

20 July 2007

To Public Library Staff in the Education and Library Boards

Dear Colleague

LIBRARY AUTHORITY


You will be aware that the Minister for Education has announced a delay to the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority. Those of you who work in the public library service may be wondering how this affects you.

The legislation to establish the Library Authority is currently being considered by the Assembly. Subject to the agreement of the Assembly, it will repeal the libraries part of the Education and Library Board responsibilities, transferring those responsibilities, with their associated staff and assets, to the Library Authority, leaving the education responsibilities to be taken forward by the Education and Library Boards until the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority.

We are now moving to a situation where these two public services – education and libraries – will be delivered by their own dedicated bodies. Separating out the public library services of the five Education and Library Boards and combining them in a single service, to be delivered by the Library Authority, will be necessary to give effect to the decision of the Executive on libraries, and there is no reason not to move ahead with this, subject of course to the agreement of the Assembly.

We are still on course for the Library Authority to be operational by 1 April 2008. It is however a substantial piece of work. The DCAL Minister, Edwin Poots, during the Assembly debate on the legislation in June, paid tribute to the contribution of library staff in delivering the service over the past three decades. We will continue to rely on your professionalism and goodwill to ensure the service delivered by the Library Authority is the best we can achieve.

Yours sincerely



COLIN JACK
Director of Culture