

E-Book Lending By Public Libraries - BA Response to The Sieghart Review

The Booksellers Association is pleased that the Government has accepted the ground rules laid out by the Sieghart Review of E-Lending in Public Libraries. We particularly welcome the core principle that the loan of digital books should emulate the loan of print books, ie one book per loan and repurchasing after a certain number of loans.

Secondly, we welcome the view that any potential for digital loans leading to a purchase should be a relationship between the borrower and the publisher or a local bookseller and not the publicly funded library, as the Review states to 'support the development and sustainability of the high street'.

Thirdly, we have always supported the extension of PLR to digital books as laid out in the Digital Economy Act which the Review has recommended.

We accept that the remote lending of digital books was inevitable, but we suggest there should be a tight definition of 'library members' and that controls are put in place to ensure they are genuine and abide by the rules.

Remote e-book lending on a substantial scale by libraries has the potential to distort the marketplace. As publically funded organisations, safeguards should be put in place to ensure the taxpayer is not involved in distorting competitive markets.

Finally, booksellers and library suppliers would be happy to participate in the research and pilot programmes suggested in the Review with a view of finding outcomes that will be acceptable to all parties.

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