

**THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM  
Business & Learning Services**

**Background**

The Library of Birmingham services include Lending, Reference and specialist services for children and young people, a Music Library, Business Library, the City Archive and Special Collections. The Library also acts as a gateway to wider services such as business support, job search, and health and supports tourism.

The Library of Birmingham is the most visited free attraction outside London with 1.7m visits pa and has totalled 6.8 million since opening in September 2013.

Birmingham has 38 Community Libraries that attract over 2m visits pa across the sites. The Mobile Library serves residents in neighbourhoods where people are geographically isolated from existing community library provision, people with limited transport or limited mobility.

During 2018, the Business & Learning team, working with the Mobile Library, aim to deliver mobile 'pop up' business and Intellectual Property advice surgeries, workshops and 1:1 business advice, targeting hard to reach groups; an innovative and unique way of delivering the business offer.

HMP Birmingham Prison Library Service is also managed through Birmingham Library Services, serving prisoners and their families by offering education through access to distance learning, qualifications, literacy and ESOL programmes. The Business team aims to deliver business advice and support to those looking to start a business once sentences are served.

**Business & Learning Service – access <https://youtu.be/gmka64C1344> to view our service and how the team have supported business start-ups!**

The Business & Learning team is the only team within Birmingham to offer a service to any person, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, postcode etc.; we do not turn anybody away and can offer the full range of services geared to individual ability through a clear, well defined service area with a 'Business Zone' and 'Learning Zone' catering for the needs of the whole community.

The main emphasis of our service is pre and start-up business support through dedicated workshops, 1:1 Business and Intellectual Property advice and participation in national initiatives such as Business Start-Up day and local business and Job Fairs.

For many aspiring Entrepreneurs, there is often the need to find employment whilst developing their IP or business idea. For this reason, a partnership has been formed with Prospects/National Careers Service who deliver much needed careers guidance services from the Business & IP Centre, contributing to enhancing our overall service offer.

The Library of Birmingham is part of the Business & IP Centre Network, co-ordinated by the British Library, consisting of six Central Libraries in addition to the Library of Birmingham and include Liverpool, Sheffield, Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds.

We are also members of the PATLIB UK Network, consisting of thirteen Local Authorities across the UK who offer IP advice. Our region covers Portsmouth/Plymouth in the South, up to Sheffield/Manchester in the North.

The Business Service also delivers a full enquiry service, comprehensive range of books and resources for loan, reference stock, free online courses, extensive online databases, business directories and free internet access.

The service engages with a wide range of external partners who deliver services to complement and enhance the Business & Learning service offer. Free legal advice covering debt, Contract, Consumer Law, Patent & Trademark legal advice plus workshops focussing on effective presentation skills, pitching your business idea, CV Master Class and Interview Skills delivered by Prospects/National Careers Service support those looking to start a business, or develop their overall skills. Birmingham Careers Service NEETs team also deliver weekly advice sessions from the Library of Birmingham, being the only central location offering advice and support to those not in employment, education or training.

Simon Topman, CEO of J. Hudson & Sons (ACME Whistles) serves as the Library of Birmingham Entrepreneur in Residence and delivers Business Master Class workshops and delivers 'motivational' business workshops as part of the 'First Steps into Business' two day workshop delivered by the team. In partnership with the Institute of Directors, we also deliver quarterly networking and 'Meet the Entrepreneur' evening seminars to encourage and support new and start-up businesses.

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#### **STATISTICS:**

Since opening in September 2013, the Library of Birmingham has attracted over 6 million visitors.

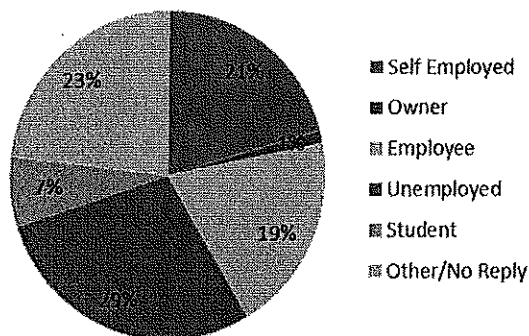
The **biggest benefits** of using the services delivered by the Library of Birmingham Business & Learning team are:

- 95% felt that free access to information and particularly business databases was the biggest benefit.
- 55% thought it was a 'one stop shop' for starting a business.
- 41% referred to other organisations.
- 40% gained confidence in setting up a business.
- 29% acquired new skills.
- 26% felt it was important to be with like-minded entrepreneurs.

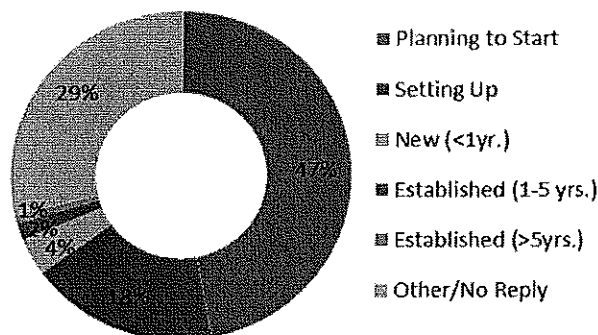
#### **Stats & Figures: April – March 2017:**

- 644 clients attended 1:1 Intellectual Property, Business Advice & Careers advice sessions
- 331 clients attended legal advice clinics
- 640 business 'outsourcing' enquiries – Creditsafe Reports & Mailing Lists
- 29,236 business website hits on the Library of Birmingham website (prior to moving to BCC)
- 183 Facebook Followers
- 1, 229 Twitter Followers

• Employment Status of Customers



Business Lifecycle



**Business & Learning Service Offer**

- Delivery of a comprehensive range of free business services to support pre and start up businesses through 1:1 advice sessions, seminars and workshops.
- SFEDI Qualified & IPO Master Class accredited staff – we are the only organisation in the West Midlands who offer this level of service.
- Workshops covering: First Steps into Business; Business Planning; Cash Flow Management; Market Research using Library Resources; Networking & Pitching your Business events, Public Speaking workshops.
- Business Databases to support business: eg COBRA, MINT UK & GLOBAL, MINTEL, Creditsafe,
- Business Outsourcing & Mailing Lists to support business growth
- Signposting to other organisations
- Dedicated internet and pc access plus self study resources and comprehensive Business Library
- Long opening hours: 40 per week Monday-Saturday.
- Access to a wide range of business journals.
- Promotion of businesses supported through The Library Shop.

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