

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of the proposal : Changes to Library Fees and Charges

Department : Culture Community and Business Services

Name of lead officer : Helen (CCRA) Wheeler

Publication date: 24/11/2010

Review date: 30/03/2012

Departmental Manager Approval by : Nicola Horsey

Departmental Manager Approval date : 25/11/2011

Main purpose and aims of the policy, plan or project

The intention of proposing these changes to the charging structure for Hampshire Library and Information Services (LIS) is to ensure the provision of a high quality service and that the LIS stock is accessible to as many people who live or work in Hampshire as possible.

Main elements of the policy, plan or project

LIS provides a wide range of services delivered from static public libraries and mobile libraries to Hampshire's residents. The majority of the services provided are free however, while the legislation within which the service operates {the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act} prohibits charging for the lending of books, there are no restrictions on charging for the loan of other media (audio/visual) or on placing a fine for items returned after the due date (overdues). The level of charges are reviewed annually.

Detailed Assessment

Age:	Impact : Medium
Any specific issues identified:	For parents or carers returning items after the due date, incurring fines may be a disincentive to using the library again. Age/Families with children over 5 Incurring fines a disincentive of use the library
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	The reintroduction of fines on children's stock is an avoidable charge. There are a number of options to renew items and early notification has been introduced to alert people to return dates 2 days in advance. Later in 2011 text messages to mobile phones and voicemail to land lines will be also be available.

	Charges will not apply to under 5s or children in care. However staff will actively raise awareness of ways to avoid charges e.g. renewing loans by telephone or online. In addition, if the customer supplies their e-mail address, they will receive a reminder of the due date two days' in advance allowing time to complete the renewal process or return the books.
Disability:	Impact : Medium
Any specific issues identified:	Affordability - see low income
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	The reservation charge for books in Large Print format will not apply to customers with a visual impairment who are eligible to register for the Print Disabled type of membership which allows for reservations free of charge. Loan of audio books and language packs will also remain free to customers registered as Print Disabled.
Faith:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Gender:	Impact : Low
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Transgender:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Race:	Impact : Low
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Sexual Orientation:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Marriage / civil partnership:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Pregnancy & maternity:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	

What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Other factors:	Impact : Medium
Any specific issues identified:	Low or no income - Incurring fines a disincentive to use the library Rural isolation - Incurring fines is a disincentive to use the mobile library
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	1. The reintroduction of fines on children's stock is an avoidable charge. There are a number of options to renew items and early notification has been introduced to alert people to return dates 2 days in advance. Later in 2011 text messages to mobile phones and voicemail to land lines will be also be available. 2. From July 2011, the revised mobile service will retain a spare vehicle with a relief driver to provide cover in emergency situations whereby there will be no disruption to service, a possibility that led to the past decision not to charge fines for late returns.

Details of why some groups are low and/or no impact

Raising income from charges for non-book lending enables the service to buy new titles. Increasing the charges will mean that customers will have access to a wider range of stock. Levying fines for the late return of items encourages customers to return them on time making them available for others to borrow thereby increasing accessibility to stock. All the customers of the library service will benefit from these changes.

By encouraging customers to return items on time and subsequently making the stock more accessible to a greater number of people.

Later in 2011, the intention is to provide a further type of reminder of return dates by sending a text or voicemail to a mobile phone or land line.

Conclusion

The increased income from non-book materials will allow more stock to be provided and the charging of fines will encourage more users to return items on time improving the availability of stock for loan by all customers.

With one exception all the proposed changes to the charges for using the library services are already in place: the proposals are for adjusting these charges to reflect changes in use. The exception is the proposed introduction of a charge for the late return of children's books which will be a new charge and it is likely that this group: children and young people and parents of young children may be affected. However, fines are an avoidable charge and we have introduced a number of early warnings to assist this group is avoiding the fines. For more information please visit the [Hampshire County Council Equality & Diversity web page](#).

