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# Libraries



## Phased re-opening of Essex libraries



You may have seen the [recent news](#) that we're preparing for a phased re-opening of libraries.

We're looking forward to welcoming you back, but safety of visitors and staff is paramount. All libraries will be prepared, and risk assessed before they re-open to allow customers and staff to maintain social distancing and stay safe. Once open, regular cleaning measures will be in place.

From Monday 6 July we will open 16 libraries, those which are co-located with Registration Offices. The libraries will initially offer a reduced service; customers will be able to return and borrow books only. Other services will be reviewed frequently so that they can be offered again as soon as it is safe to do so.

In line with Government guidance, visitor numbers will be limited to allow customers and staff to maintain social distancing and stay safe.

Further libraries will re-open as they are made safe and ready; with as many as possible opening by mid-August 2020. Since libraries were closed in March, we have seen a huge increase in demand for our [online library resources](#) and the number of people joining online to access these. We encourage people to continue to use these digital reading resources where possible.

We'll update you with further information on our plans and available services as they develop and will soon be updating our website with FAQs to answer any queries.

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## Build your empathy skills with Empathy Day, 9 June



Empathy is understanding and caring how someone else is feeling. It's an important skill that can help us in all parts of our lives.

Empathy Day on 9 June helps children build this vital skill; to understand and experience the power of empathy through books. Stories can train our brains to build real-life empathy skills. The more we empathise with characters, the more we can understand other people's feelings.

On Empathy Day we'll be sharing two special sessions that can help you start building empathy with your little ones. In the morning we'll have an Empathy Day rhymetime, a fun way to start talking with children about their feelings. In the afternoon we'll have an Empathy Day story time, where the book we'll be featuring will encourage children to explore and talk about characters' situations and feelings.

Empathy Lab will be running [online events](#) and fun home-based activities on their website on Empathy Day. You can also download their free [Empathy Day Family Activity Pack](#) available now. Look for our Empathy Day special rhymetime and story times on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube channels](#) on 9 June. Subscribe and follow us to see our latest videos as soon as they appear.

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## It's time to get silly, Summer Reading Challenge 2020 starts 5 June!

The Summer Reading Challenge 2020 launches on 5 June and this year we're getting silly! The theme is Silly Squad and every child aged 4 to 11 can take up this year's digital challenge. Sign your child up to the amazing new summer reading challenge website at [sillysquad.org.uk](http://sillysquad.org.uk) to start their summer of reading. Children can set their own reading goals and get rewards, play games and earn badges as they discover awesome books to read!

Anything they read counts and [our eLibrary](#) offers a wide variety to help them reach their reading goals. We've [e-books and e-audio](#) with many unlimited titles so you can download them now, no need to wait! There're also [e-comics](#) with over 1500 titles, from Marvel, Disney and other top publishers so it's good you can download as many as you want, whenever you want! Reading [our e-magazines](#) counts towards their reading goals too and we have a range of popular titles on gaming, comics, crafts and more. All this is available free with your Essex library card, so if you haven't already [register the whole family free online](#) now.

Join a host of famous faces on [Summer Reading Challenge Facebook page](#) for the "[Let's Get Silly](#)" [virtual launch event](#) on 5 June. From 4pm there'll be jokes, magic, readings, crafts and more from stars including CBBC's Sam and Mark, authors David Baddiel, Ben Fogle and Konnie Huq, and the BBC's Katie Thistleton and Hacker T Dog. Get the whole family involved this summer with getting silly and getting reading!

The Reading Agency and Libraries Present



Summer Reading Challenge 2020

[sillysquad.org.uk](http://sillysquad.org.uk)



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