hive and several other library services discussed how the children's libraries provided opportunities for early years education practical learning and Libraries Unlimited and Surrey Library service have provided opportunities for business students to develop business models and support marketing. Libraries with special collections may also be interesting venues for history and humanities students

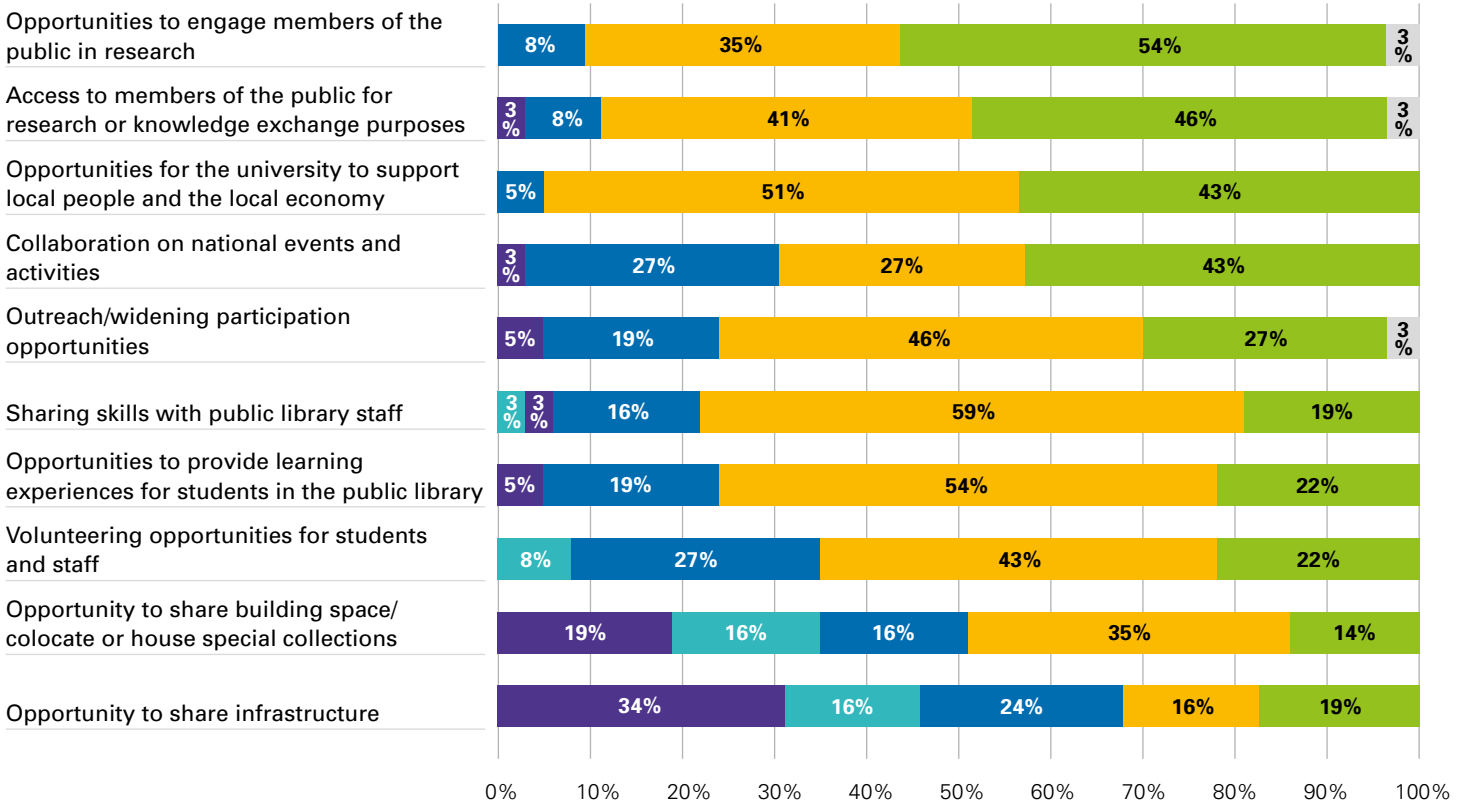
In the quantitative survey the first two of these drivers for partnership were strongest. There were three key motivations for partnership among higher education institutions that stood out:

- opportunities to engage the public in research
- access to members of the public for research purposes
- opportunities to support local people and the local economy

The top two motivations relate to the Research Excellence Framework, both in terms of improving the quality of research through access to a broader cross-section of the public and in terms of demonstrating the impact of research through public engagement. The third motivation relates to the civic universities agenda, which stakeholder interviews suggest is growing in importance.

## Figure 7: Higher education motivations for partnership

What would motivate higher education institutions to engage in public library partnerships?



- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral
- Likely
- Very Likely
- Don't know

Base: All higher education institution respondents (37)

Opportunities to improve TEF scores through high quality learning experiences for students in the public library and to engage in outreach through public libraries are less motivating to this sample of people working in higher education institutions. However, our case studies show that public libraries can be effective partners for public engagement and outreach, and that there may be an awareness/perception gap in higher education about the potential for these agendas to be strongly supported by public libraries.

### **Where public library and higher education motivations overlap**

Although the motivations for partnership between public libraries and higher education appear quite different, there is actually a strong overlap between public library priorities and higher education priorities in the following areas:

- events and activities in the public library that engage the public in higher education research, both in terms of supporting and contributing to research activities and engaging with research findings
- sharing university knowledge and skills with the local community and the public library service (e.g. through access to the public of business/innovation support services or volunteering in the public library service to bring in new skills)

The following case study example demonstrates how partnership working can bring mutual benefits to higher education institutions and public library services and meet both of their agendas:

## Case study 9: Norfolk Library and Information Service and the University of East Anglia (UEA)



**Norfolk Libraries have a long-standing relationship with UEA which has led to a range of public engagement projects which have brought new audiences into the library, opportunities to bring in funding and support to unlock collections. The partnerships have also contributed to research impact case studies and best practice in public engagement at UEA.**

*'There is a lot of institutional support from UEA for this partnership. Norfolk Libraries is seen as a prestigious and large institution that offers space for collaboration, brings in the business and design community as well as the wider public'.*

(Dr Thomas Roebuck, Lecturer, School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing, UEA)

*'The library is already a venue where people go for information, to use computers, etc and so there's more footfall so you get more public engagement. Any issues we've had over the years have been resolved by the professionalism and dedication of the public library staff'.*

(Jacqueline Fear-Segal, Professor, School of Art, Media and American Studies, UEA)

(Image: courtesy of Dr Thomas Roebuck, University of East Anglia)



Some higher education participants emphasized the importance of public libraries having suitable locations and venues, particularly where public engagement, outreach, civic participation or support activities are taking place. For example, widening participation activities are often focused around specific postcodes, and it is helpful if libraries have branches in those postcodes. Some public engagement activities require a large central library, and higher education institutions also mentioned that the attractiveness of that building can be important in attracting them (and the public) to the venue.

*'The library is not a threatening environment. People go there when they would not go to the university, but they aren't always inspiring venues'.* (Higher education case study participant)

While public engagement events and activities are an important part of public library and higher education current and potential partnerships, they are not the only kind of partnership activity that can have mutual benefits. The case studies demonstrate that complex partnerships which may include public engagement and volunteering but also have broader strategic aims in terms of organisational change and learning, infrastructure and collections sharing, can also be successful.

The case study below, which features Libraries Unlimited and Exeter University, demonstrates the potential for partnerships across a wide range of activities and for these partnerships to develop into strong strategic links between both organisations.

## Case study 10: Libraries Unlimited and the University of Exeter



**A wide-ranging strategic partnership with a focus on joint research, business model development, opportunities for public engagement and student volunteering in the library service, which began with a postgraduate research project.**

*'It showed me the benefit of knowledge exchange all round. We gained some fascinating insights into Libraries Unlimited as we were developing our new business model'.*

(Ciara Eastell, Chief Executive, Libraries Unlimited)

*'The world is rapidly changing and academic knowledge production needs to keep pace. The Business School's partnership with Libraries Unlimited enables us to embed the live context into higher education and student learning'.* (Hugh Waters, University of Exeter Business School)

For more information please see the detailed case study in Appendix 1.

(Image: courtesy of the Wellcome Centre for the Cultures and Environments of Health)

### Partnership approaches that are less motivating at present

There was less appetite for co-location and sharing infrastructure among both public libraries and higher education institutions in the quantitative survey. This may be because of budget constraints and lack of awareness of sources of funding that could support this type of working, and because this is a higher investment partnership that requires sustained commitment and trust between all parties.

The case study examples such as The Hive in Worcester, the partnership between South Gloucestershire Libraries and UEA, and Jisc's work with national bodies on joint IT infrastructure demonstrate that these are still viable partnership options for public libraries and higher education institutions. However, institutions may require more support and encouragement to adopt these approaches than those partnership activities that are currently a higher priority.

The case study with Libraries Unlimited and the University of Exeter also demonstrates that starting with a specific and time-limited project can lead to strong ongoing partnerships, as long as senior staff invest time in nurturing the partnership.

### Benefits of partnerships

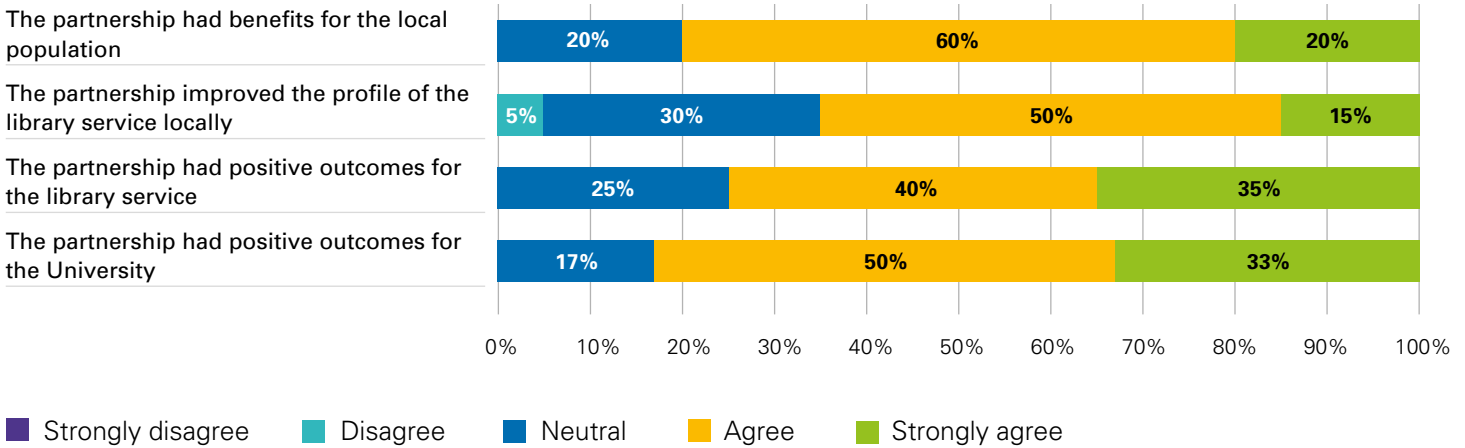
*'The ability to work through the library and with its archives has allowed us to reach a range of audiences and users we would not have been able to work with and we will continue to seek partnerships with them as a means of helping to develop resources and as a future means of enriching community projects'.*

(Simon Popple, Senior Lecturer and Director of Impact, School of Media and Communications, University of Leeds)

Public libraries and higher education institutions generally report positive partnership experiences. All those with current partnerships agreed that the partnership had benefit for their institution. In addition, all public libraries with current partnerships felt they had benefits for their local population and 95 per cent felt that the partnership had also improved the profile of the library service locally.

## Figure 8: Benefits of partnership for higher education institutions and public libraries

### Benefits of partnership



Q10 of higher education survey, Q10 of public libraries survey

Base: All public library respondents with current partnerships (20); all higher education institution respondents with current partnerships (18)

In addition, the case studies revealed a number of institutional and personal development benefits to partnership including:

- **greater understanding** of institutions, higher value placed on the contribution they can make to each other and, in the case of higher education institutions, more positive perceptions of public libraries
- **knowledge exchange and skill sharing opportunities** – both on an individual and an institutional level
- **improvements in research, public engagement and service delivery:** in successful partnerships each institution is able to identify ways in which the partnership has improved their approach and end product
- **opportunities to save money or improve service at low cost:** particularly around skills sharing and infrastructure sharing projects
- higher education respondents report feeling **more engaged with and having a better understanding of local communities**

- public libraries report **higher profile through partnerships with higher education institutions and a greater recognition of the value they can bring** despite the disparity in funding and resource

*‘Working with Wakefield Library Service has given us a more accurate picture of what working in communities is really like. Some parents and community members may not feel confident enough to speak to us face to face and have no experience of higher education. The libraries team have given fantastic support and that has opened my eyes to what working with people outside of the higher education environment can look like’.*

(Laura Bareham, NCOP Outreach Officer, Go Higher West Yorkshire, University of Huddersfield)

## **Norfolk Library and Information Service and the University of East Anglia (UEA)**

### **Masterclasses with academic researchers about special collections**

Through the development of the Unlocking the Archive project, library staff were able to attend a hands-on masterclass with researchers from the University of East Anglia's School of Medieval Studies which gave staff more knowledge about the

individual collections of rare books that they care for and helped all staff, not just those working with the special collections, to appreciate and understand the value of the partnership with UEA.

## **The Hive, Worcester**

### **The children's library provides hands-on experience for teaching students and gives the public access to library collections, exhibitions, workshops and events**

The Hive has one of the largest children's libraries in the country and the university trains a high number of teachers each year who are able to gain experience of working with children through the library. The public library benefits from an outstanding library building and a wider range of stock and the public can access the same books as the students with very few limitations on high-demand items. In addition, The Hive is open

90 hours per week, from 8.30am to 10pm every day, so that students can access it, but this also benefits the local community. The public also have access to university events, courses, exhibitions and cultural programmes. The cultural programme budget is managed jointly to ensure that it meets the interests and needs of the general public as well as students.

### 5.5 Barriers to partnership

27 per cent of library respondents and 33 per cent of higher education respondents to the survey had not had any partnerships with libraries or higher education in the past two years, with an additional 16 per cent of higher education respondents unaware of whether there had been partnerships or not.

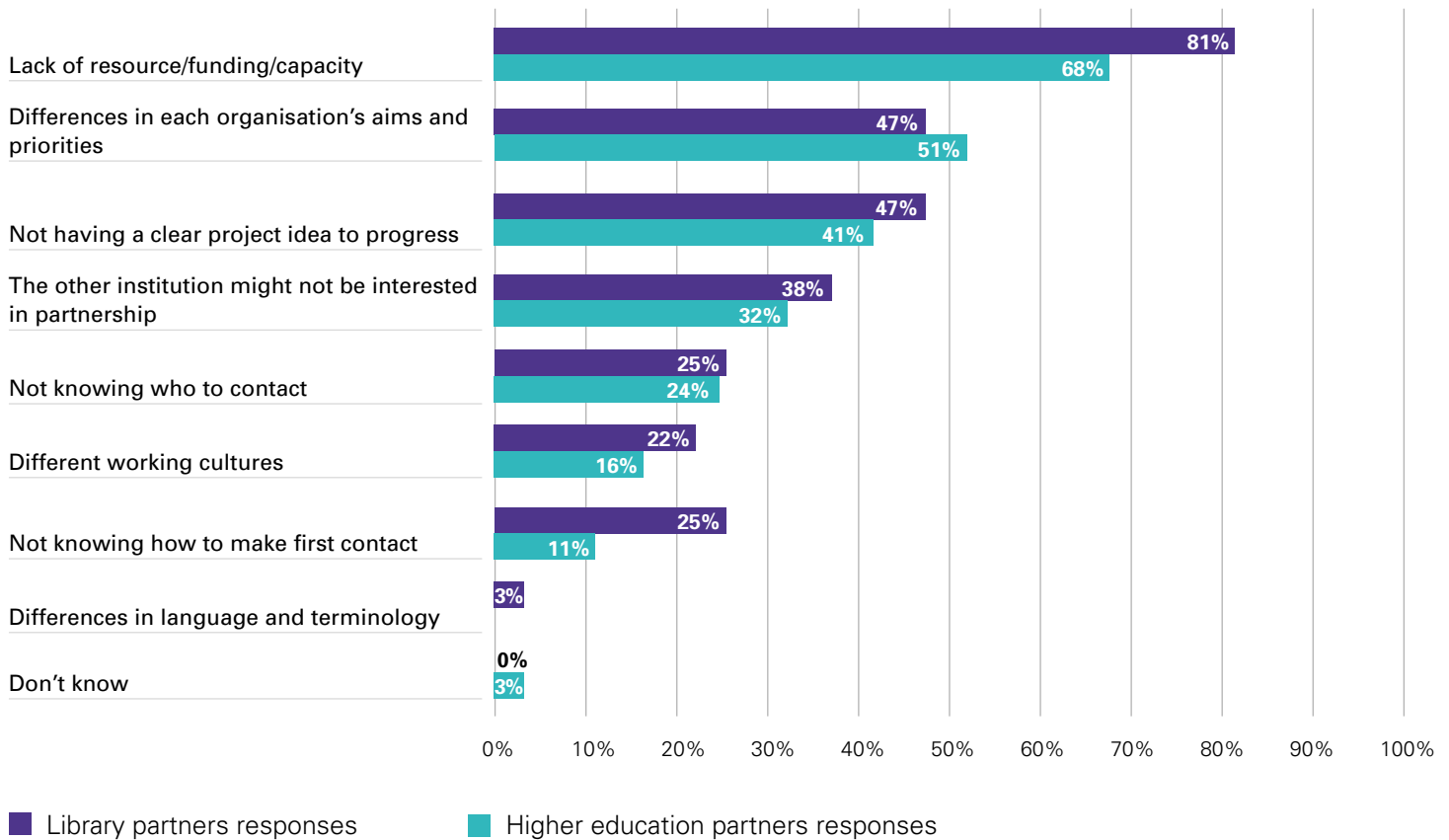
When asked why they had not engaged in partnerships, the most common answers for higher education and public library respondents was lack of time, resource or capacity within

their organisation. Additionally, higher education institutions stated a lack of knowledge about what public libraries could offer their institution and not knowing whether public libraries would be interested in partnership. Public library respondents stated that partnerships with higher education institutions were not a strategic priority for their organisation and in some cases that they did not have a ‘natural’ higher education partner in their local area.

These findings were also supported by a question that all respondents answered about barriers to future partnerships:

**Figure 9: Barriers to forming partnerships for higher education institutions and public libraries**

Which of the following might prevent you from forming partnerships?



Q16 of higher education survey, Q25 of public libraries survey

Base: All public library respondents (32); all higher education institution respondents (38)

Lack of resources was the top reason why organisations might not engage in future partnerships (81 per cent of library and 68 per cent of higher education respondents selected this option), followed by a perception that the two types of organisations have different aims and priorities (47 per cent of library and 51 per cent of higher education respondents selected this option).

Stakeholder interviews support these findings. Several national stakeholders, particularly those representing higher education institutions in various capacities, felt that the potential for partnerships to meet strategic priorities needed to be understood in order to grow partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries. In the public library sector, stakeholders reported greater emphasis on delivering core strategic priorities and less inclination to invest in projects that do not have a clear strategic benefit as resources become more and more constrained.

The previous chapter on motivations for partnership demonstrates that, although public libraries and higher education institutions may articulate their priorities differently, there is strong overlap in practical terms between what each partner wishes to achieve. What higher education institutions describe as public engagement and research impact case studies, public libraries would call events and activities to bring new and wider audiences into the library. However, while the different vocabulary used to describe similar activities is illustrated in the previous chapter, it is not recognised as a strong barrier to partnership among public libraries and higher education institutions.

In addition, while case study participants noted the cultural differences between higher education institutions and public libraries as something they had to address or overcome in many cases to develop their partnership, this is not something that is emphasized in the quantitative survey. Only 22 per cent of public libraries and 18 per cent of higher education

institutions mentioned this as a possible barrier. This suggests that while lack of funding, lack of familiarity and differing strategic priorities are barriers that most are aware of, there may be some unconscious barriers preventing partnership, such as differences in language between public libraries and higher education institutions and cultural differences between the sectors.

## 5.6 How barriers to partnership can be overcome

The case study examples and the workshop at the Libraries Connected Seminar provided opportunities to explore ways in which barriers to partnership could be overcome. Key factors in the success of partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries included:

- **finding a point of contact** in each institution that could act as a ‘navigator’ or ‘wayfinder’, particularly for higher education institutions which are very large and complex organisations
- **funding to develop the project.** This was particularly important for infrastructure and resource-sharing projects – some of the more ambitious projects would not have happened without external funding
- **adequate resource to support the project.** This was primarily identified as an issue for public libraries, but higher education institutions also mentioned that they may not have permission to devote time to new partnerships without compelling arguments for their benefit to the university
- **partnerships are identified as saving costs** or making strong contributions to sustainability rather than having a net cost in terms of time and resources. This was particularly important for public libraries, but was also mentioned by some higher education institutions and further education colleges

- **strong personal relationships** between individuals in each organisation: despite the potential for ‘single point of failure’ in person-to-person relationships, often the success of the partnership involved personal chemistry and commitment of time and resources from individuals in each organisation

## **Surrey Libraries and the University of Surrey**

### **Public engagement manager at the university acting as navigator for the public library service**

The library service was introduced to a public engagement manager at the university through their contacts at the 5G Innovation Centre. The public engagement manager provides a navigation point for external partners looking to work with the university and is able to broker relationships with different parts of the university, including

individual academics and departments. As a result of this, the public library service is now exploring partnerships with several different departments in the university, including engaging creative writing and film courses to explore how they could work with the public in the library and benefit from the digital making facilities in the library space.

## **University of the West of England and South Gloucestershire Libraries**

### **Project development funding enabled an ambitious infrastructure sharing project**

The funding provided by SWRLS, as well as the opportunities for long-term engagement and relationship building were crucial to the development of the library card sharing scheme between UWE and South Gloucestershire Libraries.

*‘We couldn’t have developed this project without the funding and support of SWRLS’.*  
(Martin Burton, Community Cultural Services Manager, South Gloucestershire Library Service)

There were also some factors that contributed to long-running partnerships or partnerships developing from single project initiatives to strategic partnerships between institutions. These included:

- engagement from senior staff in each organisation
- partnership structures that provide a framework for long-term engagement and development: these could include steering groups, memoranda of understanding, or regular meetings between representatives of each institution

## Libraries Unlimited and the University of Exeter

### Senior leadership at Libraries Unlimited is now involved in strategic activities within the University of Exeter

Libraries Unlimited brought together a consortium of partners, including the University of Exeter, RIO and Open Data Devon to bid for research funding from Arts Council England to explore the value of public libraries. This partnership was successful in achieving £200,000 grant funding from

Arts Council England's Research Fund. The chief executive of Libraries Unlimited chairs the Unlimited Value steering group and this experience has enabled her to learn more about the language used to describe strategic priorities in higher education and how public libraries can engage with them.

## The Hive, Worcester

### A strong governance structure and commitment to equal partnership at senior levels in all institutions has ensured the success of the project

The Hive operates a principle of equality between the university and the county council so that each partner has an equal say in decisions about the building and in the day-to-day management of the building. The decision was made at an early stage not to create a separate trust or organisation status for The Hive, so that it would remain integral

to the wider public library service and the wider academic environment. In the planning phase a Joint Project Board, made up of the heads of each service involved (the university library, the archive, the public library and The Hub) and an independent architect, developed a detailed workplan to deliver the project.

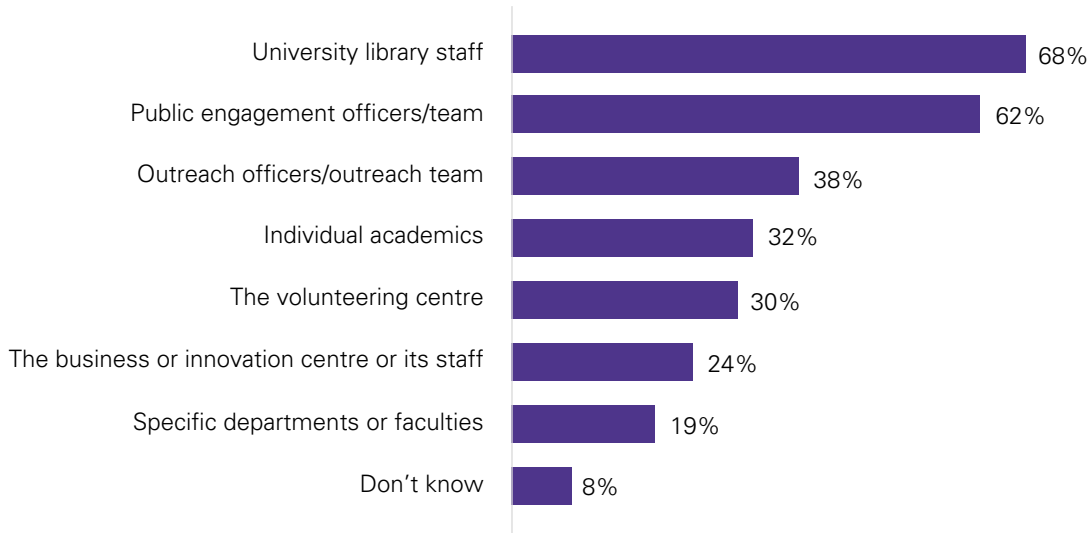
The case studies, and to some extent the quantitative research, suggest that lack of knowledge of who to contact can be a barrier to partnership. Despite the barriers to partnership, 88 per cent of public library respondents and

68 per cent of higher education respondents would be willing to make contact with the other institution to develop partnerships. The quantitative survey explored which staff members would be natural points of contact for partnership.



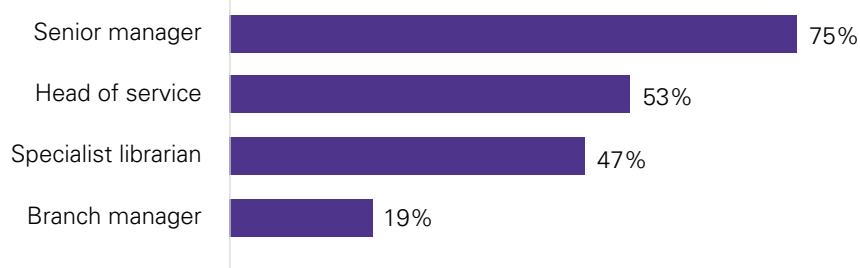
### Figure 10: Natural points of contact for partnership in higher education institutions and public libraries

Q17. Which team or members of staff would be the natural points of contact for any future partnerships with public libraries?



Base: All higher education institution respondents (37)

Q28. Which member(s) of staff in your library service would be the natural points of contact for any future partnerships?



Base: All public library respondents (32)

The most popular points of contact in public libraries are senior managers, with three quarters of services recommending them as points of contact. However, as they often are not located within a branch library and their contact details may not be publicly available, there may be some benefit to providing a directory of contacts for higher education partners among interested library services. The disadvantage of this would be the high turnover rate of staff in public libraries at present. Another way of developing a network of contacts that could be shared with interested partners in higher education could be through the Libraries Connected regional groups, which represent all public library services in nine geographical regions across England.

There are a wide range of possible contacts for partnership across higher education. The best contact depends both on the type of

partnership project proposed (e.g. outreach versus public engagement project) and on the individual institution. The advice given to public libraries interested in partnership by research respondents working in higher education was to start with higher education librarians or public engagement officers where these exist, but to try individual departments and other officers if these do not prove fruitful.

Another barrier mentioned in the quantitative research was the lack of clear ideas for partnership projects. This is where national initiatives, such as the Living Knowledge Network or STEM Ambassadors, and national festivals and events, such as the Festival of Learning, EU Code Week, British Science Week or the Being Human Festival can provide a framework or focus for partnership development.

## 5.7 Characteristics of positive partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries

*‘The strongest partnerships can be a slow burn. Once you have learnt to trust and understand each other, there are huge benefits and greater potential for future working’.*

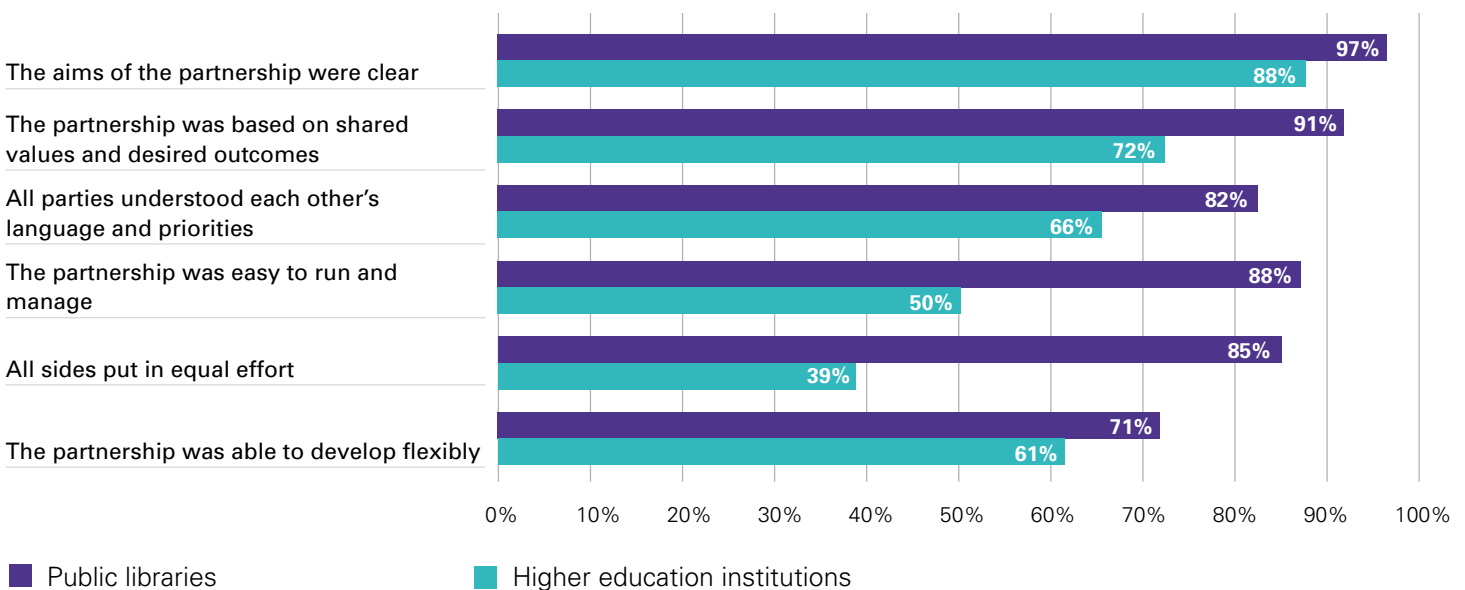
(Jan Holden, Norfolk Libraries)

A review of the detailed case studies and stakeholder interviews suggests that the following characteristics are shared among the most successful partnerships:

- **shared aims:** the most successful partnerships are based on shared values and desired outcomes. Partnerships are more likely to succeed when it is clear what the partnership will set out to achieve and how this will be measured
- **commitment:** all partners want to engage and are prepared to commit resource to the partnership
- **understanding:** each side is prepared to learn each other’s language and drivers of partnership
- **value:** the partnership has a clear value to both sides that justifies the time and effort of working together. It is useful to articulate this and review it regularly to support advocacy and decision-making
- **reciprocity:** contributions from and benefits for all sides
- **adaptability:** flexible approach to working together to respond to changes as they occur. Often partnerships grow when one activity leads to another
- **clarity:** each side knows what is expected from them and the other party, and there are dedicated contacts in each organisation and processes for managing the partnership

Many of the existing partnerships do demonstrate these qualities. The vast majority of those with existing partnerships thought the aims of the partnership were clear and that partnerships were based on shared values and desired outcomes.

**Figure 11: Qualities of existing higher education and public library partnerships**



Q10 of higher education survey, Q10 of public libraries survey

Base: All public library and higher education institution respondents who have had partnerships (60)

However, not all of those in current or recent partnerships felt that all parties understood each other’s language and priorities, and this is particularly true for the higher education respondents. Higher education respondents were also less likely than public libraries to think that the partnership was easy to run and manage. They were particularly unlikely to say that all sides put in equal effort. This suggests that some support and guidance on managing partnerships with each other effectively may be useful, both for public libraries and higher education institutions.

In addition, while 94 per cent of higher education institutions felt that the partnership met their strategic priorities, only 29 per cent of those library services engaging in partnerships said it was embedded in their strategic plan. This may explain why the incidence of partnerships is much higher than national stakeholders estimate: many of these partnerships are being undertaken ‘under the radar’ of public libraries’ strategic objectives,

which limits their scope, ambition and ability to have a positive impact on the profile of public libraries.

### 5.8 Supporting partnerships in the future

75 per cent of higher education respondents and 91 per cent of public library respondents to the quantitative survey said they would like to receive support to develop public library/higher education partnerships.

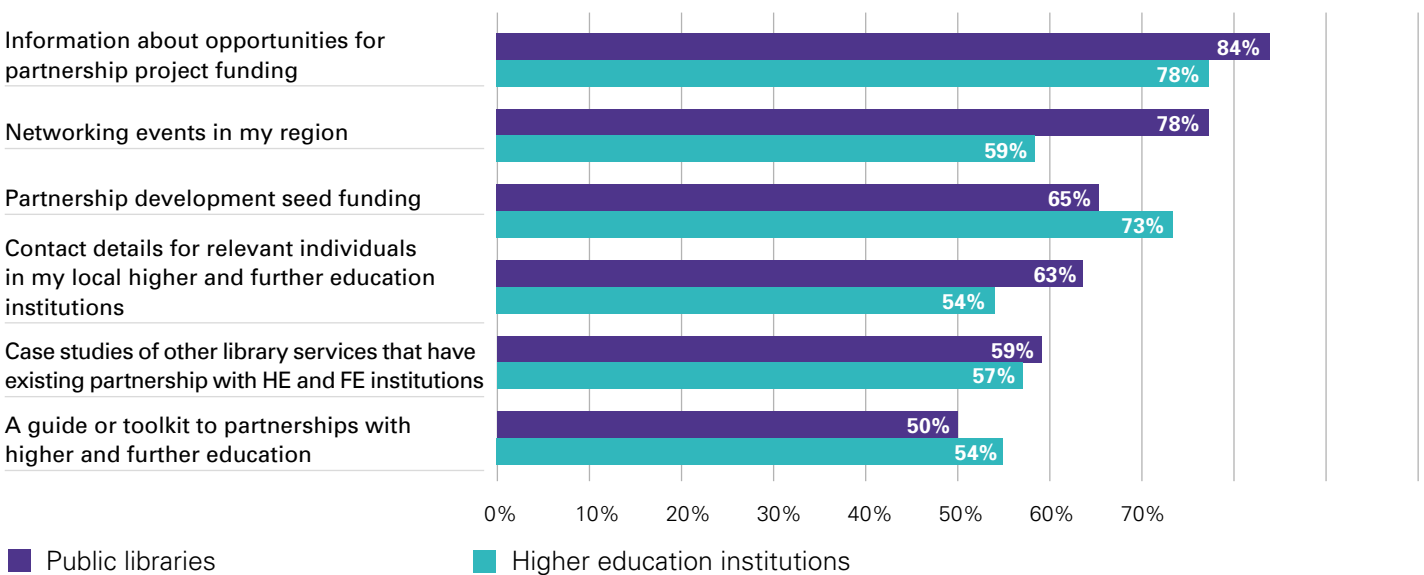
The top three support measures that public libraries and higher education institutions would like are:

- information about opportunities for project funding
- networking events
- partnership development seed funding

The partnership development seed funding is particularly important to higher education institutions, while public libraries would particularly value regional networking events.

**Figure 12: Support for partnerships that would be welcomed**

Which of the following would help you to develop partnerships?



Q22 of higher education survey, Q31 of public libraries survey

Base: All public library respondents (32); all higher education institution respondents (38)

A wide range of funders and national strategic bodies were mentioned as relevant possible **sources of information** about higher education and public library partnerships. For public libraries the top two bodies mentioned were:

- Libraries Connected
- Arts Council England

For higher education institutions, many more institutions were felt to be possible sources of information, but the top five were:

- Arts Council England
- three national library bodies: CILIP, Research Libraries UK and SCOUNL
- The Arts and Humanities Research Council

The wide variety of funders and national bodies mentioned as possible sources of support suggests that a consortium or collaborative approach across funders and national strategic stakeholders would be appropriate. This would also have the benefit of disseminating the message about the potential for higher education and public library partnership as widely as possible, particularly across the varied landscape of the higher education sector.

The relatively high profile of Arts Council England may be explained by the fact that it has supported and encouraged higher education partnerships among the library services that have become National Portfolio Organisations. Some examples of these partnerships include:

- **Libraries Unlimited** partnership with **The University of Exeter**, which is explored in a detailed case study in Appendix 1
- **St Helens Libraries** has an ongoing partnership with the performing arts department at the **University Centre St Helens** as part of the Cultural Hubs Arts in Libraries programme. For the last three years the partnership has set live projects for the students who devise new work in response to a theme as one of their university modules. The work is then presented as part of the Cultural Hubs programme in libraries

## 5.9 Further Education

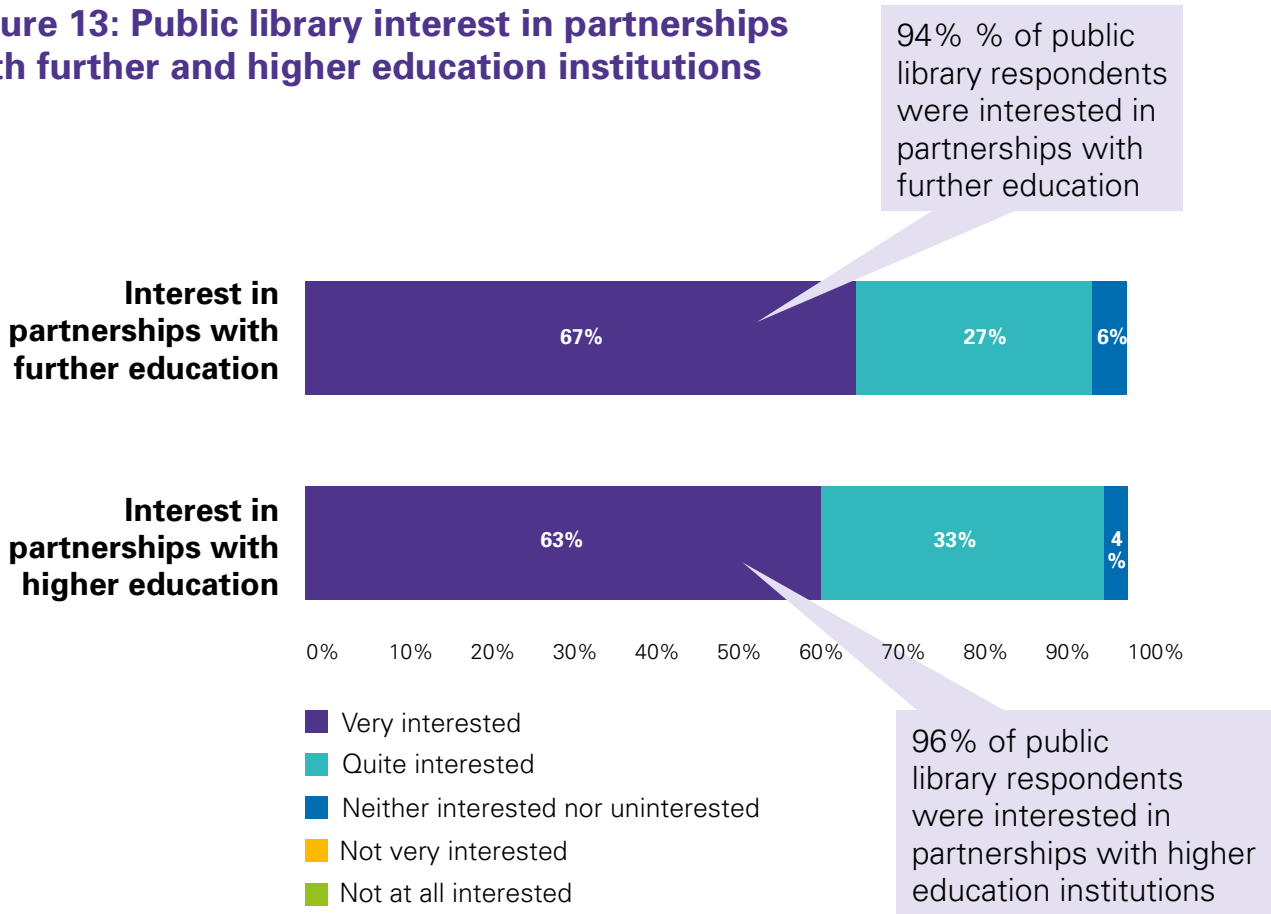
Although the original focus of the research was higher education, it became apparent, both from interviews with stakeholders and the case study analysis, that further education is a relevant and often linked partner in public library higher education partnerships. For example, in Kirklees, the skill sharing partnership is a three-way partnership between the higher education institution, the further education college and Kirklees Libraries. SWRLS includes school, health public library, higher education and further education librarians in its network. Barking Learning Centre and Dagenham College both include colocated further education colleges and public libraries, as does The Forum in Southend. In some places public libraries may have a natural further education partner but no natural higher education partner. In addition, changes to post-18 education and funding may mean more further education colleges become higher education institutions in future.

Therefore, it is relevant to discuss further education in relation to higher education and to recognize that further education colleges could be included in partnership projects – and that to exclude them from networking and partnership development support may limit the scope of the potential partnerships.

Due to difficulties in identifying a national strategic body for further education colleges, it was not possible to distribute the survey to further education colleges. However, public libraries were asked in the quantitative survey about their partnerships with further education.

Public libraries are just as interested in partnerships with further education colleges as they are with higher education.

**Figure 13: Public library interest in partnerships with further and higher education institutions**



Q4 of public libraries survey: ‘Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with higher education institutions (e.g. universities) for your library service?’

Base: All public library respondents (52)

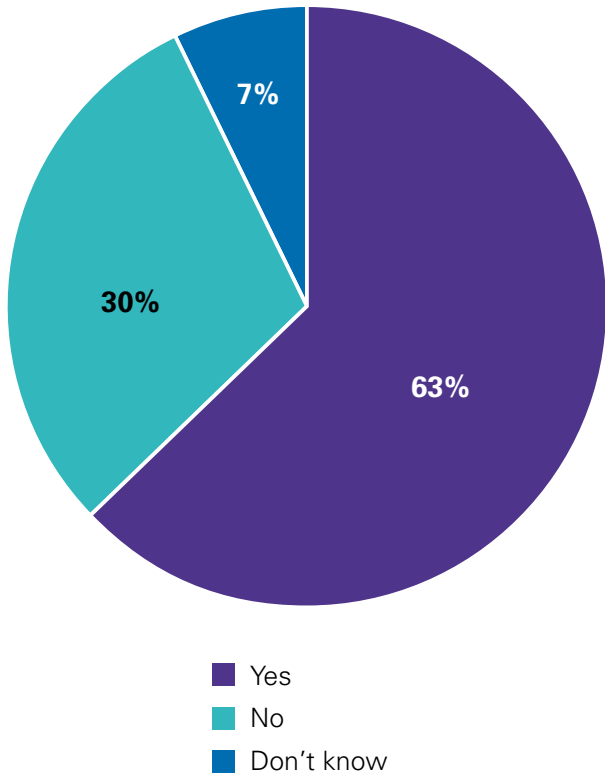
Q5 of public libraries survey: ‘Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with further education institutions (e.g. further education colleges) for your library service?’

While still relatively widespread, partnerships with further education appear to be somewhat less prevalent than partnerships with higher education institutions among public libraries,

with only 63 per cent of public libraries reporting recent partnerships with further education as opposed to nearly three quarters reporting partnerships with higher education.

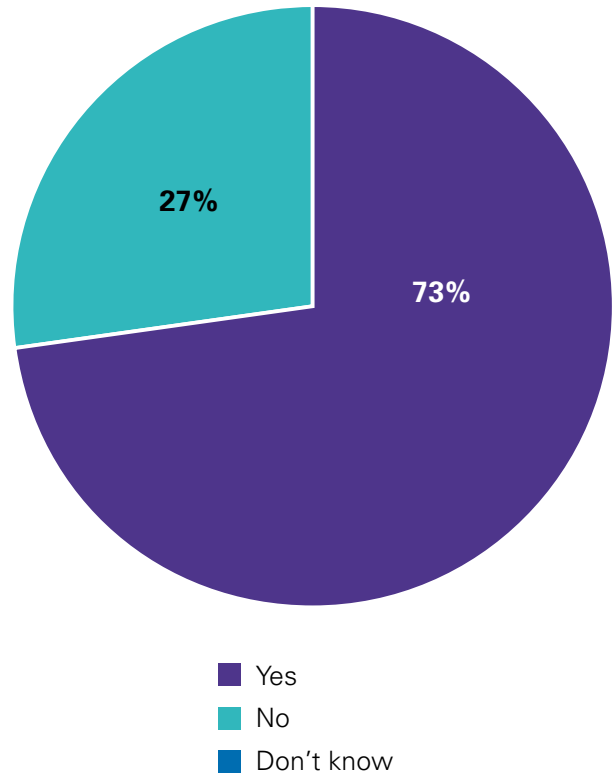
### Figure 14: Prevalence of further education partnerships vs prevalence of higher education partnerships

Q15: In the past two years has your library service had any active partnerships with further education?



Base: All public library respondents (43)

Q6: In the past two years has your library service had any active partnerships with higher education (e.g. universities?)



Base: All public library respondents (52)

They also have similar motivations for engaging in partnerships with further education colleges and higher education institutions. The top two motivations for existing partnerships are:

1. Raising the profile of the library service
2. Attracting new audiences

Although higher education institutions were more likely to be seen as bringing new thinking and raising aspirations of the library service, both higher and further education partnerships were thought to have the potential to raise the aspirations of the local population.

In summary, partnerships with further education colleges are welcomed by public libraries for many of the same reasons as partnerships with higher education institutions. This evidence, and the case studies demonstrating the potential for three-way partnerships, suggest that efforts should be made to include them in any networking and support activities for partnership development. More research with further education colleges may be required, however, in order to understand their needs and motivations for partnership.

# 6. Conclusions and recommendations for Arts Council England

## 6.1 Conclusions

### Appetite for partnerships and current state of partnerships

- There is **strong appetite for partnerships** between higher education institutions and public libraries, a wide range of types of partnerships and clear benefits that can be achieved through those partnerships. Further education colleges also provide strong opportunities for bilateral or three-way partnerships in local areas.
- **Many public library services already have partnerships with higher education:** the 75 per cent of public library respondents to the quantitative survey who report current partnerships represent 25 per cent of all public library services.
- It is therefore possible to say with confidence that **at least a quarter of all public library** services have current partnerships with higher education.
- However, **the perception among national stakeholders is that incidences of current partnership are low** and that they are not necessarily a high priority either for public libraries or for higher education at present. This demonstrates a disconnect between practice on the ground and perceptions among national stakeholders.

### Barriers to and opportunities for partnership

- **The primary barriers to partnership are lack of resource**, particularly in the public library sector, lack of familiarity and awareness of the benefits of partnership, and linked to this, language and terminology barriers which suggest a lack of strategic alignment.
- However, the research revealed that **there are several key areas of overlap in public library and higher education priorities** which present opportunities for mutually beneficial partnership working.
- The opportunities for partnership working that higher education institutions and public libraries are interested in are **public engagement/research impact activities** which are realised as events and activities that engage the local population and bring them into the public library. Public libraries have many of the skills required to deliver effective public engagement, but higher education may not be aware of this. Because of differences in the way they describe these priorities, each institution may not be aware of the interest of the other institution in this type of activity and public libraries may not be effectively marketing these skills to higher education.
- Public libraries are also strongly focused on **bringing in skilled volunteers** from the higher education sector. While the higher education community appears to place less emphasis on this, the opportunity for students to put their learning into practice is



valued and the link between the volunteering opportunities available in the public library service and practical learning for students could be stronger.

- Another area of strong interest for higher education institutions is **community benefit or the 'civic universities agenda'**. This presents opportunities for strategic partnerships and links between public libraries and higher education institutions which engage senior staff in both institutions, and for long-term benefit and value to be realised from higher education investment in communities through public libraries.
- **Infrastructure and technological partnerships** appear to be less top of mind for both public libraries and higher education institutions, but the case studies illustrate that where they do exist they can have strong benefits both for the organisations involved and for students and the general public. The case studies and qualitative interviews suggest that lack of resource and of strategic relationships contribute to the low interest in these types of partnerships.

### Characteristics of successful partnerships

Key factors in successfully developing partnerships between higher education institutions and public libraries included:

- **finding a point of contact** in each institution that could act as a 'navigator' or 'wayfinder', particularly for higher education institutions which are very large and complex organisations
- **funding to develop the project.** This was particularly important for infrastructure and resource-sharing projects – some of the more ambitious projects would not have happened without external funding
- **adequate resource to support the project.** This was primarily identified as an issue for public libraries, but higher education

institutions also mentioned that they may not have permission to devote time to new partnerships without compelling arguments for their benefit to the university

- **partnerships are identified as saving costs** or making strong contributions to sustainability rather than having a net cost in terms of time and resources. This was particularly important for public libraries, but was also mentioned by some higher education institutions and further education Colleges
- **Strong personal relationships** between individuals in each organisation: despite the potential for 'single point of failure' in person-to-person relationships, often the success of the partnership involved personal chemistry and commitment of time and resources from individuals in each organisation
- Long-term and strategic partnerships tend to be supported by **governance frameworks** such as steering groups and Memoranda Of Understanding (MOU) and they also successfully engage senior managers

The following characteristics are also shared among the most successful partnerships:

- **Shared aims:** the most successful partnerships are based on shared values and desired outcomes. Partnerships are more likely to succeed when it is clear what the partnership will set out to achieve and how this will be measured
- **Commitment:** all partners want to engage and are prepared to commit resource to the partnership
- **Understanding:** each side is prepared to learn each other's language and drivers of partnership.
- **Value:** the partnership has a clear value to both sides that justifies the time and effort of working together. In order to justify time spent on partnerships, both sides need

to be able to identify explicit links to their respective strategic/organisational plans and also to be able to measure the impact clearly and convincingly.

- **reciprocity**: contributions from and benefits for all sides
- **adaptability**: flexible approach to working together to respond to changes as they occur. Often partnerships grow when one activity leads to another
- **clarity**: each side knows what is expected from them and the other party, and there are dedicated contacts in each organisation and processes for managing the partnership

### Supporting and enabling more partnerships between higher education and public libraries

- **There is a strong appetite for support to develop partnerships**, particularly signposting funding available, seed funding for partnerships and networking opportunities.
- **National festivals and frameworks** for partnership do appear to have the potential to enable partnerships between public libraries and higher education.
- One of the barriers to engagement for both public libraries and higher education was a lack of a strong project idea. **Festivals such as Being Human, the National Festival of Learning and British Science Week** provide strong 'hooks' to base initial partnership activities on.
- In addition, networks such as the **BIPC and Living Knowledge Network** have the potential to provide a national brand for public libraries to use to engage higher education institutions in local business support activities.
- **SWRLS demonstrates the benefit of active and well-funded regional networks** for collaboration between public and higher/ further education libraries, although the

range of case studies show that partnerships can often be broader than intra-library co-operation.

- **A wide range of national bodies, including representative organisations and funders** are thought to be relevant sources of information about higher education and library partnerships.
- **New technologies** can also help in managing the partnership, e.g. use of Sharepoint/Google docs means that documents can be shared between people in different organisations. Also, use of videoconferencing and Skype can help to facilitate face-to-face communications.
- Many participants in the research have provided contact details and have indicated that they would be interested in hearing more about support for higher education and library partnerships and/or to participate in roundtables to explore approaches to supporting partnerships.

## 6.2 Recommendations

### Policy recommendations

- To position public libraries as a strategic partner for higher education, there is a need for public libraries to engage in national policy conversations around civic universities and to work at a national level to explain to the higher education sector how public libraries can contribute to the REF, TEF and potentially the KEF.
- There is a need to send out strong messages that public libraries are open to partnerships with higher education, that they are able to support those partnerships, and that they have the skills and access to local populations that are of value to higher education.
- A key message for public libraries to promote is that they can provide access to a massive number of people through their users.

## Support recommendations

- Lack of familiarity between the two sectors suggests that there will be value in:
  - o networking events
  - o directories of contact/information
  - o disseminating case studies to demonstrate the power of higher education and public library partnerships
  - o guidance on how to develop partnerships may also be useful
- Some work has already been undertaken in each of these areas for museums and archives and any new work should build on the existing body of evidence and support resources which may also be relevant for public libraries. For example, existing partnership building tools for museums and the MUPI-match methodology for curating networking events and dispensing development funding could be quickly adapted.
- Funding opportunities to develop partnerships and signposting to funding that can support partnership projects is crucial to enabling further partnership development, given the resource constraints the public library sector is operating in.
- It will be important to clarify which streams of Arts Council England funding are available to higher education in partnership with public libraries. It may also be appropriate for Arts Council England to partner with other funders to develop bespoke funding opportunities for higher education and public library partnerships.
- There is a need to support organisations to follow up initial, limited scope partnerships with more ambitious and strategic projects and to provide them with model frameworks for ongoing engagement, e.g. MOUs and governance approaches.

- The Arts Council should consider developing or working with partners such as CILIP and Libraries Connected to support the development of public library training which support public libraries to position themselves as public engagement experts, or to develop a specific public engagement toolkit for public libraries to understand what it means and how they can support it within their existing resources.

## National co-ordination recommendations

- The Arts Council and the Libraries Taskforce have a convening power, and all of these measures will have a much more powerful effect if they are undertaken together with other funders and national bodies: while the Arts Council and/or the Taskforce could co-ordinate and lead activities, especially on behalf of public libraries, it may not be the first point of contact for people looking for information in either sector. Dispersing information through a number of channels and national bodies would be more effective.
- Working with bodies co-ordinating national festivals and events to understand how they could be systematically engaged to support public library and higher education partnerships may be an efficient way to increase the number of partnerships, particularly first-time partnerships.
- There may also be a case for a high-level national partnership agreement between higher education, further education and public libraries, however work needs to be done to clarify the scope of such an agreement and which partners need to engage with it to ensure it has the desired impact at local level.

# Appendix 1: Case studies

## Case Study 1: The Hive, Worcester



### A long time in the planning

The concept for The Hive was initially developed in 2005 when the University of Worcester was planning an expansion onto a new city centre campus and the public library building in the city was becoming unfit for purpose. The Hive opened in 2012, after a seven-year planning, development and building process. The Hive was funded through £43 million raised through DCMS Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and £10 million funding from HEFCE. The Hive was designed and built by the architects [Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios](#).

### Strategic buy-in, strong governance and shared goals

The strategic aim of the project was to bring educational opportunity to a wide audience. The chief executive of the county council and the vice chancellor of the university both understood and supported this aim and recognized that by sharing resources they could each gain a better facility for the use of the university and the general public.

The project has a joint strategic board which is chaired on a six-monthly basis by the university and the county council. The project board includes elected members of the county council and university academic staff. The board was established as part of a stakeholder agreement that led on from the original project board.

### **An equal, integrated, shared building and service**

The Hive is a truly integrated higher education and public library service. The building also houses Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service and The Hub, the council's community services. The Hive operates a principle of equality between the university and the county council so that each partner has an equal say in decisions about the building and in its day-to-day management. This has been crucial to maintaining the partnership over the years and ensuring that both sides are able to get what they need. In addition, the decision was made at an early stage not to create a separate trust or organisation status for The Hive, so that it would remain integral to the wider public library service and the wider academic environment. The workforce is also integrated: within The Hive it is not possible for students or the public to tell which employees are university employees and which are public library employees.

### **Detailed work took place to learn about the similarities and differences between each institution**

The Joint Project Board, made up of the heads of each service involved (the university library, the archive, the public library and The Hub) and an independent architect developed a detailed workplan to deliver the project. They analysed the borrowing and usage patterns of each library to be certain that the project would meet the needs of different user groups equally. This work also explored the shared aspirations across institutions and looked at how these could be brought to life through the use of the shared space.

### **Benefits to the public library service**

Through The Hive the public library benefits from an outstanding library building and a wider range of stock and the public can access the same books as the students with very few limitations on high-demand items. In addition, The Hive is open 90 hours per week, from

8.30am to 10pm every day, so that students can access it, but this also benefits the local community.

The integrated service means the public also have access to university events, courses, exhibitions and cultural programmes. The cultural programme budget is managed jointly to ensure that it meets the interests and needs of the general public as well as students.

The services offered through The Hive enable the public library service to demonstrate its value in relation to economic development and other county council priorities as well as offering students access to the business community. The Business Centre is run in the building by the business development manager who is jointly appointed by the university, together with the public library service. It supports local businesses through networking breakfasts, surgeries and access to provision from the local chamber of commerce, law school, business school and the Local Economic Partnership in Worcestershire.

### **Benefits to the university and students**

The university benefitted from the DCMS PFI funding, which would not have been available to it without the public library service. Students also benefit from access to the public library collections, public events and resources. They have exclusive use of the meeting rooms for revision and study and a student engagement officer at The Hive supports students to develop projects in the space, including final degree shows for art students, the display of final assessment pieces, and study or welfare related student projects. Students are also able to use the local studies library and original documents in the county archive to support their research.

The Hive is an example of the university's commitment to its public engagement agenda. It also provides opportunities for students to work with members of the public. The Hive has one of the largest children's libraries in the

country and the university trains a high number of teachers each year who are able to gain experience of working with children through the library. The business school has studied the customer to customer interactions between university students and the general public and student placements are common, including student mentors for the national Summer Reading Challenge initiative.

The Hive has supported partnerships and connections between the community and the university populations and provides a window onto the local community for students and academics.

## Case Study 2: Surrey Library Service and the University of Surrey



(Image courtesy of Surrey Library Service)

### Partnership working between the library service and University of Surrey to support public engagement and new creative digital activities in libraries

*'Our work with the university gives us the expertise to offer exciting activities that we couldn't do on our own. Through this we're changing the way the public see libraries, making better use of our space and bringing more people into the library.'*

(Helen Leech, Digital Service Manager, Surrey Library Service)

*'Working with the library service enables us to have a better relationship with the local community and bring local benefit.'*

(Ross Kelway, Public Engagement Manager, University of Surrey)

### A partnership that grew from new digital making services in the public library

Surrey Library Service approached the University of Surrey as they searched for partners to help them deliver new creative digital services to the public. The chief operating officer of the university's 5G Innovation Centre was interested in the new ideas that the library service was exploring and became involved in the library service's makerspace. The university is now on the steering group for Guildford Library's makerspace and the business school has been supporting the development of new business models for the makerspace.

### **The pivotal role of the university public engagement officer in brokering partnerships**

The library service was introduced to a public engagement manager at the university through their contacts at the 5G Innovation Centre. The public engagement manager provides a navigation point for external partners looking to work with the university and is able to broker relationships with different parts of the university, including individual academics and departments. As a result of this, the public library service is now exploring partnerships with several different departments in the university, including engaging creative writing and film courses to explore how they could work with the public in the library and benefit from the digital making facilities in the library space.

### **Business school students providing fundraising support**

A key success of the current partnership between the public library service and the university has been a crowdfunding project that was managed by the university's business school students. The aim was to raise £5,000 for new equipment for the makerspace. The student's crowdfunding campaign resulted in £1,000 being donated by local people and businesses, and raised awareness of the fundraising so that the local council and a business donor provided the rest of the funding required.

### **Volunteering: it works both ways**

Students and staff at the University of Surrey are a key source of volunteers for the library service's digital making activities, providing both regular volunteering and one-off workshops. However, the library service has also been able to provide volunteers from its makerspace for the university to support Raspberry Pi workshops on campus.

### **Tapping into national networks: STEM Ambassadors**

As the public library service's digital making activities have grown, it has needed more volunteers to support activities. The library service attended Innovate Guildford, a networking event in the local area, and made contact with STEM Ambassadors there. STEM Ambassadors is a scheme that pairs up professionals and academics working in STEM subjects with community organisations and schools to promote STEM careers in the community. STEM Ambassadors provide volunteers that run regular and one-off events about STEM and creative digital activities in public libraries. In return, the library service offers its library buildings as meeting places for STEM Ambassador recruitment and training events.

### **Learning through doing**

The partnership has involved numerous ideas and approaches, not all of which have worked. Some of the key learnings have been:

- Universities are large, complex organisations and it can be hard to know who to approach, but if you find a navigator, such as a public engagement manager, they can help you engage different parts of the university and have greater reach for your ideas.
- Universities are used to large corporate partnerships and can sometimes struggle to understand smaller community-based organisations. Demonstrating how your project is part of a wider strategic plan can help to increase buy-in from university partners.
- Universities can be slower to act than public libraries, because they are larger organisations. It's important to understand the timeframe involved when engaging universities.

## Case Study 3: Wakefield library service and the University of Leeds



### Wakefield Libraries has a number of diverse partnerships with different higher education institutions supporting both outreach services and public engagement activities

*'The library service can make connections with higher education so that learning continues like a ribbon through people's lives and to prevent universities drifting away from local communities'. (Claire Pickering, Senior Library Officer, Information and Culture, Wakefield Libraries)*

### A diverse range of higher education partnerships built on the library service's local knowledge and contacts

Wakefield Libraries pursue a range of partnerships with different universities and individuals within universities. These partnerships rest on Wakefield Libraries' close knowledge of and ability to engage with its local place and communities and they support a variety of new opportunities for the local community.

### Supporting outreach work with Go Higher West Yorkshire at the University of Huddersfield

Go Higher West Yorkshire is a consortium of 12 higher education institutions which

delivers the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The NCOP aims to get more young people aged 13-18 considering and applying for higher education, particularly in areas where levels of attainment at school are not matched with participation. Go Higher West Yorkshire has a community engagement approach, which led them to contact Wakefield Libraries because it has several libraries in low participation postcodes.

### Starting small, building community knowledge

On the advice of library staff, Go Higher West Yorkshire started by creating a banner stand and display with information about higher education opportunities and opportunities to post questions in a post box, which tours six libraries for one month at a time. This low-key approach has been designed to make people familiar with the names and branding of higher education institutions and help Go Higher West Yorkshire learn more about the libraries and communities in Wakefield before devising other activities. This is currently an experimental partnership and is a unique approach to NCOP work.

*'Working with Wakefield Library Service has given us a more accurate picture of what working in communities is really like. Some*



*parents and community members may not feel confident enough to speak to us face to face and have no experience of higher education. The libraries team have given fantastic support and that has opened my eyes to what working with people outside of the higher education environment can look like’.*

(Laura Bareham, NCOP Outreach Officer, Go Higher West Yorkshire, University of Huddersfield)

### **In The Wrong Place at the Wrong Time: participating in an international research project with the University of Leeds**

Claudia Sternberg, a member of the Legacies of War team at Leeds University, made contact with Wakefield Library Service through her activities as part of a research and public engagement project for the First World War centenary. The investigation focused on a former civilian internment camp in Wakefield as part of a wider comparative research project with a similar camp in Germany. The website with more details can be found [here](#). Claudia hadn’t originally thought of the library service but a member of library staff attended a Heritage Open Day organized by the project team and afterwards facilitated the relationship. Library volunteers, who were also active in a local history society, became a further link between the service, the project and local communities.

Wakefield Library Service supported the research project by hosting events, making links with local schools and history groups and publicizing information to library members and visitors. They also provided access to relevant records in the local studies library and made a multi-purpose room available for talks and workshops.

*‘It was one of the best things to involve the public library in this project. It has been very important for recovering and sharing a forgotten history with the people we wanted to reach and for bringing the topic to those who wouldn’t have come across it otherwise. The library*

*service showed a different kind of enthusiasm and really helped to draw attention to the project’.*

(Claudia Sternberg, Senior Lecturer, School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, University of Leeds)

Wakefield Library was the venue for the project’s exhibition and a showcase event which brought together stakeholders and visitors from Wakefield, Yorkshire and abroad. The event included the exhibition opening, a book launch, display of a commissioned artwork, talks and an artist-led zine workshop. A programme can be found [here](#). Through the partnership the library service were able to present expert talks in the public library space and offer opportunities for people to find out more about a history of local and transnational dimension.

This visible partnership with the university has raised the profile of the library in the local area. In turn, academic staff, independent researchers and British and international students learned about locally held knowledge while also gaining insights into the aims and work of Wakefield Library Service more generally.

### **Leeds University Yarn project: public engagement providing proof of concept**

Yarn is a publicly available online platform <http://yarncommunity.org/> that has been developed by the University of Leeds School of Media and Communication as an archive engagement platform that will allow local history and archive groups to share stories and link to controlled institutional collections. They are able to share their own cultural heritage materials with other community groups, libraries, archives and members of the public.

The University of Leeds has been working with Wakefield Library Service to train local history groups on how to use the tool and support them to upload their own archive content and link to other online archive content. This has

helped the university to prove their concept and engage other stakeholders in the project. The group have set up a project page on Yarn to publish and share their projects and the ongoing results can be seen here:

<https://yarncommunity.org/projects/3>

*'The role of the library and their staff has been invaluable to the success of our project and the enthusiasm, expertise and commitment could not have been higher. The ability to work through the library and with its archives has*

*allowed us to reach a range of audiences and users we would not have been able to work with and we will continue to seek partnerships with them as a means of helping to develop resources and as a future means of enriching community projects'.*

(Simon Popple, Senior Lecturer and Director of Impact, School of Media and Communications, University of Leeds)

## Case Study 4: Kirklees Public Library Service, Kirklees College and the University of Huddersfield

### A strategic local partnership to share expertise and information with a focus on customer service

#### Building on a previous local strategic partnership between the library, museum and archive services and the university

The basis for the partnership between Kirklees Public Library Service and the University of Huddersfield's Computing and Library Service began in through a local ASPIRE group that had been formally constituted several years previously to collaborate on projects for the benefit of the community and members of the university. As part of this partnership they used to mystery shop each other's services but they stopped meeting in 2015. The library service approached the university in 2017 to ask whether they could resume the partnership and collaborate on a bilateral basis. Kirklees College joined the collaboration a few months later through their work on the Customer Service Excellence standard.

The group meet every two to three months and take turns hosting meetings. Since the beginning of 2018, public library service staff have mystery shopped both the university and the college. This has provided useful

information for the college and university, and professional development opportunities for the public library staff. The public library service has not been mystery shopped yet because it is still undergoing transformation, however there are plans for reciprocal visits in the future. In the meantime, the group has identified opportunities to mystery shop each other's events and the library service will receive mystery shopping as part of this.

*'I didn't realise how much was available at the library and now that I do I can link their events and facilities in with the relevant curriculum areas within the college'.*

(Julie James, Customer Service Team Leader, Kirklees College)

### Customer Service Excellence standard as mechanism for local collaboration and practice-sharing

Both Kirklees College and the University's Computing and Library Services have achieved the Customer Service Excellence standard; their relationship became established when the college approached the library service to share some of their experiences with them when they were preparing for their initial assessment. The library service does not currently have the

[Customer Service Excellence](#) standard, but through the mystery shopping exercises they have supported both institutions in their ongoing monitoring of the standard and have also benefited from the knowledge gained in each organisation that has undertaken the standard. For example, the public library service is looking at implementing the customer service charter that the university operates.

### **Building on customer service to explore other aspects of service development**

Following on from the successful mystery shopping exercise, the partners developed the idea of holding Learning Exchange events. The first event is due to take place in July 2018 with the theme of 'flexible workforce'. The public library service has extensive experience of supporting volunteers while the other partners will present their own approaches to flexible working. These events are also an opportunity to involve senior stakeholders in the institutions and demonstrate the benefit of the partnership to each organisation. All partners are keen to maintain the partnership and can see opportunities to expand into new topic areas in the future.

*'There are lots of ways this relationship could develop in the future. Every time we meet we always have lots of ideas and things just*

*snowball out of that. The learning exchange event will engage the senior library team which should help expand the partnership further'.* (Julie Peel, Assistant Area Manager, Kirklees Library Service)

### **Why does it work so well?**

All the partners expressed strong commitment to the partnership and felt that it was working very well. The reasons for this, and the success of the partnership so far were felt to be:

- action-oriented meetings, where individuals take responsibility for following up on ideas
- sharing the administrative and organisational burden of the partnership equally
- focusing on activities which are of mutual interest and equal benefit to all
- the activities represent an excellent return on time and resource invested, and an efficient way to gain new skills and information in each workforce which would have a considerable cost if procured externally

*'Even though on the face of it the public library has less resources than the academic library, we are all equal partners and we are getting as much from them as they are from us'.* (Lorraine Noel, Head of Customer Services, University of Huddersfield)

## Case Study 5: Medway Library Service and the University of Kent



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01634 337799

Rochester Library, Eastgate, Rochester, Kent ME1 1EW  
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University of Kent

### The University of Kent offer short access courses to members of the public in partnership with Medway Libraries to widen participation in education

#### The university approached the public library service to support their outreach work

The University of Kent has been running short creative writing courses in public libraries in Medway since 2014. The courses are funded by the university as part of its OFFA agreement and, more recently, its Access and Participation Plan with the OfS. The university outreach team approached the public library service because it has public library buildings in low participation neighbourhoods and marketing routes to reach people in the local community who have not

had the opportunity to access higher education, such as the local authority newsletter, *Medway Matters*.

*'It is a positive relationship and we really work well together. The library service advises on course content, times and locations. In return we get some really popular learning activities for local people and the university are meeting their target of engaging the local community'.* (Erika Collison, Medway Libraries)

#### The benefits of learning in a public library environment

The short courses are very popular and often over-subscribed. The courses have been so successful that they have broadened

the offer to include sociology, psychology, English literature, art, and history. The library is a community space where people feel comfortable when they would not consider entering a college or university. Libraries are in the heart of communities and provide a relaxed and welcoming environment which helps break down barriers to engaging with education.

### **The benefits of hosting outreach courses for the public library service**

The public library benefits from attracting new people to the library space, and it ensures that all learners are offered library membership when they join the courses. Hosting the courses makes good use of the library space and helps make the case for the role the public library plays in supporting learning and skills development in the community. The courses can also stimulate use of collections and issues, as the public library service prepares a selection of relevant stock for learners to browse when they attend the course.

### **The outcomes of outreach learning activities in public libraries**

The university believes the courses in public libraries make a good stepping stone for learners onto the longer accredited Access to Higher Education diploma, run by the university at a local school in Medway, but this often takes time and results are not always immediate. However, the university has developed follow-on short courses for people to continue their learning in the public library environment, which have been enthusiastically adopted. In addition, the outreach team has learnt about the barriers to accessing higher education in low participation areas and the long-term work that is required to support the development of positive attitudes to learning in local communities.

*‘We know that adult learners’ engagement with higher education can take a long time to come to fruition and we are committed to providing a range of progression activities to support this. Therefore, building confidence, addressing social isolation and developing a learning culture in local communities are important aspects of this work’.*

(Declan Wiffen, Community Development Officer, University of Kent)

### **Breaking down barriers to participation and targeting specific populations are key to success**

A number of factors for successful delivery of this type of project were identified, including:

- ensuring the library buildings and course tutors are available at the right times for learners
- targeting marketing of the courses to specific low participation communities
- ensuring the content of the courses is accessible and the tutors are able to bring the subjects to life for diverse groups of people
- providing free use of the library space in return for free education courses for the public – this model would not work if the university had to pay to use the space

The university aims to reach learners who have not accessed higher education before, will be the first in their family to have done so and who live in areas where participation in higher education is low. Their aim is that around two thirds of learners on any given outreach activity will be from this target group. As a result, while the public library service still publicizes and hosts the courses, the university is taking over the booking of participants onto the courses to ensure the attainment of this target.

## Case Study 6: University of the West of England and South Gloucestershire Libraries



### Grant funding and pre-existing relationships fostered by South West Regional Library Services (SWRLS) enabled strategic infrastructure sharing project

*'Because we already knew each other well through SWRLS it was easier for us to trust each other and engage in a more ambitious project'.*

(Martin Burton, Community Cultural Services Manager, South Gloucestershire Library Service)

*'Don't be risk averse, don't worry about being overrun if you open your university library up to the public. It can support strategic plans for public engagement and strengthen your ties with the local community'.*

(Jackie Chelin, Deputy Director of Library Services, University of West of England)

### A partnership that began within the South Western Regional Library Services (SWRLS) network

The idea for the Open Doors project was generated and developed through the SWRLS



regional network which brings academic, health, school, public and other libraries together for information, resource sharing and skills development. SWRLS offered grant funding for a project officer to manage the implementation of Open Doors across South Gloucestershire Library service and the University of the West of England (UWE) Library Services.

### **One library card for the university and the public library service**

The Open Doors project allows students at UWE to access public library services, including loans, online content and swipe-card access to library buildings throughout the week. It also allows members of the public to use UWE libraries, including loans and, through the guest user access facility, to access online journals and databases onsite. Once the scheme was initially set up in South Gloucestershire, it was also rolled out through other neighbouring authorities in the West of England. A detailed report of the initial project to set up the scheme can be found [here](#).

### **Simplicity is the key to success**

The single access scheme does not require any data to be shared across library management systems. All that is required is the modification of self-issue terminals and barcode readers in both institutions so that they can recognize the barcodes of the library cards issued by the other. Users present their library card to register with the other service and can then use it for borrowing.

### **The setting of both institutions creates strong mutual benefits**

UWE is a campus university on the outskirts of a city and many students live in South Gloucestershire or Bristol, at some miles distance from the campus, so public libraries provide valuable additional study space. In addition, because South Gloucestershire does not have a large central library, UWE was able fulfil that function with access to high level resources. University library staff were initially concerned that students would be disadvantaged by the public borrowing too many set texts or using the library in high numbers. Neither of these has been the case and the scheme has been a success. By May 2018, 979 external borrowers had used their public library card to join UWE libraries.

### **A platform for further collaboration**

The project is working with South Gloucestershire and Stroud College to extend Open Doors to their students and the three institutions have agreed to collaborate on the Festival of Learning. This provides an opportunity for the public library service to offer a series of talks by leading experts from UWE to local communities and for the university to showcase their offer to communities. In addition, the public library service advertises volunteering opportunities through the university and receives a steady stream of volunteers via this route. The university is planning on working with the public library service to reach out to a diverse community through its branch library network and to raise awareness of the range of foreign language stock that could benefit international students.

### **Keeping up the momentum**

The Open Doors scheme benefitted from grant funding to get it up and running. The long-term challenge has been to ensure that staff and the public remain aware of it and the momentum gathered during the project is sustained through new initiatives and partnerships.

## Case Study 7: Jisc and Society of Chief Librarians/Libraries Connected, including Bournemouth Library service



### Single Sign On is an innovation project using higher education infrastructure to improve access to online resources in public libraries

#### Building on existing relationships

Jisc has managed the tendering for the Reference Online framework for SCL for several years and a relationship of trust has built up between SCL and Jisc. Reference Online resources provide the backbone of the public library online reference offer; however members of the public had to sign on separately to each resource, which created a cumbersome user experience.

#### Transferring higher education solutions to the public library sector

Jisc had offered single sign on to higher education online resources for a number of years, and with the development of a new managed service for higher education it also identified that this could be of interest to the public library sector. Jisc approached SCL to

develop a pilot project to test the single sign on concept with public libraries. The pilot ran from January 2017 to January 2018. An evaluation report of the project is available [here](#). There are currently two library services offering Single Sign On, with a further 13 library services waiting to go online.

#### Rapid innovation approaches to digital solutions

Despite delays in the project caused by both technical hitches and difficulty in engaging some library management suppliers, this project does showcase a rapid innovation approach to digital services that can be replicated in other environments, including with other higher education departments. SCL was able to gather a range of interested library services quickly and the pilot was able to prove the viability of the concept without extensive or highly costly investment from either side.

#### Building understanding across cultures

The evaluation of Single Sign On points out that it took a while for Jisc and SCL to develop a



productive relationship. This was due to lack of understanding on both sides. Jisc assumed a higher level of technical resource and expertise in public library services and the public library sector expected lower involvement in implementation than Jisc had assumed.

### **Getting the resources you want for your online library service**

Engaging with publishers was a key issue for the initial success of the project for SCL. Jisc noticed through delivering this project with SCL that higher education has a much stronger commissioning relationship with publishers than public libraries. Academic publishers tend to work closely with higher education to develop the resources that academic institutions and their members want and need. Public libraries have not traditionally had a strong commissioning relationship with publishers, however through delivering this project, staff with a public library background have seen this is possible. SCL is now co-funding a post to support as many content providers as possible to sign up to Single Sign On to expand the range of resources available to the public.

*'Jisc have intimate experience of engaging with publishers, it has shown me that public library service customers can ask for what they want, not just get what they're given'.*

(John Garland, Single Sign On Project Manager, Jisc/SCL)

### **What potential is there for the future service development?**

Because Jisc is now a not-for-profit competitor in a field of organisations offering solutions similar to Single Sign On, the partnership with SCL has been limited to testing proof of concept and developing the market for this service for the benefit of the sector. Public library services are free to procure alternative services from other providers if they wish. However, Jisc see the possibility of further extending services already available to higher education in the public library environment in the future and it now has a good understanding of the needs and capacity of the public library sector when supporting innovative digital infrastructure projects.

*'Jisc are collaborating with the public library several initiatives such as working with the British Library to progress 'Single Digital Presence', and implementation of the eduroam network which would enable access to their national online resources for university students and staff'.*

(Richard Sanders, Project Manager, Jisc)

## Case Study 8: Nottingham City Libraries, Nottingham Trent University's The Hive and University of Nottingham's Ingenuity Network

### Nottingham City Libraries has started partnerships with local university business and innovation centres to support its Start Up Days and its offer to local businesses

*'I've been surprised by how keen the universities have been to work with public libraries on our enterprise offer. I've come to understand that they have a remit of doing more work in and connecting with the wider community. It's just about aligning our goals and understanding where they cross over'.*

(Ruth Hawley, Library Lead – Economic, Health and Wellbeing, Nottingham City Libraries)

### Building on existing relationships

Nottingham City Libraries has worked with university volunteering services in Nottingham for some time and numerous students have volunteered at the library service, e.g. with homework clubs, Code Clubs and more recently as part of the Arts Council's Libraries Innovation Fund project, Story Smash.

The library service also hosts interns from Nottingham Trent University's history department who worked on a local studies app about the Nottingham lace trade. The Local Studies Library is also used by students and faculty for projects, e.g. architecture projects and the [Museum and Heritage Development Course](#) course at Nottingham Trent University.

### British Library Business and IP Centre stimulating new ideas and opportunities for partnership

Nottingham City Libraries are about to begin a pilot to extend the Business and IP Network to their central library in Nottingham City Centre. This involves reorganising the library space to provide a dedicated research area and bringing together a number of initiatives within the Business and IP Centre's activities, including Prince's Trust Young Entrepreneurs work and the Local Authority Enterprise team.

As part of this, the library service ran a Start Up Day in September 2017, which involved inviting a number of local organisations that provide business support to an event for local people considering setting up their own businesses. The Start Up Day included workshops and a lunchtime open event where the organisations had stands and local people could speak to them informally. The Hive at Nottingham Trent University and The Ingenuity Network from the University of Nottingham both attended the lunchtime open stands event.

*'Universities can feel impenetrable to people at the beginning of their start up journey. Even for more established companies, finding the right person to talk to within a university can be a real challenge. Events like this that enable us to connect with the business community and help them to put a name and a face to the institution and link them into our support are always welcome'.*

(Gemma Morgan-Jones, SME Engagement Manager, University of Nottingham, Research and Innovation)

### A simple start

The library service initially contacted The Hive via their website, while they had an existing relationship with the Ingenuity Network. Both university partners reported that they were keen to be involved and that the library service created an easy opportunity for them to engage, the opportunity had a clear ask and was aligned with their own priorities. Both universities were looking to extend their business support offer to the local community and were aware that many local people would not think to ask for help from the university and may not feel comfortable coming on campus. In advance of the event the Ingenuity Network also promoted the Start Up Day on social media.

The Start Up Day was a pilot event and there were some recommendations from the

university partners about how future events could be delivered, including ensuring high attendance from a diverse range of people. They also felt that more tailoring of engagement – so that people at the right stage in their business development journey were directed to them – would be beneficial, as perhaps would offering some kind of appointment system to allow people to talk confidentially about their business ideas.

### Big ambitions for the future

Nottingham City Council has secured European Regional Development Funding to support local businesses. Through this funding stream the library service are looking into the potential for the universities and other organisations to deliver workshops and learning sessions in libraries for established businesses, as well as advice on intellectual property via the IP centre.

The Hive report that the establishment of a Business and IP Centre in Nottingham Central Library makes the library service an attractive partner for Nottingham Trent University's business support and innovation activities. They are also looking forward to the library building redevelopment in Nottingham city centre and feel it will make it a more accessible and attractive location to deliver workshops and public events.

*'We see potential for future partnerships – we are being urged to widen our remit across Nottingham and the library service can help us deliver this because it is an unthreatening environment. The Business and IP Centre is a big plus to the business support environment'.* (Philip Clarke, Enterprise Adviser, The Hive, Nottingham Trent University)

Both the library service and the higher education partners see opportunities for greater information exchange and promoting each other's events and services in the future.

## Case Study 9: Norfolk Library and Information Service and the University of East Anglia (UEA)



(Image: courtesy of Dr Thomas Roebuck, University of East Anglia)

### **Norfolk Libraries have a long-standing relationship with UEA which has led to strategic partnerships and opportunities to bring in project funding and support to unlock collections**

*‘The strongest partnerships can be a slow burn. Once you have learnt to trust and understand each other, there are huge benefits and greater potential for future working’.*

(Jan Holden, Norfolk Libraries)

### **Engaging Libraries: a funding mechanism that supports public library and higher education partnerships**

Norfolk Libraries is leading a consortium including the Science Art and Writing Trust (SAW), independent artists and writers and the School of Psychology at the University of East Anglia (UEA) to deliver [You Can’t Judge a Book by its Cover](#), funded by the Wellcome Trust and Carnegie UK Trust Engaging Libraries programme. The partnership with SAW has developed over more than 10 years and started with creative writing workshops in the public library.

The current project involves creative workshops in public libraries to facilitate and encourage discussions on the impact of self-reflection on wellbeing and mental health. The workshops are led by a team of writers, artists, academics and scientists and the creative writing and book covers that are made in the workshops will be turned into an exhibition to encourage thought and discussions about mental health and wellbeing across the county.

### **Suffragette Stories: A joint Heritage Lottery Fund bid between the British Archive for Contemporary Writing (BACW) at UEA and Norfolk Library and Information Service**

Norfolk Libraries is currently working with Dr Jos Smith of the BACW at UEA to deliver Suffragette Stories, an intergenerational public engagement project on the topic of democracy and women’s rights, using previously hidden papers from leading working

class suffragettes, Annie and Jessie Kenney, held in the UEA Library. The public library network employs the project coordinator and provides the venue and audience for various intergenerational workshops and activities delivered in partnership with the university. The project provides opportunities for the archive to make its collections known to the public and to stimulate public debate and conversations about democracy and history.

This is an example of how partnership with the university has allowed the public library service to develop more ambitious bids and to access bid-writing expertise in the academic sector, which has led to £45,500 of Heritage Lottery Funding to support the project.

### **Unlocking the Archive: an opportunity for the library service to participate in the AHRC’s Being Human festival and to benefit from the Higher Education Innovation Fund**

*‘There is a lot of institutional support from UEA for this partnership. Norfolk libraries is seen as a prestigious and large institution that offers space for collaboration, brings in the business and design community as well as the wider public’.*

(Dr Thomas Roebuck, Lecturer, School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing, UEA)

Norfolk Libraries has an ongoing partnership with Renaissance and early-modern academics in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing at UEA, which has allowed the library service to participate in the AHRC’s [Being Human](#) festival, and benefit from a higher profile in the university and additional funding from higher education sources.

In 2015, Dr Thomas Roebuck worked with library staff on the Unlocking the Archive project to develop new ways for the public to interact with rare books from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries held in the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library through ‘Hands-on Drop-in’ events involving members of the public, library staff and students and academics from UEA. The event was a great success with

over 250 members of the public attending. Members of the public were invited to choose their favourite books from the collection. This led to the creation of a small range of merchandise inspired by the collection (prints and postcards, funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund) that generates an income for the library service.

In 2017 this partnership developed further through a project called New Impressions: Redesigning Norwich's Renaissance Books. Local graphic designers and artists were invited to create their own interpretations of books in the collection. These were then presented in an interactive exhibition in the public library. Local printers (Page Bros) and an Italian paper manufacturer (Fedrigoni) sponsored the project and enabled the artworks to be produced at low cost. The exhibition went on to be presented at the Crypt Gallery at Norwich School and at the Royal Norfolk Show, and is now available online via the new Unlocking the Archive website.

There are plans to link the University, Norfolk Libraries and Unlocking the Archive's newest partner, Blickling Estate, a National Trust property with a large collection of rare books, in a bid to 'put the East of England on the map as a place for rare books'. With the support of the Higher Education Innovation Fund, members of the Unlocking the Archive project have developed a new website to provide a digital home for the project, which aims to build links between rare book collections in the East of England. Dr Roebuck recently received an award for public engagement from the University of East Anglia for his work with Norfolk Libraries. Find out more about this project through [@archiveunlocked](https://twitter.com/archiveunlocked) and [www.unlockingthearchive.co.uk](http://www.unlockingthearchive.co.uk).

## **2nd Air Division Memorial Library: shared curation and development of a special collection**

*'The library is already a venue where people go for information, to use computers, etc. and so there's more footfall so you get more public engagement. Any issues we've had over the years have been resolved by the professionalism and dedication of the public library staff'.*

(Jacqueline Fear-Segal, Professor, School of Art, Media and American Studies, UEA)

The 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in the Norwich and Norfolk Millennium Library is a partnership between the Memorial Trust (a separate charitable trust set up by veterans of the United States 2nd Air Division who were stationed in East Anglia during the Second World War), the public library service and the School of Art, Media and American Studies at UEA.

Dr Jacqueline Fear-Segal is a member of the Board of Trustees and supports the library in the recruitment of two graduate American scholars to work alongside staff in the library. The partnership is responsible for arranging a series of lectures and talks at the university and supporting the library with public engagement activities and events.

The partnership has ambition to redevelop the physical space that houses the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library and to better integrate it with the wider public library offer, attracting new audiences and engaging younger generations with its collections and purpose. The longevity and sustainability of this partnership is valued by all parties and provides a strong basis for collaborative working and shared expertise into the future.

## Case Study 10: Libraries Unlimited and the University of Exeter



(Image: courtesy of the Wellcome Centre for the Cultures and Environments of Health)

**A wide-ranging strategic partnership with a focus on joint research, business model development, opportunities for public engagement and student volunteering in the library service.**

### **Learning from an academic library in planning public library redevelopments**

The relationship between the public library service and the university started when Central Library in Exeter was being redeveloped. Library staff visited The Forum, a new library development at the University of Exeter, to look at the approach the university had taken to redeveloping its library and explore the new ways the university library staff were working. The university librarian at the time was keen to develop new partnerships and welcomed new links with the public library service.

### **Academic research enabling reflection on public library business models**

The relationship grew further when the library service devolved from local authority control. A master's student at the University Business School approached Libraries Unlimited and asked to study its transformation to a Public

Service Mutual. The experience of participating in research with a master's student was very positive and included benefits for public library staff as well as the academic researcher:

*'It showed me the benefit of knowledge exchange all round. We gained some fascinating insights into Libraries Unlimited as we were developing our new business model'.*  
(Ciara Eastell, Chief Executive, Libraries Unlimited)

### **Partnership to gain joint research funding**

Following on from a positive experience of participating in academic research into their transition to a new governance model, Libraries Unlimited brought together a consortium of partners, including the University of Exeter, RIO and Open Data Devon to bid for research funding from Arts Council England to explore the value of public libraries. This partnership was successful in achieving £200,000 grant funding from Arts Council England's Research Fund. The Unlimited Value research project runs from 2016 to 2018, with findings due in late 2018. An evaluation report of the partnerships developed through this project is due to be published later this year.

## Business School providing support and expertise to the library service

The initial research project led to an ongoing, strong relationship between Libraries Unlimited and the Business School. This has included MBA students working with the public library service to create a sustainable business plan for the FabLab and the Business and Intellectual Property Centre, as well as developing thinking on public library membership and affinity, increasing engagement between the public library service and its members, e.g. through volunteering, legacies and charitable giving. Undergraduate students and library staff are benefitting from leadership and skills development events through action learning sets facilitated by the university. This relationship has reciprocal benefits:

*‘The world is rapidly changing and academic knowledge production needs to keep pace. The Business School’s partnership with Libraries Unlimited enables us to embed the live context into higher education and student learning’.*  
(Hugh Waters, University of Exeter Business School)

Different facets of Libraries Unlimited’s experiences have been embedded into the teaching and learning of first year undergraduates, all the way through to the Exeter MBA, addressing topics such as social enterprise, leadership development, research methods, and change management. This enables Libraries Unlimited to gain new insights from student work, and helps to build a pipeline of future leaders, by enabling a new generation of business-savvy graduates to engage with challenges facing the library sector.

## Supporting public engagement work in universities

In addition to the work with the Business School, Libraries Unlimited has also developed a valuable partnership with the new Wellcome Centre for the Culture and Environments of Health (WCCEH), which has received £8 million funding from the Wellcome Trust and the university itself. The partnership has involved Exeter Library providing spaces and support to enable the WCCEH to engage with the diverse audiences that the library attracts. The partnership has involved a collaboration between a PhD student from the centre and a member of library staff developing a new publication called *A Catalogue of Cures*, which focused on the little-known resources held by the library in its stack collection on the theme of medical history. Current engagement is focusing on a major public engagement activity to mark the 70th birthday of the NHS. The chief executive of Libraries Unlimited sits on the International External Advisory Board for the WCCEH and is the only non-academic to do so.

## Learning a new language

The experience of partnering with the University of Exeter has been overwhelmingly positive for Libraries Unlimited. However, as with any new relationship, there has been a steep learning curve for the library service. Some key issues for success include:

- **learning about the drivers of academic engagement**, such as ‘public impact’ and the excellence frameworks
- **building confidence in communicating with academics**, e.g. on steering groups and committees of academics which can be intimidating at first
- **ensuring that the costs associated with higher education partnerships are fully considered** in any funding bids – higher education institutions can require fairly significant overheads to be included in any funding bid

# Appendix 2: Overview of existing support tools for partnerships

There are some relevant documents and toolkits that could be built on or further developed to provide support for public libraries and higher education to encourage greater partnership working. They include:

## **The National Archives’ Higher Education and Archives Programme<sup>5</sup>**

- The guidance for collaboration has been very recently updated.
- It provides a useful comparison for motivations for partnership in and with the archive sector versus the information provided on public libraries in this document.
- It is a useful and detailed how-to guide that could be relevant to public libraries, particularly those which incorporate archives in their service.
- The most relevant sections for this research are:
  - o A number of barriers for the higher education sector are set out in Section 2.2, some of which are also relevant to public libraries
  - o Section 2.3 sets out the kinds of collaboration currently being undertaken between archives and higher education which is also a useful comparison with section 5.3 in this report
  - o It also identifies sources of funding that can be accessed through higher education institutions (Section 4.4)

- o Section 5 addresses the issue of impact and evaluation from both the archive and the higher education institution perspective: this is a useful starting point for public libraries as well

## **Kings College London’s *The Art of Partnering*<sup>6</sup>**

- This report is an enquiry into the nature of partnerships for arts and cultural institutions.
- It proposes a definition of partnership as ‘an ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared’ – this seems like a useful starting point for this work.
- As part of this, the report suggests that partnership needs to include a commitment to mutuality, in the form of:
  - o contributions, albeit of different types, from all those involved
  - o co-creation/co-ownership of the partnership’s activities
  - o shared risk, responsibility and accountability
- In addition, it notes that there are some established principles of partnership working:
  - o equity
  - o transparency
  - o mutual benefit

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/2018-edition-archive-and-he-guidance-all-sections-combined-ci-final.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/culturalenquiries/partnership/Full-report.pdf>



- This report also discusses higher education partnerships with cultural institutions – the benefits of partnership working, but also the complexities of working with large higher education institutions and the need for a broker to support those relationships.
- The report attempts to provide a taxonomy of different types of relationships that can exist in partnership working. These are organized by whether they are goal oriented or, network or resource based or delivery mechanisms. This may be a useful framework to use in describing the case studies, although it will need to be applied to the evidence to see whether this is the case.

### **National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement's (NCCPE) Museum University Partnership Initiative (MUPI)<sup>7</sup>**

- The Museum University Partnership Initiative (MUPI) facilitates partnership working between smaller and medium-sized museums and higher education institutions through:
  - o 'sandpit' match events that bring museum representatives together with local/ regional higher education partners to start conversations about ways they can work together
  - o providing partnership development funding of between £100 to £1,000 to enable museums and higher education institutions to develop proposals for partnership projects
- MUPI is funded by the Arts Council England Museum Resilience Fund and delivered by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) in partnership with the Share Academy project and Paddy McNulty Associates.
- An online set of tools and guidance documents to partnership working between museums and higher education institutions have been published.
- The MUPI project also conducted a review of museum and higher education partnerships in the REF Impact Case Studies database – it would be interesting to look at this in the context of public libraries and is also useful to know that this resource is relevant/ considered by higher education institutions and their national bodies.
- A report commissioned by MUPI<sup>8</sup> explores potential sources of funding, of which the most interesting for public libraries are:
  - o The Cultural Capital Exchange – this is a higher education institution membership organisation in London which offers grants of up to £5,000 for partnership projects
  - o AHRC's Connected Communities programme has a remit to help '... understand the changing nature of communities in their historical and cultural contexts and the role of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life.'
- NCCPE is holding its annual Engage conference in Edinburgh on 29 and 30 November 2018. They have asked if someone from public libraries can attend to talk about public library partnerships with higher education – both to submit a paper and for a speaker from the sector to sit on a panel, etc.
  - o Would Arts Council England like to take this role? (Darren Henley will provide the keynote speech for the event). Or would you like to offer this to SCL?
- MUPI builds on the Share Academy initiative which piloted collaborations between mainly London-based higher education institutions and small and medium-sized museums. This initiative was funded by Arts Council England.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/nccpe-projects/museum-university-partnership-initiative>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/mupi\\_strategic\\_agencies\\_report.pdf](https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/mupi_strategic_agencies_report.pdf)

# Appendix 3:

## Stakeholder consultation list and research instruments

Interviewee	Title	Organisation
Daniel Gardiner	Advisor	LGA
Dr Peter O'Brien	Executive Director	Yorkshire Universities
Paul Manners	Director, National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement Associate Professor in Public Engagement	National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement
Christina Kamposiori, PhD	Programme Officer	Research Libraries UK
Sue Crossley	Consultant, Special Collections Programme	Research Libraries UK
Julie Griffiths	Chair of Learning Group	Libraries Connected
Ayub Khan	Chair of Digital Group	Libraries Connected
Ruth Stubbings	Deputy Director, Services	SCONUL
Liz White	Head of Strategy Development	British Library
Ella Snell	Manager, Living Knowledge Network	British Library
Isabel Oswell	Head of Business Marketing	British Library
Torsten Reimer	Head of Research Services	British Library
Jacqueline Chelin	Chair	SWRLS
Tina Morton	Development Manager	The National Archives
Paddy McNulty	Consultant	Paddy McNulty Associates

# Appendix 4: Public library survey

## Introduction to this survey

This survey has been developed by Katie Pekacar at Independent Mind on behalf of Arts Council England to understand the appetite for partnerships with higher and further education institutions in the public library sector and explore what kinds of support public libraries need to build stronger partnerships.

Responses to this survey will be anonymised during analysis and any responses will not be attributed to your library authority directly in the reporting. The survey will form part of a report from Independent Mind to Arts Council England which will be used for information in developing policy for the public library sector.

The survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would like to provide your contact details.

You do not have to provide your details, but any information you do provide will be shared with Arts Council England for the purposes of engaging public libraries in work to support partnerships with higher education institutions (e.g. you may be sent links to support information, or invited to participate in workshops or present information about your service at seminars and conferences).

Libraries Connected is distributing the survey to its members as part of its role as a Sector Support Organisation but it has not been involved in commissioning this research and will not have access to your response.

If you have any questions about the survey before completing it, please contact Katie Pekacar at [katie.pekacar@independentmind.co.uk](mailto:katie.pekacar@independentmind.co.uk)

**Q1.** Please select your library service from the list

[A dropdown list of all library services in England]

**Q2.** Which of the following best describes your library service:

Local Authority run service	1
Devolved service (e.g. IPS, CIC, charitable trust or other)	2

**Q3.** Which of the following best describes your role in the library service:

Head of service	1
Senior manager	2
Other (please specify)	3

**Q4.** Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with higher education (e.g. Universities) for your library service?

Not at all interested	1
Not very interested	2
Neither interested nor disinterested	3
Not very interested	4
Very interested	5
Don't know	6

**Q5.** Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with further education (e.g. further education colleges) for your library service?

Not at all interested	1
Not very interested	2
Neither interested nor disinterested	3
Not very interested	4
Very interested	5
Don't know	6

**Q6.** In the past two years has your library service had any active partnerships with higher education (e.g. universities)?

Yes	1 [GO TO Q7]
No	2 [GO TO Q13]
Don't know	3 [GO TO Q14]

**Q7.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] What type(s) of partnership has your library service had with higher education in the past two years? (select any that apply)

Supporting student/faculty research through public library collections	1
Supporting student/faculty research through links to the local community	2
Student/faculty volunteering in the library service (e.g. organizing and facilitating clubs and activities, supporting library staff etc.)	3
Running access courses in the library space	4
Hosting exhibitions, talks, workshops and displays from the university in the library space	5
Providing information about higher education options in the library	6
Sharing skills/expertise between staff members	7
Sharing IT infrastructure	8
Sharing library card access/joint membership scheme	9
Shared space/location/services (e.g. public library and University co-located)	10
University or college providing support for the public library enterprise offer to local business	11
University staff or students supporting new business models in the library service (e.g. new service development, crowd funding, marketing etc.)	12
Library service publicising courses, talks, activities, events etc that are run by the university (not in the library space)	13
Collaboration on national initiatives such as the Festival of Learning, British Science Week etc.	14
Other (please specify)	15
Don't know	16

**Q8.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, how positive overall would you say your partnership experience(s) with higher education has been so far?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**Q9.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Which of the following best describes your motivations for participating in this partnership? (select all that apply)

Professional development opportunities for staff	1
Raising aspirations among local people	2
Attracting new audiences to libraries	3
Getting access to expertise that we don't have in the library service	4
Bringing new thinking and raising aspirations of the library service and what we can achieve	5
Bringing collections to life/making use of collections that the library service holds	6
Developing new services for local people	7
Raising the profile of the public library service	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know	10

**Q10.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] There are a number of statements below that may apply to your recent partnerships with higher education institutions. Please consider your most recent partnership when responding and select the response from 1-5 that best corresponds with your partnership experience, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 5 is 'strongly agree'

Statement	Strongly disagree	Tend to Disagree	Neither Disagree nor agree	Tend to Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
a. The aims of the partnership were clear	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. The partnership had positive outcomes for the library service	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The partnership improved the profile of the library service locally	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. The partnership had benefits for the local population	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The partnership was easy to run and manage	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The partnership was based on shared values and desired outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. All sides put in equal effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. We would be interested in engaging in further partnerships in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. We have a strong ongoing relationship with the higher education institution we partnered with	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. The partnership was embedded in our strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. All parties understood each other's language and priorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. The partnership was able to develop flexibly over the period of the project	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Q11.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Who has your main contact in the higher or further education been? (Please select as many as required if you have had more than one partnership)

University librarian	1
Public engagement officer	2
Outreach officer	3
University volunteering service	4
Specific faculties or departments (e.g. the history department)	5
Specific academics or individual staff members	6
Individual students	7
Other (please specify)	8
Don't know	9

**Q12.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Which member(s) of staff in your library service have been most involved in organising or managing the partnership(s)? (Select any that apply)

Head of Service	1
Senior manager (e.g. Area Manager etc)	2
Officer in the local authority (not a member of library staff)	3
Branch manager	4
Specialist librarian (e.g. children's librarian, local studies librarian, etc)	5
Library assistant	6
Don't know	7
Other (please specify)	8

**Q13.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Please provide any other details you think could be relevant to this research about your recent or current partnerships with higher education institutions:

OPEN TEXT BOX]  
[GO TO Q15]



**Q14.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'NO' AT Q6] For what reason(s) has your library service not partnered with a higher education institution? Please select all that apply

Don't know who to contact	1
Don't know if the library service is a partner of interest for higher education institutions	2
Had a bad experience in the past	3
There are no local higher education institutions for my library service to partner with	4
Lack of time/resource/capacity	5
Tried to make contact but was unsuccessful	6
Don't know what higher education institutions could offer my library service	7
Not a priority for my library service	8
Haven't even considered it/not on our radar	9
Other (please specify)	10
Don't know	11

**Q15.** [ANSWERED BY ALL] In the past two years has your library service had any active partnerships with further education institutions (e.g. sixth form colleges)?

Yes	1 [GO TO Q16]
No	2 [GO TO Q21]
Don't know	3 [GO TO Q22]

**Q16.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] What type(s) of partnership has your library service had with further education in the past two years? (Select any that apply)

Supporting student/teacher research through our collections	1
Supporting student/teacher research through access to the public or local interest groups	2
Student/teacher volunteering in the library service (e.g. running clubs, supporting library staff etc)	3
Running access courses in the library space	4
Hosting exhibitions, talks, workshops and displays from the further education institution in the library space	5
Providing information about further education options in the library	6
Sharing skills/expertise between staff members	7
Sharing IT infrastructure	8
Sharing library card access	9
Shared space/location/services (e.g. public library and further education college co-located)	10
Further education college providing support for the public library enterprise offer to local businesses	11
College staff or students supporting new business models in the library service (e.g. new service development, crowd funding, marketing, etc)	12
Library service publicising courses, talks, activities, events etc that are run by the college (not in the library space)	13
Collaboration on national initiatives such as the Festival of Learning, British Science Week etc	14
Other (please specify)	15
Don't know	16

**Q17.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, how positive overall would you say your partnership experience(s) with further education has been so far?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**Q18.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] Which of the following best describes your motivations for participating in this partnership? (select all that apply)

Professional development opportunities for staff	1
Raising aspirations among local people	2
Attracting new audiences to public libraries	3
Getting access to expertise that we don't have in the library service	4
Elevating thinking and aspirations of the library service and what it can achieve	5
Bringing collections to life/making use of collections that the library service holds	6
Developing new services for local people	7
Raising the profile of the public library service	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know	10

**Q19.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] There are a number of statements below that may apply to your recent partnerships with further education institutions. Please consider your most recent partnership when responding and select the response from 1-5 that best corresponds with your partnership experience, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 5 is 'strongly agree'

Statement	Strongly disagree	Tend to Disagree	Neither Disagree nor agree	Tend to Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
a. The aims of the partnership were clear	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. The partnership had positive outcomes for the library service	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The partnership improved the profile of the library service locally	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. The partnership had benefits for the local population	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. The partnership was easy to run and manage	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. The partnership was based on shared values and desired outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. All sides put in equal effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. We would be interested in engaging in further partnerships in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. We have a strong ongoing relationship with the further education institution we partnered with	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. The partnership was embedded in our strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. All parties understood each other's language and priorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. The partnership was able to develop flexibly over the period of the project	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Q20.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] Who has your main contact in the further education been? (Please select as many as required if you have had more than one partnership)

College librarian	1
Access/outreach officer	2
College volunteering co-ordinator	3
Specific departments (e.g. the history department)	4
Specific individual staff members	5
Individual students	6
Other (please specify)	7
Don't know	8

**Q21.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] Which member(s) of staff in your library service have been most involved in organising or managing the higher education partnership(s)? (Select any that apply)

Head of Service	1
Senior manager (e.g. area manager, etc)	2
Officer in the local authority (not a member of library staff)	3
Branch manager	4
Specialist librarian (e.g. children's librarian, local studies librarian, etc)	5
Library assistant	6
Don't know	7
Other (please specify)	8

**Q22.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q15] Please provide any other details you think could be relevant to this research about your recent or current partnerships with higher or further education institutions:

OPEN TEXT BOX]  
[GO TO Q24]

**Q23.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'NO' AT Q15] For what reason(s) has your library service not partnered with a further education institution? Please select all that apply

Don't know who to contact	1
Don't know if the library service is a partner of interest for further education institutions	2
Had a bad experience in the past	3
There are no local further education institutions for my library service to partner with	4
Lack of time/resource/capacity	5
Tried to make contact but was unsuccessful	6
Don't know what further education institutions could offer my library service	7
Not a priority for my library service	8
Haven't even considered it/not on our radar	9
Other (please specify)	10
Don't know	11

**Q24. [ANSWERED BY ALL RESPONDENTS]**

Which of the following potential benefits would be likely to motivate you to develop partnerships with higher or further education for your library service **in the future**?

For each benefit please rank it from 1-5 where 1 is 'very unlikely' to motivate your service to engage in partnership and 5 is 'very likely' to motivate your service to engage in partnership

Statement	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Don't know
Opportunities for staff development/sharing skills with university or college staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
Events and activities that bring more/different people into the library	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunities for the local community to engage in learning activities and raise their aspirations	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunities to bring new thinking and ideas into the library service	1	2	3	4	5	6
Higher profile for the library service with influencers and decision-makers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bringing new skills into the library service through volunteers (e.g. code clubs, marketing, enterprise support)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunity to share infrastructure, e.g. library cards, catalogues, collections, etc	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunity to share building space/co-locate or move collections to university spaces	1	2	3	4	5	6
Opportunity to support or participate in research activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collaboration on national events and activities such as British Science Week, the Festival of Learning, etc	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Q25.** Which of the following might prevent you from forming partnerships with higher or further education for your library service **in the future**? (Please select all that apply)

Differences in language and terminology	1
Differences in each organisation's aims and priorities	2
Different working cultures	3
Lack of funding/resource/capacity	4
Not knowing who to contact	5
Not having a clear project idea to progress	6
Not knowing how to make first contact	7
The higher or further education institution might not be interested in public library partnerships	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know	10

**Q26.** Would your library service be willing to make contact with a higher or further education institution to initiate any of these kinds of partnerships/benefits or would you expect the higher or further education institution to contact you?

The library service would be willing to make contact	1
We would expect the higher/further education institution to make contact	2
Neither	3
Don't know	4

**Q27.** Who would you expect to lead and drive the partnership?

The library service	1
The higher/further education institution	2
Both, equally	3
Don't know	4



**Q28.** Which member(s) of staff in your library service would be the natural points of contact for any future partnerships?

Head of service senior manager (e.g. area manager, etc)	1
Branch manager	2
Specialist librarian (e.g. children’s librarian, local studies librarian, etc)	3
Library assistant	4
Don't know	5
Other	6

**Q29.** [ANSWERED BY ALL] Would you welcome any support to develop new partnerships with higher/further education institutions?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

**Q30.** [ANSWERED ONLY BY THOSE WHO ANSWER 'NO' AT Q29] Can you provide any more information about why you would not like help to develop partnerships with higher or further education institutions?

**Q31.** [ANSWERED ONLY BY THOSE WHO ANSWER ‘YES’ AT Q29] Which of the following would help you to develop partnerships with higher/further education institutions? Please select all that apply.

A guide or toolkit to partnerships with higher/further education	1
Networking events in my region	2
Case studies of other library services that have existing partnerships with higher and further education institutions	3
Contact details for relevant individuals in my local higher education and further education institutions	4
Information about opportunities for project funding in partnership with higher/further education	5
Partnership development seed funding	6
Other (please specify)	7
None of these	8
Don't know	9

**Q32.** [ANSWERED ONLY BY THOSE WHO ANSWER ‘YES’ AT Q29] Which, if any, national bodies would be best placed to provide this support to you? Please select all that apply.

Libraries Connected (formerly SCL)	1
Arts Council England	2
The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)	3
Local Government Association	4
Research England	5
Other funders	6
None of these	7
Other (please specify)	8

**Q33.** [ANSWERED BY ALL] Please use this box to add anything else you think may be relevant to the topic of supporting partnerships between public libraries and higher or further education institutions

[FREE TEXT BOX]

**Q34.** Please enter your contact details if you would like to be contacted or involved in future in the Arts Council's work on higher and further education partnerships for public libraries

[FREE TEXT BOX]

# Appendix 5: Higher education institutions survey

## Introduction to this survey

This survey has been developed by Katie Pekacar at Independent Mind on behalf of Arts Council England to understand the appetite for partnerships with public libraries among higher education institutions.

Responses to this survey will be anonymised during analysis and any responses will not be attributed to your institution directly in the reporting. The survey will form part of a report from Independent Mind to Arts Council England which will be used for information in developing policy for the public library sector.

The survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would like to provide your contact details. You do not have to provide your details, but any information you do provide will be shared with Arts Council England for the purposes of engaging higher education institutions in work that is being undertaken to support partnerships with public libraries (e.g. you may be sent links to support information, or invited to participate in workshops or present information at seminars and conferences).

If you have any questions about the survey before completing it, please contact Katie Pekacar at [katie.pekacar@independentmind.co.uk](mailto:katie.pekacar@independentmind.co.uk)

**Q1.** Please select your higher education institution from the drop down list below

[A dropdown list of all higher education institutions in England provided]

**Q2.** Which of the following best describes your role:

Public engagement officer or manager	1
Outreach officer or manager	2
Academic/faculty member	3
University librarian	4
Other (please specify)	5

**Q3.** Overall, how much would you say you know about public libraries?

A lot	1
A little	2
Nothing at all	3
Don't know	4

**Q4.** Overall, how interested are you in partnerships with the public library service for your university/department?

Not at all interested	1
Not very interested	2
Neither interested nor disinterested	3
Not very interested	4
Very interested	5
Don't know	6

**Q5.** There are a number of statements below about public libraries. Please select whether you agree or disagree with these statements

Statement	Strongly disagree	Tend to Disagree	Neither Disagree nor agree	Tend to Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
a. Public libraries can be useful partners for higher education	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Public libraries lack resources to support partnerships	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Public libraries are too small to be relevant partners for my department or team	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. I don't know what public libraries have to offer higher education	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Public libraries can effectively deliver partnership projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Public libraries provide access to a broad local population	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Very few people visit public libraries these days	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Q6.** In the past 2 years has your team or department had any partnerships with public library services?

Yes	1 [GO TO Q7]
No	2 [GO TO Q15]
Don't know	3 [GO TO Q16]

**Q7.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] What type(s) of partnerships are you aware of your University, Department or team having had with public libraries? (please select any that apply)

a. Using public library collections for research purposes	1
b. Using public library collections or spaces for teaching purposes	2
c. Working with public libraries to access local populations for research or knowledge exchange purposes	3
d. Participating in joint research projects	4
e. Students undertaking internships or research placements in the public library	5
f. Student/faculty volunteering in the library service (e.g. running clubs, supporting library staff etc.)	6
g. Running access courses in the library space	7
h. Public libraries hosting exhibitions, talks, workshops and displays from the University	8
i. Public libraries providing outreach services to widen participation (e.g. providing information about higher education options for the public)	9
j. Sharing skills/expertise between staff members	10
k. Sharing IT infrastructure	11
l. Sharing library card access across institutions	12
m. Shared space/location/services (e.g. public library and university library colocated)	13
n. University business centres providing support for local businesses through the public library service	14
o. Library service publicising courses, talks, activities, events etc that are run by the university or college (not in the library space)	15
p. Collaboration on national initiatives such as the Festival of Learning, British Science Week etc.	16
q. Other (please specify)	17
r. Don't know	18

**Q8.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] On a scale of 0-10, where "0" is not at all positive and "10" is very positive", how positive overall would you say your partnership experience(s) with public libraries has been so far?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**Q9.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Which of the following outcomes or priorities have your institution's partnerships with public libraries supported? Select all that apply:

Public engagement	1
Outreach/widening participation	2
TEF assessments	3
REF assessments	4
Civic engagement/supporting local communities (civic universities agendas)	5
Knowledge exchange	6
None of these	7
Other (please specify)	8
Don't know	9

**Q10.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] There are a number of statements below that may apply to your recent partnerships with public libraries. Please consider a partnership you are familiar with when responding and select the response from 1-5 that best corresponds with your partnership experience, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree"

Statement	Strongly disagree	Tend to Disagree	Neither Disagree nor agree	Tend to Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
a. The aims of the partnership were clear	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. The partnership had positive outcomes for the university	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The partnership was easy to run and manage	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. The partnership was based on shared values and desired outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. All sides put in equal effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. We would be interested in engaging in further partnerships in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. We have a strong ongoing relationship with the library service we partnered with	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. All parties understood each other's language and priorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. The partnership met our strategic priorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. The partnership was able to develop flexibly over the period of the project	1	2	3	4	5	6



**Q11.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Who is the main contact in your institution for public library partnerships? (Please select as many as required if you have had more than one partnership)

University librarian	1
Public engagement officer	2
Outreach officer	3
University volunteering service	4
Specific faculties or departments (e.g. the history department)	5
Specific academics or individual staff members	6
Individual students	7
Other (please specify)	8
Don't know	9

**Q12.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Who has your main contact at the public library service been for partnership working?

Head of Service	1
Senior manager (e.g. area manager, etc)	2
Officer in the local authority (not a member of library staff)	3
Branch manager	4
Specialist librarian (e.g. children's librarian, local studies librarian, etc)	5
Library assistant	6
Other (please specify)	7
Don't know	8

**Q13.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'YES' AT Q6] Please provide any other details you think could be relevant to this research about your recent or current partnerships with public libraries:

[OPEN TEXT BOX]  
[GO TO Q15]

**Q14.** [ONLY ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO ANSWERED 'NO' AT Q6] Can you tell me why your university has not recently partnered with a public library? Please select all that apply

Don't know who to contact	1
Don't know if the university is a partner of interest for public libraries	2
Had a bad experience in the past	3
There are no local public library services for my institution to partner with	4
Lack of time/resource/capacity	5
Tried to make contact but was unsuccessful	6
Don't know what public libraries could offer my institution	7
Not a priority for my institution	8
Haven't even considered it/not on our radar	9
Other (please specify)	10
Don't know	11

**Q15. [ANSWERED BY ALL RESPONDENTS]**

Which of the following potential benefits would be likely to motivate you to develop partnerships with higher or further education for your library service in the future?

For each benefit please rank it from 1-5 where 1 is "very unlikely" to motivate your service to engage in partnership and 5 is "very likely" to motivate your service to engage in partnership

Statement	Very unlikely	Quite Unlikely	Neutral	Quite Likely	Very Likely	Don't know
a. Sharing skills with public library staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Opportunities to engage members of the public in research and activities taking place in my university (REF impact)	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Access to members of the public for research or knowledge exchange purposes	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Opportunities to provide learning experiences for students in the public library setting (TEF)	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Outreach/widening participation opportunities (e.g. delivering access courses through the public library, providing information for young people and parents about higher education etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Volunteering opportunities for students and staff in areas of personal or professional interest	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Opportunities for the university to support and provide value to local people and the local economy (civic universities agenda)	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Opportunity to share infrastructure, e.g. library cards, catalogues, collections, IT, etc	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Opportunity to share building space/ co-locate or house special collections	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. Collaboration on national events and activities such as British Science Week, the Festival of Learning etc	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Q16.** Which of the following might prevent you from forming partnerships with public libraries in the future? (Please select all that apply)

Differences in language and terminology	1
Differences in each organisation's aims and priorities	
Different working cultures	3
Lack of funding/resource/capacity	4
Not knowing who to contact	5
Not having a clear project idea to progress	6
Not knowing how to make first contact	7
The public library service might not be interested in partnership	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know	10

**Q17.** Would your institution be willing to make contact with a public library service to initiate any of these kinds of partnerships/benefits or would you expect the higher or further education institution to contact you?

The university would be willing to make contact	1
We would expect the public library service to make contact	
Neither	3
Don't know	4

**Q18.** Who would you expect to lead and drive the partnership?

The library service	1
The university	2
Both, equally	3
Don't know	4

**Q19.** Which teams or members of staff would be the natural points of contact for any future partnerships? (Please select all that apply)

Outreach officers/outreach team	1
Public engagement officers/public engagement team	2
Individual academics	3
Specific departments or faculties	4
University library staff	5
The business or innovation centre/business or innovation centre staff	6
The volunteering centre	7
None of these	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know	10

**Q20.** Would you be interested in receiving support to develop new partnerships with public libraries?

Yes	1 [GO TO Q22]
No	2 [GO TO Q21]
Don't know	3 [GO TO Q22]

**Q21.** Can you provide more information on why you would not like support to develop partnerships with public libraries?

[FREE TEXT BOX]

**Q22.** Which of the following would help you to develop partnerships with public libraries? Please select all that apply

A guide or toolkit to partnerships with higher and further education	1
Networking events in my region	2
Case studies of other library services that have existing partnerships with higher and further education institutions	3
Contact details for relevant individuals in my local higher and further education institutions	4
Information about opportunities for project funding in partnership with higher/further education	5
Partnership development seed funding	6
Other (please specify)	7
None of these	8
Don't know	9

**Q23.** Which, if any, national bodies would be best placed to provide this support to you? Please select all that apply

Arts Council England	1
The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)	2
Local Government Association	3
Libraries Connected	4
The Office for Students	5
National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)	6
SCONUL	7
CILIP	8
Research Libraries UK	9
Research England Heritage Lottery Fund The Arts Humanities	10
Research Council (AHRC)	11
Other funders	12
None of these	13
Other (please specify)	14

**Q24.** Please use this box to add anything else you think may be relevant to the topic of supporting partnerships between public libraries and higher education institutions

[FREE TEXT BOX]

**Q25.** Please enter your contact details if you would like to be contacted in future about the Arts Council's work on higher education partnerships for public libraries

[FREE TEXT BOX]

## Contact us

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