

# Changes to Cambridgeshire County Council library service from March 23rd

Following the Prime Minister's words tonight about increasing social distancing by closing many social venues, the county council has taken swift measures to retain key functions of the library service across Cambridgeshire.

The council is doing this in a way which minimises the risk of infection to customers and staff as we face the COVID- 19 pandemic so from next week it plans to focus on an increased digital and online offer, and an appointments based system for all its libraries.

This means that from **Monday 23 March**, all Library buildings will close but the service is working to create an alternative offer including:

- Appointments to use IT for those who most need it
- A drop off / collection service for item reservations on an appointment basis – with items quarantined for 72 hours between loans

Details of how to book these appointments will follow shortly.

- An increased Library@Home Service – using more staff and volunteers to drop off and collect books and other resources/services whilst maintaining social distancing (a doorstep service)
- An Expanded Assisted Digital offer over the phone / online –increasing the amount of online resources for people to borrow and enjoy and with more digital alternatives to group sessions including online activities e.g. storytimes for families to take part in.

We will also use the Library Service infrastructure to support the new countywide Co-ordination Hub, with

- Library delivery vans and mobile vehicles available to provide transport infrastructure for the distribution of essential goods and services to communities, care homes and individual housebound as required – mobiles already distribute batteries and are in discussion with food banks about deliveries
- Library staff to be redeployed through The Hub and in support of the interim service outlined above

“We recognise that our Library service is such a vital and important resource for so many people, particularly in times such as these – so our decision today aims to retain core services –while not putting any of our customers or our staff at unnecessary risk,” said Cllr Steve Criswell, chairman of the County Council's Communities and Partnership Committee.