

Home Service Library Survey

October 2017

Working with support from [Renaisi](#) and to help evaluate the Reading Agencies [Reading Outcomes Framework Toolkit](#) the Home Service Library team conducted a survey of a third of the existing customer base, approximately 200 people. The evaluation will help create a baseline for measuring impact moving forward. As we are bringing in new users we wanted to set up an evaluation system to show the impact that this service development had on these new groups. It was felt appropriate to look, at this point, at how we evaluated the impact that the current Home Service Library has on its customers. The information will be used as tool to provide evidence that the service is having impact.

Survey summary

From the survey results, we can clearly see the importance of reading and having access to books for these customers. This survey shows reading is a key part of the lives of Home Services Library customers with 76% reading every day.

90% of the customers were happy with the books that are selected for them by the Customer Service Officers.

94% found it easy or very easy to talk to the drivers about the books they would like to read.

The information gathered shows we are improving mental health, well-being of our customers, reducing social isolation and making the lives of our customers a happier and less anxious one.

The findings related to the effect on their mood and the difference access to the Home Service Library makes, showing that reading has a positive effect on their mood in general with 75% feeling relaxed, 66% happier and 38% less lonely. The Home Service Library makes a difference to these customers with 77% feeling happier, 59% feeling relaxed and 41% feeling less lonely as a result of their visits. The whole survey highlights the value of the social interaction with the Customer Service Officers to these socially isolated, vulnerable, lonely and often elderly customers.

The survey has highlighted some areas that could be developed or done differently with 57% of the customers wanting a wider range of books or more recommendations. Moving forward and the survey results, the service will look at the stock selection, sharing information about stock, introducing new stock formats and reader development opportunities.

Survey results

How much time do you usually spend reading for enjoyment?

Every day	145	75.9%
Few times a week	42	22.0%
Once a week	4	2.1%
Few times a month	0	0.0%
Once a month	0	0.0%
Rarely	0	0.0%
Never	0	0.0%

Does the home service allow you to read for enjoyment more than you would usually?

Yes	192	98.0%
No	4	2.0%

Quote

"Because we are both ill, reading blocks out, for a time, the terrible news from consultants and Doctors we have been given during the last few years, saves my sanity"

Do you have access to all the books that you would like to read through the home service?

Yes	174	89.7%
No	20	10.3%

When asked if it was no to the above question and what they would like to read, we were supplied with a long list of books, authors and genres the customer would like to access.

How easy is it to talk to the drivers about the books you would like to read?

Very difficult	1	0.5%
Difficult	1	0.5%
Ok	9	4.6%
Easy	42	21.4%
Very Easy	143	73.0%

All the responses to this question can be grouped into a few key words and phrases.

- Depth of knowledge of books
- Knowing customer's tastes
- Friendly and good relationships with customers and their families
- Helpful and caring

Quotes

"They are chatty and smiling, brightens up my day"

"Because my driver (Ian) I've known him for so long, he's like one of the family to me now. My family are comfortable with him coming and always ask about him and what he's brought me this week. It's a wonderful service, love the books and also always obliging to do little jobs for me too. Thank you"

What effect, if any, does reading have on your mood in general?

It makes me happier	132	66.0%
It makes me less sad	27	13.5%
It makes me relaxed	150	75.0%
It makes me less anxious	40	20.0%
It makes me less lonely	76	38.0%
It makes me feel worse	0	0.0%
It has no effect	4	2.0%
Other	14	7.0%

Quotes

"Cheers up my day, knowing I've got new books to look forward to."

"It helps keep my mind alert even though my body is almost useless"

What difference does having access to the home service make in your life?

It makes me happier	148	77.1%
It makes me less sad	23	13.5%
It makes me relaxed	113	58.9%
It makes me less anxious	49	25.5%
It makes me less lonely	78	40.6%
It makes me feel worse	0	0.0%
It has no effect	3	1.6%

Quotes

"I have books I would otherwise not have access to. Reading lessens the pain I suffer by distraction, taking my mind elsewhere. The days I am confined to bed are helped by lessening the frustration of being a captive"

"Fills in the long nights. Takes me out of the situation, I am an insomniac so helps me get a little sleep"

Is there anything you would like done differently as part of the home service?

Wider range of books	62	44.6%
More information about other library services	14	10.1%
More time to talk to drivers on visit	38	27.3%
More books recommendations	33	23.7%
Other	45	32.4%

Quotes

"More mp3 for ease of use"

"Large Print please"

"If there is any sheet of piano music available. I look forward to the time the drivers can spend with me."

"Q: would computer selection be possible at all? Sometimes in the past, I asked for specific books or authors at that time, I was instructed it was not possible to do this. I gave up asking. I don't have any information on ebooks etc."

"If it possible to 'order' a book if you read a write up of one in a newspaper magazine etc.?"

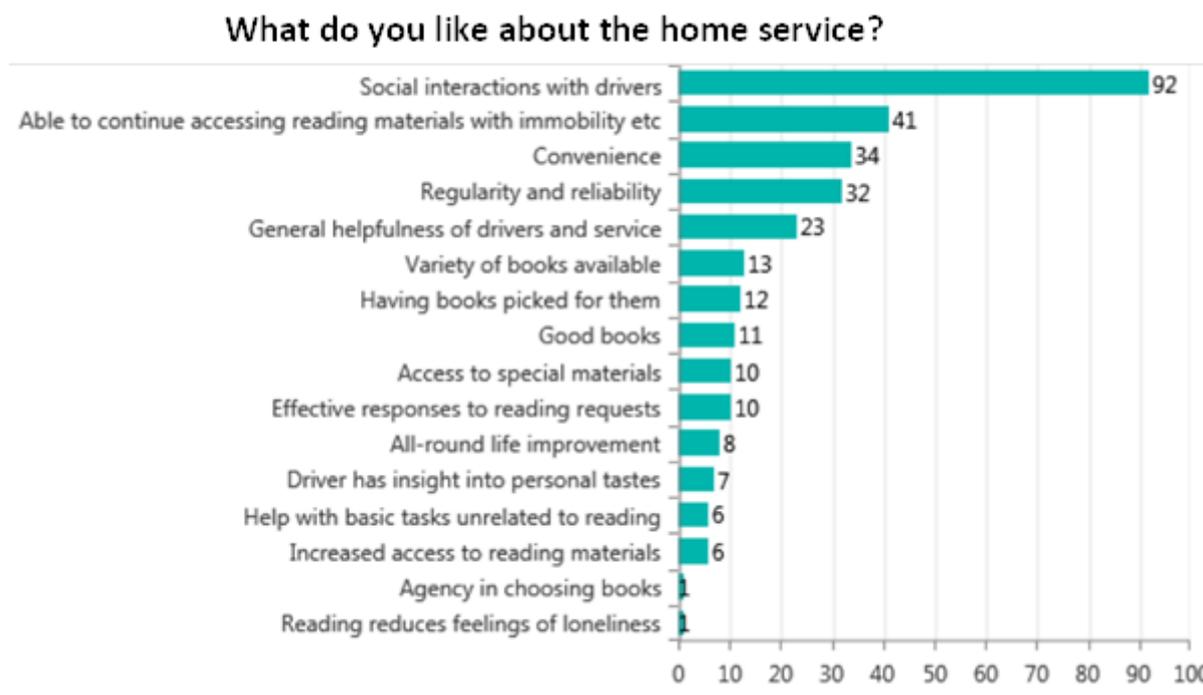
"I'd like to be able to put reservations online"

"This is not a criticism, but sometimes you're only aware of a book when you actually see it and want to read it, but that is impossible with the home service"

"Perhaps we could have lists of available books/CDs and make a choice for future deliveries"

What do you like about the home service?

In order to analyse the responses to this question, each response has been coded, to identify the key themes that emerge in it. By identifying the number of times each theme emerges, we can see a rough insight into the elements of the home service most valued by the service users. This is summarised by a bar chart:



Quotes

“EVERYTHING! The best or one of the best things that’s happened to me lately. I am very grateful for the home deliveries. I don’t have a car now and it’s hard for me to walk. Reading is one of my life’s pleasures. Thank you for providing it.”

“I feel like that I’m not forgotten”

“I nearly always have something to read. The saying ‘you are never alone when there is a good book to read’ is very true”

“Reliable, Good Service, Social aspect of it, knowledge. Often help me with other council services. It’s a great service and not just for books”

Drivers’ feedback

What can we do moving forward?

Short Term

- Do some myth busting with staff, volunteers and FOG’s
- Produce new publicity in the new branding
- Leaflet drops
- Schedule the Home Service publicity banners to be in each library and customer service centre for a period of 6 weeks
- Use the canvas publicity bags to promote the service

Medium Term

- Promote E-books and Press Reader using our or the customers devices
- Use devices to aid customers to access the library catalogue
- Use staff picks to promote stock to Home Service customers
- Promote ourselves through attending local and community events
- Promote ourselves through the local hospitals
- Invite elected member to spend a day out with the staff and give them information about what’s happening in their ward, e.g. number of customer visited in their ward
- Have a care homes coffee morning and promote the different parts of the service
- Organise invited events e.g. Home Service coffee mornings
- A telephone book group every 4 to 6 weeks
- Work with other agencies - RVS Compassionate Neighbours Scheme and Electoral Services

Other pertinent quotes

“I like everything about Home Service Library. Regular service. Super staff who bring the books and have a little time to chats about books and general life. When one lives alone their visit means a lot and I look forward to the delivery days”

"Being old with difficulty walking I feel I am not forgotten. I find the drivers are always pleasant"

"I discover new authors. I look forward to the delivery knowing I will have a good selection of books"

"As I have agrophobia it is a god send"

"We are both disabled and it's a plus to have books delivered"

"It's excellent. It brings some hours into my life that I can happily pass away"

"It has made it possible for allowing me to do something I have done all my life and it is very much appreciated"

"I like everything about Home Service Library. The fortnight pass so quick and I look forward to my visit and what books I'm getting that day. I feel like a 'child in a sweet shop'. It's such a special service to me in all aspects of my life. Also advising and sorting out other problems with me re: council, energy probs etc."

"Reliability. Friendliness, life line for people living alone"

"I Like everything about Home Library Service. It's such a vital service, with my sight being very minimal, the audio books make such an impact in my life"

"Socially I couldn't manage without it. It's lovely to see the driver come and I get excited to see what they bring me, lovely chat – not just about books either, my family, my life and shows support and concern too. First class service."

"An excellent substitute for the fact I can no longer visit my local library due to age and immobility"

"The joy of opening my door and finding a book on the sill. Thank you"

"The fact that I now read new authors one I would never look at before. I know if I cannot answer the door I would get help also it is nice to see somebody"

"I would be lost without the service as I could not get to the local library for age and mobility. Used libraries from early childhood when we were first able to enrol."

"Always know I should have something to read"