

# **Boyack says libraries need to open**

**Scottish Labour has today warned of a 'connectivity crisis' for elderly people and can reveal that, as at 16 December, only 40 per cent of Scotland's public libraries were open for business – with the remaining libraries in mainland Scotland set to shut under Level Four restrictions.**

Libraries play a vital role in local communities, with elderly people relying on computer services to pay bills and access the internet.

Scores of libraries across Scotland have been closed due to the pandemic, with eight local authorities reporting no open libraries at the time of the enquiry.

Scottish Labour calls on The Scottish Government to provide local councils with the support they need to ensure elderly people are not isolated with no access to the internet.

Scottish Labour local government spokesperson Sarah Boyack said: "Libraries are at the heart of local communities and play a vital role in the lives of elderly people in particular.

"I have had elderly constituents contact me in distress over

their inability to access library services, leading to worries over bill payments and social interaction.

“Regretfully public health measures have necessitated the closure of some libraries, but much more needs to be done to ensure elderly people are not isolated and unable to access the internet. Libraries also allow those without computers at home to access the internet, and with it vital services such as GP appointments and social security services.

“It’s time for the SNP government to face up to this connectivity crisis and support local authorities to ensure that our elderly people are able to get by during this pandemic.”

Edinburgh had opened 29% of its libraries – behind Glasgow City Council which had reopened 33% of its 33 libraries.

City of Edinburgh Council	35	10	29%	Home Delivery service continues to deliver library books to our most	council owned
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Edinburgh Central Library is one of those which had reopened. Photo: Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)