

Open Plus

Open Plus is the name of the system developed by Bibliotheca, who also deliver the self-service RFID system in South Gloucestershire Libraries. It allows usage by valid customers during hours when there are no library staff present.

This is a system being adopted in many authorities in the UK having been launched in Denmark in 2011. It is used in both rural and urban settings.

Key features

Access - only valid users are given access – customers are asked to apply for Open Plus membership and the opportunity is used to explain that there will be no staff present but all other systems will be available.

Systems management – the system will turn on and safely shutdown the power for lights, alarm systems, computers, self-service kiosks and other systems required for the library.

System integration – all the systems are integrated door access, barriers, building lights, public access computers, self-service kiosks, cameras, and security alarms.

Security - Camera surveillance provides peace of mind for the library users and deters theft and vandalism. However it is not subject to live monitoring and we would need to consider the costs of monitoring and data management. CCTV also provides added security during times when the library is staffed and may deter incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Messaging – a PA system delivers pre-recorded or your own custom messages to patrons when opening and closing.

Staff support – libraries are not totally unstaffed for the week, Open plus compliments the core staffing allowing the library to open longer on days when staff are present and also on days when there may be no staff due to work on that day.

Open Plus in South Gloucestershire

Benefits to South Gloucestershire include:

- Enabling libraries to open additional days and times when there are no staff present, this will suit people whose personal lives do not allow them to use libraries in core hours (for example shift workers).
- With reduced staffed opening hours Open Plus will take pressure off these hours and spread usage across more hours.
- It will enable use of the library space by other staff and agencies who can be given the access card (e.g. PCSO, locality based staff, agencies who need space to meet clients).
- It will provide working space for lone workers who may currently work from home or coffee shops. It provides the potential of networking opportunities between this sector.

Risks /concerns and mitigation

	Risk / concern	Mitigation
1.	Damage to property and theft	The system is in use in over 200 libraries and this has not been reported as an issue. The system makes use of CCTV and any reported damage can be identified and the user identified for further action to be taken
2	Safeguarding of young people / adults	Young people below the age of 16 would not have membership (exceptions being accompanied children).
3	Making use of a building when other people are not present could be a deterrent to some users especially women	<p>The service will encourage groups to use the building during Open Plus times. This could include Community Learning classes, craft groups, reading groups, class visits</p> <p>It is felt that Open Plus will have high take up in those libraries located with other services (e.g. Patchway / Kingswood hubs</p>