

## SLS Research Report: Executive Summary

School Library Services (SLS) in England provide a range of exceptional services. Book loans underpin all areas of the curriculum across all phases. Advisory services support and enhance teacher knowledge and skills. The services provided by SLS cannot be found elsewhere and without them classrooms are impoverished. SLS offer value for money and should be supported at local and national level.

Forty three staff representing thirty-nine SLS responded to our survey.

**24 SLS are part of the Library Service in their area**, 6 part of the Education Service, 5 part of a different council service and 4 are independent.

36 SLS receive funds through **school subscription**. 11 SLS receive some **Local Authority** funding. Most SLS have multiple sources of income.

39 SLS provide a loan service for **primary schools**. 26 SLS provide a loan service for **secondary schools**.

The number of schools served by SLS ranges between **12 and 480**. The majority of SLS serve between 20 and 120 schools. The full time equivalent of staff employed by each SLS ranges from **1-19.6**.

**Book loans** are the most common service, followed by **advice and consultation, book awards and artefact loans**.

The **ratio of SLS staff** to number of schools served ranges from 1:7 to 1:43

### SLS strengths:

- *meeting school needs*
- *communication and relationships*
- *range and quality of resources*
- *range and quality of services*
- *high calibre staff*

### Opportunities to develop:

- *profile and reach*
- *service and stock*

**100%** of respondents agreed that their SLS contributed positively to teaching and learning.

**100%** agreed that users valued their service.

**75%** said that their SLS was valued in the local area.

**74%** said that their SLS was well resourced.

### Risks to SLS:

- *threats to financial security*
- *threats to service quality*
- *changing school contexts*

26% of respondents said that their SLS was adequately staffed

60% said that their SLS was financially secure in the short term

9% said that their SLS was financially secure in the long term,

### Key ingredients for a successful SLS



### Recommendations

**For SLS:** A number of different models are running successfully; we cannot recommend a 'one-size' SLS to fit all contexts as local opportunities and needs vary. Sharing best practice among an SLS network will likely be highly beneficial; a priority is to identify ways to raise the profiles of SLS in their local areas.

**For organisations representing SLS:** SLS offer support, advice and resources to schools that cannot be replicated elsewhere. SLS need support in building local networks and marketing their services; advocacy at national and local level is essential.

**For policy makers:** SLS offer excellent value for money and significantly support teaching, learning and curriculum delivery. Only a small proportion of SLS are confident that they are financially secure and therefore sustainable in the long term. If SLS are lost it will not be possible to replace them. They are a public service that should be maintained, promoted and valued for the expertise and resources they provide.