

## ***What we do***

The Library Service is part of Cultural Services and Lifelong Learning within the Learning and Children's Services Directorate. Cultural Services and Lifelong Learning aim to improve the range of cultural and sporting opportunities for all, and increase participation in learning across the borough.

There are seven libraries in the borough plus the Community Library Service which delivers books and other materials to housebound readers in their homes. The seven libraries are Hook and Chessington, Kingston, New Malden, Old Malden, Surbiton, Tolworth and Tudor Drive.

All libraries offer books, videos, DVDs, CDs, spoken word cassettes and CDs and computer games for Playstation, Xbox and Gamecube. CD-ROMs are available in some branches as are books in community languages.

All branches have computers with free access to word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and other office software as well as the internet. We provide computer classes for a range of abilities, one-to-one tuition with a trainer, and the opportunity to study for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

We run reading groups for adults, children, Tamil readers, ImaginAsian and crime readers. There are a wide range of children's activities weekly and in school holidays.

## ***Why do we have volunteers?***

Kingston Library Service supports volunteering in its libraries. Volunteers:

- Bring a new perspective to the service, increasing community engagement in the service.
- Add value and help us to extend the services we offer to the community.
- Bring expert knowledge and a diversity of skills not readily available in the service.
- Contribute to libraries being positioned at the heart of their local communities.

## **Kingston Libraries Mission Statement**

Kingston Libraries are accessible leisure and lifelong learning resources at the heart of local communities. Our purpose is to educate and empower through a commitment to inclusive and unbiased access to information, knowledge and works of creative imagination.

Kingston Libraries: Aims

- To provide, within the resources allocated to the Library Service, a range of recreational and educational material in a wide variety of media tailored to the needs of the local community
- To provide an equal opportunity to all for access to books, information, online services and lifelong learning
- To support social inclusion by seeking to meet the diverse information, learning and leisure needs of the whole community
- To act as first point of contact and a gateway to other council services
- To be the key source for access to local and community information
- To support reading development, literacy, numeracy and basic skills for people of all ages
- To lead, support and participate in literary and cultural activity in the borough
- To be the leading community resource for self-guided education and life long learning
- To promote digital inclusion by providing the support and training residents need to access digital information and e-government services
- To provide support and training to enable access to online information, enhanced employment opportunities and participation in the life of the community
- To consult library users and residents in the development of the Library Service
- To act in partnership with other council and community services helping them to meet their aims as well as our own
- To put local community needs at the heart of our service

## ***Roles for volunteers***

- Supporting IT tutors and learners.
- Leading or facilitating reading groups.
- Engaging hard to reach communities through outreach.
- Supporting children and young people in homework clubs.
- Helping to deliver the Bookstart programme.
- Planning and delivery of community events in libraries.
- Supporting the promotion of libraries

## ***Principles***

In using volunteers, Kingston Library Service will adhere to the following principle:

***Volunteers will be engaged in work that adds value and is additional to the existing service.***

## ***Recruitment process***

Volunteers will be recruited in a range of ways, including the Council's website, word of mouth, through partnership with local groups, and via Kingston Voluntary Action. Applicants will be invited to complete an application form. This can be downloaded from the Libraries' *Volunteering* pages on the Council's website, or a paper copy can be collected from any library. Applicants will receive an initial acknowledgement of their application. Once a suitable volunteer vacancy is identified, the applicant will be invited for an informal interview. Two references will be required for all vacancies.

Where appropriate, volunteers will be asked to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check, for working with children and vulnerable adults. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974 Exemption) all spent convictions are required to be declared.

Volunteers will be recruited on the basis of ability, the requirements of the placement, and similar relevant and objective criteria. No applicant should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, nationality, religious belief, age, sex, or disability in any matters to do with volunteering.

Each volunteer will be expected to undertake a four week trial period. At the end of this period, the volunteer and supervisor will meet to make sure that the volunteer and activity are properly matched. Either side may end the placement at this stage. At the end of a voluntary placement lasting for a minimum of three months, Kingston Library Service will provide a reference.

It is expected that volunteers will stay for a minimum of six months. This is considered the minimum for both the volunteer and the Library Service to gain from the experience. A shorter period can be agreed for youth volunteers.

### ***Induction and Training***

Before commencement of the placement, the volunteer will have a meeting with their placement supervisor. This meeting will cover:

- An overview of the aims and objectives of the library service.
- The Volunteer Policy, Health & Safety Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy.
- The Role Outline, detailing the roles and responsibilities relating to the specific placement.
- Procedures in the event of sickness and unexpected absence.

There may be further opportunities for training, related to the volunteer's placement work.

### ***Supervision and Support***

The volunteer will have a named member of staff as 'placement supervisor' who will have day to day responsibility for the volunteer. In the event of that person being unavailable the Learning, Education & Participation Manager will take over the role. The placement supervisor will ensure that the volunteer has reasonable accommodation and equipment to perform their tasks effectively. The placement supervisor will also have regular supervision and support sessions, giving feedback on their contribution.

### ***Ending the Volunteer Placement***

Volunteers are important to the Library Service, and therefore we ask that volunteers give as much notice as possible if they know they will be unavailable for a period of time, or if they wish to end their period as a volunteer.

### ***Insurance***

Volunteers are covered under the Council's Public Liability insurance.

### ***Equal Opportunities and Diversity***

Volunteers will receive a copy of the Council's Equal Opportunities policy. The Council recognises that services offered should be relevant to the needs of the local community, reflecting the diversity

of its religious and cultural heritage, with information about services being readily accessible and easy to understand. Services will be provided on the basis of fairness and openness. No one will receive less favourable treatment because of their race, nationality, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age or disability. All volunteers are required to adhere to the Council's Equal Opportunities policy.

### ***Health and Safety***

Volunteers will receive a copy of the Council's Health and Safety policy, outlining the Council's responsibilities to members of staff and volunteers. In keeping with the policy, volunteers have a responsibility to act with due regard to the health and safety of themselves, comply with Council instructions relating to health and safety, and to report any serious danger to health and safety to their placement supervisor.

### ***Grievance procedures***

Volunteers rightly have an expectation of fair treatment in their placement and the Council is committed to ensuring that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently in all matters relating to their placements.

Where the volunteer feels that they have not been treated fairly, they should raise the matter with their placement supervisor in the first instance. Should the matter not be resolved, the volunteer should contact the Learning, Education & Participation Manager, or if this is the volunteer's placement supervisor, the Strategic Manager, Library & Heritage Service, to take the matter further.

### ***Disciplinary Procedures***

When a volunteer's conduct or performance does not meet the required standards, the volunteer's placement supervisor should advise the volunteer of ways to improve his/her effectiveness and to advise them of the implications of further misconduct and/or problems with their performance.

Where an initial act or omission by a volunteer is sufficiently serious as to amount to gross misconduct, gross negligence or gross lack of competence, in conduct or performance, the Council may end the volunteer's contract without notice.

If the volunteer feels they have been treated unfairly they should follow the grievance procedures above.

### ***Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information***

All staff and volunteers must ensure the safe custody and confidentiality of Council records.

All records (whether held in electronic or paper form and original or copied) must not be transferred electronically or physically removed from the Council's premises except for properly authorised purposes.

Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

### ***Acceptance of Gifts***

Employees should not accept gifts other than insignificant and impersonal items of token value such as trade pens, diaries, etc. Where clarification is required, the volunteer should discuss it with their placement supervisor.