

### **The return of library materials by young people on the move**

1. There is a very small but significant group of children and young people who, either for periods in their life, or more permanently, do not live settled in one place.
2. This includes particularly Traveller & Gypsy children, looked-after children, and children from refugee and asylum-seeker families (some of whom will have arrived here as unaccompanied minors).
3. There is growing evidence (eg from library authorities that are working with young people in some or all of these groups; from some of the specific projects that have targeted looked-after young people) that libraries can play a significant part in these young people's lives (eg supporting leisure reading and other activities; study support).
4. Considerable effort is being put into promoting the use of library facilities to these young people and also to their parents and carers.
5. However, a major barrier still exists. What these three categories of young people have in common is that they are all liable to be moved without much notice – eg Traveller children will go with their families to where there is work; placements of looked-after young people frequently change; and refugee and asylum-seeking children are frequently moving, especially depending on their eventual status.
6. The issue of return of these items then arises. Some public libraries take a relaxed attitude towards this, and are keen that the children and young people borrow library materials and therefore, when a young person from another authority arrives in their area, are happy to make the arrangements to return stock to the originating library.
7. However, some libraries still see the need to recharge the originating library for postal costs, for example – this attitude does not encourage library staff to receive back library materials from elsewhere.
8. **Therefore, the proposal is that children and young people who are Travellers, looked-after or refugees/asylum-seekers – and their parents/carers – be allowed to return library materials to any library in the UK (also without overdue charges being made), and that the library will then make arrangements to return the items to the originating library free-of-charge.**