



Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer: Cheryl Haskell</p> <p>Phone no: 077454 313890</p> <p>E-mail:</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal:</p> <p>To remove social and economic barriers to use of public libraries through the removal of fines for overdue books</p>
<p>Name of Service area: Monmouthshire Community Hubs & Library Service</p>	<p>Date: 12/10/2022</p>

1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	With regards to notification of overdue books and fines are via text and email. It is likely that if fewer older people have less access to digital technology they may be disadvantaged in comparison to younger people in receiving notice of overdue books and fines. Children are unaffected.	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of non notification and fines.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	Fines may negatively impact people with disability where fear may lead to them not coming into the service for advice and support with council enquiries that assist their wellbeing. This is in addition to free access to computers that allow access to benefits, work and learning opportunities.	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of non notification and fines.
Gender reassignment	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group.
Marriage or civil partnership	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group.
Pregnancy or maternity	Libraries provide a space for women who are pregnant and young parents to meet, socialize and connect with other parents and children. Library fines could prevent pregnant mums to be and young parents from using the services where fines prove to be prohibitive.	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of non notification and fines.
Race	.Fines may impact race where notifications for overdue books are not provided in a chosen language as this could inhibit reading and understanding.	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of non notification and fines.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group.
Sex	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group.
Sexual Orientation	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group	We presently don't have data that would enable us to measure the impact of this.	At this stage no positive or negative impact has been identified on this group.

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	Proposal to remove fines will improve outcomes financially for people who are otherwise disadvantaged socially and economically as it negates the impact of them having to pay for overdue books. In turn people in this group are more likely to require support to access services that support their well-being and therefore if they do not feel threatened by library debt would not be afraid to return for support.	We do not presently hold data that would demonstrate positive or negative impact in this group.	Proposal report to remove fines
---	--	---	---------------------------------

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	As this proposal reaches out to all of our communities, it is hoped that it will encourage Welsh speakers to return where they had otherwise allowed membership to lapse as a result of fines. Of late there has been a conscious effort to increase and improve Welsh language reading materials in our hubs and this it is hoped will also prove to be positively welcomed by Welsh speakers.	We do not presently hold data that would demonstrate positive or negative impact in this group.	Increase in purchase of Welsh language reading resources across all age groups.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	We always endeavour to recruit a proportion of Welsh speakers to our teams and to date have Welsh speakers or learners in all hubs. This is done with a view to being able to provide equal access for Welsh and English speakers, readers and learners.	We do not presently hold data that would demonstrate positive or negative impact in this group.	All vacant posts welcome applications from Welsh speakers.
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	We always endeavour to recruit a proportion of Welsh speakers to our teams and to date have Welsh speakers or learners in all hubs. This is done with a view to being able to provide equal access for Welsh and English speakers, readers and learners.	We do not presently hold data that would demonstrate positive or negative impact in this group.	All vacant posts welcome applications from Welsh speakers.



4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!




Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Individuals often seek support through libraries to help with access to education and employment through use of books to study and free computers. The removal of fines will remove barriers where people are fearful of returning after accruing large fines.	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of people not returning.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	We do not presently hold data that would demonstrate positive or negative impact in this group.	We do not presently hold data that would demonstrate positive or negative impact in this group.
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Individuals often seek support through libraries to improve wellbeing through befriending, group activities, use of books to study and free computers. Our community hub approach goes beyond this by supporting access to a whole range of services such as benefits, housing, Foodbanks and work with partner agencies to provide holistic support. In addition Community Learning classes aim to enhance skills and knowledge that support access to work and education. Our spaces are much more than simply libraries. The removal of fines will remove barriers where people are fearful of returning after accruing large fines.	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of people not returning.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Libraries provide a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities. Library fines go against this principle and so this impacts the	Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of people not returning.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances and how this is appreciated and positively valued. Fine free libraries aim to provide inclusive and safe spaces those from different backgrounds with a view to supporting opportunities and positive outcomes in our communities. They are places where strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds and communities. Removing fines can only positively benefit this outcome.</p>	
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Individuals often seek support through libraries to help with access to education and employment through use of books to study and free computers. In turn this improves chances for access to education and employment and this supports the local economy. Strong local economies have a wider national and sometimes global advantage. Therefore fine free libraries can only have a positive impact in visitor numbers and memberships that support wider agendas. Fine free will remove barriers where people are fearful of returning after accruing large fines.</p>	<p>Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will remove the risk of people not returning.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>Our ibraries provide spaces and resources that aim to spark curiosity, imagination and fun. Libraries enable people to develop new creative skills that support users to flourish and enriches the lives of children and adults by providing arts and cultural experiences in local settings.</p>	<p>Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will provide wholly inclusive spaces for all.</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	The offer celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, values identity and contributes to an active local cultural economy.	
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Libraries are one of the only public spaces we can spend time in without being expected to spend any money at all. They incur no monthly membership fees and they do not charge for entry or length of time members spend in them. The only negative impact on this to now has been the policy of library fines for overdue books. This as already stated mainly impacts those on lower incomes and who are experiencing additional health issues. Our aim is to provide spaces that welcome all, regardless of characteristics. Libraries, unlike profit-seeking companies, are designed to serve whole communities. They are multifunctional spaces which offer not only a wealth of intellectual resources, but also practical services like low-cost printing, free WiFi, and computer use. They are also centres for community-building (something which is needed today more than ever), hosting activities and workshops ranging from summer reading schemes to educational courses for job-seekers.</p>	<p>Proposal to remove fines for overdue books will provide wholly inclusive spaces for all.</p>

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the removal of fines will encourage people to return who previously had moved away from the service through fear of financial penalties being accrued. This goes toward the principle of maintaining lifelong members who are able once again to feel at ease with accessing the range of services on offer.</p>	<p>No negative impact arising in this area.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Community Hubs have always worked alongside a range of partner agencies to provide holistic support that aims to maintain or improve wellbeing outcomes in our communities, and libraries sit at the heart of this. Or ability to link people to supportive services is likely to reduce the need for access to complex care and support. In addition Monmouthshire libraries hold strong links with all libraries across Wales to achieve common national as well as local goals.</p>	<p>Removing fines should remove access and barriers to other services provided.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>There is a growing movement across Wales and wider that supports the principle of removing fines to increase confidence and visitor numbers in libraries, the reasons for this are already outlined in this report. Whilst there continues to be scope for growth in this area, Monmouthshire would be amongst those libraries leading the way in this area. This has reputational advantage but most of all is beneficial to the needs of our communities, where it is clear that libraries have never before played a more important role than they do at this time.</p>	<p>Removing fines should remove access and barriers to other services provided.</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Research in this area suggests that where the risk of fines is eliminated there is a greater chance that people are more likely to return and also return books. This approach therefore would result in the return of books that have previously disappeared from circulation through the fear of returning to the library.</p>	<p>Removing fines should remove access and barriers to other services provided.</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>As illustrated in the previous points listed above, this proposal can only positively impact most, if not all, of the well being goals.</p>	<p>Removing fines should remove access and barriers to other services provided.</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Our libraries become trusted and familiar places for people who use them in our communities. All of our colleagues have safeguarding training and follow local and national safeguarding protocols. They may be considered to be the eyes and ears within our services, and they identify situations where they feel someone may be at risk or require further support. Therefore libraries and hubs are at the heart of ensuring safe communities. Fine free libraries can only underpin the importance of this whereby it is hoped people will return without fear of financial threats.	.No negative impacts identified in this area	NA
Corporate Parenting	This proposal does not impact children and young people.	NA	NA

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

[Library fine survey: results and summary report revealed | Libraries Connected](#)
[Libraries: Powys becomes latest council in Wales to drop fines - BBC News](#)
[Fine free libraries | Fine Free Libraries](#)

Throughout the pandemic and into Covid recovery there has been extensive research into the benefits of fine free libraries, and this continues to be a growing movement, Wales is no exception to this trend. It is widely considered that fines act as an inhibitor to library membership, and that the principle of fines affect those who are on the lowest incomes and also people who have health difficulties. As we move towards what appears to be a very difficult few years for our citizens who are most economically and socially disadvantaged by the cost of living crisis, we are clear that libraries and hubs have never played a more important role than they do at this time. We remain committed that our libraries and hubs should be safe spaces that are accessible to all members of our communities, and we should remove all possible barriers, fines are at the forefront of this.

We recognize there will be a need to market and promote the changes to ensure that these changes, if agreed, reach out to all members of the community. To that end we will work alongside partner agencies in asking them to help us communicate this to those people who may not have access to information through social media and technological channels. This could include organisations such as CAB, local places of worship, Foodbanks, housing and mental health organisations, whilst recognizing this is not exclusive and other organisations may also be approached.

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

This proposal seeks to request that we immediately remove social and economic barriers to the use of public libraries through the removal of fines for overdue books.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Reach out to partner agencies to help us market and promote this proposal.	Immediately upon approval	Cheryl Haskell

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this

process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
	<i>e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinetetc</i>		