

Examples of Public Libraries that offer Business Information Services

City of London Business Library

Have an extensive range of events through the year from business start up information to HR advice, using other government services, business experts and consultants. See their events website here: http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/LGNL_Services/Leisure_and_culture/Libraries/City_of_London_libraries/Events+at+City+Business+Library.htm

Joanne John www.askalibrarian.org.uk

Slough Library

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/libraries/490.aspx>

Slough Library has an extensive collection of business information resources.

Offers business and trade directories, market research reports. access to **Datamonitor 360**, **Mint** UK online, business management books, info on export/import, statistics, legal information, newspapers and journals

Was part of the library offer - some things were charge for, e.g. printing off British Standards (could be £75 for a single copy), and compiling/ printing from a business address database which was charged per page. (This is a few years back)

Worcester Libraries MERGED with Adult/Family learning 3 years ago

Offers business related learning course. Example: 'Making Creative Arts Your Business' at Redditch Library - it's a free course for people interested in setting up in this area .

Also ran an Employability course and intend to turn the next one into a JobClub, At Worcester there's a high demand for service use for searching and applying for jobs, e.g. using People's Network computers for CVs and applications. Have had Connexions in for advice and guidance to younger people not in work or education too. Starting your own business is quite a popular topic in books too.

“Redditch, the Employability course we offer is funded by our own service (Libraries and Learning) through one of our Adult Learning funding streams - in this case First Steps which is designed to support people into additional qualifications or employment. We don't have an outside partner for funding but will promote to job centres etc for recruitment. Students who complete the course will be strongly encouraged to continue as an informal job club which will self-manage using volunteer input, either from within the group or recruited externally, we'll just provide them with the venue to meet each week and some free support in addition to the usual library resources, e.g. free photocopying. (As with library services around the UK we're really exploring ways to provide the maximum service with minimum resources in the present economic climate.) Again this will be promoted through the JobCentre and we'll aim to work more closely in partnership using the job club to support those needing additional resources in

their search for employment.”

Angela Wright acwright1967@btinternet.com

Unknown library

Merged was library with CAB and Tourist Info Centre. Both became too busy to be house in the same area

“the major problem was that it was difficult to provide them with sufficient privacy space where they could interview clients on a one-to-one basis”

Martyn Everett martyn.everett@btinternet.com

Swindon

Took out subscription of Mint jointly with Economic Development department

“It brought the price down quite a bit & seems to suit everybody.”

Paul Gahan pgahan@swindon.gov.uk

Croydon

Developing business support offer

Monthly training sessions of business online resources such as **COBRA, Keynote and FAME.**

Programme of free business talks; monthly business advisor drop in sessions (free). Planning event with different organisations (**South London Business** to be held in library)

Contracts with **Prospects** to deliver advice to 18+.

Hoping to run a work club with volunteers as facilitators at one of our libraries – working with **job centre plus** and **Croydon Voluntary Action.**

“At the moment the business advisor is giving their time free and so are the speakers. Library staff deliver the sessions on online resources so that is funded out of library budget. We were given some funding from a Council department for a couple of the online resources. “

Fiona Tarn Fiona.Tarn@croydon.gov.uk

Cheshire East Libraries

Arrangement with CAB to use libraries with meeting rooms.

CAB provides advice surgeries twice a week, general, or finance and debt specific.

Provision used to be free but now the library charges for use of rooms

Would like to expand to offer CV help and careers advice.

Paul Everitt Paul.Everitt@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Birmingham Central Library

Offers business info and start-up info. including **£81.20 company formation service**.
Offers **outsourced** business information services to other libraries, including Coventry library.

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/businessinsight>

Coventry Library

We pay for our outsourced business info from Birmingham via the resources budget on a yearly subscription basis.

Philip Jones philip.jones@coventry.gov.uk

Gloucestershire Libraries

Run the Ask Us enquiry service via a link with **Gloucestershire First**, the county's economic development body, and developing links with other local councils.

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/ask

Katie Smith katie.a.smith@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Rutland Library Service

Access 2 Work project funded by EMDA (**East Midlands Development Agency**)

2 year project held twice a week. Employs a qualified IAG (Information, Advice, Guidance worker, to help with CV writing skill, online search, application forms interview skills.

County has no JobCentre so it's popular.

Works in partnership with a charity called PJT Employability under **Next Step** contracts offer 1-2-1 careers advice, interviews, offering them 1-2-1 space in library. cross refer between A2W and PJT - our IAG worker also works closely with the JobCentre so we get referrals from them too.

"asked BusinessLink to come and try some business start-up workshops in our main library. They were initially reluctant as they did not think they would get adequate numbers, however we have had numerous information requests at the librarian's desk for business information so I managed to persuade them (I talked to the East Midlands office)"

Library managed the publicity. First workshop was fully booked, two more have been booked.

Possible future plans: HMRC to do workshops on Self Assessment online and VAT workshops. (if the right people can be contacted)

1-2-1 space for CAB and Councillors surgeries to increase accessibility.

Emily Barwell ebarwell@rutland.gov.uk

Islington Libraries.

Awarded funding from MLA to research business information needs. Research led to the development of a business training program, and worked closely with MLA and Islington Business Partnership for this.

Worked with Environment Sustainability team to create online map of Green groups in Islington. Worked with Voluntary Action Islington on numerous projects. (Stock materials were donated by VAI). Islington Library also assisted on research projects, and work to encourage voluntary groups to use the Reference Library to answer information needs.

Hosted Employment Advice sessions for Islington Working.

Created a blog with Web team for information on Islington.
<http://islingtonblogs.typepad.com/infoislington/>

Keith Scott Keith.Scott@islington.gov.uk

Westminster library

Has a high number of business enquiries and in 2008, got extra funding and launched a dedicated Business Information Point. 8 dedicated computers, more online resources and journals, training for staff, marketing and money for events.

Funds came to us via the economic development section in the Council but originated from different spending streams such as LAA funding.

The Business Information Point was very successful and promoted the difference and contribution libraries are able to make to wider council agendas. User satisfaction rates from our survey showed that 86% rated the information we gave them as valuable or very valuable, 85% said the resources we have are essential for their work, 85% said the business information service is good or very good.

This success has enabled us to continue to be commissioned to deliver this service and has secured us extra funding each year. Funding does have to be sought each year but because the impact of our work is clear this has not been a problem. In 2010 we launched a further 3 mini business information points in community libraries. Each have the main resources and run monthly networking events and have enabled us to reach a wider audience in the community. Events are a mixture of workshops with guest speakers, offering expert advice and talks

followed by networking opportunities. The events continue to successfully and cost effectively market the business information service provided by libraries and provide those attending events with opportunities to talk to like-minded people and share experiences. Staff do a lot of outreach to other business support organisations and have built up a wide range of partners that support the work we do.

We have a dedicated email enquiry service for business users and many resources are available online and can be seen at

<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/libraries/special/business/>

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