

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

It's a privilege to present the 2024/25 annual report for London Libraries – a collective of all 33 library services working together to champion equity, opportunity, and creativity across our Capital. This network is one of London's greatest strengths, and it has been an honour to serve as its Chair over the past year.

The past twelve months have reinforced something we know to be true: libraries are essential civic infrastructure. In the face of ongoing financial pressures, rising community need, and the widening inequalities that shape daily life for so many Londoners, libraries have stood firm as places of learning, safety, connection, and hope. Our staff and partners have demonstrated once again that when libraries are empowered, communities flourish.

This year we have pushed further than ever to advocate for the recognition, investment, and visibility that London's libraries deserve. From digital inclusion and early years literacy to cultural engagement, workforce development, and social wellbeing, our services continue to deliver outcomes that no other public institution can replicate. We do this not because it is easy, but because it is necessary — and because every Londoner deserves the chance to thrive.

As we look ahead, the need for strong, well-resourced libraries has never been clearer. Our ambition remains unwavering: to influence city-wide decision-making, to secure sustainable investment, and to strengthen the role of libraries in London's strategic priorities. We will continue to champion the impact of our work at every level, ensuring that libraries are recognised not as optional extras, but as fundamental pillars of a fair, culturally rich, and inclusive city.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to this year's achievements: our funders, partners, volunteers, and the exceptional library leaders and staff across London. I am especially grateful to the Executive team for their dedication and wisdom, offered so generously alongside already demanding roles.

This year also marks a personal milestone. After three wonderful years as Chair — a role I have deeply loved — I will be stepping down. It has been an honour to lead this remarkable network, but it is the right time for new energy, new ideas, and the next chapter in London Libraries' collective journey. I am delighted to welcome Fiona Tarn, Head of Camden Libraries, as the incoming Chair. Fiona's vision, leadership, and commitment to public libraries make her the perfect person to guide the network forward, and I know London Libraries will continue to thrive under her stewardship.

I hope this report gives you a clear sense of the impact we have delivered together — and the even greater impact still to come.

With warm regards,

Anita Luby

Chair, London Libraries (2022–2025)

ABOUT US

London Libraries is the regional network for Libraries Connected, representing all 32 London boroughs and the City of London. Together, we collaborate on shared projects, champion our members' work, and advocate for the vital role of public libraries in London.

We support Libraries Connected's vision by promoting inclusive, modern, innovative and sustainable library services. Through strong partnerships, shared learning, and collective problem-solving, we drive improvement and stand with one another through both opportunities and challenges.

London is home to the largest public library network of any major world city, with more than 300 libraries serving over eight million residents.

Wherever you are in London, you are never far from a public library!



OUR IMPACT

London's libraries remain one of the city's most-used and most-trusted public services. Every visit, every book borrowed, and every hour volunteered reflects the essential role we play in the wellbeing, learning, and resilience of our communities.

Our data tells a powerful story: London's libraries continue to be one of the city's most-used and most-trusted public services. From reading and digital access to connection and lifelong learning, our impact reaches every corner of the city — proving that libraries are not optional extras, but vital civic infrastructure.

With more than **30 million** physical visits, over **20 million** books borrowed, and almost **9 million** digital loans, our services remain an essential part of daily life for Londoners. More than **1 million** active members and nearly **5,000** volunteers giving over **108,000** hours of their time, reflect a network that is vibrant, valued, and deeply rooted in its communities.



Physical Visitors
30,493,035



Borrowing
29,459,241



Volunteers
4,983
&
108,633 hours



PC & WIFI
2,087,803



Active Users
1,003,690

OUR IMPACT

This year saw several major milestones that strengthened our offer city-wide

Our new digital home

We launched www.ldnlibraries.org, a modern, accessible platform designed to showcase our work, guide residents to their local services, and provide a dedicated resource hub for library staff across the capital.

Building skills that strengthen our communities

The rollout of health literacy training for library staff has equipped teams with vital knowledge to support residents navigating health information — a reflection of our continued commitment to meeting London's evolving health needs.

Championing accessibility

Our partnership with the RNIB continues to grow, with 33 visual impairment ambassadors now embedded across the network. This is a clear step toward ensuring every Londoner can access library services with confidence and independence.

National recognition for London's library teams

We were proud to see London staff honoured at this year's Libraries Connected Awards. Congratulations to the outstanding teams in Hillingdon and Waltham Forest for their category wins, and to colleagues in Newham, Brent, Bromley, Wandsworth, and Greenwich for being shortlisted across a range of categories. These achievements shine a light on the exceptional talent and dedication across our network.

OUR IMPACT

Our biggest conference yet!

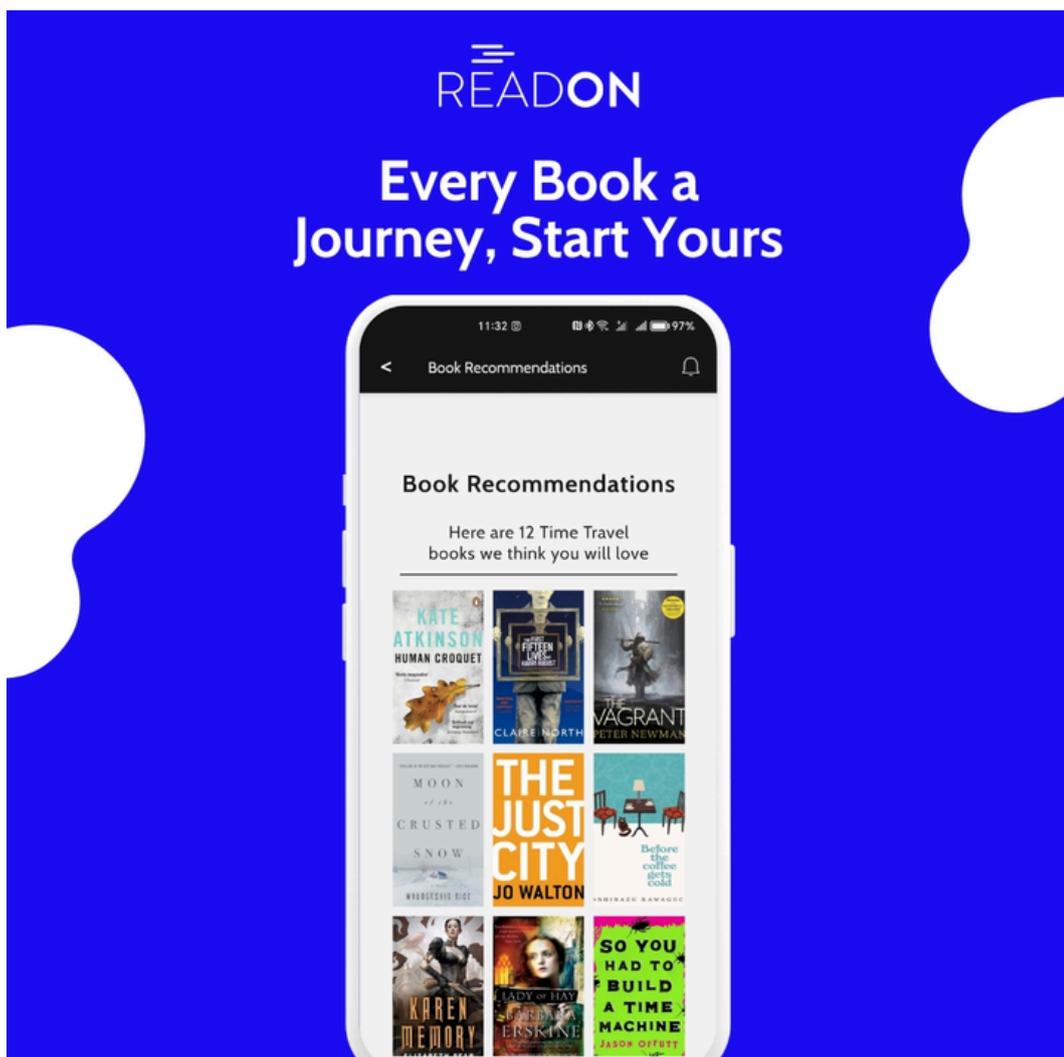
“Stronger Together“, held in Kensington, brought over 200 colleagues from across the capital into one dynamic space to share best practice, spark new ideas, and celebrate innovation. The ignite presentations were a testament to the creativity, resilience, and leadership of library teams city-wide.



OUR IMPACT

Read ON – inspiring a new generation of readers

Our new reading app, Read ON, has already begun transforming how Londoners connect with their local libraries. Its success has attracted national attention, with the British Library’s LibraryOn team impressed by its potential for the sector. Conversations are now underway about opportunities for further development and a future national rollout.



PRIORITIES FOR 25/26

We are committed to developing and delivering the following projects for London in the coming year:

- Seek funding to support a roll out of training for the Homeless project in partnership with Homeless Link.
- Continue developing the Read On App
- Create a strategic plan for the network
- Whole day staff conference.

London Libraries is open to working with new partners and on new opportunities.



OUR TEAM

Our Executive team is made up of Heads of Service who are responsible for 14 London library authorities between them.

They meet 4 times a year to set the strategic direction for the network, ensuring libraries in London are aware of and participating in national initiatives and benefitting from joint programmes.

The wider general membership meets 4 times a year. In 2024/25 the team was made up of the following Officers:

Executive Officers

Anita Luby - Chair (Redbridge)
Fiona Tarn - Vice Chair (Camden)
Hannah Richens - Secretary (Barnet)
Caroline Rae - Treasurer (Newham)

Committee Members

Anthony Hopkins - (Merton)
Claire Powell - (Hounslow)
Claire Robe - (Kingston)
Daniel Waller - (Hammersmith & Fulham)
Joan Redding - (Croydon)
Rachel Levy - (City of London)
Rebecca Gediking - (GLL-Bromely, Greenwich & Wandsworth)
Susanna Barnes - (Lambeth)

Universal Offer Leads

The following officers are the regional Universal Offer leads

Books and Reading

Daniel Waller

Culture and Creativity

Claire Robe and Rebecca Gediking

Digital & Information

Caroline Rae and Susanna Barnes

Health

Claire Powell

FUNDERS & PARTNERS

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support with projects in the year:

- Libraries Connected
- Arts Council England
- Library On / British Library
- Novellic
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- London Borough of Kensington



ACCOUNTS

Our finances are maintained by Libraries Connected and are audited by an independent auditor as part of their annual audit.

| Financial Year 2024-5 | Opening / Closing Balance | Income | Expenditure |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Opening Balance | 41,405.12 | | |
| Accrued aged debt | | 1,615.28 | |
| Accrued commitment to Libraries Connected for Marketing Project | | | 6,000.00 |
| Subscriptions | | 6,817.33 | |
| Sponsorship | | 15,300.00 | |
| Activist - Homeless Project | | | 960.00 |
| Web services | | | 223.20 |
| Novellic | | | 5,640.00 |
| Conference expenses | | | 1,052.39 |
| Total | | 23,732.61 | 13,875.59 |
| Closing Balance | 51,262.14 | | |

Grants Received on behalf of London Libraries

Library On – Read On App

£25,800. Held by the City of London.