

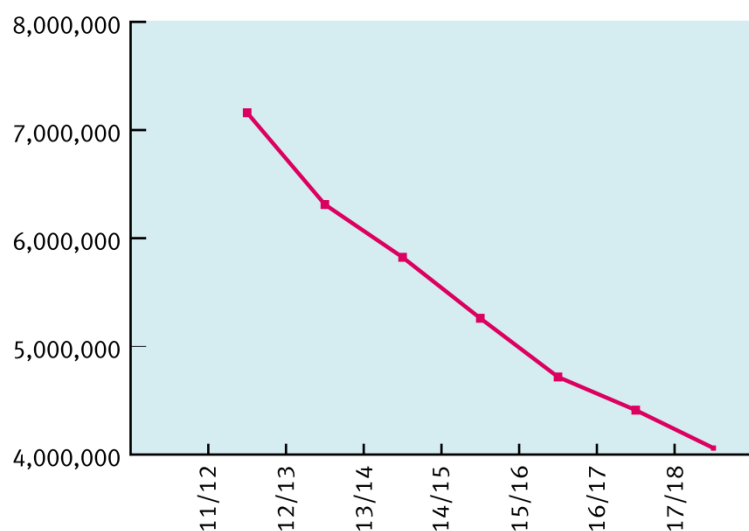
# Charging Statement for Birthday Parties in Libraries

## Introduction

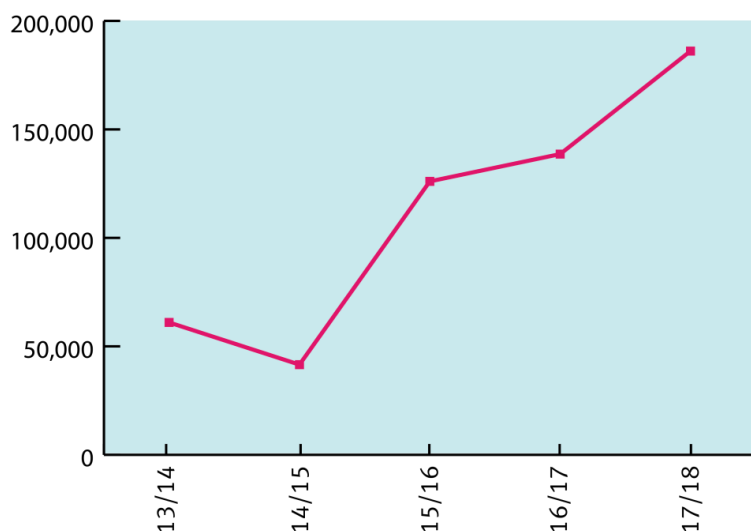
In 2015 the children's party market in England was estimated to be worth nearly £1.1bn with parents spending £135 on average on their child's party. However one in 6 parents admitted to spending over £300 according to the website Netmums.

Essex library service is in the process of developing a new Library Strategy as it is seeing reduced foot fall and book loan rate across the libraries estate over the last seven years. On the other hand, demand for digital content from the Library service has increased. Please see the graphs below.

Graph: Annual Loans (2011-2018)



Graph: Loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines (2013 – 2018)



Our aim is to break into the market by trialling 3 different types of party aimed at 0-3, 3-5 and 5-7 year olds in our libraries. The outcome that we hope to achieve is to attract new library users into Essex libraries that will enjoy the socialization and learning opportunity in the company of friends and family enjoy the socialization and learning opportunities that Essex libraries provide.

Birthday Parties in libraries will help:

- Library Service continue to help provide great places for children, families and the community to grow, live and work and help people get the best start in life
- Developing more chargeable events support ECC's priority to transform the council, achieve more with less, limit cost and drive growth in revenue.
- The current draft library strategy includes exploring additional sources of funding for Library services including from chargeable events.
- One of our ambitions in the draft library strategy is to reach new communities and attract new library users. We see this activity as one of many that will fulfil this ambition.

The library service will run a 6 month trial that will commence in August 2019 and end in January 2020. The trial will test the format of parties for the three age groups, the desirability of birthday parties in Libraries and the proposed charging structure.

## The ECC library proposed charges alongside other children's party providers in Essex

Note: ECC charges above include cost of staff time (during, to set up before and clear up after each party), room / space hire cost, party equipment and materials for 5-7 year old birthday parties, cleaning and booking administration costs.

Age Group	Group Size	Party Duration	ECC's Proposed Charge Per Child	ECC Sky Ropes	Reiverside Pool Party	Jump Street Chelmsford	Hall & Entertainer
<b>Age 0 – 3</b> Rhyme Time Party	8 - 20	1 hour session	<b>£6.50</b> From £52 for 8 to £130 for 20	<b>Jnr Party</b> 1.5hr session £100 for 8 and £160 for 20		£51 for a min of 6 for 1 hour £105 for 10	£145 - £328
<b>Age 3 – 5</b> Interactive Story (suitable for children with learning disabilities)	8 - 20	1 ¼ hour session	<b>£7.50</b> (Party charge from £68)	<b>Jnr Party</b> 1.5hr session £100 for 8 and £160 for 20		0-4yrs: Mon-Thurs min 10 for £160 and Thurs, Fri & Sat £180 for 10.	£145 - £328
<b>Age 5 – 7</b> Pirate Party	14 - 20	2 hour session	£12 (Party charge from £180)	Party Package £11 without food or room	65 people= £205 + £4 a head for food	£16-£18 dependant on day	£145 - £328
<b>Age 5 – 7</b> Enchanted Forest Party	14 - 20	2 hour session	£12 (Party charge from £180)	Party Package £11 without food or room	65 people= £205 + £4 a head for food	£500 for up to 20	£145 - £328

The proposed party formats involve individual materials for the 5-7 age range. We have proposed a per head charge to cover the materials that each child requires for the party as well as the other costs mentioned on page 3. The alternative fee structure is to implement a flat fee which can be found at sporting venues such as swimming parties or a hall and entertainer. These two examples are different to our proposed parties as the same resource (venue / staff) is required for 1 – 65 children, unlike the libraries proposed parties, the cost increases on a per head basis.

During the next phase of the project, we will have a set flat fee as the cost is the same to deliver a party at each of the four sites. The Library service has an event management software package (booking bug) that has been developed to sell individual tickets to one off events. The package is currently not able to handle birthday party bookings. The booking process we plan on using involves paper enquiry forms and payment process managed by the Library management system. The booking process needs to be simple to operate for both the customers and the ECC staff, one fee will be used at this time to avoid further complication, but we will gather feedback to see if there was compelling evidence to change this position.

This phase of the project aims to ascertain market demand across the county by focusing on four locations. Each location has different demographics which will help inform further roll out of the programme. There are three charges to reflect the cost of providing birthday parties for each age group. The charges proposed for this phase will be reviewed at the end of the trial and should a change be considered necessary this will be the subject of a further report.

## Introduction, Review and Amendment of a Fee or Charge form.

*This form should be completed in conjunction with the requirements and approvals set out in the Corporate Fees and Charges Policy.*

<b>Function</b>	Customer Service	<b>Service Area</b>	Library Services	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Suzanna Shaw, Director, Customer services			
<b>Description of Chargeable Service</b>	Birthday Parties in Libraries			
<b>Date of Agreement</b>	TBC	<b>Date of Review</b>	TBC	
<b>Approved by</b>	Councillor Barker following review of a CMA		Insert link to approval <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Charges to be applied (please state £0 if decision is not to charge)</b>				
<b>Charge</b>	<b>Current year charge</b>	<b>Current year +1</b>	<b>Current year +2</b>	<b>Current year +3</b>
	£	£		

<sup>1</sup> See current Fees and Charges Policy for required approvals for introducing or amending fees and charges.

			£	£
<b>Age 0-3</b> Rhyme Time Party	£6.50 per child. (£52 minimum party charge for 8)	TBC after trial review report.		
<b>Age 3-5</b> Interactive Story (Suitable for children with learning disabilities)	£7.50 per child. (£54.75 minimum party charge for 8)	TCD after trial review report.		
<b>Age 5-7</b> Pirate Party / Enchanted Forest	£12.00 per child (£168 minimum party charge for 14)	TBD after trial review report.		1
<b>State any discounts or concessions to be applied</b>				
<b>Discount / Concession</b>	<b>Current year charge</b> £	<b>Current year +1</b> £	<b>Current year +2</b> £	<b>Current year +3</b> £
<i>(Insert additional lines as required)</i>	N/A	TBD after trial review		
<b>State the rationale for charging, including where the decision is not to charge</b>				
<p>Introducing birthday parties in libraries offers some scope for library service to generate sufficient income to cover both variable and overhead costs, other important factors have been taken into consideration in arriving at the charges proposed for birthday parties in libraries. In proposing these charges, the service has considered how birthday parties in libraries can be used to meet strategic / council priorities stated in the draft Future Libraries Strategy including increasing footfall to Essex libraries, encourage children's interest in reading and literary pursuits and generally support Essex residents to increase their utilisation of Essex Libraries.</p> <p>Charges of alternative children's birthday party providers in Essex have also been taken into account to ensure charges proposed for the three age groups compare favourably with theirs.</p> <p>The charges proposed cover the cost of staff to help set up, help parents facilitate parties for the duration of each party and clear up after each party, the charge for hiring library rooms</p>				

and space of up to 100m<sup>2</sup> and where relevant materials that each party attendee will use.

There are currently no plans to recruit additional staff to help with birthday parties, this will be reviewed after the trial period and an update provided in the trial report.

The amount charged per child and the minimum party charge for each age group will be reviewed and revised as necessary after the trial period and charges for future years will increase with inflation.

As the activity and space rental are exempt, VAT is not applicable.

**State the service delivery objectives to be achieved by charging (including the objectives of concessions and discounts)**

Increasing the footfall to and utilisation of Essex libraries:

<b>Age 0-3</b> Rhyme Party	8-20 children
<b>Age 3-5</b> Interactive story (suitable for children with learning disabilities)	8-20 children
<b>Age 5-7</b> Pirate Party Enchanted Forest	14-20 children

It is important to get families to read to children throughout their childhood and Essex Library Services have a number of programmes to encourage this.

**Do the charges aim to achieve full cost recovery?**

Yes

[\*Birthday Parties Cost Model\*](#)

**If “No”, please indicate the reason(s) for not achieving full cost recovery: (please tick)**

**a) It is not legal to do so**

**b) It does not support Corporate Objectives / Outcomes**

**c) Market conditions will not sustain charges at that level**

**Where full cost recovery is not intended to be met, please state how the unrecovered costs are to be funded and the value of the unrecovered amount**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Current year cost</b> £	<b>Current year +1</b> £	<b>Current year +2</b> £	<b>Current year +3</b> £
<b>Council tax</b>				
<b>Ring-fenced grant</b>				

<b>Un-ring-fenced grant</b>				
<b>Third party funding</b>				
<b>Other (please state below)</b>				
<b>Which stakeholders have been engaged with regard to the changes?</b>				
<p>Suzanna Shaw, Director Customer &amp; Technology Operations (19/07/19)</p> <p>Paul Turner, Monitoring Officer (31/8/19)</p> <p>Stephanie Mitchener (17/09/19)</p>				