

Greater Manchester Libraries and Information Services Partnership 2021/22



What is GM Libraries?

Greater Manchester (GM) Libraries is a collaborative partnership of public library services across the city region. The partnership shares resources and embraces innovation to deliver service improvements

that would be difficult for individual services to achieve; collaboration means a bigger impact and better outcomes for residents. The joint approach provides the opportunity to reach a potential population of 2.8million.



A single catalogue system and one library card

Since 2016, Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford libraries have offered a shared Library Management System, with a single library catalogue that enables customers to enjoy seamless access to 2.8million books and other items. This allows customers to use their own authority's library card in those other authorities' library services.

e-lending

All ten authorities jointly procure e-books and e-audiobooks for use by customers, which enables us to provide a greater choice. Working with our supplier, Bolinda/Borrowbox, we have run in-person promotions in each authority.

Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership

The Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership provides an overarching strategy for the ten authorities' archive and local studies services. Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office, which holds records from across the city region and, since 2014, has led the Archives+ partnership.

Activity in 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be the partnership's primary focus this year, co-ordinating as much as possible a Greater Manchester-wide approach to service delivery. Libraries proved an invaluable service to residents throughout the pandemic; they developed extensive digital 'libraries at home' programmes, and many were open for book-borrowing and essential PC use. The use of e-lending was promoted, and usage increased massively as residents' access to reading continued, despite some library buildings not being open.

2.8million
books on your shelf

5.4million
virtual visits

Joint projects 2021

Business and Intellectual Property Centre, Greater Manchester, and Build A Business

The Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) based at Manchester Central Library provides access to business information and support for customers of all ten library services. In 2021 this service expanded with two new initiatives, with an additional combined funding of over £3million through to 2023.

The expansion of the BIPC national network has seen additional resources added in eight Greater Manchester libraries, including workshops and events, additional information resources, marketing, and staff training. This will enhance support for businesses at a much-needed time following the pandemic.

Build A Business, with funding from The European Regional Development Fund, provides a targeted 12-hour business support programme for would-be entrepreneurs and existing small businesses, with dedicated expert staff and an enhanced business-activity programme.

.....
"Build A Business has been a fantastic support to me; it's amazing! The ongoing assistance is helping me to plan and prepare to grow and be successful."
.....

Redz Holyfield, recently featured on S4C's Sweet Academy

Greater Manchester Libraries of Sanctuary

Bolton, Manchester and Oldham library services were awarded Libraries of Sanctuary status in 2021.

Supported by £47,000 of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, recent work has included:

- Training of over 100 staff, co-delivered by people with lived experience, with further training planned throughout 2022.
- Events programmes, celebrating diverse cultures and co-created with refugee-heritage artists.

One attendee commented:

“I enjoyed hearing from a variety of voices who don’t usually get involved, and the international co-operation.”

The GM Libraries of Sanctuary project has raised the profile of GM Libraries as being among the UK libraries at the forefront of this work, and we contributed to the development of the national resource pack to help other library services become Libraries of Sanctuary.

<https://libraries.cityofsanctuary.org/resources>

Festival of Libraries, Greater Manchester

The Festival of Libraries, led by Manchester UNESCO City of Literature, supported by Arts Council England, took place in June 2021. This celebration of Greater Manchester’s libraries highlighted the library network’s full offer and featured a vibrant mix of online and in-person events across all Greater Manchester boroughs. One attendee said:

“Taking part in the Festival of Libraries has really sparked my reconnection with the physical space of libraries, and I’m looking forward to now going back more often!”

133 libraries
10million visits



Autism-inclusive libraries (Great Place): The Puzzle Box Escape Room

Greater Manchester Libraries and KIT Theatre collaborated to make every library across the area autism-inclusive and to increase the number of autistic children, young people and adults who access libraries. Autism Champions were recruited in libraries in all boroughs and worked with Autism and the Arts to develop training for library staff.

The Puzzle Box, a touring escape room experience, was co-created by KIT Theatre, in collaboration with young people and emerging theatre-maker Jessica Nolan. COVID-19 restrictions prevented the tour planned in libraries, so this took place in schools in summer 2021 with library staff attending, creating opportunities to develop stronger links with schools. One participant said:

.....
"I don't usually do stuff like this,
because I never thought I would
enjoy it, but I actually really liked it."
.....

<https://greatplacegm.co.uk/projects/autism-inclusive-libraries/>

Library, information and archives apprenticeship

Fifteen library and archives apprentices from eight Greater Manchester authorities are among the first in the country to take the new library apprenticeship. The 18-month course is a new sector-specific Level 3 apprenticeship that covers a wide range of professional skills, including digital skills and information literacy.

4million
books issued

2million
digital issues



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



Oldham
Council



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Salford
Community
Leisure

Salford City Council



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Tameside
Metropolitan Borough



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Wigan
Council