

## Engaging with community engagement: public libraries and citizen involvement.



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Publication



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The first session of Library's "Journal Club"

# Abstract

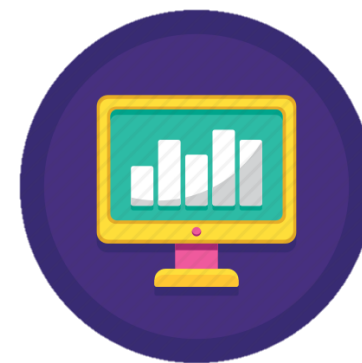


**Purpose:** The purpose is to explore the concept of community engagement within a public library context



**Approach:** Key issues are illustrated using examples from the literature and data from an interview-based study of public library practitioners and policy makers.

**Findings:** Making library space available for community engagement ...



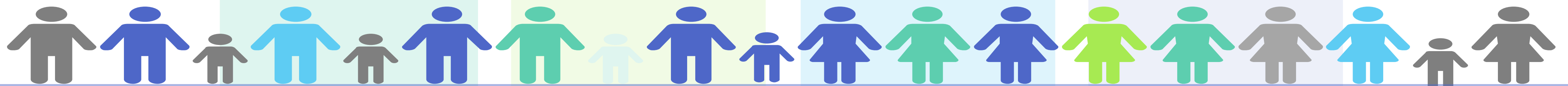
**Value:** The paper provides empirical evidence of the views of key stakeholders towards community engagement activities in public libraries



**Keywords:** Public libraries, Community relations, Partnership, Library building, Readers, United Kingdom



**Paper type:** Research paper



## Community Engagement

Community engagement encompasses a variety of approaches whereby public service bodies empower citizens to consider and express their views on how their particular needs are best met.

**Get Involved  
Today!**



# The Challenge of Councils



Keep people well-informed about services and policies



Listen and respond to people's views and concerns through consultation



Engage people in decisions about changes to services and policies



Improve the accessibility and accountability of the council to local people



Build trust

Councils should prepare the mentioned items to enable people to become more actively involved in decision making and delivery of local public services

# Key ideas relating to the public library



A place that feels good and that makes people proud



An idea that is grounded in our lives



Focusing on people and where they live

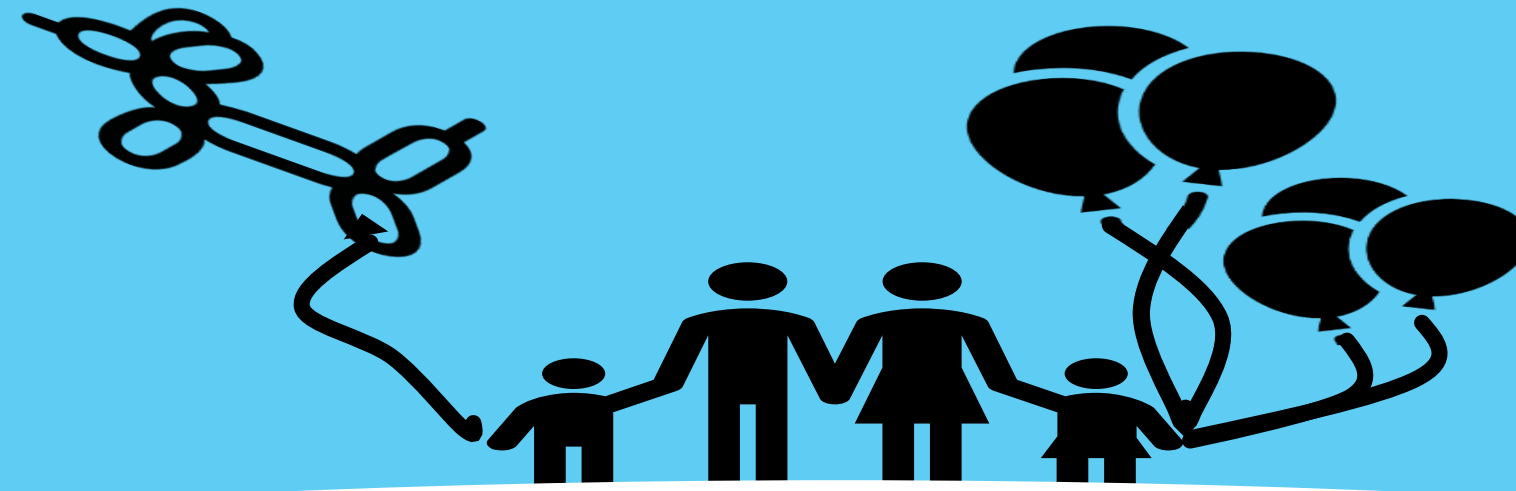


Based on the relationships that staff build and the services that are developed

UNIQUE

A unique space

Public library as the HEART of the community



## Aspects of community engagement



The library as a space for community activities

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Partnership working with voluntary and community sector

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Partnership working with other public services

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Involvement of volunteers

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Community involvement in one-off decision making and in relation to projects

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Community involvement in relation to boards/strategic decision making

**The lack of clarity and vision around community engagement led to the development of a toolkit designed to help public libraries involve their local communities in service delivery and development.**

# The library as a space for community activities



# Partnership working with voluntary and community sector





# Partnership working with other public services



# Involvement of volunteers



# Community involvement in one-off decision making and in relation to projects



# Community involvement in relation to boards/strategic decision making





# conclusion

Documentary, policy and empirical evidence indicates that, increasingly, the public library is being positioned not just as a place to borrow or read books or even to access digital material, but, as a key community resource and facility which can act as a venue for community events and as an access point connecting individuals with one another, connecting people with their local communities, and connecting communities with wider society.

There was a general acceptance that public libraries had been too user-focused in the past and although this seems like an odd criticism to make in these days of customer-facing services, the argument is that by attending to the needs of those who use the library most, those who do not use them or use them infrequently have been neglected.

