

# CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT SWRLS CIO

The vision of the South Western Regional Library Services (SWRLS) CIO is

* Uniting, inspiring and collaborating across libraries, information services and cultural organisations in the South West

Its mission is to take “a strategic and partnership approach to serving our communities by developing staff, services and resources that are inclusive, sustainable and enhance learning”.

As such, SWRLS is focused on mediating staff, services and resources for the wider public benefit. As the only significant library cross-sector regional group remaining in England, SWRLS CIO is proud of its 80+ year history and keen to develop its partnerships and to further its strategic ambitions. Its members are currently all organisations within the library and information sector and pay an annual subscription fee.

Following a commissioned “fundamental review” of SWRLS’ purpose and activities, in 2016, the Board made a full-scale change to the charity status of the organisation. This resulted in a repurposing of the nature and priorities of the organisation in order to more fully reflect the changing nature of the environment in which libraries operate, and the concomitant needs of library staff and users. Its objects, now, more clearly articulate its role in supporting cultural activities, too (see below). Following a year characterised by pandemic SWRLS activities and ways of working have changed, to an extent, and it will be important to build on this to capitalise on what worked well, whilst resuming some in person events.

The SWRLS Co-ordinator will have the opportunity to use their local and/or sector knowledge to attract more members, partnerships and funding. Taking a project-based approach, and working with the Trustees, the Co-ordinator will help to create an increasingly vibrant community that works collaboratively for the benefit of all its member organisations. This will involve attending meetings of the region’s key library committees and groups to raise awareness of SWRLS and ensure it is operating to the benefit of all its members.

The main purpose is to develop strategic and operational relationships with libraries, information services and cultural organisations in the South West, through the management of a range of projects, in order to deliver SWRLS’ key priorities/strategic plan, with advice and guidance from the trustees.

## SWRLS offer

SWRLS aims to support and provide added value to libraries in the activities they are currently undertaking, and aspire to offer, for their users. To achieve this, the SWRLS offer covers five main areas.

The work of the SWRLS Co-ordinator is vital to this offer, as well as supporting bids and research that is advantageous to member libraries.

1. **Networking** includes information exchange and advice, sharing learning from projects, facilitating access to services, key contacts, support and expertise. This happens through the AGM/conference each November and the members’ day in April. It is also facilitated through the SWRLS discussion list and web site. A key priority for the Co-ordinator is to work with the Board to raise the profile of SWRLS further, e.g. through web and social media presence.
2. A number of **work force development/training** events are offered, each year, with reduced fees for members.  The Co-ordinator will lead on organising such events, in collaboration with the Board, and with other local training providers, in order to offer a complementary training provision for librarians within the region. This includes taking care to identify appropriate trainers and garnering ideas for training events through members’ suggestions.  Examples can be seen on the SWRLS web site.
3. All SWRLS member libraries are asked to engage in **interlending and document supply** free of charge to each other, within a policy framework that takes account of the workload and resources of the lending libraries.  There is an interlibrary loans sub group which comprises SWRLS members’ ILL experts and who meet up to discuss working practices and initiatives.
4. The SWRLS **grant scheme** provides funding for projects and individual training/development opportunities.  The Co-ordinator will manage the process carefully to ensure that it is fair and that the projects support SWRLS objects, encourage collaborative working and provide value for money. Examples of previous projects are available on the web site.
5. The SWRLS Co-ordinator will identify and work with potential **strategic partners**. For example, SWRLS works in partnership with Literature Works to support reader development initiatives within the region, contributing funding to projects in libraries that support readers across all library sectors.

## SWRLS CIO objects:

(1) The advancement of education for the benefit of the public by:

(a) Promoting cross sector co-operation between members.

(b) Promoting access to library collections and specialist knowledge.

(c) Providing a framework for the interlending of materials.

(d) Advancing the skills and knowledge of the workforce and their stakeholders.

(e) Facilitating a collaborative network to share best practice and excellence.

(2) The advancement of literature, knowledge and lifelong learning for the benefit of the public by promoting:

(a) Access to specialist resources.

(b) Cultural activities and partnerships.

(c) Access to data and information.

[www.swrls.org.uk](http://www.swrls.org.uk)