

Laser Foundation Libraries Impact Project

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Foreword

Professor FW Bullock, Chair of Project Steering Group

This work was commissioned by the Laser Foundation in response to the perceived urgent need for the public library sector to be able to demonstrate to local and national government the scale of its contribution to the interests of society. No previous study has attempted to define and measure in a reproducible way the full impact that libraries have in influencing and supporting their local communities and, in addition, produced robust data to confirm its findings. The study by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), reported here, not only provides such data over a restricted set of pilot authorities, but also defines methodologies that are widely applicable over the sector. Their implementation will provide a valuable framework within which libraries can assess the effectiveness of their services, can drive improvements, and progressively demonstrate their beneficial impact on local communities.

We have worked closely with those working on the DCMS Impact Measures, which are expected to form part of the CPA next year. The work reported here is complementary to, but separate from, the DCMS measures, which allow scope for authorities to add local indicators. The present work will be very useful in this context as well as reinforcing the methodology. It is intended to assist library authorities in developing their impact measures and understanding how they might most effectively be used.

The Steering Group would like to thank those library authorities that participated in this work for their perceptive and useful comments throughout the project. In addition, we would like to thank the Laser Foundation for funding the work, and those individuals across the sector who spent time discussing with PwC staff involved in the work the issues and themes that were highlighted by the project.

Steering Group

Professor FW Bullock, Chair
Frances Hendrix (Laser Foundation)
Adrian Olsen (LB Southwark and SCL)
Barry George (Bedfordshire CC and SCL)
Brian King (Audit Commission)
David Lightfoot (Lancashire CC)
Keith Gibbins (DCMS)

Pilot authorities

Birmingham
Bournemouth
Cambridgeshire
Gateshead
Lancashire
Newham
Slough

From Professor Mark Hepworth, Director, Local Futures

Beyond the drive towards efficiency savings, the UK Government is increasingly concerned with the wider contribution of public institutions to social and economic development. The role of public libraries, the subject of this Laser Foundation report, is a case in point: what impact does the library service have on the shared priorities between central and local government?

This report proposes methodologies and measures for quantifying the impacts of public libraries in relation to four particular Government priority areas – children, education, health and older people. Based on desk research and the results of piloting the methodologies in seven English libraries, the report argues that libraries make a clear and measurable contribution to wider policy priorities at both the local and national level. The DCMS, MLA and other key partners are invited to build on the report's analysis and recommendations for further work on the important topic of impact assessment in public services more generally.

The report is undoubtedly timely given the current political debate on the role of public libraries, and in light of the Audit Commission's findings that library visits have recently soared, though book borrowing has waned. What does this paradox imply for the future of libraries, given that the Government's position is that libraries exist largely to promote reading as a universal cultural pursuit? But are books everything?

The research in this report – and its wider consideration of how libraries contribute to 'social well being' – supports the argument that in this day and age we should not look at libraries exclusively as free 'book shops', or 'book warehouses' or as promoters of 'book reading'. Books are not everything, and book-borrowing indicators should not be used as the prime measure of how libraries contribute to local and national priorities. This is a key message from the Laser Foundation report – more complex measures and methodologies are needed to properly capture the social benefits of library services. Moreover this type of impact assessment should be extended to economic development – what do libraries contribute to national, regional and local *economic* priorities?

The power of context is everything. Today we must look at the role of libraries in the context of the knowledge economy – the Government's vision for the country, and the unifying idea behind its long list of national and local priorities for the economy and communities. This is the exciting challenge facing the sector, a century and a half on from the opening of the first public library in London.

Executive Summary

Background to the project

The following report describes the work and findings of the Libraries Impact Project commissioned by the Laser Foundation in 2004. The focus of the project reflects a wide-ranging and continuing debate in the libraries and the wider cultural services sectors around how services can demonstrate a broader impact on, and important contribution to, a wide range of local and national priorities.

Internationally, there has been further recognition, for example through the US National Information Standards Organisation, of the “critical need for systemic data collection and a pressing need for guidelines for collecting qualitative and performance data”. In commissioning the project, the Laser Foundation has sought to respond to this need and to provide a practical solution to it.

The focus of the project

As part of the project, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) was asked to establish how to develop and use measures to enable a library service to identify its impact on any of four of the shared priorities between central and local government (children, education, health and older people). While the specific focus of these shared priorities may change over time, the policy areas to which they relate are likely to remain a priority for future governments and, as a result, the focus of the project should be relevant and sustainable in the longer term.

In the project, we have developed a series of measures that offer a transferable framework for adoption by library authorities to allow them to demonstrate the distinctive contribution that libraries make to a range of policy areas at local and national level. Throughout the work, we have sought to link the measures that have been developed to established library activities in the relevant shared priority areas as well as the central and local government policies and targets that underpin each of the shared priority themes.

The use of these measures is supported by the detailed methodologies that were developed in the project. In this way, we have sought to provide a practical tool for library management and staff to measure the impact of their work and to support service improvement.

Using the impact measures and methodologies

The methodologies have been designed to offer a clear and robust framework, based on the experience of pilot authorities supporting the project, to allow practical and consistent use of the measures across local authorities. The methodologies will thus support library authorities in the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data for the shared priority themes covered by the project.

The use of the measures and methodologies, linked to the use of wider frameworks such as Inspiring Learning for All and the key priorities of Every Child Matters, should support the development of an increasingly powerful evidence base to demonstrate at local and national level how public libraries can have a significant influence on the delivery of wider government priorities and the achievement of related targets. The development of such an evidence base should help to exert an influence in a range of contexts, by informing thinking across government about the possible future role of libraries and, potentially, in supporting the case for resources and suggesting a profile for local authority library services which reflects the wider contribution that they can make.

Libraries make a clear contribution to the shared priorities

In the course of our work, we found evidence of a clear and measurable contribution made by libraries to wider policy priorities at both local and national level. We believe that this evidence forms part of the case for the continued and meaningful involvement of libraries in these policy areas.

The quantitative and qualitative data collected by the pilot authorities in using the measures highlight a significant contribution, in line with government priorities, to the development of adult skills and child literacy in the **education** and **children** shared priority areas. The data demonstrate a clear contribution to government objectives on patient and public involvement in **health**. For **older people**, the data show an impact in a range of themes around quality of life and general well-being, as well as national policy priorities on strengthening independent living.

The value of impact measures

By using the measures and methodologies, libraries can position themselves to show that they can deliver positive outcomes and that they have a meaningful role to play in each of these policy areas. In relation to older people, this may be as part of a mixed economy of welfare providers. In health, this may come through support for new forms of primary care as access to health information and resources become increasingly important in the context of informed patient choice. In relation to education and children, this is likely to involve demonstrating the existing and ongoing link that libraries have with the “child centred aims” from “Every Child Matters”, which underpin the Children Act 2004, and in underlining libraries’ support for improved educational outcomes for both children and adults. It is particularly important to link data collection in all of these areas to service improvement at both local and national level.

The experience of pilot authorities described in Section 3 offers a number of examples of how data can be used in a practical way to develop and deliver increasingly effective service provision. The experience of pilot authorities suggests a range of benefits to

library services in developing approaches to impact measurement in:

- **Focusing attention** on the need to show evidence of how libraries engage with a range of policy areas;
- **Demonstrating the value** of conducting focused research with customers;
- **Providing powerful data** and information to advocate the role and work of libraries;
- **Linking with cultural change** by encouraging a culture of focused evidence gathering among staff;
- **Supporting planning and service improvement** by providing data that can be used to reflect service performance and to make informed decisions about future priorities.

Supporting wider initiatives

The project should be seen as distinct from, but in the context of, a number of current related activities and developments. In particular, the Advisory Council on Libraries (ACL) has commissioned work to develop revised library standards which resulted in the suggested DCMS impact measures that were launched in March 2005 for initial collection by libraries in financial year 2005-06.

The Libraries Impact Project has influenced this wider work in relation to DCMS impact measures and adds to that initial framework by providing through the measures, methodologies and data further practical examples to show how approaches to measuring impact can be developed in other library authorities. In particular, by setting out the key themes which authorities should consider in collecting data, our work should add value in supporting local authorities in developing local approaches to impact measurement. To this end, we believe that the measures should be suitable for use in all library authorities and that they offer library authorities and staff a practical means of demonstrating their impact in any of these policy areas.

The next steps

The report contains key messages for a range of audiences including library staff themselves, other local authority staff, elected members and government departments. As well as supporting the development of an evidence base at local and national level, the use of the measures and methodologies offers a further means of collecting evidence to support external scrutiny, particularly through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process.

In showing how these lessons from our work can be transferred to other library authorities, the project presents a clear and up to date picture of how libraries can change people's lives at the moment. The project shows how libraries can demonstrate this further in future. As such, it is an informed further step in the development of impact measures for public libraries. However, we recognise that there is scope for further work to develop further approaches to measuring impact and set out a number of recommendations to this end in the report.

1. Development of impact measures

What are the impact measures we identified?

As we describe in more detail in setting out our approach in Appendix A, the process of identifying possible impact measure areas was strongly based on existing library activities in the shared priority areas on which the study is focusing. We also drew upon the input of the project Steering Group, desk-based research, a more detailed policy analysis around the four shared priority areas covered by the study, existing evidence of libraries' contribution in the shared priority areas and reports showing the value of, for example, reading such as the OECD report "Reading for Change" (found at www.oecd.org).

As well as basing the measures we identified on the range of activities undertaken by libraries, we also sought to identify themes that have a high priority for both central and local government under each of the shared priority headings. We were also mindful of a need to avoid, as far as possible, cutting across existing evaluation frameworks if these were felt to be relevant and appropriate to the development of impact measures.

Education

For *education*, we identified two specific themes based on the impact on pupils of summer reading schemes (or homework clubs/study support) based in libraries and in relation to the impact on adults – that is, the post 16 population in general - of library services supporting adult education. This led us to develop two measures:

- The impact on adults (post 16 population) of library services supporting adult education by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered and
 - Qualitative data linked to, for example, the impact on confidence and qualifications or attainment.
- The impact of libraries on pupils attending summer reading schemes or homework clubs/study support based in libraries by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of participants and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participants.

Children

In relation to *children*, we focused on the impact of library activities supporting children and families (for example, activities related to wider programmes including Sure Start and family learning):

- The impact of library activities supporting children and families (including, for example, Sure Start and family learning activities) by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered by activities and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participant literacy and confidence.

Health

For *health*, we examined the impact of libraries in supporting public health in relation to the provision of a range of health information through libraries with additional reference to qualitative information showing the contribution that libraries can make to health and well being

- The impact of widening access to health information by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data on the number (or %) of adults accessing health information through libraries, through bookstock and ICT, supplemented by
 - Qualitative data (including support for well-being) gathered through survey information or interviews.

Older people

For *older people*, we looked at the impact of libraries' work with older people in two areas – access to library services in the home and access through libraries to information on entitlements (for example to benefits and services) – with a similar approach to gathering qualitative information to that used in the health priority area:

- The impact on older people of receiving library services in the home by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people receiving the service and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews of users.
- The impact of libraries on older people accessing information on entitlements to benefits and services including:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people accessing information and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews.

In all cases, we developed approaches to showing impact in relation to these activities based on both quantitative and qualitative data under each of the measure headings. Our subsequent work to collect data and develop methodologies to show the impact of libraries was strongly informed by the engagement of a group of pilot authorities who have made a significant contribution to the project.

Section 3 and Appendix B set out in detail the data collected by the pilot authorities.

2. Methodologies for use of the impact measures in library authorities

Introduction

This chapter sets out in detail the methodologies to support the wider use of the impact measures outlined in Section 1. The methodologies have been developed in the light of the experience of pilot authorities in using the measures, the lessons learnt from the quantitative and qualitative data collection in pilot authorities and the wider research that was carried out as part of the project. This work highlighted the importance of supplementing quantitative data with qualitative data to demonstrate more clearly the impact on individual library users (or on groups of users) of accessing library provision and activities.

Using the methodologies

We set out below for each of the shared priority areas proposed methodologies that can be used by library authorities in demonstrating their own contribution to wider local and national policy priorities. In this way, the measures and methodologies will give practical support and impetus to wider work to demonstrate the impact of libraries. They also reflect the need to collect robust and meaningful data as part of, for example, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.

When using the measures and methodologies, library authorities should also consider how the data that they collect could be linked to existing frameworks, such as Inspiring Learning for All framework and the related Generic Learning Outcomes, which offer a consistent template to support the wider use of quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, library authorities should consider carefully how the data that they collect can provide useful information and learning to assess services and to drive improvements. Where possible, the data collected by authorities should thus be linked to local performance targets and expectations.

Each of the methodologies recommends an approach and focus for the collection of *quantitative* data and recommends a series of themes and questions on which other library authorities can base their own approaches to *qualitative* data collection in the context of the measures we have defined.

Methodologies for measuring impact on education

Measure

- The impact on adults (post 16 population) of library services supporting adult education by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered and
 - Qualitative data linked to, for example, the impact on confidence and qualifications or attainment.

The measure and methodology does not assume that an authority is operating formal learning sessions under the requirements of Learndirect or other external funding bodies which require detailed learner information to be maintained in an Individual Learner Record, although this was the case with the two pilot authorities. However, we recognise that the use of the measure will be simpler where an authority is required to collect such quantitative data and where there are opportunities to survey groups of learners in collecting qualitative data.

The experience of pilot authorities suggests that quantitative data can be particularly useful in developing a baseline understanding of the level of demand for particular courses and activities and the related progress of participants. In addition, quantitative data in relation to progression can offer an important means of showing how provision through libraries can support the development of adult learners, in line with a range of significant local and national priorities and targets.

While the use of the measure is likely to require more work for authorities that operate learning centres in a less formal way, the principles set out in the methodology will support them in developing more extensive approaches to recording data to demonstrate their impact. For other authorities who do not yet undertake this type of work but who plan to in future, the use of the measures and methodologies will support them in considering the data that they will need to collect in this context.

Quantitative data

In this context, we recommend that library authorities should record *quantitative* data for their adult education activities under as many as possible of the following headings. Depending on the type of provision that the authority delivers we recognise that not all categories may be relevant or recordable:

Data on the scope or type of provision (how provision links to national or local priorities)

- Total number of learners;
- Total number of courses or activities;
- Breakdown of the number of learners (by number (and/or %) of learners) by the type of course or activity – for example, ICT Courses or Basic Skills courses;
- The number (and/or %) of learners completing the course or activity;
- The number (and/or %) of learners withdrawing from the course or activity;
- The number (and/or %) of learners progressing to other courses or activities.

Information on the demographic and socio-economic profile of learners (link to the authority's community profile)

- The age of learners (grouped by the authority by number and/or % of learners under age band headings);
- The gender of learners by number (and/or %) of learners;
- The ethnicity of learners by number (and/or %) of learners (collected under consistent ethnicity headings such as Labour Force Survey groups – White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, Other Ethnic Group);
- The number (and/or %) of learners with disabilities;
- The number (and/or %) of learners who are library members;
- The employment status of learners.

Qualitative data

To supplement the above quantitative data, and to show more clearly the impact on individual library users (or on groups of users) of accessing such provision and activities, library authorities should aim to collect *qualitative* data for their adult education activities under as many as possible of the following headings. Depending on the type of provision that the authority delivers we recognise that not all categories may be relevant or recordable:

- What did the learner want to learn from the activity?
- What were the learner's aims in undertaking the activity?

In addition to these two open ended questions, authorities should aim to collect qualitative data under the following headings to show the extent to which provision meets learners' needs:

- The quality of the induction which the learner received;
- Whether the learner received the training that they required;
- The learner's view of the quality of the course;
- Whether the learner felt that they achieved their aims;
- Whether the learner would like to undertake another course.

These headings can be supplemented by further questions linked to customer satisfaction in relation to:

- The quality of support provided by staff; and
- The facilities that were available to learners.

Measure

- The impact of libraries on pupils attending summer reading schemes or homework clubs/study support based in libraries by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of participants and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participants.

Methodology

In relation to summer reading activities, the Reading Agency evaluation framework, based on Inspiring Learning for All, to support the evaluation of the Summer Reading Challenge provides a consistent and widely used methodology for the collection of quantitative data covering registrations and completions, along with the age breakdown and gender of participants. This approach was used by Slough in its 2003 and 2004 evaluations of its Summer Reading Challenge, with Cambridgeshire adopting a similar approach, based on the MLA/Reading Agency “Their Reading Futures” framework, in the evaluation of its 2004 summer reading activities. Our work with pilot authorities, and wider research, suggests that as such approaches become increasingly well established, the use of such national templates offers a practical and consistent framework through which local authorities can collect quantitative data in particular. As a result, we would recommend the use of these frameworks as a starting point for library authorities when using this measure.

The *quantitative* data which was collected by both pilot authorities in the context of their summer reading activities was supplemented by a range of *qualitative* data, with particular focus on capturing the views of the parents/carers and the children participating in activities. As with the quantitative data, we recommend that library authorities should use the approaches set out in the above national frameworks to support and develop the collection of this *qualitative* data in relation to two themes in particular:

- The satisfaction of participants (or their parents/carers and teachers) with provision;
- The perceived impact on participants’ reading (linked to, for example, indications of improved reading, confidence and motivation and enjoyment).

Consistent approaches to measuring the impact of homework clubs and study support in libraries appear to be less well developed at national level, and we believe that there is merit in further research being undertaken into the impact of homework clubs in libraries in terms of the attainment at Key Stages of pupils attending such provision. Here, approaches that have been adopted in evaluating the impact of wider forms of study support, as well as the Inspiring Learning for All framework, are likely to be instructive in developing a more consistent framework for use by libraries.

Methodology for measuring impact on children

Measure

- The impact of library activities supporting children and families (including, for example, Sure Start and family learning activities) by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered by activities and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participant literacy and confidence.

In addressing the possible impact of libraries in a number of contexts linked to children and families, including support to younger children through a range of reading related activities and provision of outreach activities to support children and families, the measure shows a clear relationship with the methodology which has been developed for use in relation to libraries' role in supporting education and lifelong learning. As a result, there is scope to use the methodologies in combination to demonstrate clearly the breadth of the support that libraries can provide to participants of all age ranges and from all parts of the community, enabling reference as appropriate to the authority's community profile.

Quantitative data

In this context, we recommend that library authorities should record *quantitative* data for their activities to support children and families under as many as possible of the following headings. Depending on the type of provision that the authority delivers we recognise that not all categories may be relevant or recordable:

Data on the scope or type of provision (how provision links to national or local priorities)

- Total number of participants;
- Total number of courses or activities;
- Breakdown of the number of participants (by number (and/or %)) by the type of activity – for example, family reading activities;
- The number (and/or %) of participants completing the activity;
- The number (and/or %) of participants withdrawing from the course or activity;
- The number (and/or %) of participants undertaking other activities delivered through the library.

Information on the demographic and socio-economic profile of learners/young readers (linked to the authority's community profile)

- The age of participants (grouped by the authority by number (and/or %) of learners under age band headings);
- The gender of participants by number (and/or %) of participants;
- The ethnicity of participants by number (and/or %) of learners (collected under consistent ethnicity headings such as Labour Force Survey groups – White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, Other Ethnic Group);

- The number (and/or %) of participants with disabilities;
- The number (and/or %) of participants who are library members;
- The employment status of parents/carers participating in activities.

Qualitative data

The experience of the project highlights the importance of developing an effective method of collecting qualitative data that can easily capture children's views of the events that they participate in. For some activities, such as those as those linked to national programmes such as the summer reading challenge, the evaluation may be supported by existing national templates and well developed approaches which can meet the need to be effective for a wide age range of children and young people.

In this context, we recommend that evaluations should be carried out promptly at the end of activities with the aim of avoiding disruption to the sessions themselves. Where data collection requires library staff (and other partners such as teachers) to capture children's comments on evaluation forms there is a clear need to offer appropriate training and support to staff in how to deliver any evaluation that is undertaken.

The *quantitative* data, which was collected by the pilot authority in the context of its activities to support children and families, was supplemented by a range of *qualitative* data with a particular focus on capturing the views of the parents/carers and the children participating in activities.

Based on the experience of the project, we recommend that library authorities should collect *qualitative* data in relation to three themes in particular:

- the satisfaction of participants (and their parents/carers and/or teachers) with activities;
- the perceived impact on participants' reading (linked to, for example, indications of improved reading, confidence and motivation and enjoyment);
- the wider perceived benefits for children and families participating in activities (in relation to, for example, confidence and health and well-being).

Drawing on the methodology which we have set out above, we believe that there is scope to develop a broad national template, linked to wider frameworks such as Inspiring Learning for All, to support authorities in collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The experience of the project highlights the value of capturing the qualitative comments received from individual children, parents/carers and teachers, as this data can be particularly important in underlining the breadth of views of participants and the benefits to them of engaging in library activities.

Methodology for measuring impact on health

Measure

- The impact of widening access to health information by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data on the number (or %) of adults accessing health information through libraries, through bookstock and ICT, supplemented by
 - Qualitative data (including support for well-being) gathered through survey information or interviews.

The use of the measure and methodology will support library authorities in collecting quantitative and qualitative data to show the possible impact of libraries on a number of health related themes. In this context, the measure can be used in relation to the range of support that libraries can offer to individuals and communities in accessing health information and, in addition, the methodology is designed to address the broader theme of libraries' contribution to "well-being", which has been the subject of significant debate and previous research at local and national level.

Quantitative data

In using the measure, we recommend that library authorities should consider collecting quantitative data in relation to *bookstock* based on issue statistics.

The experience of the project suggests that *quantitative* data related to issue statistics can be useful in developing a baseline understanding of the level of demand for, and related trends around, health related information. This quantitative data can be based on issue statistics at authority, branch and, for example, homebound service level and, depending on local practice and need, grouped in terms of broad headings or in terms of, for example, classification numbers relating to a range of health topics. We are encouraged that such an approach has been adopted as part of the development of DCMS impact measures so that the usefulness of such data at local and national level can be explored and evaluated in more detail.

While this data can be useful in establishing a better understanding of local access to, and demand for, resources related to health topics, and thus support informed decisions on stock purchase in these areas, the experience of the project highlights the importance of supplementing this data with qualitative information which examines more clearly the impact on individual library users (or on groups of users) of accessing such information.

Qualitative data – Surveys relating to libraries' impact on health and well being

As a result, we recommend that library authorities should undertake, where appropriate, survey activities with library users linked to the public health themes covered by the measure. Based on the experience of the project, we suggest that these should be undertaken through discrete survey activities, via questionnaires administered by staff at individual libraries, with a random sample of library users or through the addition of questions linked to health issues to existing surveys or questionnaires. The experience of pilot authorities indicates that assisted interviews, with library staff carrying out the survey, provided more detailed responses than stand-alone questionnaires.

Based on this experience, we recommend that such surveys in other library authorities should cover as many as possible of the following *quantitative* data themes:

- Levels of access by library users to health related material;
- The type of health material accessed (for example bookstock, leaflets or the internet); and
- The numbers of respondents indicating that the library service contributes positively to their health or well-being.

In addition, we recommend that the approach developed through these surveys and questionnaires should focus on a number of areas of *qualitative* data, which offer an important additional level of detail in understanding libraries' impact on respondents in relation to a number of health themes. To that end, we suggest that surveys should also contain questions covering:

- The usefulness and value of the health related information provided by libraries;
- How the information was used;
- The contribution of the library to health and well-being.

Appendix C contains an example of a survey template, based on the approach used by Gateshead MBC, which explores the themes which we have set out above. Based on the experience of the pilot authorities, we believe that the use of this template could allow other library authorities to develop their understanding of their impact in relation to wider public health issues. To this end, there is scope to develop a national approach to gathering survey information in line with the themes that we have set out above.

Methodology for measuring impact on older people

Measures

- The impact on older people of receiving library services in the home by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people receiving the service and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews of users.
- The impact of libraries on older people accessing information on entitlements to benefits and services including:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people accessing information and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews.

Context of methodology

The use of the measure and methodology will support library authorities in collecting quantitative and qualitative data to show their impact in a number of areas of support to older people. This relates in particular to the range of support that libraries can offer to individuals and communities through both outreach services and activities in libraries themselves. In addition, as with the health measure, the methodology relates to the broader theme of libraries' contribution to well-being.

In describing the methodology below, we therefore recommend approaches to collecting quantitative and qualitative data which will allow library authorities to better understand and demonstrate their own contribution to supporting older people. In this context, the experience of the project suggests that qualitative data is particularly important in setting out the important role that libraries can play for many older people.

Quantitative data

In using the measures, we recommend that library authorities should collect quantitative data in relation to:

- The numbers of older people accessing services for homebound users (in terms of numbers of visits to homebound users, frequency of visits and issues).

In addition, to demonstrate the breadth of their support for older people, we recommend that library authorities should consider collecting quantitative data in relation to:

- The numbers of older people attending activities in libraries (for example, reading groups for older people, "Silver Surfer" IT courses or pensions advice sessions).

This quantitative data, which is likely to be transferable to other library authorities undertaking similar activities, and which may already be collected in relation to specific activities, can be useful in establishing a better understanding of older people's access to, and demand for, library services. However, the experience of the project shows that it is important to supplement this data with qualitative information which examines more clearly the impact on individual library users (or on groups of users) of accessing library

services. As a result, we recommend that library authorities should undertake, where appropriate, survey activities with library users linked to themes covered by the measure.

Qualitative data

While the quantitative data to which we refer above may already be collected, the collection of qualitative data through survey activities may present a greater challenge. It is likely to require staff to focus on two areas in particular in developing local survey activities, through the preparation of appropriate surveys and the coordination of the survey, by one or more members of library staff.

Importantly, the experience of pilot authorities suggests that survey activities can be undertaken without a significant impact on staff time when they are completed in conjunction with the functions of providing the service. Indeed, the activity of carrying out the survey may in itself enhance the relationship between the library service and user. The recommended approaches to undertaking surveys, which are set out below, have thus been developed with these key themes in mind.

The experience of the project suggests that the results of user surveys can provide meaningful *quantitative* data in relation to the numbers of users expressing a particular view of:

- How the service from the library has made a difference to or improved the user's life;
- How the service better enables the user to live independently.

Importantly, these surveys provide the opportunity to develop and document a more detailed understanding of user reactions to, and reflections on, the impact of library services on their daily lives.

In relation to *homebound users*, we recommend that library authorities should collect, as appropriate, qualitative data through questions focusing on the following broad themes, the wording of which can be amended to reflect local need:

- Does the service from the library improve your life in any way?
- Do you feel that this service better enables you to live independently?

For the first question, staff in pilot authorities noted the benefit of offering a number of appropriate prompts to support users in responding related to, for example, social benefits, communication and links to the community, access to bookstock and resources, learning or education or supporting confidence.

In addition, we recommend that questions based around the following themes can also be used by a service in developing its understanding of how it could offer further support to older people:

- Please describe anything which could improve the service which you receive at the moment;
- Would you be interested in joining (for example) a reading group?

In relation to participants attending activities in libraries, for example through “Silver Surfer” IT sessions, pilot authorities used surveys to gather qualitative information under the following headings. We believe that these questions would be suitable for adaptation and use in other library authorities:

- Has attendance at the sessions helped participants in their day-to-day life in relation to career prospects, knowledge, self-confidence and communication with friends and family?
- How often did participants use computers before the session or course?
- Has attendance at the sessions encouraged participants to use IT (internet, e-mail, word processing) more frequently?
- What have participants used the internet for since the session or course (for example, to use e-mail, to find council information, to find local information, to look for health information, to contact family or relatives)?
- Has attendance at the sessions led participants to use any other services offered by the library?

In relation to the provision of, for example, library based information points for other services or pension advice surgeries, we believe that the following questions, which were developed by pilot authorities, would be suitable for adaptation and use in other library authorities:

- Has the visit to the session or information point in the library helped the respondent in any way?
- Has the location of the session or information point in the library made the respondent more likely to use the service?
- Has the visit to the session or information point in the library led the respondent to use any of the other services offered by the library?

Based on the experience of the pilot authorities, we believe that the use of these questions would be useful in supporting other library authorities in developing their understanding of their impact in relation to wider issues of support for older people. To this end, we believe that there would be merit in developing and agreeing an appropriate national template, including, for example, a mixture of core and discretionary questions, which could be implemented locally where appropriate. The development of a national survey design may also be beneficial in reducing the burden on staff undertaking surveys and the duplication of effort between authorities.

3. How the data collected by pilot authorities demonstrates impact in the “shared priority” areas

Introduction

In this section, we summarise the key themes arising from the quantitative and qualitative data collected by the pilot authorities supporting the study. At the end of the section, we show how pilot authorities have used impact measurement in developing their services.

The pilot authorities we have worked with were chosen to give a selection comprising different sizes, authority types and geographical locations. The full list of pilots, listed alongside the shared priority area in which they have supported the study, is as follows:

- Birmingham – children
- Bournemouth – older people
- Cambridgeshire – education
- Gateshead – health
- Lancashire – older people
- Newham – health
- Slough – education

The data collected by the pilot authorities provides a valid and robust demonstration of the contribution of a range of activities in the pilot authorities to a number of shared priority themes. While we have not carried out a formal audit of the data provided by the pilot authorities, we believe that it shows a sufficiently clear range of meaningful examples of the contribution that libraries can demonstrate to wider policy themes. In addition, there is a sufficient breadth of robust data across the four shared priority themes to give a clear starting point for the use of the measures and methodologies in other library authorities.

Appendix B describes in detail the data collected, listed in the relevant shared priority area and under the relevant impact measure heading, to show the impact of the activities to which the data relates.

What does the data demonstrate?

We summarise below the key themes highlighted by the data to offer clear examples of how the measures can be used to demonstrate libraries' impact on individuals and communities in each of the shared priority areas.

Education

In relation to the *education* measures, the quantitative and qualitative data which was collected by both pilot authorities demonstrates how the measure can be used to show the impact of library services on a number of *adult education* policy themes. The qualitative data provides evidence of the breadth of provision (and the link to particular targeted groups) in both local authorities and supports the model for data collection which is set out in the methodology in Section 2.

In relation to specific courses and activities, and in particular in relation to IT and basic skills activities, the qualitative data shows that participants felt that provision was seen to be beneficial in two significant ways, as it was both enjoyable and helped them to develop their skills further. The following quotes are illustrative of wider participant comments:

I did find this course was more informative than others I have done, it was easier to understand. The staff have been extremely helpful and friendly and always able to answer my queries.

As I have never used a typewriter or word processor this course has enabled me to start using a computer and changed my attitude towards computer work in general, as until I began this course I felt that it was all too advanced and beyond my capability. I now feel sufficiently confident to progress further.

I am no longer afraid of computers as the course was excellent – a real worthwhile hands-on experience.

In addition, the qualitative data gathered by Slough in its recent survey work to better understand what customers can “learn” by visiting the library indicated a broad range of areas in which respondents felt that they had gained through their visit to the library. Responses reflected three broad themes: education and study or work, entertainment and general information (including, for example, home/DIY and travel). For example, when reflecting on their visits, respondents noted that:

(My mother) finds the library a lifesaver as (she) meets friends here as well as borrowing books. Also taught mother how to use the internet to look up information that she may need – really enjoyed it.

I gained valuable work-related information and useful troubleshooting material needed to revive my ailing home computer.

I learnt parenting tips and information on pregnancy.

By showing the value that users attach to the core library service, this type of qualitative data can be extremely useful in developing a more systematic evidence base at a local level about the value of visits to libraries themselves. In combination with qualitative and quantitative data relating to specific adult learning activities, this information can be used to develop a powerful statement of the tangible benefits that libraries can provide for individuals and communities.

For *summer reading schemes*, the measure and underpinning data collected by the pilot authorities reflects a wide ranging activity and is based on national evaluation frameworks; it should thus be applicable to and replicable across many other library authorities. The use of the measure, underpinned by the methodology and national evaluation frameworks, should allow meaningful comparison of data over time and allow evidence of libraries' contribution to be built up over a number of years.

The qualitative data collected by pilot authorities reflects three themes in particular: *enjoyment, confidence and motivation and indications of improved reading*. These areas show a clear link to the themes and priorities that have been identified nationally in relation to Every Child Matters (*"be healthy; be safe; enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society; and experience economic well-being"*).

In the context of libraries' work in the education and children shared priorities themes, it is increasingly important for libraries to relate both quantitative and qualitative data collection for both areas to the key priorities from Every Child Matters. The following quotes from parents/carers are indicative of this wider experience:

Enjoyment

Wonderful idea. Children really enjoyed taking part [never used the library so much].

The children really enjoyed reading all the books and coming to the library bus, it kept them reading all Summer. Great!!

A very good idea as the school Summer holidays are so long and the children need things to occupy them. Giving them a challenge to do has been good for them as they are not 'bored'!

I think the Reading Rollercoaster is an exciting and fun way of helping children enjoy their books, both whilst reading and also when they've finished. It encouraged them to readily choose another book quickly. An excellent scheme through the Summer holidays.

Confidence and motivation

My children have always loved books but this has helped them understand the potential of the library.

(He) struggles with his reading, so this encouraged him. He enjoyed collecting the stickers along the way.

Very well done. Thank you. Our son has returned to school ready to read. He is more confident and motivated.

This has been a wonderful scheme and has encouraged my son to read all Summer. I know he wouldn't have lifted a book if he hadn't been on this. He is not a keen reader. I hope this will be something you do again at any time. It is very worthwhile. Thank you.

It has helped build her confidence.

I think this is a great scheme. It has sustained the kids reading over the Summer [when they're not getting stuff from school] and they love having goals/targets/rewards – especially my 7 year old son. The weekly trip to the library was a real fixed point in our holiday schedule. The high quality materials [stickers, folders, plastic wallets] made it seem very "special" to the kids.

Indications of improved reading

My child enjoyed this and the school has said that her reading has improved over the holidays. We hope to do this again next year.

Definitely encouraged children to visit the library on a regular basis. Made them consider the content of what they were reading and to judge what they thought. Made them consider author's names and to be more selective in their choices. Enjoyed the supportive activity events

held in the library.

I think that the Reading Rollercoaster is a very good idea as it encourages children with their reading. Joshua has improved since doing it. He has enjoyed it a lot.

Comments from children participating in activities also reflected the themes of enjoyment and confidence and motivation which were noted by parents and carers:

I enjoyed reading the books and all the people were nice and I want it to come again next year. [Kealeigh 10]

The Rollercoaster is fun because I get to do fun things and I get to read. The books are fun. [Lilly 6]

I think it was great fun and I love reading so I liked it a lot. I hope something like this happens again soon. Thanks for coming. [Heather 10]

I thought the Reading Rollercoaster was wicked. It has helped me to read more confidently. [Liam 7]

It helped a bit more with my reading, but it was mainly just fun. [Chelsea 10]

I have enjoyed coming to the Rollercoaster club. It's fun and I enjoy books more now. [Sean 8]

Yes, I have enjoyed it. I think it has been a good idea. It has encouraged more children to read. Thanks. [Ami 11]

I think I read a lot more than I usually do in the holidays while doing Reading Rollercoaster. [Jack 10]

Summary

Both education measures and the supporting data show a strong link to national and local policy priorities, in particular educational attainment, basic skills and social inclusion. In this way, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data linked to the measure and methodologies could be used in other library authorities to set out a powerful case to advocate the continuing role of libraries in supporting a wide range of educational aims.

Children

In relation to **children**, the qualitative and quantitative data which was collected shows how the measure can be used to demonstrate the impact of libraries on children and families in a range of contexts. While the Birmingham data reflects locally based as well as national activities, the principles of using quantitative data to show the reach of provision supplemented by qualitative data to show the impact on individuals could be applied widely to both local and national initiatives carried out in other library authorities.

The activities which the measure encompasses link to significant local and national priorities (including education and social inclusion) and, viewed across a range of local authorities, could make a strong case to advocate libraries' role in a significant and evolving agenda based on a series of "child centred aims" linked to the key priorities articulated through Every Child Matters.

The headteacher of a school engaged in a library outreach project provided a succinct summary of the value of the work in noting that it identifies community interests and priorities so that:

Learning becomes relevant because it makes peoples' lives better, and quickly.

Examples of the qualitative data from participants in activities in the pilot authority show clear reference to themes of **social inclusion**, **health and well-being** and **enjoyment** in particular:

Can we come in with him? – We get thrown out of a lot of places.

I don't eat as much since I've been coming here – I'm busier now.

Over the past two years we have enjoyed the library group. It has been lovely to be able to spend time reading with my daughter on a one-to-one basis.

I never thought I would enjoy a whole day about things to do with reading and books.

Helped me to socialise. Since coming to Toddlertime and Parents group I have made friends.

You have introduced me to a lot of new things.

I have lost weight – I have gained confidence and I feel better about myself.

My son has met and already got to know other children he will be mixing with at the nursery.

Our children play with each other and are learning to share with each other.

(My son) has a speech problem, and being part of a group has helped his speech to improve.

We help each other out now because we are mates after coming here.

Summary

The themes arising from this qualitative data reflect a number of the key “child centred aims” which underpin the government’s current strategy for children. In particular, they show a link to the government’s wish that “all children should: be healthy; be safe; (and) enjoy and achieve”. On this basis, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data linked to the measure and methodology could be used in other library authorities to set out a clear case to advocate the continuing role of libraries in supporting a wide range of aims in relation to children.

Health

In using the **health** measure to demonstrate libraries’ contribution to wider public health aims, the quantitative data gathered by pilot authorities provides a preliminary understanding of the level of demand for, and related trends around, health related information. The quantitative data from the pilot authorities suggests that there is clear demand from library users for bookstock relating to health issues, although there is scope to examine in more detail the reasons for year on year variation in issue figures and changes in numbers of issues by category.

The finding from the Gateshead survey that almost one in two respondents have accessed health information through libraries is particularly striking. Many of the findings of this qualitative survey can be seen to complement wider government objectives on patient and public involvement and Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) in particular. For example, a number of responses indicated that the information provided **reassurance** or made respondents feel **more informed** about the subject for which they sought information:

- Gave valuable background information & reassurance.
- Getting more insight/more specific information regarding a particular ailment/medical condition that the doctor has diagnosed.
- Helps me to become better informed about decisions I make about my health.
- In some cases it has made me aware of other treatments available etc. However the internet tends to give a lot of unrelated information as well.
- It helps me with questions previously left unanswered. Now I have most of the answers.
- Learned specific details about illnesses.
- Looked up my husband's illness, found out one of the drugs he was taking was an appetite suppressor, realised why he was never hungry.

We recognise, however, that the qualitative data provided by the survey does not offer detailed information on the actions which followed the receipt of the material. In relation to the contribution of the library to **health and well-being** a number of comments from respondents reflected a range of social inclusion themes:

- Access to information can set your mind at rest. Also find reading v relaxing - a bit of escapism.
- Enjoy reading and have access to a large variety of books which I would be unlikely to buy.
- Excellent resource in terms of all media products allowing me to feel up to date with the world. Provides a very safe environment for myself and children. Books freely available from the library of course allow me to either lose myself in a novel or find myself in self help/new skills etc. Staff are very cheerful and helpful - they help me to feel like part of the community and yet I am not someone who integrates well with people socially. I feel completely comfortable in a library.
- It gives me a place to visit, which motivates me out of the house and feel better, just to have said hello to another human being.
- It is an oasis of sanity in a desert of madness. It is one of the most civilised parts of our society. It is a big part of my life.
- Relaxing, friendly, informal place to visit. Helps me to wind down. Talking Books help me to sleep.

Summary

Through the use of the measure and methodology in pilot authorities, the combination of this demonstration of libraries' role in providing access to health information and the benefits for general health and well-being points towards a powerful statement of libraries' wider role in supporting public health which could be built upon through the use of the measure in other library authorities.

Older people

In using the **older people** measure to demonstrate the impact of libraries on users receiving services in the home, we are able to draw on quantitative data from showing the reach of provision, supplemented by detailed qualitative responses which suggest a wide-ranging impact on users. These responses can be broadly categorised in the following themes:

Logistical – This defines situations where the user is homebound and depends on the service in order to access library material; for example: *“we have our books”*.

Supplementary – This defines situations which respondents appear to value the home library service as an extension of the library (and they do not indicate other reasons here); for example: *“...time saving – convenient”*.

Educational – This defines responses which indicate an educational or cultural function or improvement. In these responses, links are made between lifelong learning and well being; for example: *“It’s encouraged me to read more, I seldom read a book before.”*

Social inclusion – This defines responses which indicate that the service is felt to counters exclusion or isolation; for example: *“You can socialize with other people”*.

General impact on well being – This defines the set of responses which state improvements to quality of life. They range from the prosaic “passes a few hours” to the generic “it brings a welcome addition to the daily routine” to the more life transforming “it has improved my life” and “gives many hours of pleasure.”

As part of the project, we also sought to draw on the experience of pilot authorities in gathering data to demonstrate the impact of libraries on older people accessing information on entitlements to benefits and services.

While we were able to gather several examples of quantitative data showing levels of access to, for example, Citizens’ Advice Bureau services and other information sessions carried out by organisations in libraries, there were fewer examples of how this data could be used to show clearly the impact of libraries themselves in influencing access to, or take up of, services. Our experience suggests that detailed and specific data on the number of older people accessing information on rights and benefits from the library can be difficult to collect, particularly as older people may access this type of information a very informal and potentially “uncountable” way.

To this end, we believe that the measure related to homebound services for the elderly provides at this stage a more effective and replicable measure which could be used in wider advocacy at local and national level. However, the measure in relation to access to information relates to an important policy theme and there is scope to undertake further work to develop approaches to collecting data under this heading.

Summary

The evidence from pilot authorities gives a strong indication of library support for broader government policy objectives linked to independent living, as expressed in the aims of both the Departments of Health and Work and Pensions, and links to the goals of the Third Age Service in particular. The wider implementation in other library authorities of appropriately focused surveys to collect and use data in line with the themes explored by Bournemouth and Lancashire and the methodology outlined in Section 2 would further strengthen the case for libraries’ significant contribution to older people’s quality of life.

The baseline quantitative data showing numbers of users could be used to allow comparisons over time of access to, and demand for, homebound services. While quantitative data showing numbers of users is useful, it can be strengthened by being described as a proportion of an agreed variable. This approach has been adopted by the DCMS work to develop wider impact measures and should offer a useful source of data at national level to indicate the breadth of libraries’ support for older people.

Framework for data collection

To support the analysis in other library authorities of their own quantitative and qualitative data linked to the measures, we have developed a framework which provides a consistent set of questions which could be used by other library authorities when considering the possible use of data. The framework builds on the data from the pilot authorities to offer an indication of how the measures can be useful to practitioners on the ground and in local authorities more widely. The framework can be used to indicate whether data:

- Is already collected by a library authority (or that it requires additional data collection);
- Could be linked to wider DCMS impact measures or wider evaluation frameworks;
- Could be used to support an authority in showing how it meets CPA requirements.

More widely, the framework could be used to set out:

- The frequency with which the data is collected – for example on a quarterly or annual basis (thus showing the possibility of comparing data trends over time);
- Whether the activity is part of a national programme (and, as a result, whether other authorities could use similar data to show their own impact if it is collected under the same headings nationally);
- How the activity can show that the service is meeting local priorities;
- Whether (and how) the activity would be applicable to other library authorities.

The framework is shown in more detail below. To support other library authorities in considering how they can use their own data in line with the measures which we have developed, we have set out in the framework a checklist showing a number of themes which authorities should consider in relation to data that they may already collect or which they plan to collect in future.

We recognise that not all categories will be appropriate for all activities and all library authorities, but the use of the framework will assist authorities in establishing the wider purposes for which the data they collect could be used and in developing staff understanding of the possible wider use of the data which they are already collecting or which they are about to collect. In the table below, we have offered some examples of how the table might be used in relation to, in this case, the health measure area:

	Headline information	Supporting detail
Measure area	Health	
What data is required?	Quantitative and qualitative data showing libraries' support for access to health information	
How will the data be collected (information already collected, survey, interviews)?	Survey	Insert detail showing e.g. sample size of survey
Who needs to collect the data?	Library staff	Insert detail showing e.g. number of staff and libraries involved in collection
When does the data need to be collected?	e.g. Monthly, quarterly, annually	
What it is the data used for?	e.g. Demonstrating libraries' support for wider policy aims	How does the data meet this purpose?
Does the data relate to a local or national initiative?	National/local	To which initiative does the data relate (e.g. improved access to health information - Patient Advice and Liaison Services)?
Does the data relate to local or national policy priorities?	National/local	To which priorities does the data relate?
Does the data show a link to DCMS impact measures or wider evaluation frameworks?	Yes/no	How can this link be demonstrated?
Does the data show a link to a CPA Service Block?	Yes/no	How can this link be demonstrated?
Is the data applicable to other library authorities?	Yes	Data relates to mainstream library activities rather than specific initiatives
What are the key issues arising from the data collection?		

Experience of Pilot Authorities

Our engagement with pilot authorities has been particularly important in supporting us in developing measures that are of practical use for library authorities and in gaining an informed view of the demands on staff in collecting information to support the measures.

The following comments from pilot authorities indicate that work to measure impact can have a number of clear benefits for authorities in demonstrating their wider contribution and in supporting service improvement. The comments also describe some of the key issues for staff when carrying out impact measurement. In general, the experience of the pilot authorities suggests a number of benefits from engaging in more detail with impact measurement through the focus of this project. In this way, pilot authorities have noted that the use of the measures and development of the methodologies have:

- **Focused attention** on the importance of demonstrating libraries' impact on wider policy areas and on local communities through the Shared Priorities;
- **Demonstrated the value** of conducting customer research with a specific focus and shown the importance of having a clear purpose for data collection;
- **Provided powerful information** to advocate the role of libraries to, for example, the local authority more widely;
- **Built on existing approaches** to evaluate initiatives and activities at a local level and helped to increase focus on these existing approaches;
- **Linked to cultural change** by highlighting to staff the importance of having clear evidence to show how the services that libraries provide can benefit individuals and communities and to ask staff to consider why an activity is undertaken and whether it is being delivered in the most effective way;
- **Supported planning and service improvement** by providing data to inform service planning in a way that accurately reflects service performance and which can be used to plan future services and activities and to make informed and effective decisions about the allocation of resources.

Gateshead Council Library Service - Stephen Walters

Participation in the development of the impact measure addressing libraries' contribution to 'promoting healthier communities' has in itself been an excellent way in focussing attention on the need to demonstrate impact across the breadth of the 'shared priorities'.

The qualitative/questionnaire work conducted has very much demonstrated to us the value of conducting customer research with a specific focus. Evaluation has been conducted at the end of specific time limited projects, for example the Summer Reading Challenge, but this work did show the value of seeking to measure of the impact of core services on a shared priority.

The research has given us some powerful information at the time of corporate reorganisation. The finding that that 48% of respondents had used the library service for health information is powerful information.

It is important also to recognise that data gathering with a specific focus can reveal powerful customer information that has a broader value, or may be of benefit in demonstrating a contribution to other priorities. For example a quote from our 'health questionnaire' was "The library is an oasis of sanity in a desert of madness. It is one of the most civilised parts of our society. The library is a big part of my life". This is the start of evidence that libraries contribute to stronger local communities.

Participation in the pilot, and the subsequent recent publishing of the Public Library Impact Measures, will result in the development of a range of local targets being set for 2005-06. For example, we already have a local target that records the number of events targeted at people with a disability. We now plan to develop local targets that measure the delivery of, for

example, health promotion activities.

Bookstock and issues statistics become interesting, and powerful, when examined locally at a neighbourhood level. In Gateshead we now have draft vitality index data at a neighbourhood level. This will identify libraries that are located in neighbourhood where there health issues are a concern. This neighbourhood data will help us target new service developments, be it the promotion of 'health books', the hosting of health promotion activities or the location of new reader development projects. Subsequently when we are able to demonstrate impact it will not necessarily be uniform across the authority, but activities will have been targeted on 'hotspots' of local need.

Gateshead has recently been reviewing the wide range of learning activities that are delivered by the library service. Evidence exists that lifelong learning has positive health benefits. We have however identified that we need to demonstrate learning outcomes far more powerfully. We are now establishing a cross-service team to look at the action needed to implement the Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA) framework. We believe that use of the ILFA framework will assist in demonstrating of 'impact' in many of the priority areas, not just the raising of educational standards.

Cambridgeshire Library Service – Michael Wyatt

The concept of impact measurement has been well received in Cambridgeshire. Following a recent strategic review and library closures, staff are sensitive to the issues of falling activity levels and the more challenging attitude to public libraries in general, and increasingly receptive to initiatives in areas such as advocacy and impact measurement. The Laser project was given full support by senior library management, and its national profile gave it strong credibility amongst staff.

At the front line, staff were already responding in ways that related to impact measurement. Cambridgeshire Children's team was already well attuned to the issues addressed in this project and had for some time been shifting resources from activities where intangible benefits were believed to exist towards those where they could be measured. Engagement with the project was seen as consistent with and supportive of this development.

They were also committed to using the planning and evaluation tools from "Their Reading Futures" in shaping future developments, so "outcomes" and "impact" were already integral to service provision in this area. Engagement with the Laser project has reinforced this approach, and encouraged creative thinking about the connections between different impact focused schemes.

"Their Reading Futures" links, of course, with Inspiring Learning for All and the MLA's Generic Learning Outcomes, initiatives which are of particular interest to us as Cambridgeshire Libraries became part of the Community Learning and Development directorate of the county council. We were encouraged to consider how these frameworks might enable us to gauge the educational impact of a wider range of library services. This work is still in progress. At the same time we are anticipating the need to report impact measures in the shared priority areas and considering the practical arrangements for collecting this information.

Cambridgeshire's Library Learning Team were also well positioned to take part in this project, as they were accustomed to the focus on outcomes and impact that accompanies dependence on external funding streams.

The main challenges we have encountered have been the related issues of time, money, and culture. Attempts to measure impact, even indirectly, require the commitment of significant resources, which are inevitably in short supply. This is particularly true in the context of a time-limited project, where the option of accumulating data relatively cheaply, over a longer period, is not available. Even if additional finance were available, this would not necessarily release the time of the key individual practitioners whose expertise and input are heavily committed to a

planned work schedule.

In practice, the project in Cambridgeshire has to a large extent built on the work which has been developed as part of existing initiatives. The Children's Team was already committed to developing impact measures, and the reporting regime required by Learning Service's funding bodies yielded useful information in this area. Both teams were able to increase their investment in these activities to good effect.

Lancashire County Library and Information Service – Ann Marsh

Lancashire volunteered to support the Libraries Impact Project in relation to the "older people" shared priority. Collection of the quantitative data was relatively straightforward - the number of people reached by the Housebound (At Home) Service, the number of people reached by the Library Link Service, the number of Silver Surfers sessions, and number of Pensions Advice sessions were simple enough to collect from relevant members of the library staff.

The collection of data for which library staff were not directly responsible, for example, the take up of Pensions Advice Surgeries was slightly more problematic. We were reliant on staff over whom we had no direct responsibility to supply the data to us.

Similarly, the methodology used to collect qualitative data is critical. Where we used our own staff (such as for Silver Surfer surveys), the result was prompt; where we asked others to carry out the work on our behalf there were problems with meeting deadlines.

The most effective way to gather qualitative data is to identify a member of staff who has an investment in the result and ask them to undertake the project. For example, the staff member who carried out the Silver Surfer surveys did it as part of her NVQ course. Having said that, an excellent piece of work on Silver Surfers was carried out by a student from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, as part of her Masters course.

The project has tied in very well with what we have been doing over the last three years with LISU (Library and Information Statistics Unit) as part of the Evidence Based Management (EBM) project. The aim of the project has been to raise awareness and encourage the use of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, in the planning process - to demonstrate the "why" and to evaluate services. One example of work done as a result of the EBM project which was easily developed to contribute to the Laser Project was the evaluation of the Library Link service in North Division.

Our service planning framework demands that staff consider the impact of the services they deliver – the actual service plan template requires outcome/impact to be identified; the project planning template requires staff to consider outcome/impact, the rationale behind the project, and the evidence required to evaluate the project. The question of impact should be at the forefront of managers' minds now when they are planning service delivery.

The work done for Laser has put in place the basics required to report on the recently published Public Library Impact Measures and lessons learned from the experience will make the process more reliable and the results more meaningful.

Any data collection needs to have a very good underlying reason – if staff can see the "why" behind it, they will do a proper job, if not, it will be half-hearted and end up not worth the paper it is written on. Don't underestimate the time required to carry out questionnaires with these particular target groups – the most meaningful data will come from one to one questioning. It is better to rely on your own staff if possible.

Bournemouth Libraries – Gerardine Bodey

Bournemouth Libraries is always ready to be involved with innovative ideas. We were pleased to be chosen as one of the pilot authorities as we see the future of libraries increasingly dependent on proving their worth to society. We cannot rely solely on issue and visitor figures, as has been pointed out by influential figures in the industry. These are declining, though in Bournemouth I'm pleased to say, they have been rising for the past two years. We all know that libraries are valuable to society, but now we have to prove it.

At a meeting of Pilot Authorities at PwC in September 2004, I got together with Ann Marsh from Lancashire Libraries and Roger Wicks from PwC to develop a series of survey questions that would capture the impact that libraries have on the lives of older people. We looked in particular at the impact of libraries on older adults accessing information and accessing library services from home. We hoped that this survey would give us our qualitative information. The surveys were personally conducted with users of the Home Library Service via volunteers and staff members. Community Libraries were also given questionnaires to measure the use of computers and information surgeries by older people. Where possible these were conducted by library staff. We found the results were more reliable if the personal touch was used. Quantitative data on user figures and borrowing statistics were gathered from Library System computers, and records of IT courses and information surgeries attended.

The most useful thing about the Bournemouth Libraries' participation in this study has been in raising awareness about the need to try to measure the impact that libraries have on the lives of people. For years, we have known or suspected that libraries do have an impact, but have been a bit complacent in assuming the worth of libraries without having thought about proving it. This study has highlighted the need to think about ways that we can do this. I'm not sure whether we have got it right, but it's a step in the right direction.

Participation in this study is supporting the way in which we work by highlighting the need to evaluate all of our services and events. Key staff have undergone training in the "Inspiring Learning for All" model of preparation, evaluation and recording of the learning that may have taken place at Library events, which in turn gives information on the impact of libraries. This training is now being cascaded to all library staff. The three Library Managers who participated in the training have created a PowerPoint presentation of the key concepts for the rest of the Library Managers and Librarians in the service. They have also held two workshops for key activity planners on using the Activity Planning and Evaluation forms, and interpreting the evaluation data and assigning GLOs to them. This was held in preparation for the Children's Summer Reading Game – "The Reading Voyage" this year. After the summer these workshops will be offered to other staff who are involved in activity planning.

We will now be using this ILFA model to plan and evaluate all of our library events. Our Service Plan has also undergone many changes in accordance with the requirements of the new Bournemouth Council Structure. There is now a greater emphasis on the impact of services rather than just the delivery of services and the service plan for the Information, Culture and Community Learning business unit (in which the Library Service is located) needed to reflect this.

The main challenge, as mentioned previously, has been an attitude change within the service, to not only provide a service, but to know why we are doing this and asking ourselves are we doing it in the best way. Staff know that the library service is valuable and don't necessarily see why we need to prove it, so getting across the importance of this is a challenge. Another challenge is in looking at our services and work practices with a critical eye and making any changes needed. Self-examination is always a painful experience! The final challenge has been to fit our service into the new corporate structure and reflect the council priorities which emphasise impact.

Birmingham Library Service – Patsy Heap

We were very keen to examine whether we could demonstrate impact by identifying some key elements in a menu of activities which we had evaluated over time. This would enable us to say that if your library is running a programme of activities like this or to this standard you know that you will make an impact on the children and families you reach.

In delivering a good quality service that makes an impact and a difference to children's lives we would expect to see the following key elements featured in the provision:

- Clear policy
- Targeted activity (e.g. by age group, by priority group etc.)
- Effective marketing tailored to target audience
- Relevant partnership approaches
- Sufficient resources – an appropriate level of spend and sufficient staff
- Well planned and run activities
- Staff trained appropriately so they understand the purpose of the activity
- Sufficient number of activities throughout the year
- Sufficient number of children attending/participating
- Detailed evaluation and analysis of activity from all perspectives (staff, children, parents, teachers, performers etc)
- Regular review of activities based on outcomes of evaluation

Our experience has been that by using this approach our Senior Management Team can clearly use these factors to assess what has been delivered and whether the activity is working well in order to make often effective decisions about allocation of future resources (funding, staffing, marketing etc). We have regularly tested things out by piloting services (for example, Homework Help Clubs, outreach work, Stories from the Web, Detached Youth Work and Teenage Reading Groups) often with external funding. As external funders require rigorous evaluation we have adopted this approach to continue to demonstrate the impact we are making. Once an analysis has been undertaken of the value and impact of the activity/service, the evidence is assessed and a decision is made about continuation and whether to develop it as part of our mainstream service. We try hard to share good practice across the service and share evaluation reports widely with staff, managers, key partners and funders.

The main challenges and issues in measuring impact have been as follows:

- How to gather accurate views of the service/activity particularly from children
- How to see/measure our contribution to long term impact
- How to see what constitutes a high quality activity and not just a one-off event
- Measuring active participation rather than just attendance figures (important though they are)
- Trying to gather evidence on an ongoing basis with libraries' resource limitations and without alienating our users
- Cost (in staff time for internal evaluations e.g. summer report) and for external, independent evaluations (e.g. Vector survey of Young Readers)
- Developing and agreeing consistent approaches in order to show improvement over time
- Local impact is very important-particularly for certain target groups and we need to demonstrate this specifically
- Importance of organisational learning and development from innovative projects, particularly with socially excluded groups who are a priority. This takes considerable time and

commitment because it is staff and time intensive

- Developing a reflective culture in the service so that there is an expectation that all projects/activities have to be thoroughly evaluated within the context in which we work

It was a useful reflective exercise enabling us to articulate our thoughts based on previous experience and developed practice. It challenged us to think about the issue of measuring impact and to draw together our understanding, rather than developing the work during the pilot itself.

Slough Borough Council – Yvonne Cope

Effective evaluation gives our library staff material to work with in order to accurately reflect the performance of the service and to plan for future events. As part of the Libraries Impact Project we obtained feedback from customers on particular activities and projects. This meant that at the time of our CPA inspection of Cultural Services we were able to provide evidence of the impact our service was having. Two examples of the projects for which we could pull together anecdotal evidence on the impact of the service were music times for Under 2s and their parents and the formal learning activities available in the UK Online learning centre at the central library.

We were already looking at the evaluation of our services and events and looking for ways to measure their impact. Being a pilot authority in this project enabled us to develop this further. We have found that sometimes the results of the evaluation support the way we work and at other times they challenge it. All evaluation is taken seriously and if appropriate alterations to events or services made.

One example is the formal courses on ICT that we offer. Whilst many people found them useful some reported that they did not want to sign up to a series of training sessions over a number of weeks but would rather do individual sessions and move on to a further course at a later stage. In addition some people asked for a very basic introduction to the computer as an additional session. Following this feedback we are now offering the following additional workshops with users free to attend one or all of the workshops:

Workshop 1 – An Overview of basic computer concepts

Workshop 2 – An Introduction to Word Processing

Workshop 3 – Using the Internet

Workshop 4 – Setting up and using Email

Measuring the impact of events and services can be difficult and should not be too onerous for the library customer. We are using simple evaluation forms that are completed at events and training activities. In addition, we are using the services of a member of staff who is not based at the libraries to floor walk and asks customers two or three questions about one specific issue. She is able to clarify and interpret questions if necessary.

The latter method has provided very useful information as it is essentially the result of an informal 'interview'. We have repeated this exercise several times on different issues. One of the most informative of these surveys looked at what our users gain from using the core library service rather than a specific project or activity (i.e. borrowing books, reading newspapers or magazines and/or using information sources and IT in the library). The anecdotal evidence of the impact of this aspect of the library service was very powerful.

4. Recommendations for next steps and future work

In the report, we have set out a series of measures and recommended methodologies that have been designed to offer a clear and robust framework to allow practical and consistent approaches to measuring impact across library authorities. While we believe that the use of the measures and methodologies should support the development of an increasingly powerful evidence base to demonstrate the influence of libraries on wider government priorities, we recognise that there is scope for further work to develop approaches to measuring impact and set out below six specific recommendations to this end:

- We recommend that the DCMS, MLA and other key partners should consider developing a national template for impact measurement drawing on the findings of this project, the review of the initial DCMS impact measures and wider evaluation frameworks, such as Inspiring Learning for All.
- We recommend that the DCMS and MLA should undertake research to evaluate the progress and spread of impact measurement in library authorities and to focus the development of future impact measures to reflect the findings of this research.
- We recommend that the DCMS, MLA and other key partners should consider developing a national approach to gathering survey information in the shared priority policy areas in line with the findings and methodologies set out in this project.
- We recommend that longitudinal research, building on the initial work developed through this project and elsewhere, should be undertaken at national level to track in more detail the impact of libraries on each of the shared priority headings. In education, for example, such research could relate to the specific impact on pupil attainment at Key Stages for children attending summer reading schemes, study support or related activities through libraries.
- We recommend that the DCMS and MLA should undertake research to establish the reach and influence of library services and activities beyond the individual users of services and participants in activities themselves. This research should seek to measure how individuals who use a library then transfer the information or learning that they gain to influence other individuals.
- We recommend that government departments with responsibility for the shared priority areas covered by the project should agree with the DCMS and MLA a protocol through which libraries' contribution to these policy areas as demonstrated by the project can be maximised and taken into account in the development of policy.

Appendix A – Rationale, approach and context of project

Introduction

In this section, we set out our approach to the project, summarise the key issues which we identified at each of the five broad stages of work and describe the policy context that informed the work to develop the measures which we have set out in Section 1. We explore each of these areas in turn below.

Impetus for project

The Libraries Impact Project was commissioned by the Laser Foundation in 2004 in the light of the increasing debate in libraries and the wider cultural services sector about how services can demonstrate a broader impact on a wide range of local, and indeed national, priorities. In the project, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP was asked to establish how to develop and use measures to enable a library service to identify its impact on any of four of the shared priorities between central and local government (children, education, health and older people) which were highlighted by the Laser Foundation in commissioning the work.

The project has been overseen by a Steering Group chaired by Professor Fred Bullock (the former chair of the Laser Foundation). The Group's members were drawn from a range of key partners, including DCMS (Keith Gibbins), SCL (Barry George and Adrian Olsen), the Audit Commission (Brian King), David Lightfoot of Lancashire CC and Frances Hendrix of the Laser Foundation. We have also been grateful for the contributions and information provided by a number of wider partners, including MLA and the Reading Agency.

Since the project began, there have been a number of significant developments with which the project shares some common themes and focus. These developments include recent work to revise DCMS library standards and the development and launch of public library impact measures by the DCMS in March 2005. While the present work is distinct from the DCMS measures, we have been encouraged that the direction taken by the focus of these initial impact measures and related approaches reflect in a number of areas the experience and findings of our work.

More generally, we have sought to reflect key wider policy and other developments around public libraries. In this context, the publication of the latest Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee report on libraries (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmcmds.htm>) has brought additional focus to the debate around the focus and nature of current and future public library provision. In addition, the recent Laser Foundation “Futures Group” (www.futuresgroup.org.uk) report sets out a similarly thought-provoking assessment of the themes which are likely to influence library provision in the next ten years.

Context of the “shared priorities”

As we have noted, the project has focused on four of the seven shared priorities originally agreed between the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in July 2002. The shared priority programme has built on the experience of, and lessons learnt from, a range of local and central government programmes which have been designed to improve the well-being of local communities.

The development of the shared priorities has been supported by a series of initiatives at national and local levels. Some of the activities have focused on “pathfinder projects” in local authorities. Others have used existing government and LGA initiatives to highlight different ways of improving the quality of life in local communities.

The underlying focus for all of the shared priorities has been driven by a wish to foster local innovation in one area that can be transferred to another. While the content and nature of the shared priorities themselves may change over time, it is likely that the four themes which our work covered will continue to be priorities for both local and central government so that the measures and methodologies that we set out should have validity in the longer term.

While we have looked in detail at four of the shared priority areas (children, education, health and older people), it is important to note that there are overlaps between the shared priorities and that our work has also linked to other shared priority themes which we have not been explicitly asked to cover – such as those relating to safer and stronger communities and to promoting the economic vitality of localities. This is evident in, for example, the relationship between our work in relation to impact measures in education and its possible use in supporting the DCMS impact measure in relation to economic vitality. Equally, the selection of these policy themes by the Laser Foundation does not imply that libraries do not make a meaningful contribution to other policy areas.

The approach taken to the project

Our approach to the project was based on five broad stages, which were as follows:

- Stage one – a baseline stage;
- Stage two – identification of possible measures and of pilot local authorities;
- Stage three – work with pilot authorities and data gathering;
- Stage four – data analysis and development and testing of methodologies;
- Stage five – reporting.

Throughout the project, our work has been driven by the wish to link the measures and supporting methodologies to library activities in the relevant shared priority areas as well as the central and local government policies and targets which underpin each of the shared priority themes.

Stages of approach

Stage one – Baseline stage

In the first stage of our work, we undertook a desk based research exercise which drew on a number of contextual sources and wider research. The areas that we covered in our desk based research can be grouped in to six broad themes:

- **general background and context of libraries** – to allow the project to be placed in an appropriate context and understanding of public libraries including Framework for the Future, Inspiring Learning for All, Building Better Library Services, MORI Perceptions of Libraries research and wider research such as Reading Agency and LGA research projects (for example, Realising the Potential of Cultural Services);
- **wider policy context** around the shared priority themes (based on central government strategy documents and accompanying policies, priorities and targets) to link the study into the thrust of central and local government policy;
- **other measures of outcome or impact** in the shared priority areas (for example, local Public Service Agreements in each of the four shared priority areas covered by the study) to understand ways in which local authorities more generally are aiming to demonstrate outcomes or impact in the shared priority headings;
- **the context of inspection and CPA** (Audit Commission CPA consultation, analyses and related update documents);
- **performance management** (including the DCMS performance profile for cultural services, Audit Commission guidance (“On Target”) and other central government guidance, for example, HM Treasury’s “Choosing the Right Fabric”) to understand whether broader performance management frameworks and approaches could be used in supporting libraries in demonstrating impact;
- **other research on impact in libraries** or the impact of activities undertaken by libraries which could support the project. Without quoting a full list of sources in this area, we gained useful contextual information from, for example, The Learning Impact Research Project (Resource), Mapping the Territory (National Literacy Trust/Resource), Londoners Need to Read (ALM London), Social Impact Audit (SWMLAC (University of Sheffield)), New Measures for the New Library (University of Sheffield), Libraries Must Also Be Buildings? (Resource (University of Sheffield)) and Reading for Change (OECD).

Our desk based research was supported by the information highlighted in wider studies into the impact of public libraries in the UK, as well as examples of work which has been carried out internationally. For example, the “Impact Evaluation Of Museums, Archives And Libraries: Available Evidence Project”, which was published in 2002 by Robert Gordon University on behalf of Resource, offers an extensive summary of the attempts made up to that point to show the impact of public libraries. It notes that more studies examining social impact have been conducted in the public library domain than in museums and archives, including major national reviews and studies taking a more

qualitative approach. To this end, the available evidence project report draws on a range of sources in indicating a positive impact from libraries in supporting:

- *“Personal development - including formal education, lifelong learning and training; after-school activities; literacy, leisure, social, and cultural objectives through book borrowing; skills development, availability of public information;*
- *Social cohesion - by providing a meeting place and centre of community development; raising the profile and confidence of marginalised groups;*
- *Community empowerment - by supporting community groups and developing a sense of equity and access;*
- *Local culture and identity - by providing community identity and information;*
- *Health and well-being - by contributing to the quality of life and how well people feel, as well as providing health information services;*
- *Local economy - by providing business information and supporting skills development.”*

The Robert Gordon report suggests that the most compelling evidence was “in the area of personal development if only because the immediate outcomes are more easily identified and less problematic in terms of establishing causality.”

The available evidence project also draws on the findings of a number of empirical studies examining the relationship between libraries and learning. It notes that evidence from research into learning and library use indicates a positive impact on:

- *“Enjoyment and choice of leisure reading material;*
- *Reading development in young children;*
- *Academic achievement, particularly in terms of language skills;*
- *Acquisition of skills, particularly ICT and information literacy;*
- *Broader aspects of learning, such as increased motivation for learning, self-confidence, independence.”*

Although positive impact was identified in these areas, the Robert Gordon report “highlights that all the studies examined reflected the complexity of the learning process, the difficulties of isolating the impact of the library from other significant influences and the challenges in establishing causal relationships.”

The report noted that studies examining library provision and academic achievement identified factors which appear to enhance the impact on young people’s learning. These include readily available, high quality resources, an appropriate environment and the presence of trained library staff. It also underlined that existing research also highlighted the need for effective partnerships between library professionals, teachers, health workers and parents in order to mediate and facilitate the learning process.

Examples of international work

As part of our research, we have also made reference to similar work around the impact of libraries carried out internationally, for example in the United States through the American Library Association, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the OCLC.

The US National Information Standards Organisation (www.niso.org) has considered in some depth the development of impact measures through a wider review of the requirements to describe, measure and show the significance of contemporary library services. Its work indicates a number of common themes with those which have been highlighted through recent developments around impact measurement in libraries in the UK.

The network has underlined – in particular through a Forum on Performance Measures and Statistics for Libraries held in 2001 – a similar wish to that which has emerged in the UK to demonstrate more clearly “the value that libraries contribute to their communities”. To that end, the Forum identified a number of common themes which underpin the need to show more clearly the contribution of libraries to wider policy agendas. Interestingly, in the light of the focus and approach of the Libraries Impact Project in setting out transferable measures and methodologies, NISO has noted that “guidelines and best practices are more flexible than standards, and may be better suited to coordinate the development of evolving common practices”.

The work of the NISO Forum was structured around “four categories of measurement and three key management functions supported by those measures”. Of the themes which the forum identified (statistics, performance indicators, economic value and outcome measures), the area of outcome measures is most closely related to the focus of our work. In describing the area of outcome measures as “what good we do”, NISO sees the theme as offering “an evaluation of the results of the program activity compared to its intended purpose”. In NISO’s assessment, “measures relate to observable changes in knowledge, skills, behaviour, attitudes, status or life condition. Quantitative measures are based on test scores, and qualitative measures are based on observations of indicative behaviours.”

The three key management functions identified by NISO are set out below. Again, these show a clear link to moves in the UK to develop a more detailed picture of the wider impact of library services:

- *“Internal decisions – to assist with management decisions and internal specifications and policies*
- *Local advocacy – to justify budgets and demonstrate that local goals and objectives have met the needs of the community*
- *Broad advocacy – to identify trends, understand the larger environmental factors, promote the value of information organizations and professionals such as library and information professionals.”*

The US Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS; <http://www.ims.gov>) is a federal agency “that fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning through grants to museums and libraries”. One of IMLS’s major roles has been in helping libraries and museums to strengthen their programs and their capacity to evaluate the impact of their work through systematic evaluation of results. This process, which it defines as “outcome-based evaluation”, bears a number of similarities to the focus of our work and offers some relevant assessments of approaches to capturing impact.

For example, IMLS believes that “an outcome is a benefit that occurs to participants of a program; when the benefits to many individuals are viewed together, they show the program's impact. Typically, outcomes represent an achievement or a change in behaviour, skills, knowledge, attitude, status or life condition of participants related to participation in a program.” This view reflects in many ways the approach to developing impact measures based on both quantitative and qualitative data which we have used in our work and which we set out in this report. To support this, IMLS suggests that libraries should ask “why are we offering this program, what do we want to accomplish, and who do we want to benefit?”

IMLS has also provided a coherent summary of its view of effective approaches to measuring impact. In this, it states that approaches are effective if “they are closely associated with the purpose of a program and describe what an organization wants to make happen for people, are realistic and within the scope of what the program can affect and have indicators that allow them to be measured.”

More widely, the OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre – www.oclc.org) 2003 Environmental Scan offers a broad identification and description of the issues and trends that are likely to influence libraries, museums and archives in social, political, economic and technological terms.

Stage two – Identification of possible measures and identification of pilot local authorities

The second stage of our work involved the identification of possible impact measures and the selection of pilot local authorities to support the study, followed by the refinement of these possible impact measures with the project Steering Group. The measures are set out in Section 1 of the report.

Stage three – work with pilot authorities – data gathering

In the next stage of the project, we worked with the pilot authorities to identify a selection of activities which offer relevant qualitative and quantitative data which can be used to show how the service is making an impact in relation to each of the measure areas which we identified.

For some of the shared priority areas, in particular education and children, the pilot authorities identified a range of data which is currently collected in some form in many library authorities. For other shared priority areas, such as health and older people, pilot authorities found fewer sources of existing qualitative data and, as a result, developed other approaches – including surveys and questionnaires of service users – to look in more detail at their impact under these themes.

Stage four – data analysis and development and testing of methodologies

In this stage of the work, we undertook a detailed analysis of the data provided by pilot authorities to show how the data could be used to demonstrate the impact of the pilot authorities in each of the shared priority areas. The data and accompanying analysis are set out in Section 3 and Appendix B. In addition, to allow the lessons learnt from the pilots to support work in other authorities we drew on the experience of pilot authorities to develop and test with the pilot authorities methodologies to show how other library authorities could use the measures. The methodologies are set out in Section 2.

Stage five – reporting

In the final stage of our work, we have set out in this report the findings from each stage of our work in setting out a series of measures which could be used in showing libraries' impact, as well as the lessons and methodologies which can be used to support impact measurement at a local level. Accordingly, the work provides an informed starting point in supporting the wider development of impact measurement in libraries. However, our discussions with the project Steering Group and other partners have highlighted the importance of longitudinal research to evaluate the impact of libraries in the longer term. We have set out some recommendations for possible further research in Section 4.

Relation of the impact measures to the key “shared priority” policies and priorities

Introduction

As part of our desk based research in the baseline stage of the project, we undertook an analysis of key policy themes in each of the four shared priority areas on which the project was asked to focus (education, children, health and older people). In this section, we use the research to set out the wider policy context around each of the four shared priority themes, including key government targets and strategies which relate to each theme and show how we have drawn on these policy themes in identifying the impact measures which we have developed. The section looks at each of the policy themes in turn, describes some of the key targets and policy drivers which underpinned government policy at the time of the project, and links these activities to work which is undertaken by libraries and the measures which we set out in Section 1.

Government targets and strategy - education

The DfES's current Five Year Strategy and the recent 14-19 White Paper build on the focus of the DfES's 2002 PSA targets, which informed much of the policy analysis which was carried out in the early stages of our work. The objectives which underpinned the 2002 PSA targets were as follows:

- *Objective I: sustain improvements in primary education*
- *Objective II: transform secondary education*
- *Objective III: pupil inclusion*
- *Objective IV: raise attainment at 14-19*
- *Objective V: improve the skills of young people and adults and raise participation and quality in post-16 learning provision*
- *Objective V: tackle the adult skills deficit*

In undertaking our initial analysis, it was clear that it was possible to draw a meaningful link between a number of these objectives and existing work carried out in public libraries and we focused the development of the education measures accordingly. We set out below the main issues which informed our thinking.

Objective I: sustain improvements in primary education

Objective II: transform secondary education

In relation to objectives I and II, we felt that an impact measure that could be linked to the government's wish to raise attainment at primary and secondary level could offer a powerful indication of the potential contribution of libraries to two key areas of the government's education policy. However, we recognised that it could be difficult to separate the influence of libraries from that of other significant factors such as effective teaching. In addition, an analysis based on attainment at particular key stages would require a longer-term and detailed evaluation of the impact of libraries and would be dependent on the continuing engagement of pupils in activities supported by the library.

As a result, we felt that libraries' contribution to improving pupil attainment would be better supported, at least in the short to medium term, by an approach to measuring impact based on the number of pupils engaging in key library activities such as summer reading schemes or study support supplemented by qualitative data from participants to show the impact of activities on, for example, their attainment and confidence. Accordingly, these principles guided the development of the education measure around:

- **The impact of libraries on pupils attending summer reading schemes or homework clubs/study support based in libraries by collection and analysis of:**
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of participants and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participants.

Importantly, in the short term, this approach to information gathering is less reliant than specific indicators of pupil attainment (such as attainment at key stages) upon data gathered by other agencies. In the longer term, however, the quantitative and qualitative data collected under this measure heading could be supplemented by reference to the progress at various key stages made by pupils engaging in library activities.

Objective III: pupil inclusion

Objective IV: raise attainment at 14-19

Our desk based research indicated that while it would be difficult to develop a robust and practical measure for use in library authorities to show their impact on pupil inclusion, there may be some merit in undertaking further research outside the scope of this project to evaluate the possible contribution of libraries to improving attendance among targeted groups. In a similar way, for 14-19 provision, there may be scope in the longer term to identify specific ways in which libraries are supporting the government's proposals for 14-19 reform which have been developed further in the recent 14-19 White Paper. In particular, there may well be opportunities for libraries to support the wish for increased flexibility around where learning might take place.

Objective V: improve the skills of young people and adults and raise participation and quality in post-16 learning provision

Objective VI: tackle the adult skills deficit

The government's objective to improve the general level of skills in the post 16 population has a clear link with an area of significant existing activity in libraries. In particular, our initial research and subsequent work highlighted a wide range of work in libraries to support adults by removing barriers to learning and developing basic and other skills.

Many examples of this work in libraries are set out in the "Mapping the Territory" study which was carried out on behalf of the MLA by the National Literacy Trust. The study noted a number of current activities which had been considered in earlier research relating to the ability of museums, archives or libraries to improve adult basic skills. These were as follows:

- *"activities not previously labelled as 'basic skills', such as making museums, libraries and archives more welcoming for this audience,*
- *the delivery of basic skills courses*
- *'informal' learning, including family literacy*
- *'formal' learning*
- *'awareness-raising' and 'sign-posting'*
- *a wide range of audiences including language skills provision for culturally diverse communities."*

There are many further examples of activities, linked to the principles of Framework for the Future, in which libraries provide support in this area, including The Vital Link, led by the Reading Agency, which aims to build libraries' capacity to support adults with low literacy levels through reader development.

As a result, we felt that a measure to reflect and provide more robust data to demonstrate this significant and wide ranging contribution would offer meaningful further evidence of libraries' support for wider educational aims. To this end, we developed the following measure:

- The impact on adults (post 16 population) of library services supporting adult education by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered and
 - Qualitative data linked to, for example, the impact on confidence and qualifications or attainment.

Government targets and strategy – children

The Government has stated that its overriding concern is to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life and the opportunity to achieve good outcomes. For this reason, the Government is in the process of transforming the shape of delivery of services for children, young people and families. The Green Paper “Every Child Matters” and the subsequent Children Act 2004 set out the five “child centred outcomes” around which all policy is to be directed. All children should:

- *“be healthy;*
- *be safe;*
- *enjoy and achieve,*
- *make a positive contribution to society; and,*
- *experience economic well-being.”*

We believe that is important to demonstrate the existing and ongoing link which libraries have with these “child centred” aims so that libraries can continue to contribute and inform wider policy agendas in a meaningful way at local and national level. The Reading Agency’s “Fulfilling Their Potential” development programme report and supporting evidence file provides an extensive analysis of the areas in which library services have the potential to support policy outcomes.

The “Fulfilling Their Potential” report, the background research which we have undertaken and the input of the project Steering Group highlighted the strong link between libraries and key policy priorities, such as the Sure Start wish “to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children”. In addition, the impact of the Bookstart programme has been widely recognised and researched and provides further evidence of how libraries have been able to exert a positive influence on children and families.

To capture the breadth of libraries’ support for children and families, we developed a measure based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data which can be used in demonstrating libraries’ impact through a range of programmes and activities:

- **The impact of library activities supporting children and families (including, for example, Sure Start and family learning activities) by collection and analysis of:**
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered by activities and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participant literacy and confidence.

Government targets and strategy – health

The health policy issues which are set out below are placed in the context of the overall Department of Health objective to improve health and social care outcomes for everyone. There are a number of central policy drivers within this overarching objective and their relationship to possible areas of impact for libraries is considered.

Patient choice in health care

The government believes that increasing patient choice in health will raise standards.

By December 2005 all patients should be able to choose the hospital they want at a date and time of their choosing.

The new NHS gateway

NHS Direct aims to give patients access to a flexible service before contact with primary or secondary care. The service provides 24-hour nurse advice and a health information service providing confidential information.

Public health

Public health is increasingly one of the most important areas of health policy. It is recognised that combatting the so called killer diseases – cancer and heart disease – rests as much on individual lifestyle decisions, such as exercise and diet, as on medicine and treatment. Public health policy can be divided into four key areas – smoking, drugs, obesity and sexual health. Significantly, concerns remain about the numbers of people smoking, levels of drinking and obesity, in particular among children.

Our initial research suggested that there was clear scope to explore the role of libraries in supporting new forms of primary care, in particular through access to information and resources through bookstock and ICT which, at this stage, offer one of the clearest indications of how libraries are supporting wider government public health aims. This information could be used, for example, to show access to information around nutrition and diet, lifestyle and physical fitness.

However, while we felt that this would provide useful quantitative data, we believed that it was important to supplement this with qualitative data which could set out in more detail the wider ways in which libraries and their services can have a positive impact on people's health. Our background research suggested that this could relate to, for example, social inclusion and health inequalities and health and well-being (through, for example, bibliotherapy as described through the Reading and Health Mapping Research Project). We have explored these issues further in our work with pilot authorities.

The Reading and Health Mapping Research Project, which was prepared for the Arts Council by The Reading Agency, provides a detailed analysis of a series of themes under the broad concept of "reading and health" which it sees as a "convenient label for a broad range of activity designed to promote well being and alleviate some of the symptoms of physical and mental illness."

The project's final report highlights the breadth of the work in this field, which covers a range of areas including bibliotherapy, early years development and work with specific groups and in specific locations. The report identifies "a powerful set of arguments to underpin the important contribution that reading can make to the support of health and well-being", although it acknowledges that the arguments are based on reading trends survey work rather than scientific or medical research. The report finds that these arguments "suggest the importance of reading as a creative act that relieves stress, provides an opportunity for enjoyment and relaxation, supports learning and self-development and provides an opportunity for social interaction for those who like to talk about what they read."

The mapping project used arguments for the value of reading to inform the development of an initial definition of the role of reading in supporting health and well-being. The appropriateness of the definition was tested in the project through a series of questionnaires. The research identified a range of policy themes which inform the involvement of stakeholders in activities relating to reading and health. In the health sector these related to “partnership development, the patient-centred approach, health literacy, the importance of prevention as well as cure, empowerment and evidence-based practice”. Library sector bodies were “interested in the role of reading in reaching new audiences, in supporting good practice, in developing the evidence base, and in supporting partnership building and lifelong learning.”

The experience reflected in “Well Read: developing consumer health information in Ireland” (Jennifer MacDougall, May 1998 - <http://www.libraryassociation.ie/policy/wellread.htm>) offers some interesting insights into the development of improved health information services with a central role for public libraries.

The “Well Read” report identified a particular challenge in developing consumer health information services of reconciling local needs with economies of scale and expertise. The report concluded that the most effective approach involved the provision of local access to information backed up by central resources. It recommended that public libraries should have a more proactive role in the improvement of consumer health information in Ireland with increased resources to exploit their network of branches and professional expertise. Partnerships between health boards and public library authorities were seen as an important means of facilitating wider access to consumer health information for the public.

We developed the above themes in setting out the following measure to reflect libraries’ potential role in supporting a number of key public health aims:

- **The impact of widening access to health information by collection and analysis of:**
 - Quantitative data on the number or % of adults accessing health information through libraries, through bookstock and ICT, supplemented by
 - Qualitative data (including support for well-being) gathered through survey information or interviews.

Government targets and strategy – older people

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a broad and multifaceted strategy relating to ageing and pensions. At root, however, there are four core objectives:

Savings: encouraging and enabling the pensioners of the future to make adequate financial provision for their retirement. This is related to a key DWP indicator to secure “an increase in the proportion of working-age people contributing to a non-state pension”. Our initial research suggested that there was scope to explore the possible enabling role of libraries in this area, in particular in providing access to information and relevant organisations.

Extending working lives: encouraging and enabling those approaching State Retirement Age (SRA) to remain in employment up to and beyond SRA.

Independent living: encouraging and enabling the elderly to remain in their homes and active in their daily lives. This relates to the 2002 Department of Health PSA target “to improve the quality of life and independence of older people so that they can live at home wherever possible, by increasing by March 2006 the number of those supported intensively to live at home to 30 per cent of the total being supported by social services at home or in residential care.”

Our background research highlighted the breadth of support which libraries can provide to older people, with the extensive provision of homebound services being particularly relevant in supporting independent living in line with wider government policy aims. We have explored this theme further in the measure relating to:

- The impact on older people of receiving library services in the home by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people receiving the service and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews of users.

Claiming entitlements: encouraging and enabling those of retirement age to claim their full benefit entitlement so that poverty is prevented and those with additional needs are assisted.

Our background research suggested that the breadth of libraries’ work and their potential role (in partnership with other organisations) in providing a range of information to older people could be shown most clearly through the following measure:

- The impact of libraries on older people accessing information on entitlements to benefits and services including:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people accessing information and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews.

Wider policy context

Education

The Department for Education and Skills’ current Five Year Strategy is based on five key principles covering education, children's services and training:

- Greater personalisation and choice, with the wishes and needs of children’s services, parents and learners centre-stage.
- Opening up services to new and different providers and ways of delivering services.
- Freedom and independence for frontline headteachers, governors and managers with clear simple accountabilities and more secure streamlined funding arrangements.
- A major commitment to staff development with high quality support and training to improve assessment, care and teaching.
- Partnerships with parents, employers, volunteers and voluntary organisations to maximise the life chances of children, young people and adults.

This strategy is linked to a number of more detailed policies, including the expansion of the specialist schools and academies programmes, a “new relationship with schools” and 14 -19 year old education reform.

The DfES published the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper in February 2005, following the Working Group on 14-19 Reform, chaired by Sir Mike Tomlinson, which reported in October 2004. The White Paper proposes reform of the system of 14-19 education, curriculum, assessment and the range of opportunities available. It is based on five specific targets to:

- tackle low post-16 participation and increase participation at age 17 from 75% to 90% over the next 10 years;
- ensure that every young person has a sound grounding in the basics of English and maths and the skills they need for employment;
- provide better vocational routes which equip young people with knowledge and skills for further learning and employment;
- stretch all young people; and
- re-engage the disaffected.

Children

The government’s “child centred outcomes”, which underpin the Children Act 2004, will be pursued within a new structure of integrated children’s services. These services are currently provided by a range of public, private and voluntary providers. While in some services one provider is responsible for the totality of provision, in others two or three sectors operate. The government believes that a ‘mixed economy of welfare’ should often be encouraged through contestability.

“Every Child Matters” and the Children Act 2004 set fundamental organisational change as a means to securing these ends. Importantly, it places the duty for achieving these objectives on new Directors of Children’s Services, who will be responsible for all local authority children’s services. A further duty is placed on local authorities and others to co-operate to secure better outcomes for children.

Accordingly, local authorities will be able to combine their education departments and children’s social services if this is believed to be the most effective means of improving child welfare. A senior councillor will be appointed to take political responsibility for local children. Local education authorities, children’s social services, the youth advice service Connexions, some local health services, and possibly youth offending teams will be able to pool their children’s budgets, leading to the creation of multi-purpose children’s trusts in all areas by 2008. This will not necessarily require structural reform.

Health

Patient choice in health care

The Government believes that increasing patient choice in health will raise standards. By December 2005 all patients should be able to choose the hospital they want at a date and time of their choosing. Pilot programmes in London have given people waiting over 6 months for ear, nose, throat and orthopaedic treatment the choice of going elsewhere.

The new NHS gateway

NHS Direct aims to give patients access to a flexible service before contact with primary or secondary care. The service provides 24-hour nurse advice and a health information service providing confidential information on: steps to take in response to common illnesses; particular health conditions; local healthcare services, such as doctors, dentists or late night opening pharmacies; and self help and support organisations.

Public health

Public health is increasingly one of the most important areas of health policy. It is recognised that combatting the so called killer diseases – cancer and heart disease – rests as much on individual lifestyle decisions, such as exercise and diet, as on medicine and treatment. In February 2004, Derek Wanless published *Securing good health for the whole population*, on behalf of the Treasury. It defined public health as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts and informed choices of society, organisations, public and private, communities and individuals”.

There is likely to be an increasing onus on individuals to look after their own and their family’s health as healthcare is increasingly seen in terms of rights and responsibilities. In the light of this, access to information and the ability to make informed decisions becomes increasingly important.

Older people

This section is ordered according to key government objectives with accompanying relevant PSA targets and indicators drawn from the Department for Work and Pensions 2004 Departmental Report.

Savings

It is broadly held that today’s employees are not saving enough for their retirement. The “savings gap” – the difference between what people ought to save and what they actually are saving – has been estimated at over £20bn. Government strategy, in pursuit of greater levels of individual savings, is based on activation, education and information.

Activation

The government aims to maximize scheme membership and contributions. The process individuals go through in making decisions on savings is therefore crucial. Individuals, for example, may make choices on the basis of information, their perception of the importance of pension provision, their expenditure preferences and their capacity to make provision. There is particular concern with the position of women who account for the majority of pensioners. The choices open to women are more limited by reference to their lower wages, greater likelihood of being in part-time work and the general impact that caring responsibilities have on their employment patterns and ability to build up entitlement to an adequate retirement income in their own right. This is exacerbated by social changes such as rising rates of cohabitation and divorce.

Education

The DWP, in conjunction with the DTI, aim to raise levels of financial literacy. There is recognition that employees face difficult decisions on both whether to opt for occupational, private or state schemes and at which level of contribution.

Information

The government believes that clear information tailored to individual circumstances is a key to changing savings behaviour. A web-based retirement planner is a central initiative.

Extending working lives

Enabling and encouraging individuals to remain in employment up to and beyond retirement age is a further key area of the government's strategy. The driving element behind this part of the agenda is that, whilst there has been some improvement in recent years, one of the most significant developments of the past two decades has been the decline in economic activity rates amongst the over fifties. This has clear implications for pension provision and benefit expenditure.

Independent Living

In the longer-term, the development of the Third Age Service, with its focus on promoting independence and an active life for older people, can be expected to lead to a significant shift in demand for services. This would be away from the more intensive and expensive forms of support, such as hospital inpatient treatment and residential care, to less intensive and lower cost services such as home help and represents a shift from support being provided at the point of need rather than at the point of crisis. "Third age" customers are a very diverse group, ranging from the well off to the socially excluded, from those who chose to continue in employment after reaching retirement age to those who stop working, from those with care responsibilities to those living alone.

Government policy aims to help the elderly to live in their own house and support their carers. Elderly hospital patients who could support themselves at home if they received certain home support can receive direct payments. They are able to use the money to buy care, equipment or home improvements such as stair lifts, ramps or rails.

The number of households receiving intensive home care per thousand aged 65 and over was 9.9 per thousand in 2001/02, up from 7.8 per thousand in 1998/99. The number of people receiving any community-based service per thousand population aged 65 and over was 85 per thousand in 2001/02, a small increase from 83 per thousand in 2000/01 and up on the baseline of 82 per thousand in 1998/99¹.

Claiming entitlements

Enabling and encouraging all persons of pensionable age to claim – or take up - their full entitlement is of central importance to the current pensions agenda. The introduction of Pension Credit has substantially expanded the scope of means-tested support. In the past, pensioners have proved the most difficult group to reach by this method of social security.

¹ Source: Social Services Performance Assessment Framework Indicators 2001-2002.

The reasons why some people fail to claim the benefits to which they are entitled have been well-researched. Despite changes to the social security system over the years, the findings of this research have remained remarkably consistent. Three key factors militate against high take up: ignorance (a lack of knowledge of entitlement), complexity (applications forms necessarily require a certain level of information to determine eligibility) and stigma (an aversion among elderly, especially the older elderly, to calling benefits for 'poor people'). Consecutive governments have sought to address these barriers with, for example, simpler forms, publicity campaigns and new ways of claiming, such as over the telephone and online. These themes relate to a 2002 DWP PSA target to be paying Pension Credit to at least 3 million pensioner households by 2006.

Appendix B – Data from pilot authorities

Education – data and analysis

The following section sets out the data which has been collected by the two pilot library authorities (Cambridgeshire and Slough) in using the following measures to demonstrate their impact in relation to education:

- The impact on adults (post 16 population) of library services supporting adult education by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered and
 - Qualitative data linked to, for example, the impact on confidence and qualifications or attainment.
- The impact of libraries on pupils attending summer reading schemes or homework clubs/study support based in libraries by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of participants and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participants.

Data collection – context

The examples of data provided by Cambridgeshire and Slough for both measures offer an interesting and clear indication of their impact in supporting wider education and lifelong learning agendas in their local communities. This is underpinned by both the quantitative dimension showing the numbers of participants engaging in the activities and the qualitative dimension indicating the value of the activities for participants. For both pilots, the data has been drawn from activities which are already being undertaken by the authorities and which have thus built upon existing data collection and evaluation processes with some additional collection or survey activities.

Adult education measure

Cambridgeshire

Quantitative data

The sample of quantitative data collected by Cambridgeshire Library Service's Learning Service is based upon the example of the data provided by the service to Ufl/LearnDirect showing a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) for each of the service's eight library-based learning centres. The data which we set out below

provides a snapshot of the combined figures for the eight learning centres for the first three quarters of 2003-04. The table below shows the number of learners for that period, the total number of courses and the breakdown of the number of courses undertaken by type of course.

Centre	Arbury	Ely	Huntingdon	Level 3 (City)	Littleport	March	St. Ives	Whittlesey	Total
Learners	159	255	392	448	78	263	347	200	2142
Total courses	202	457	682	657	149	381	561	342	3431
ICT courses	180	386	607	626	129	345	512	307	3092
Skills for Life courses	22	47	58	29	15	24	32	15	242
Business and Management courses	0	24	17	2	5	12	17	20	97
Other courses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

As the table shows, the service's provision supported **2,142 learners** who undertook **3,431 courses**. A significant majority (90.11%) of courses were ICT courses, with 7.05% of courses being Skills for Life courses. The remainder of courses related to business and management. The quantitative data thus shows the service supporting learners with clear reference to key government priorities, through the development of ICT proficiency and basic skills, linked to a high profile national government initiative through Ufi/Learn Direct.

The KPI data also offers a breakdown by centre of the percentage of learners by gender and ethnicity, the percentage of learners with disabilities and the percentage of learners by age band. The figures for each of the centres show that the majority of learners (67%) were women, approximately 10% were from minority ethnic communities and 7.2% learners were disabled. Across the network of centres, 60.1% of learners were women, 13.9% of learners were from minority ethnic communities and 11.1% learners were disabled.

This quantitative data also provides a useful indication of the potential contribution of the provision in supporting older people, as well as the contribution to developing employability and wider skills among participants of all ages. Across the eight learning centres, the figures for the first three quarters of the year showed that over half of the learners (54%) in the eight centres were aged 55 and above. Approximately one third of learners (33.3%) were aged 35-54, with 12% of learners aged 20-34. Less than 1% of learners were aged 16-19.

In comparison with the wider Learndirect network, this shows a much higher proportion of older people accessing provision. Across the Network for the same period, over one third of learners (34.2%) were aged 55 and above. Here, the highest proportion of learners were in the age band 35-54 (40.5%), with 23.5% of learners in the age band 20-34.

The final area of quantitative data collected in this context relates to the completion of courses, achievement of participants and progression of learners. Significantly, the provision was able to support learners to move on to further learning, with 13% of learners at that point progressing on to other courses.

Qualitative data

While this data is useful in showing the extent of local access to, and demand for, adult education activities supported by libraries, the pilot authorities have sought to supplement this data with qualitative information which examines more clearly the impact on individual library users (or on groups of users) of accessing such provision and activities.

To this end, Cambridgeshire undertook a random sampling exercise of the evaluation forms completed by 100 learners participating in the learning service's "Access to Learning" activities, which are linked to the Learndirect provision highlighted in the quantitative data. The evaluation covered a number of areas which highlight relevant qualitative data by asking the following questions:

- What did the learner want to learn from the activity?
- What were the learner's aims in undertaking the activity?

Approximately one third (31%) of the 90 learners in the sample who stated an aim in learning indicated that they had undertaken the provision to improve job skills. A further 62% of those stating an aim in learning wished to improve their understanding of ICT and to "learn more about computers". 43 of the 100 learners in the sample had achieved the required level at the end of the provision.

In addition to these two open ended themes, the sample of data shows that a range of useful information can be gathered under the following headings to show the quality of provision and the extent to which provision meets learners' needs. The sample of 100 learners were asked:

- Whether they were satisfied with the quality of the induction which they received:
96 answered yes, 1 no and 3 did not respond
- Whether they received the training that they required;
99 answered yes and 1 did not respond
- Whether the quality of the course was high;
97 answered yes, 1 no and 2 did not respond
- Whether they felt that they achieved their goal;
93 answered yes, 4 no and 3 did not respond
- Whether they would like to undertake another course.
83 answered yes, 5 no, 12 did not respond (a further 2 answered "possibly")

In addition, 99 of the 100 learners in the random sample felt that they got the training needed, 98 felt the quality of the course was high (1 said no and 1 did not respond) and 98 found the staff friendly and helpful (1 said no and 1 did not respond). This high level of participant satisfaction is reflected by the additional comments which participants were asked to offer:

Very useful.

Enjoying learning, lots of help available.

Felt happier using a computer.

I have enjoyed this course and would like to progress further.

Found the audio presentation of the course very helpful, as I am partially sighted.

I have been introduced to the computer and enjoyed it!

Can create a presentation and slideshow - very pleased.

I did find this course was more informative than others I have done, it was easier to understand. The staff have been extremely helpful and friendly and always able to answer my queries.

I found it very enjoyable, being put at ease straight away.

Using the skills course helped me to develop my IT skills. Thanks.

All tutors were excellent, always helpful, friendly and efficient.

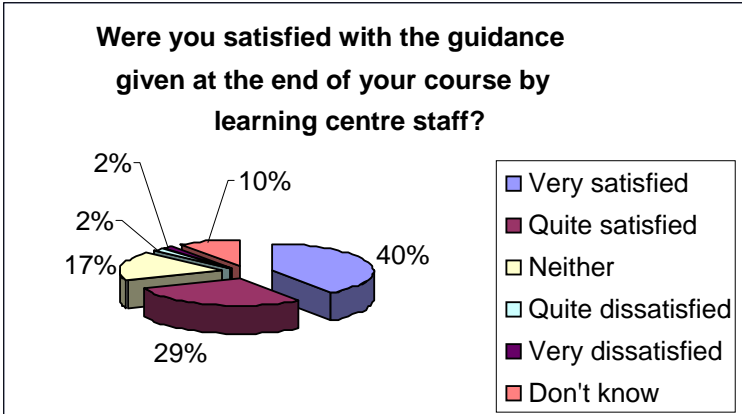
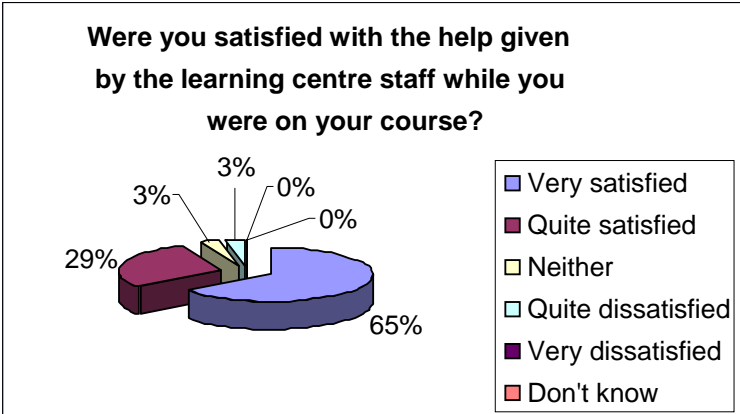
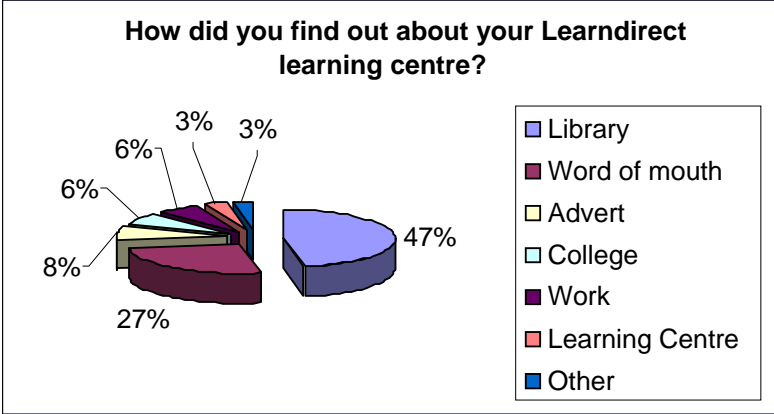
Found the course interesting and easy to understand.

As I have never used a typewriter or word processor this course has enabled me to start using a computer and changed my attitude towards computer work in general, as until I began this course I felt that it was all too advanced and beyond my capability. I now feel sufficiently confident to progress further.

Staff very helpful, especially as I am an OAP.

Cambridgeshire has also been able to supplement the above data with the findings of a Learndirect customer satisfaction survey in relation to the support provided by staff and the facilities which were available to learners. The survey was sent in January 2003 to a random sample of 300 learners across the network. A total of 71 surveys were returned by the deadline date, representing a 24% response rate.

The survey showed that 100% of learners were made to feel welcome on arrival at the learning centre. Interestingly, 66% of respondents had been offered a taster session through the library service before deciding to learn with Learndirect. The survey also showed that the highest proportion of respondents had found out about the Learndirect learning centre through the library and indicated high levels of satisfaction with both the help provided by learning centre staff and the guidance given by staff at the end of the course. Participant responses are highlighted in the three charts set out below.



Slough Borough Council

Quantitative data

The following quantitative data has been gathered by the Library Service in Slough for its UK Online Centre based in the central library. The centre was established through the New Opportunities Fund and courses are delivered in partnership with the local branch of the Workers Educational Association and the Borough's Lifelong Learning Section. Through the centre, the Library Service has been able to offer a range of courses in ICT and basic skills for a range of target groups, including:

- People living in socially disadvantaged areas
- People with disabilities
- People with few or no formal educational qualifications
- People difficult to engage in formal education or training or from a background of educational exclusion or disadvantage
- Older people
- Lone parents
- Black & ethnic minority communities
- Minority language groups

In the first year of the project – **2002-03 – the service worked with 204 individual learners** through seven courses or activities, each of which was focused on particular target groups. In the second year of the project - **2003-04 – the service worked with 236 individual learners** through six courses or activities. As in its first year, the project's activities were focused on a range of the target groups from the list highlighted above. For each course, the service recorded the percentage of learners on each course relating to each of the target groups above.

Qualitative data

In monitoring the courses and activities, staff have noted that positive participant feedback and word of mouth recommendation from customers meant that the service increased capacity for its Basic Skills Learning course in ICT to 104 from its original target of 64. Staff noted that the development of these skills provided learners with a boost in confidence to use IT further and to move on to other courses. This is supported by examples of participant feedback:

I am no longer afraid of computers as the course was excellent - a real worthwhile hands-on experience.

I was really impressed and the tutor was excellent making sure we understood, never getting tired even when we asked stupid questions. I would be grateful if more courses developed and we are given the same tutor. My colleagues at work are impressed and I managed to book myself a ticket to Scotland using expedia.com of which prior to this course I would not have done.

The higher than expected demand for courses also related to learner enthusiasm for regular weekly sessions that allowed them to learn at their own pace and consolidate and practice their learning at each session. However, staff noted that some of these same learners were eager to join other basic skills courses at the library even though they may have been relearning similar skills, as they appeared to be reluctant to move on to other types of courses elsewhere. However, the service was able to encourage a small number of learners to sign up for the National Qualification for Adults in Literacy and Numeracy (using Learndirect) at the library.

As part of a wider move to gather further meaningful qualitative feedback, Slough has developed as part of the project an additional approach to provide qualitative information about what customers can “learn” by visiting the library. To improve its baseline understanding of the range of areas in which customers gain by visiting the library, the service undertook short survey interviews in December 2004 with a random sample of 100 customers in all 4 of Slough’s libraries.

Customers were asked two questions: “If items were returned, did you gain anything from borrowing the items?” and “What have you gained from the items (books, magazines and websites) you have looked at in the library today?” Unsurprisingly, participants offered a broad range of areas in which they felt that they had learnt something through their visit to the library.

However, these responses can be grouped into three broad themes: **education and study/work**, **entertainment and general information** (including home/DIY and travel). Reflecting on their visit, one respondent noted that *“(my mother) finds the library a lifesaver as (she) meets friends here as well as borrowing books. Also taught mother how to use the internet to look up information that she may need – really enjoyed it.”*

Other participants felt that their visit had been useful in the following ways:

Help on statistical theory from statistical books. Also general knowledge of cars from Autocar.
I have gained some useful information regarding my studies (Accounts) and follow the useful information.
Non-fiction books on crime are really of interest as work in a prison.
Books i.e. fiction, comedy. Better than watching TV.
A wider understanding of the theories I was studying.
DIY tips to take home.
Jobs information i.e. looking at papers etc.
Have not been an internet today but usually extremely useful for researching articles in conjunction with studies.

This type of qualitative data can be extremely useful in developing a more systematic evidence base at a local level about the impact of visits to libraries themselves. In combination with qualitative and quantitative data relating to specific adult learning activities, the information can be used to develop a powerful statement of the tangible benefits that libraries can provide for individuals and communities.

Summer reading schemes measure

In relation to summer reading activities, the Reading Agency evaluation framework to support the evaluation of the Summer Reading Challenge provides a consistent and widely used methodology for the collection of quantitative data covering registrations and completions, along with the age breakdown and gender of participants.

This approach has been adopted by Slough in its 2003 and 2004 evaluations of its Summer Reading Challenge, with Cambridgeshire adopting a similar approach, based on the MLA/Reading Agency "Their Reading Futures" framework, in the evaluation of its summer reading activities.

Slough BC – Summer Reading Challenge

The following quantitative and qualitative data evaluates the "Reading Rollercoaster" – the theme for the 2004 Summer Reading Challenge – which took place in Slough libraries between July and September 2004. The Reading Rollercoaster was part of a programme of wider summer events organised by the service's Children's Team, in addition to a wide range of events under the auspices of Sure Start.

Staff noted very positive feedback from customers and their parents/carers as well as offering positive feedback themselves. In planning the summer activities, the service set out the following outcomes which it wanted to achieve:

- To promote reading for pleasure
- To develop confident readers
- To encourage young people to read more broadly
- To promote social skills such as communication, sharing, working together
- To support and encourage the library staff so that they were also able to enjoy the programme and to help us promote the Reading Rollercoaster

In addition, the service set itself the following targets:

- To increase the number of children joining the reading challenge
- To achieve a completion rate of 43%
- To introduce the Bookstart Bookcrawl
- To increase regular library usage during the summer
- To increase library membership of children
- To provide a programme of library based activities which would encourage young people to come to the library regularly during the holidays

In evaluating the programme, the Children’s Team noted their views of the range of benefits, to both children and the library, of participating in the Summer Reading Challenge:

- *“It encourages children to become regular library users*
- *It keeps up the reading habit during the summer holidays*
- *It allows children to read for pleasure as opposed to text book reading*
- *It encourages children to reflect upon what they have read and to become critical readers*
- *It encourages family involvement in the library experience*
- *It gives children a sense of pride in their achievements*
- *It forges links between the library, school and home*
- *It encourages perseverance*
- *Every child who finishes has the same reward, regardless of age, length/complexity of books read or whether they completed the challenge week by week or had to catch up at the end*
- *It is not a competition. It is a personal challenge for the child and as such, is a valuable developmental opportunity.”*

Quantitative data

The quantitative data which was collected as part of the service’s evaluation recorded the number of children registering and the number of children completing the Challenge, listed by library:

	Registered	Completed (6 books)	% Completed	Registered excl Mobile	Completed excl Mobile	% Completed excl Mobile
Library 1	133	86	64.7	133	86	64.7
Library 2	91	35	38.5	91	35	38.5
Library 3	127	49	38.6	127	49	38.6
Library 4	316	124	39.3	316	124	39.3
Mobile	163	163	100			
TOTAL	830	457	56.2	667	294	44.1

The total percentage of children completing the challenge, at 56.2%, exceeded the service’s target for completions of 43%. The 44.1% completion rate excluding the service’s mobile library (which had a completion rate of 100%) still exceeded this wider target.

The figures for registration and completion compared with 2003 as follows:

Library	2003 Registrations	2004 Registrations	2003 Completions	2004 Completions
TOTAL	787	830	329	457

In cases where registration or completion rates may have decreased at branch level, staff noted the importance of direct staff engagement and personal contact with schools in encouraging participation at, for example, school assemblies.

Reflecting the importance of wider partnership working, staff also noted the positive influence in 2003 of work carried out through the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) which was operating in Slough at that time. Staff noted the positive influence from engagement with the programme on registrations and completions of the Summer Reading Challenge for the following reasons:

- A full-time outreach worker built up good relationships with several schools and children;
- The BIP officer was available to attend many school assemblies to promote the Summer Reading Challenge;
- The extra funding resulting from the BIP enabled many more invitations to be purchased and delivered to schools.

The number of girls who registered exceeded the number of boys at all branches except the nurseries visited by the mobile. Girls accounted for 59% of the total registrations. The higher levels of registration and completion of the Reading Rollercoaster reflected staff experience of a higher number of girls than boys visiting libraries, and staff have noted this as an issue which they plan to address.

The ages of participants were as follows:

Age	0 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 11	12 – 14	15+
Number registered	266	276	238	45	5
Completions	216	118	102	17	4
% Completion	81.2	42.8	42.0	37.8	80

Qualitative information

As part of its evaluation, Slough collected qualitative data to support the quantitative information which is described above. The examples shown here, which relate to “Stories from the Web activities”, link staff views of the benefits of the activities with feedback from children and parents to show the obvious value that the activities had:

“Children of all ages were totally engrossed in the activities.”

“It was very good and I really liked it. It was really, really great.” (Anmol, 10)

“Children were very excited when they saw their work on the internet – often during the session.”

“Matthew so enjoyed the session on the computers.” (parent of Matthew, 8)

“Children had an opportunity to participate in creative writing”

“I liked ‘Stories from the web’ because of its activities. I liked especially the stories. Who set it up? Please thank that person.” (Samar, 10)

Cambridgeshire

In evaluating its 2004 Summer Reading Activities, the service used the “Their Reading Futures” planning and evaluation table which has been designed to offer a framework, linked to “Inspiring Learning for All”, to allow library services to:

- Focus on **outcomes and the impact** that they wish to make through services and activities for young readers;
- Consider what **evidence of impact** there should be with each outcome;
- Plan the **activities** through which the service can achieve those outcomes;
- Plan how the service will **collect the evidence** needed to measure the impact of its activities;
- Think how the service will **use the evidence** collected for advocacy and for the future shaping of the service.

Using the “Their Reading Futures” planning and evaluation table, the service identified a number of outcomes that it wanted to achieve in undertaking the 2004 Summer Reading Challenge. The key outcomes that it identified were as follows:

- A broader range of young people access reading through the library;
- Young people become more confident about themselves as readers;
- Young people have more positive attitudes towards reading.

By using the planning and evaluation framework, the service was able to set out the evidence of impact that it expected to see in relation to widening participation and completion of reading incentive schemes in particular.

Quantitative data

The quantitative data which the service gathered in relation to participants was based on the definition that participants were children “who took away a collector folder, entered the title of at least one book they have read and collected at least one set of stickers”. Based on this definition, the service recorded **3671 participants and 2124 completions** across the county. This data is underpinned by more detailed information for each library and for the “Book Bus”, which visited six Fenland villages and provided an access point for the Reading Rollercoaster for 90 minutes each week at each location over a five week period.

Staff noted in particular the benefit of using the “Book Bus” to engage with communities which may not have ready access to local library provision and the related positive influence that the bus had on the number of completions – all children who accessed provision through the bus completed the scheme. These benefits were supplemented by the added value of engagement by staff on the bus with children in recommending titles and in discussing what the children had read.

The service also gathered a number of anecdotal comments from teachers, parents and carers praising the presence of the activities which had previously been lacking in these communities and reflecting positively on staff effort and commitment. Further activities to support the Reading Rollercoaster were provided in libraries which received financial support from local town and parish councils. These activities included the provision of designated staff to discuss with children the books they had read and the provision of book based craft activities.

Qualitative information

In collecting the evidence to support its evaluation of the 2004 Summer Reading Challenge, Cambridgeshire collected extensive qualitative feedback from parents/carers and children through their simple “Tell us what you think” evaluation forms. Feedback indicated high levels of satisfaction with the provision and noted in many cases a positive influence on children’s reading.

The comments below show a sample of the highly positive feedback which was offered. They have not been altered in any way except to correct punctuation and spelling where appropriate:

Adults:

Enjoyment

Wonderful idea. Children really enjoyed taking part [never used the library so much].

The children really enjoyed reading all the books and coming to the library bus, it kept them reading all Summer. Great!!

We have really enjoyed coming on the bus and all the children in my care have looked forward to Wednesdays. It would have been helpful for a few adult books.

Great fun. Megan had fun with the Reading Rollercoaster. Much needed this Summer holiday.

A very good idea as the school Summer holidays are so long and the children need things to occupy them. Giving them a challenge to do has been good for them as they are not 'bored'!

My children have really enjoyed The Reading Roller coaster. They have enjoyed all the books from the library and it has encouraged them to visit more often. The stickers were also a bonus.

I think the Reading Rollercoaster is an exciting and fun way of helping children enjoy their books, both whilst reading and also when they've finished. It encouraged them to readily choose another book quickly. An excellent scheme through the Summer holidays.

Education – confidence and motivation

He has enjoyed the Rollercoaster and found it very entertaining. It has also made him more confident to try different books.

My children have always loved books but this has helped them understand the potential of the library.

The Rollercoaster has made Florence want to read more and has encouraged her to read a greater variety of authors.

(He) struggles with his reading, so this encouraged him. He enjoyed collecting the stickers along the way.

Very well done. Thank you. Our son has returned to school ready to read. He is more confident and motivated.

This has been a wonderful scheme and has encouraged my son to read all Summer. I know he wouldn't have lifted a book if he hadn't been on this. He is not a keen reader. I hope this will be something you do again at any time. It is very worthwhile. Thank you.

It has helped build her confidence.

My 8 year old is a keen reader, but she has enjoyed visiting the library to collect stickers and activity sheets. However, it has been a fantastic incentive for my 6 year old son, who although a proficient reader, would rather do other things [preferably computer based.] However, he is exceptionally motivated to get the stickers and to finish "so he can be in the photo" [when certificates are handed out at the end] so please keep this going next year and the next....

The scheme really helped and encouraged them to continue reading and extending their literacy skills throughout Summer Hols! Thanks.

The Reading Rollercoaster has had a positive effect on my eldest daughter's reading as well as stimulating my younger daughter. Her reading improved from book to book and she enjoyed coming to the library every week. Please keep up the good work.

I think this is a great scheme. It has sustained the kids reading over the Summer [when they're not getting stuff from school] and they love having goals/targets/rewards – especially my 7 year old son. The weekly trip to the library was a real fixed point in our holiday schedule. The high quality materials [stickers, folders, plastic wallets] made it seem very "special" to the kids.

The scheme gave them both an incentive to read and they really looked forward to getting their stickers.

Education – indications of improved reading

My child enjoyed this and the school has said that her reading has improved over the holidays. We hope to do this again next year.

Definitely encouraged children to visit the library on a regular basis. Made them consider the content of what they were reading and to judge what they thought. Made them consider author's names and to be more selective in their choices. Enjoyed the supportive activity events held in the library.

My 6 year old loves reading but this scheme have her the incentive to read to us her chosen book and get it finished to have a medal at the end. My 3 year old read the stories to me [via pictures] and loved to be able to do the same as her big sister. I believe this scheme has definitely had a benefit on both my children and their reading ability. As it was a scheme outside the home and friends were doing it as well it was exciting and the encouragement they needed over the long Summer break. Thank you all.

I think that the Reading Rollercoaster is a very good idea as it encourages children with their reading. Joshua has improved since doing it. He has enjoyed it a lot.

Since starting the Rollercoaster my 4 year old has taken more interest in the actual words. He starts school in September and is fairly confident now in his alphabet and words like 'at', 'and' and 'the', 'that' etc.

General

Very impressed with the selection of books available. A very good idea for the children, beneficial for my 7 year old [a boy!] who perhaps would not have read as much in the holidays.

It has been a great boost to their reading over the Summer holidays. Completing the Rollercoaster was an added incentive to come very regularly to the library.

My children enjoyed the Reading Rollercoaster. They love reading but this made us use the library more. They also loved doing the activities.

I think it is brilliant in the way it combines play [stickers], asking for children's judgement on books [they feel taken seriously], being quizzed about what they have read [they feel important] and the idea of doing a project [six books] Thank you to the library staff who make it so enjoyable and thank you for providing so many children's books that continually change.

Fabulous resource for an outlying village. Helpful and friendly staff. Thank you!

Children:

Enjoyment

I thought that the library bus was very interesting. [Nicole 11]

I thought the bus was brilliant as it had lots of different books to choose from. [Ross 8]

I enjoyed reading the books and all the people were nice and I want it to come again next year. [Kealeigh 10]

The Rollercoaster is fun because I get to do fun things and I get to read. The books are fun. [Lilly 6]

I think I read a lot more than I usually do in the holidays while doing Reading Rollercoaster. [Jack 10]

I think it was really good. [Isaac 3]

I thought it was fun but I am not very quick at reading. [Cara 10]

I think it was great fun and I love reading so I liked it a lot. I hope something like this happens again soon. Thanks for coming. [Heather 10]

It's a very good idea and has gone down well with all ages. [Josh 11]

I enjoyed the Reading Rollercoaster and like activity sheets. I like coming to the library because there's a big range of books for all interests. [Ellie 9]

I have enjoyed coming to the Rollercoaster club. It's fun and I enjoy books more now. [Sean 8]

Education – confidence and motivation

I thought it was good because I can read better. [Mitch 10]

I thought the Reading Rollercoaster was wicked. It has helped me to read more confidently. [Liam 7]

I think it helped me read and I liked doing the stickers. [Jasmine 7]

It helped a bit more with my reading, but it was mainly just fun. [Chelsea 10]

Yes, I have enjoyed it. I think it has been a good idea. It has encouraged more children to read. Thanks. [Ami 11]

I think I read a lot more than I usually do in the holidays while doing Reading Rollercoaster. [Jack 10]

I thought the library was very helpful and there is a wide selection of books and it has kept me busy. So I would like it to come next year.

Children – data and analysis

The following section outlines the qualitative and quantitative data collected by Birmingham City Council's library service in using the following measure to demonstrate its impact in relation to activities to support children and families:

- The impact of library activities supporting children and families (including, for example, Sure Start and family learning activities) by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the numbers (or %) covered by activities and
 - Qualitative data showing the impact on participant literacy and confidence.

Data collection - context

We have used examples of data from three of the service's activities which reflect the breadth of its work with children and families and which offer clear examples of quantitative and qualitative data which show how the service makes a telling difference to a wide range of children and their families in its local communities.

Library Outreach Development Project

The project aims to offer families access to positive reading and learning experiences, book sharing and library-based activities. Many of the parents engaging with the project have low literacy and numeracy levels, poor self-esteem, and have had negative experiences of formal education and libraries. The lead Development Officer's work takes place with a high level of person-to-person interaction and offers a service explicitly tailored to individual needs. The work of the project covers a wide range of activities including reading and craft activities, health sessions, two music technology projects for children at risk of offending, road safety days, a visit the Young Readers UK Book Bash and weekly sessions at the library offering Learndirect classes. The service has collected the following quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the project.

Quantitative data

In this second year of the project (April 2003- March 2004), there were **138 outreach sessions**, including 49 family literacy sessions. 127 of the sessions took place in the community and 11 in the library from which the project operated. **3,223 people were seen over the year, an increase of 22% on the previous year's total of 2,647.**

Of the people seen in 2003-04, **1274 were adults and 1949 children** (of whom 1743 were school-age children and 206 non-school age children). **Book loans to participating families increased by over 30%** on the previous year.

Qualitative data

The Development Officer has reported many positive outcomes from the second year of the project in relation to improved confidence, group bonding and friendship and a strengthened desire to learn and achieve accreditation. Here, it was noted that participants' self-imposed exclusion from the library service has diminished greatly and that they have a much more positive view of the library and what it can offer them and their families.

The headteacher of a local school engaged in the project provided a succinct summary of the value of the work in noting that it identifies community interests and priorities so that:

“Learning becomes relevant because it makes peoples’ lives better, and quickly.”

In evaluating the project, the Development Officer has identified a number of longer term benefits of the project and the related activities which it covers in:

- *“Allowing adults and children to develop new experiences;*
- *Creating a sense of achievement;*
- *Encouraging greater creative thinking;*
- *Creating enthusiasm to experience activities again;*
- *Generating an understanding of diverse ways of creativity;*
- *For some participants and staff, learning new skills, which they may be able to use again in the future;*
- *Creating a sense of ownership amongst the group;*
- *Understanding the value of reading and books for pleasure;*
- *Creating and sharing good practice through staff from the library and other agencies working together and having an increased depth of understanding of this clientele;*
- *Introducing various agencies to each other who will develop their own best practice through working together and may collaborate in the future;*
- *Changing the perception of the library from a negative to a positive one;*
- *Parents making friends with each other, and therefore feeling less isolated;*
- *Library staff and parents/children making contact and feeling less isolated and alienated.”*

This assessment of the wide ranging benefits of the project is supported by a sample of the comments and feedback which have been received from children and adults attending activities:

That woman’s so friendly – I feel I know her.

Can we come in with him? – We get thrown out of a lot of places.

I don’t eat as much since I’ve been coming here – I’m busier now.

Do you get paid a lot to come here – or do you come because you like us?

Over the past two years we have enjoyed the library group. It has been lovely to be able to spend time reading with my daughter on a one-to-one basis.

“Book Bash” visit

It’s like being on holiday – I’ve had such a good time.

We've had a smashing time – I wouldn't have come here on our own. I'm glad you brought us. I never thought I would enjoy a whole day about things to do with reading and books.

I met a real author today (Chris White) – he was so normal and funny.

Brilliant day out.

I enjoyed it so much – I rushed about all day so I didn't miss anything.

Parenting group

Helped me to socialise. Since coming to Toddlertime and Parents group I have made friends.

You have introduced me to a lot of new things.

I have lost weight – I have gained confidence and I feel better about myself.

My son has met and already got to know other children he will be mixing with at the nursery.

Our children play with each other and are learning to share with each other.

(My son) has a speech problem, and being part of a group has helped his speech to improve.

We help each other out now because we are mates after coming here.

Summer Holiday Activities

While there is some overlap with the education measure in relation to summer reading schemes, using the measure to make a wider analysis of the quantitative data relating to wider summer holiday activities offers further evidence of the wide ranging impact of the service on children and families. This analysis draws on the detailed overview of events for children and young people held in Birmingham libraries during the summer holiday period from 19 July to 1 September 2004, which also includes information about the Reading Rollercoaster.

Quantitative data

The total number of events held in 2004 is set out in the table below showing a year on year increase in the number of events since 2000.

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
203	254	256	294	308

As part of Birmingham Libraries' Service Standards (known as the Children's Promise), it is stated that every library "will hold a programme of at least four story sessions at each library during the summer holidays". All but one of the city's libraries met or exceeded the four story sessions "promise".

Total number of children attending

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total	4899	5365	4731	5075	5085
Boys	2144 (44%)	2294 (43%)	2016 (43%)	2108 (42%)	2119 (42%)
Girls	2755 (56%)	3071 (57%)	2692 (57%)	2967 (58%)	2966 (58%)

Library events continue to attract a higher proportion of girls than boys to their events overall, with the balance remaining fairly static over the last five years, although three libraries attracted more boys than girls to their events. In this context, the service has noted the challenge of attracting boys in equal percentages.

This qualitative data is supplemented by more detailed information showing more detailed information in relation to ethnicity, age, library membership and attendance at other library activities drawn from a “snapshot week” from 9-13 August 2004.

The figures for ethnicity gathered during this week were assessed by third person observation and based on a sample of 897 children. Overall attendance from children from a non-white background was assessed as 42%. Although direct comparisons with the 2001 census are difficult because of the restricted categories that third person observation can use, by amalgamating the different census groups it would appear that approximately 42.5% of children aged 0-15 in Birmingham are from a non-white background. This means that although the percentage of Black African Caribbean children attending events has fallen, the overall percentage of children from a non-white background attending events in libraries is close to the amalgamated census figures.

Analysis by age

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Under 5	21%	21%	23%	29%	26%
5 to 7	39%	41%	42%	36%	34%
8 to 11	37%	34%	33%	31%	37%
12 and over	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%

(based on a snapshot week sample of 905)

These figures show that this year there was a small fall in the percentage of attendances by those in the under 5 and 5-7 year age groups, but a 6% increase in attendance by the 8-11 age group.

Library Membership

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Member	81%	83%	89%	86%	91%
Non member	19%	15%	11%	14%	9%

(based on a snapshot week sample of 876)

There was a 5% rise in the number of children attending events who were already library members. Two libraries reported that some children joined the library following on from their attendance at events and were thus originally non-users at the start of the period. By the time the snapshot period was recorded, they had taken out library membership and therefore were recorded as library members. The service's evaluation notes that libraries need to continue to strive to attract non-users to events with the ultimate goal of encouraging library membership.

Attendance at other library activities

	2003	2004
Yes	74%	73%
No	26%	27%

(based on a snapshot week sample of 844)

The number of children that have attended previous events remains almost the same, showing that the number of children attending events for the first time is low. Again, this has led the service to raise the question of attracting non-users during the summer holiday period, but also to other library events throughout the year.

Children's Issue Figures

The number of items issued on children's tickets from 5th July-13th September 2004 shows an increase on 2003 of 14% from 200824 to 229085.

Future actions

To improve attendance further the service aims to:

- continue to find ways to tackle the under representation of boys at summer events in libraries by examining the type of sessions that are planned and delivered.
- try to find ways of targeting publicity to non users of library services in order to expand the client base of children attending summer holiday sessions and ultimately encouraging more library usage.
- continue to put the message that "children with disabilities are welcome at all library events" on any publicity produced.
- find ways of being more proactive in encouraging families of children with a disability to view the library as a place that they can visit and all enjoy the experience.

Big Bonanza Book Bash

In addition, the service commissioned an external research report from Vector Research providing an evaluation of the *Big Bonanza Book Bash* which was held in May 2003 as the centrepiece of the Young Readers Birmingham Festival. The research offered a profile of visitors and expenditure analysis and obtained feedback from attendees to measure overall satisfaction. The evaluation thus offers both quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate the use of the measure in showing the service's impact in relation to children and families.

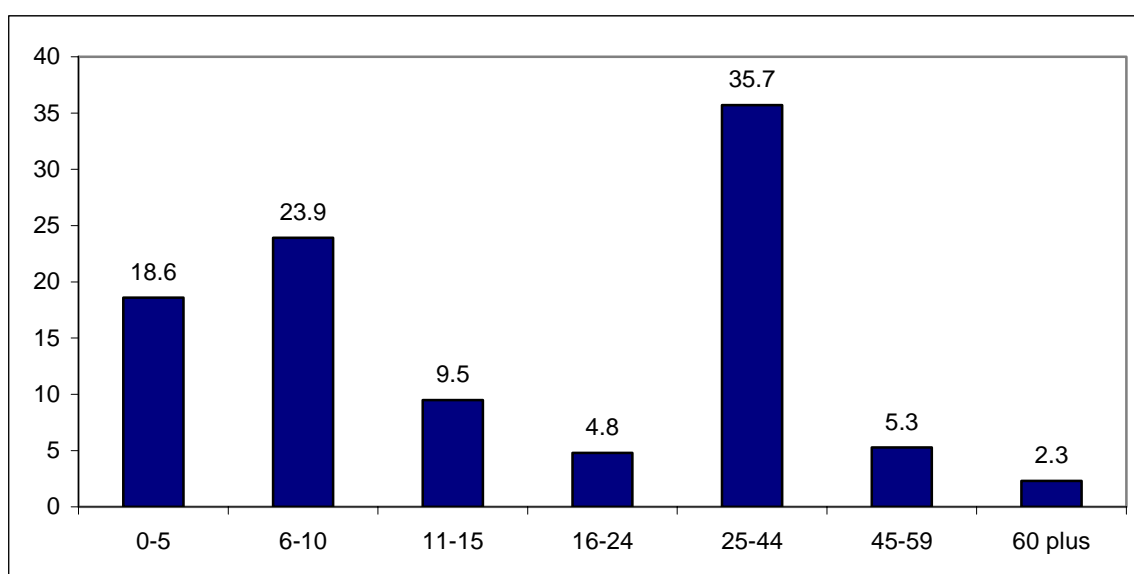
Other objectives of the external evaluation were to provide:

- wider profile information on attendees – including transport mode and income;
- information on publicity sources;
- reactions to the specific sessions.

Quantitative data

The research was based on a screening exercise with a large sample of attendees (at least 1,000 of the approximately 4,000 attendees) as they entered the venue and a self-completion questionnaire handed to all those respondents who were screened, as well as a number of additional attendees.

Age profile of visitors



Ethnic profile of attendees

	White groups	Black groups	Asian	Other
Attendees 2003	61.4	10.8	21.7	6.1
City population (2001 census)	70.34	6.13	19.52	4.02

Household income

Up to £5,199	£5,200-£10,399	£10,400-£15,599	£15,600-£20,799	£20,800 - £31,199	£31,200 - £41,599	£41,600+
12.4 (4.8)	8.8 (8.9)	14.7 (15.4)	11.2 (23.2)	21.8 (22.6)	17.6 (14.7)	13.5 (10.2)

Percentages; Base=208, 2001 figures in brackets

Previous attendance (Young Readers)

Frequency of attendance	
First time	56.1 (66.9)
One previous visit	20.4 (26.1)
Two previous visits	13.5 (7.0)
Three previous visits	9.9

Percentages; Base=215, 2001 figures in brackets

Disability

Yes	No
16.7 (4.2)	83.3 (95.8)

Qualitative data

Respondents were asked for a rating of their overall impression of the event and it was apparent (as with the 2001 event) that the event was well received. The vast majority (93.1%) rated it as very good or fairly good (a slight increase from 2001 – 90.6%). Only a small minority (3.6%) stated that the event was fairly poor or very poor. The overall rating of the event was as follows:

Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor
51.0 (48.2)	42.1(42.4)	3.2 (5.2)	0.3 (1.8)	3.3 (2.4)

Percentages; Base=208

In general, most specific issues were given a positive rating. There were particularly positive results in terms of the *venue* and *quality of the sessions*, with only a small minority of respondents expressing negative reactions. Respondents were invited to offer any other comments regarding the event. The positive comments made included:

- An enjoyable day – 26 mentions
- A fantastic event – 18 mentions
- Would attend next year – 12 mentions
- Impressed with the goody bag – 4 mentions
- Polite/good staff – 4 mentions
- Well organized – 3 mentions

These themes are summarised by two quotes in particular:

“A truly wonderful event and all free of charge! Excellent organization – we had a great day out and look forward to next year”

“Excellent – very good value for my council tax.”

Health – data and analysis

Introduction

The following section outlines the qualitative and quantitative data collected by Gateshead and Newham library services in using the following measure to demonstrate their impact in relation to health:

- The impact of widening access to health information by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data on the number (or %) of adults accessing health information through libraries, through bookstock and ICT, supplemented by
 - Qualitative data (including support for well-being) gathered through survey information or interviews.

Gateshead and Newham have provided a range of data including quantitative information in relation to bookstock, quantitative and qualitative surveys of library users and a qualitative survey of IT training participants. We explore this data and its link to supporting wider policy priorities below.

Gateshead

Quantitative data

The table below sets out quantitative data showing Gateshead Library Service’s Adult Non-Fiction Issues (610 – 618.99) relating to health.

	Health & Medicine 610 – 613.99	Public Health 614 – 614.99	Pharmacology 615 – 615.99	Diseases 616 – 617.99	Obstetrics 618 – 618.99	Total Issues (Health) 610 – 618.99	% of all Adult Non-Fiction Issues
2002/03	11,216	559	3,986	7,576	1,578	24,915	7.74 %
2003/04	10,544	547	3,272	6,943	1,419	22,725	7.85 %
2004/05 (to date)	9,508	496	2,921	5,905	1,175	20,005	8.03 %

While there has been a downward trend in the use of adult non-fiction resources, reflecting national trends, there has been a slight increase in the level of ‘health’ issues as a percentage of all adult non-fiction issues. The decline in adult non-fiction issues has been counterbalanced by the growth in the use of the internet. Responses to the Gateshead survey show that 43% of people who had retrieved health information from the library had used the internet. However, 91% had used books, which clearly remain a key health resource. Gateshead Council now has a ‘vitality index’ for individual neighbourhoods and the service will use this to identify libraries located in ‘health hotspots’ and to consider additional investment in health stock at these locations.

Preliminary analysis undertaken by the service shows that health stock has approximately 3% of adult non-fiction shelving, but delivers 8% of adult non-fiction issues. While this does not necessarily make the case for expanding the space dedicated to health stock, it does show that health stock is a high performing area of adult non-fiction stock.

Qualitative data

We have received extensive qualitative data from a survey carried out by Gateshead which covers a range of issues in relation to libraries’ impact on health and well-being. Survey questionnaires were distributed to all libraries within Gateshead Library Service and administered by the staff at the individual libraries. In total, 196 questionnaires were completed by a random sample of library users between 6 and 11 September 2004. 63% of respondents were female.

The key findings of the survey are that:

- Almost one in two (48%) of the respondents used the library to access health related material.
- Respondents access a broad range of health related material as shown in the table below:

Response	Percentage
Medical Dictionaries	33%
Babies and Children’s Health Books	17%
Women’s Health Books	48%
Men’s Health	18%
Mental Health Books	12%
Guides to Prescription Drugs	21%
Alternative Health Books	33%
Self Help Books about a specific condition	33%
Food & Diet Books	53%
Books about Healthy Living e.g. exercise, sport	38%

- Respondents had used the following sources through the library to access health related material: bookstock: 91% of respondents, leaflets: 26% of respondents, internet: 43% of respondents.

- There were high levels of satisfaction with the **usefulness and value of information**; 97% found the information which they had accessed through the library useful, with 34% saying it was very useful. Much lower proportions found the information they had accessed from the internet useful (56%, with only 26% describing it as very useful). The lower satisfaction rates for the internet could be explained by untested factors including a lack of familiarity with the internet and potential uncertainty around the reliability of internet sources.

How respondents used the information which was accessed

The survey provided wide ranging qualitative data on the ways in which the information was thought to be useful to respondents. A number of the comments which reflect the wider sample are summarised in the table below.

How respondents used information

- Because I am able to read up on the subject in my own time. So I am informed when I visit the doctor.
- Can use it in my life and sometimes people with a certain condition log on or have their own websites. On them they describe their condition how it has affected them and their families, support groups or organisations that have helped them and the medication they are on - side effects.
- Either points me in other directions not considered or provides information not previously found. Often refers to books/authors or links that have proved fruitful.
- Gave valuable background information & reassurance.
- Getting more insight/more specific information regarding a particular ailment/medical condition that the doctor has diagnosed.
- Gives information that you sometimes don't get, or miss when the doctor's talking to you. Good background info.
- Helps me to become better informed about decisions I make about my health.
- In some cases it has made me aware of other treatments available etc. However the internet tends to give a lot of unrelated information as well.
- It helps me with questions previously left unanswered. Now I have most of the answers.
- Learned specific details about illnesses.
- Looked up my husband's illness, found out one of the drugs he was taking was an appetite suppressor, realised why he was never hungry.
- Suggested reading, background, case studies.

Contribution of library to health and well-being

- 94% of respondents stated that the 'information gives me a better understanding of the condition/subject'.
- 35% of respondents went even further and said that the 'information has a positive impact on my health'.
- More than half (57%) of the respondents said the library service contributes positively to their health or wellbeing. The full percentages were as follows:

Response	Percentage
Yes	57%
No	10%
Don't Know	23%
No Response	10%

Respondents who replied in the affirmative were then asked to explain their reasoning. The following table summarises the ways in which respondents felt that libraries contributed positively to their health or well-being:

<p>A calming environment, knowledge that you could find info on most subjects through the system, very reassuring. Thank you.</p> <p>A good book helps me relax and if I read at bedtime it sends me off to sleep quicker.</p> <p>Access to information can set your mind at rest. Also find reading v relaxing - a bit of escapism.</p> <p>Enjoy reading and have access to a large variety of books which I would be unlikely to buy.</p> <p>Excellent resource in terms of all media products allowing me to feel up to date with the world. Provides a very safe environment for myself and children. Books freely available from the library of course allow me to either lose myself in a novel or find myself in self help/new skills etc. Staff are very cheerful and helpful - they help me to feel like part of the community and yet I am not someone who integrates well with people socially. I feel completely comfortable in a library.</p> <p>Gets me out every day and also helps you in meeting people and you can read the paper free & use the computer.</p> <p>Gives information and guidance. Puts mind at ease or prompts you to seek professional advice.</p> <p>I like libraries in general and this library in particular. I find it very welcoming, the staff are helpful & friendly. I do look forward to coming here.</p> <p>I love reading so I enjoy browsing in the library. The staff are always friendly and helpful.</p> <p>It gives me a place to visit, which motivates me out of the house and feel better, just to have said hello to another human being.</p> <p>It is an oasis of sanity in a desert of madness. It is one of the most civilised parts of our society. It is a big part of my life.</p> <p>It seems any or most books available. Very well stocked. Great library. You feel a lot better when you can read a little about whatever; you are not left in the dark.</p> <p>Just the knowledge there is somewhere to go to get the information when required.</p> <p>Keeps me in touch with my local community via the notice board. Offers information when I need it. Good place to have 'quality time' with my children. Time for me!!</p> <p>Place to go to talk to people - don't get out very often.</p> <p>Reading groups are great for boosting self confidence & giving confidence to try something new. Good meeting place. Able to exchange stories & seek support from other members.</p> <p>Relaxing, friendly, informal place to visit. Helps me to wind down. Talking Books help me to</p>

sleep.

Sometimes information from the library can allay concerns and unnecessary visits to the doctors with alternative methods unless the symptoms persist.

Time to relax and encourages further learning.

Newham

Quantitative data

Newham provided a detailed quantitative breakdown of bookstock related to health themes, which includes issue statistics for three broad headings - diseases and surgery, medicine and pharmacology which reflect Newham's circulation system. The data shows issues for each health category for all branches and for the Housebound Service over the last two complete years. The summarised results of the data are as follows.

Loans of health information

LIBRARY	HEALTH AND MEDICINE	PHARMACOLOGY	DISEASES AND SURGERY	TOTAL
Housebound 2003/4	198 (+67.8%)	155 (-12.4%)	120 (+37.9%)	473 (-23.8%)
Housebound 2002/3	118	177	87	382
TOTALS				
2003/4	16549	8923	11787	37259
2002/3	18138	9061	12946	40145
+/-	-8.8%	-1.5%	- 8.9%	-7.1%

Qualitative data

Newham have also provided qualitative data from the results of surveys of participants on one-day "Click On" IT training sessions for the over 50s. Many participants are women, aged over 60 and from a black ethnic background.

The survey includes information on what respondents have used the internet for following the course, including health related purposes. Following the courses, three in every ten participants (29%) have used the internet to access health related information. In addition to an increased ability to access information, the courses offer wider benefits broadly related to health and well being through social inclusion and improving IT and general skills.

Older people – data and analysis

Introduction

The following section outlines the qualitative and quantitative data collected by Bournemouth and Lancashire library services in using the following measures to demonstrate their impact in relation to older people:

Measures

- The impact on older people of receiving library services in the home by collection and analysis of:
 - Quantitative data showing the number (or %) of older people receiving the service and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews of users.
- The impact of libraries on older people accessing information on entitlements to benefits and services including:
 - Quantitative data showing the number or % of older people accessing information and
 - Qualitative data gathered through survey information or interviews.

We have received quantitative and qualitative data from both services in relation to users of the homebound library service, supported by qualitative and quantitative data in relation to participants in Silver Surfer IT courses.

Bournemouth Home Library Service

Quantitative data

Homebound service – 2003/04 figures

The quantitative data provided by the authority shows that the scope of the homebound service was as follows:

- 381 people were visited by volunteers (usually in their own homes);
- 548 people were visited by library staff (including individuals living in sheltered accommodation, nursing homes and day centres);
- Users are visited every 4 weeks and take out on average 6 books per visit.

While the measure focuses on the provision of homebound services, Bournemouth also provided useful data showing the breadth of participation in its Silver Surfers courses. In 2003/04, 1027 people (from May 2003 to June 2004) attended IT courses in Bournemouth libraries. Of these, 872 were Silver Surfers.

Qualitative data

The authority has also provided qualitative data from homebound users which gives detailed information on the following topics:

- How the service from the library has made a difference to/improved the user's life;
- How the service better enables the user to live independently.

The findings which are set out below are drawn from survey carried out by Bournemouth Libraries with a sample of 40 users of the homebound service (11 respondents were male and 29 female). Responses from these homebound users encompassed a range of reactions and reflections on the impact of the service on their daily lives. The vast majority, however, held in common the broadly positive impact of the service. This is reflected in user responses to the first question, which is set out in the table below:

Does the service from the library improve your life in any way?

100% - Yes

Respondents were then asked a follow up question: 'if the answer is yes, please describe how' and replied in the following terms which indicate that users perceived significant benefits from the service:

Gives me an extra dimension to the day.
It's a great form of relaxation and helps at my age to keep one's mind alert.
It has improved my life.
Gives many hours of pleasure.
It brings a welcome addition to the daily routine.
Passes a few hours.
Keeps the brain active.
Improves my life magnificently.
Being disabled I'm unable to get around to public libraries.
Helps to fill leisure hours.
Able to depend on the library.
An excellent service tendered by a courteous and helpful staff.

Lancashire County Council

Quantitative data

Homebound service

Figures provided by Lancashire County Libraries show that there were 953 users of the homebound service in the period 2003-04.

Qualitative data

The qualitative results provided by the Bournemouth survey of users of the homebound service are supported by the survey results provided by North Lancashire's Library Link Service. Library Link is a book lending service directed at nursing and sheltered housing and users were asked a specific question on quality of life as part of a wider survey of their views of the service.

The survey was carried out in November 2004 and 200 questionnaires were distributed with 150 returned, mainly from customers in sheltered accommodation. At the time of the survey, there were 101 visits per month to Homes and sheltered accommodation, three to Day Centres and one to a Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit. In total there are approximately 350 registered borrowers.

The survey results clearly show that the service is much valued. It reveals, amongst wider themes, that 55% of respondents read more than they did prior to Library Link visits and that 84% said the Library Link has made a difference to their lives:

Library Link makes a difference to my life	
1 – Agree strongly	60.5%
2 – Agree	23.0%
3 – Neither agree nor disagree	7.2%
4 – Disagree	2.0%
5 – Disagree strongly	0.7%
No answer	2.0%
Spoilt	4.0%

As with the data from Bournemouth Library Service, these figures are backed up with a series of clear statements from respondents indicating that the service had a positive impact on their day-to-day life. In the survey, users who said that the service had made a difference to their life were then asked to state why. There was a 68% response rate here among the users who felt the library made a difference to their lives. Key comments from respondents were as follows:

It has kept me alive.
 Life is more interesting.
 Occupies my spare time.
 You can socialize with other people.
 I am 93 years old; the library is 25 minutes walk away, need I say more?
 I read more than I use to, I find it relaxing.
 It gives me an interest, a world of imagination.
 It has made a difference.
 Being confined to a wheelchair, it gives me more freedom.
 It's encouraged me to read more, I seldom read a book before.
 Kept me alive.
 Started me reading again.
 You can socialize with other people.
 By meeting people.
 It gives me an interest, a world of imagination

In addition, Lancashire carried out a small snapshot survey of 11 (4 male, 7 female) participants in a Silver Surfer IT session. This illustrates one of the wider ways in which libraries can support older people. Participants were asked whether attending the sessions in the library had helped them in their day-to-day life in any way. Respondents were able to give more than one response and answers were as follows:

Improved my career prospect	0
Improved my knowledge	9
Improved my self-confidence	8
Encouraged me to consider purchasing a PC	2
Helped me to communicate with friends/family	3

Appendix C – Sample questionnaire to support health methodology

This Appendix contains an example of a survey template, based on the template used by Gateshead MBC, which could be adapted to form a template for use in other library authorities in line with the methodology set out in Section 2 for collecting qualitative data in relation to the health measure.

Question 1 Do you use the library to find information about your health?

Response	Percentage
Do use the library to find information about their health	
Do not	
No response	

Question 2 If yes, which services do you use?

Response	Percentage
Books	
Leaflets	
Videos/DVDs/CDs	
The Internet/PCs	
Taster sessions	
Other services	
Newspapers/magazines	
Talking Books	
Notices for health related local events	

Question 3 If you use books, please specify which type.

Response	Percentage
Medical Dictionaries	
Babies and Children’s Health Books	
Women’s Health Books	
Men’s Health	
Mental Health Books	
Guides to Prescription Drugs	
Alternative Health Books	
Self Help Books about a specific condition	
Food & Diet Books	
Books about Healthy Living e.g. exercise, sport	
Other books	
Fiction books	
General	

Question 4 How useful do you find the information?

Response	Percentage
Very Useful	
Quite Useful	
Useful	
Not Very Useful	
Not At All Useful	

Question 5 Please tick, as appropriate, if either or both of these statements apply

Response	Percentage
'The information gives me a better understanding of the condition/subject'	
'The information has a positive impact on my health'	

Question 6 If you use the internet to look for health related information, are you able to find the information you are looking for?

Response	Percentage
Yes	
No	
Partially	

Question 7 How do you find the information you are looking for on the internet?

Response	Percentage
By using a specific website	
By using a search engine	
By asking the staff for help	

Question 8 If you use specific websites which ones do you use?

--

Question 9 How useful have you found the information to be?

Response	Percentage
Very Useful	
Quite Useful	
Useful	
Not Very Useful	
Not At All Useful	

Question 10 In what way have you found the information useful?

Question 11 Do you feel that the library service contributes positively to your health or well-being?

Response	Percentage
Yes	
No	
Don't Know	

Question 12 If yes, please explain how

Question 13 Where else do you go to look for health information?

Response	Percentage
Doctor	
Pharmacist	
Friend	
Newspaper/Magazine	
NHS Direct	
Health Visitor/Practice Nurse	
Other	

Appendix D – Sample questionnaire to support older people methodology

This Appendix contains an example of a survey template, based on the templates used by Bournemouth and Lancashire library services, which could be adapted to form a template for use in other library authorities in line with the methodology set out in Section 2 for collecting qualitative data in relation to the older people measure.

Question 1 Does the service from the library improve your life in any way?

Response	Percentage
Yes	
No	
No response	

Question 2 If yes, please describe how?

Response

Question 3 Do you feel that this service better enables you to live independently?

Response	Percentage
Yes	
No	
No response	

Question 4 How could we improve the service that you receive at the moment?

Response	Percentage

Question 5 Would you be interested in joining another library activity (for example, a reading group)?

Response	Percentage
Yes	
No	
No response	

Question 6 If you use the already use the library for other activities, have these activities helped you in your day-to-day life (for example, in relation to knowledge, self-confidence or communication)? Please describe how.

Response	Percentage
Yes – how	
No	
No response	

Question 7 Do you feel that the library service contributes positively to your health or well-being? Please describe how.

Response	Percentage
Yes	
No	
Don't Know	

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