

Libraries Unlocked

FAQ's

What is Libraries Unlocked?

Libraries Unlocked is a new service from Worcestershire Libraries which offers longer opening hours and more flexibility for customers and community groups to use their local library at times that are convenient to them.

New technology allows customers to upgrade to the free Libraries Unlocked membership allowing them to enter the library using their library membership card outside normal opening hours and use library services independently when staff are not present.

A mandatory induction is available for anyone wishing to become a Libraries Unlocked member to ensure a good understanding of how the technology works.

Who can use Libraries Unlocked?

All library members are eligible to upgrade to Libraries Unlocked membership for free, except for under 16s who, for safeguarding reasons, need to be accompanied during Libraries Unlocked opening hours by someone aged 16 or over who has Libraries Unlocked membership.

What can I do during Libraries Unlocked?

During Libraries Unlocked hours you can:

- Borrow, return & renew library items using self-service kiosks
- Use a free library computer or free library Wi-Fi and print documents
- Use study spaces
- Search online reference services eg. Ancestry
- Meet with friends or join a social connecting interest group
- Take part in activities provided by library partners including job clubs, adult learning classes, and BIPC business support services.



When is Libraries Unlocked available?



Droitwich Library Opening Hours

Day	Libraries Unlocked	Core Library Opening	Libraries Unlocked
Monday	8am – 10am	10am – 5pm	5pm – 8pm
Tuesday	8am – 10am	10am – 5pm	5pm – 8pm
Wednesday	8am – 1pm	1pm – 5pm	5pm – 8pm
Thursday	8am – 8pm Libraries Unlocked all day	8am – 8pm Libraries Unlocked all day	8am – 8pm Libraries Unlocked all day
Friday	8am – 10am	10am – 5pm	5pm – 8pm
Saturday	8am – 10am	10am – 2pm	2pm – 8pm

Stourport Library Opening Hours

Day	Libraries Unlocked	Core Library Opening	Libraries Unlocked
Monday	8am – 10:30am	10:30am – 4:30pm	4:30pm – 8pm
Tuesday	8am – 10:30am	10:30am – 4:30pm	4:30pm – 8pm
Wednesday	8am – 8pm Libraries Unlocked all day	8am – 8pm Libraries Unlocked all day	8am – 8pm Libraries Unlocked all day
Thursday	8am – 10:30am	10:30am – 4:30pm	4:30pm – 8pm
Friday	8am – 1pm	1pm – 4:30pm	4:30pm – 8pm
Saturday	8am – 10:30am	10:30am – 1:30pm	1:30pm – 8pm

Can I hire a meeting room or library floorspace during Libraries Unlocked hours?

Library meeting rooms are available to hire during Libraries Unlocked opening hours as well as during core library opening hours. For the first year after launch we are offering free community hire of library meeting rooms during Libraries Unlocked opening hours.

Libraries Unlocked technology also supports the hire and use of library buildings & meeting rooms by trusted community partners outside public opening hours.

Is it safe to use Libraries Unlocked?

Safety of our members is paramount and feedback from library authorities who have introduced this approach reveals that it has proved to be a safe and effective way of improving library access.

Under 16s must be accompanied by a Libraries Unlocked member and 16 and 17-year-old members are required to gain parental consent to use the service.

Customer safety measures include:

- A mandatory induction for anyone wishing to become a Libraries Unlocked member to ensure a good understanding of how to respond in the unlikely event of an emergency
- A dedicated 24/7 emergency phone line to contact local emergency services and the Council's emergency property helpline if required
- Clear instructions for emergency procedures and clearly signposted evacuation routes and fire safety equipment
- Full CCTV coverage inside the library to capture all activity during Libraries Unlocked opening hours
- Security and fire alarm systems linked automatically to suppliers for a timely response
- Exclusion of customers with a recent or persistent history of unacceptable behaviours including disruption, theft or damage to property
- A system is also in place for Libraries Unlocked customers to report non-emergency issues to the local library team for follow-up, e.g. problems with IT or other equipment.

Are library staff still available to provide support for customers?

Library staff are still available to provide valued support to customers throughout the week; helping them to locate and access trusted information sources; signposting them to a wealth of services and resources and developing and delivering activities and events that meet community needs.

As the take-up of digital library services increases and customer visiting patterns change post pandemic, library staffing is focused on what we know to be the busiest, most popular times in libraries.

Why has Libraries Unlocked been introduced in Worcestershire?

The Council's Library Strategy sets out a vision for Worcestershire Libraries from 2020 to 2025 that sees:

- Greater awareness and use of library services by Worcestershire residents
- Increased use of libraries by local residents, community groups and service providers
- Libraries established as a 'front door' for Council and community services
- Library services tailored to meet community needs
- Investment in new technology and new service delivery models to future-proof the library network.

Investment in new technology has allowed Worcestershire Libraries to increase library opening hours at Droitwich and Stourport, providing more convenience for customers who find it difficult to visit their local library during normal working hours and allowing a wider cross-section of the community to take advantage of library services.

It also enables residents and community groups to get the best use out of their local library by extending access to library buildings for community activities both within and outside public opening hours.

Why is Libraries Unlocked only being introduced in Droitwich and Stourport Libraries?

We have decided to start our implementation on a small scale with two early adopter libraries at Droitwich and Stourport to allow us to refine our approach and inform our decisions about extending it to other libraries.

We selected libraries that are located in Council owned buildings, and which stand to benefit more from Libraries Unlocked as they each have a closed day mid-week.

How will you make sure that under 16s are not disadvantaged by being unable to visit Libraries Unlocked unaccompanied?

We have surveyed under 16s in local schools to discover their preferred times for visiting their local library unaccompanied during term time, school holidays and studyleave periods.

Based on survey results we have timetabled staff availability to reflect these preferred visiting times, including 3pm – 5pm after school and after lunch during school holidays.

We are working with local partners to introduce new services for this age group in response to survey feedback. These include Study Happy sessions, supporting student wellbeing, 'Bookstagram' and 'Booktok' reading groups, youth work sessions and webinars on referencing and information literacy.



For more information visit:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries

