



West Sussex Library Service

Welcoming spaces and services for families

By Christine Broggi, Contracted Services Team Manager



At West Sussex Libraries, we're always working to offer a warm welcome to families. Anyone who lives or works in West Sussex may become a member of the library, with access to 36 libraries across the County, and it is free to join. Families can visit the [West Sussex Library Service website](#) to discover our huge range of services, resources and activities for families, children, and young people. There are so many benefits to library membership, and children are never too young for a library card!

West Sussex Library Service is 100 years old!



In 2025, the West Sussex Library Service turned 100 years old and the year is filled with events and activities to mark our birthday. At the heart of the centenary celebrations will be an exciting virtual reality project and we'll be bringing virtual reality headsets to your local library. This project, possible thanks to National Lottery money awarded by Arts Council England, will celebrate books and our library history in a very special way.

We will have a variety of [centenary-inspired events](#) for families taking place in libraries, so keep an eye out for what might be happening at your local library during the year.

How can we help?

Families can join by visiting their [local library](#) or using our [online joining form](#). Every library has:

- Baby and picture books for under 5s
- Beginner reads, story books and audiobooks on CD
- Comic and picture books for older readers
- Information books for homework, hobbies or interest

Our larger libraries also offer **special collections**, including:

- Parent information with adult books on **parenting topics**
- Situation books to **help children with new experiences** or difficult situations
- **Dual language** picture books for families with English as a second language
- **Multi-sensory stories** designed for children with additional needs
- **Giant print and braille** picture books for children or parents with visual impairment
- Playaway **audiobooks** on MP3 players

Families can also reserve specialist items for **free** and we'll deliver them to their local library for collection. Our team is always available to offer support, including:

- Our team of **family and wellbeing librarians** with specialist knowledge to help with enquiries about children's books and reading
- We have online help and advice for parents/carers with children **learning to read**
- Our resources and services for children and young people with **special educational needs and disability (SEND)**
- Our family and wellbeing librarians also work **in the community** with preschools, children and family centres, schools and other partners to promote books and reading to families

For any questions, please encourage families to contact their [local library](#), who will refer their question to a member of our team, or use our [Ask a Librarian](#) online enquiry form.

Summer Reading Challenge: coming to a library near you this summer!

Our annual **Summer Reading Challenge** is a great way to support children and young people's learning over the summer holidays and provides opportunities for parents/carers to get more involved with their children's learning. We are excited to share that this year's Summer Reading Challenge will be **Story Garden!** Encouraging a love of reading, nature and exploring the outdoors. It will be launching in libraries across West Sussex on **Saturday 12 July** and **running until Saturday 13 September**.



During the summer, children aged 4-11 will be asked to read books and complete reading challenges to collect stickers to receive a medal and certificate at the end of the challenge. We also have the **mini challenge** for those aged under 4.

Library staff will be visiting schools and sending out information in June and July about how to sign up to the challenge and all the fun things happening in your local library this summer. Please encourage families to look out for more information soon in their local library!

Have you discovered the Disability Register?

The [West Sussex Disability Register](#) is a database that collects information on those living with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25 in West Sussex and is managed by [West Sussex Library Service](#). This information is used by West Sussex County Council and its partners to help plan and deliver services now and into the future. Anyone aged 0-25 with a disability living in West Sussex can sign up and you do not need to have a diagnosis to sign up.

[Sign up to the Disability Register online.](#)



By joining the Register, families will:

- Help West Sussex County Council and our partners to **plan and deliver services** for now and in the future
- Receive a **monthly newsletter** via email with local information and details of upcoming events and activities
- Have access to a Library card with **additional concessions**, including free reservations and free audiobook loans
- Access to a **Max Card** – a discount card with local and national offers

And finally, the Schools Library Service can help support teachers and families too:



Schools Library Service
Save time, save money...
give your pupils the library they deserve



How can we help your school?

Over 150 West Sussex primary schools are already saving time and money by subscribing to West Sussex Schools Library Service.

Your school could be next to benefit!

We provide schools and teachers with access to high quality resources and expertise to support literacy, learning and reader development.

This includes:

- Long-term loan and exchange service
- Project loans
- Professional help and advice
- Support with Accelerated Reader

"Schools Library Services are an important resource for teachers, parents and children. They provide access to books, offer advice and training on children's literature, and provide a wide range of activities and schemes that support children's development as readers beyond school".

DfE Reading Framework 2023

Subscribing schools and teachers are welcome to visit the SLS base at Worthing Library for INSET days, group visits, team training days or to select books and lesson plan.

Please ask a member of library staff for a leaflet, visit www.schools.westsussex.gov.uk or call 01903 704828 to find out more.

Visit the [Schools Library Service website](#) to find out more, and don't forget to [subscribe to the SLS newsletter](#) to receive regular news and updates.