

Community Managed Libraries

Update 17

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Community Managed Libraries – Moving to Your Own ICT Infrastructure

Leicestershire County Council has to comply with strict compliance standards and has to provide a standardised service to effectively manage its IT support model.

Community Groups, as part of their business model, may wish to offer their customers a much wider range of IT facilities that Leicestershire County Council does not currently offer.

This document outlines the ICT considerations for Community Groups when setting up their own service. It is intended for small sites and groups that may be unfamiliar with ICT.

1. Funding

Leicestershire County Council will be offering Community Groups a one-time payment of **£3000** to assist them in moving to their own infrastructure. This is not an annual payment.

The funding can be provided as a lump sum of £3000 or, alternatively, as £2000 to assist start-up followed by a payment of £500 in year 2 and £500 in year 3. Groups will be able to use this as leverage/match funding to attract additional grant funding. There are a range of public and private foundation grants available - <http://www.leics.gov.uk/grants>

The funding preferably needs to be taken up by the end of the 2015/16 financial year for transfers taking place before 31st March 2015 or within 6 months of date of transfer. If your group is interested in this, then please let the Project Manager Paul Love, know.

There will still be access to the Leicestershire County Council Library management system provided through a dedicated PC, but the remainder of LCC infrastructure would be removed.

This provides the group with the flexibility to put in ICT options that are in line with their plans for their Community Group and services for customers.

2. Connecting to the Internet and getting a phone line installed

This is very similar to what you would do as a resident when you want your own phone and/or broadband line.

- a) Check the services that are available

Websites such as www.broadbandchoices.co.uk, www.uswitch.com, or www.superfastleicestershire.org.uk/ offer a range of advice on what connections are available in your area. Your group will probably be classified as a business account, so please bear this in mind when you are comparing and have selected your supplier.

Ideally, you need a superfast/fibre connection, but this is not yet available in all areas in the county.

For the telephone line, you will need a new telephone number. Leicestershire County Council's contract with its supplier means that it cannot transfer the existing number to you.

b) Arrange for the services to be installed

There is usually a lead time to factor in for when you can be connected. This varies between suppliers. Please let the Project Manager know when the transfer date is.

The data services normally come with a wireless router that sits between your PC's and the telephone/data socket. This will enable the group to connect a small number of PC's without any cabling. Leicestershire County Council will also leave the existing cabling infrastructure in place so that you can link equipment directly to the router if you wish.

c) Handset

Groups will also need to provide their own telephone handset. These are widely available and features vary to accommodate your requirements.

3. PC's and other computing devices

The current infrastructure uses a combination of technologies. The machines that the public use are on a specific technology and they cannot be repurposed for your use. However, the machines formerly used by staff are available to you, subject to the equipment that was included in the original ICT inventory at transfer.

One of the machines will be set-up for connection to the library management system only.

If there are surplus staff machines at your location, these can be rebuilt and set-up ready for you to install your software if you wish. They will have the standard windows 7 operating system on them. However, additional machines will not be provided if they were not part of the ICT inventory on transfer.

Most standard computers are well specified and can run most applications that you are likely to require – see software section.

You may wish to offer other devices to your customers, such as laptops and tablets, as well as or instead of traditional PC's. They are portable and would need a secure storage area to be kept in overnight. You may also wish to security tag them.

4. Software

The primary piece of software to have is good anti-virus. There are a range of products on the market and they are regularly reviewed. Search anti-virus software reviews in Google.

You may want to offer commercial based products such as Microsoft Office to your customers, but there are a range of similar free office productivity applications – type free office into Google.

The rest is really up to what you want to provide to customers. It may be best to start simple and then survey customers later.

New computers and devices will come with an operating system as standard and there may be offers of bundled software packages thrown in by the supplier.

5. Printing

Having your own printer will enable you to look at your cost and charging models in a more flexible way. Leicestershire County Council offers a standard charging model across all libraries that cannot be changed for individual libraries.

Most printers are now known as a multi-function device (MFD) that can scan, copy and print. They connect wirelessly to networks. The size and features of the device will depend on the usage that you expect customers to make of such facilities. Factors to consider will be the cost per page and the amount of consumables that the printer needs – normally toners.

Note that the current printing contract comes to an end on 31st March 2017. After that date, Community Groups who have their own ICT infrastructure can choose whether or not to take out another photocopier contract and if they do, choose their own supplier.

6. Support and Maintenance

Groups are advised to have a support and maintenance contract with a local firm for their equipment. This company may be able to provide and set-up the equipment for you and you may be able to negotiate a favourable package deal. There are a range of local companies that can help with small business IT. Leicestershire County Council are unable to recommend specific companies.

7. Other items

Should there be areas within the building that suffer from a poor signal, Wi-Fi booster/extender equipment available for about £20. These are widely available.

Groups are advised to have a “terms of use” document for their customers. This sets out what you provide and the expectations that you want from the customers when they use your equipment.

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There will still be a terms of use for the actual library service in place, so you do not need to replicate this.

When you do decide to have your own set-up, Leicestershire County Council and its suppliers will remove its equipment and cease its data and telephone lines. Cabling, including network, power and telephony points will remain. At least one former staff machine will also remain and groups will be required to provide a connection for one LCC PC to access the library management system.