



## Mobile Library Service Strategy

### Introduction

When Libraries NI was established in April 2009 it inherited mobile library services from the 5 Education and Library Boards which were based on 5 different strategies. Libraries NI is consulting on a single strategy with the aim of increasing use of the mobile service and ensuring that it meets the needs of current and future users.

The proposals in the consultation document relate to the public mobile library service rather than the Homecall service which is provided for anyone who has significant difficulty in visiting a branch or mobile library due to ill health, disability or lack of mobility.

### Current position

Libraries NI operates 28 mobile library vehicles, with over 700 stops across Northern Ireland. The service seeks to provide stock for customers of all ages and interests in the limited space available. Some of the vehicles provide public ICT access but the level of use of ICT on the mobile libraries is very low.

There is a high level of customer satisfaction with the current service but the overall level of use is not high. There is considerable potential to increase use of the service whilst maintaining the high level of customer satisfaction.

### Objectives of the Mobile Library Service Strategy

These are:

- to increase use of mobile libraries;
- to ensure that the service is accessible;
- to maximise the contribution of mobile libraries to Libraries NI overall service provision in both rural and urban areas;
- to deliver value for money services;
- to deliver a harmonised and equitable service; and
- to deliver a service which is appropriate for target users.

### Service Proposals

To achieve the objectives, the strategy is based on 5 proposals. Proposals 1 and 2 aim to make the best possible use of the space available on our mobile libraries. Proposal 3 is intended to make sure the service is equitable. Proposals 4 and 5 are designed to increase use.

#### Proposal 1: Target groups

The recent customer survey shows that the mobile library service is primarily used by older, retired people and children of various age groups and their carers.

Space on mobile vehicles is limited and it is not practical to carry an extensive range of materials for all age groups and interests. In order to make the best use of the service, we propose that the space on mobiles will mainly be used to provide services for the target groups identified above. This would mean that more large print and talking books and more novels and popular non-fiction would be on the shelves, and a greater number of books for pre-school and early primary children would be available.

### **Proposal 2: Services to be provided**

The mobile library service has tried to provide the same range of services as a small branch library, including some access to the Internet as well as books, CDs, DVDs etc. Our view, confirmed by the results of the recent customer survey, is that mobiles serve people best for borrowing books including talking books and large print books.

We propose that mobile libraries should mainly deliver book lending services and should not provide Internet access.

### **Proposal 3: Criteria for service delivery**

#### **(a) Setting criteria for determining mobile stops**

Libraries NI needs to establish criteria for stops in order to provide an equitable service.

Our view is that criteria should be set for determining mobile stops and that they should focus on distance from branch libraries, customer demand and continued levels of use.

#### **(b) Criteria for mobile stops in rural areas**

The mobile library service strategy proposes the following criteria for a mobile stop in a rural area:

- at least 5 regular customers on an on-going basis with continued levels of use; and
- at least 3 miles from a branch library.

#### **(c) Criteria for mobile stops in urban areas** (i.e. the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and the Derry Urban Area).

The mobile library service strategy proposes the criteria for a mobile stop in an urban area to be:

- not within easy access of a branch or central library;
- in an area of social need (i.e. within the top 10% most deprived wards); and
- at least 5 regular customers on an on-going basis with continued levels of use.

### **Proposal 4: Services to schools and playgroups**

At present some mobile libraries visit a number of schools and playgroups along the route. Capacity for providing this service is limited and we are aware that we cannot call at all the schools and playgroups that might be interested in the service. We do not wish to establish limiting criteria but we propose to make future decisions on whether individual requests can be met on the basis of:

- the level of need established by the school or playgroup, e.g. distance from a branch library;
- whether the stop fits into the mobile route on a suitable day and time;
- whether the stop would adversely affect the use of a branch library; and
- how well used the mobile would be.

### **Proposal 5: Increasing use**

The mobile library service is valued by our customers but the overall level of use of the service is not high. We intend to do more promotion of the service and to ensure that the mobile libraries are used to capacity by making arrangements to visit more schools and playgroups, to provide services to individual children and their families.

**The closing date for receipt of completed questionnaires is 14 December 2012.**

## Consultation Questionnaire

If you are at 16 years of age or older, Libraries NI would welcome views on all aspects of the consultation document but in particular on the service proposals.

### Proposal 1: Target Groups

**Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI's public mobile library service should mostly serve the needs of older people, children and their parents/carers?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q2. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

### Proposal 2: Services to be provided

**Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI should make lending of books (including talking books) the main service provided on public mobile libraries?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

**Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI should stop providing Internet access as a service on public mobile libraries?**

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q6. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

**Proposal 3: Criteria for Service Delivery**

**(a) Setting criteria for determining public mobile stops**

**Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI should put in place criteria for deciding public mobile library stops both in rural and urban areas?**

[Such criteria may include distance from branch or central libraries, customer need/demand and continued levels of use]

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q8. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

**(b) Criteria for public mobile stops in rural areas**

**Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI should put in place the criteria outlined below for deciding public mobile library stops in rural areas?**

- Mobile stop must have at least 5 regular customers on an on-going basis with continued levels of use;
- Mobile stop must be at least 3 miles from a branch library.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q10. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

**(c) Criteria for public mobile stops in urban areas** (i.e. the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and the Derry Urban Area).

**Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI should put in place the criteria outlined below for deciding public mobile library stops in urban areas?**

- Mobile stop must not be within easy access of a branch or central library;
- Mobile stop must be in an area of social need (i.e. within the top 10% most deprived wards); and
- Mobile stop must have at least 5 regular customers on an on-going basis with continued levels of use.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q12. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

## **Proposal 4: Services to Schools and Playgroups**

**Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Libraries NI should apply clear principles when deciding whether to meet requests for mobile stops at schools or playgroups?**

[Principles may include the suitability of available days and times, the effect on branch libraries, the potential level of use and the level of need, e.g. distance from a branch library]

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q14. If you disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal, please explain why:**

## **Proposal 5: Increasing usage**

**Q15. Do you think there is anything Libraries NI can do to increase use of public mobile libraries?**

- Yes  → Go to Q16  
No  } → Go to Q17  
Don't know/no opinion  }

**Q16. If 'Yes', please explain how you think Libraries NI can increase use of public mobile libraries:**

**About you**

**Q17. Are you responding to this questionnaire as an individual or on behalf of an organisation? (Tick one only)**

- Individual  → Go to Q20
- Organisation  → Go to Q18 & Q19

**Q18. What is the name of your organisation?**

.....

**Q19. Please provide contact details:**

Name: .....
Address: .....
.....
.....
Telephone: .....
Fax: .....
Email: .....

→ Go to Q33

**Q20. Are you a member of a library in Northern Ireland?**

- Yes
- No

**Q21. How often do you use Libraries NI’s public mobile library service?**

- Once a week
- Fortnightly
- Once every 3 to 4 weeks
- Less frequently
- Never

**Q22. How often do you use a branch or central library in Northern Ireland?**

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Fortnightly
- Once every 3 to 4 weeks
- Less frequently
- Never

**Q23. Are you a member of Libraries NI staff?**

Yes

No

**Q24. Are you male or female?**

Male

Female

**Q25. Which age range do you fall under?**

16-24 years

25-34 years

35-49 years

50-59 years

60 years and over

**Q26. Are you... (Tick one only)**

Single

Married/cohabiting

Divorced/separated

Widowed

Civil partnership

Civil Partnership Dissolution/Annulment

Surviving Civil Partner

**Q27. Do you have someone who is dependent on you, i.e. a child, someone with an incapacitating disability, an elderly person?**

Yes

No

**Q28. What is your country of birth? (Tick one only)**

Northern Ireland

England

Wales

Scotland

Republic of Ireland

Other (write in country)  \_\_\_\_\_

**Q29. What is your ethnic group? (Tick one only)**

- White
- Chinese
- Irish Traveller
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black Other
- Mixed Origin
- Other (please specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

**Q30. Are you currently... (Tick one only)**

- In full time employment
- In part time employment
- Self employed
- Unemployed
- Student
- Looking after home/family
- Temporarily sick/injured
- Permanently sick/disabled
- Retired
- Other (please specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

**Q31. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or illness that substantially limits your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities?**

- Yes  → Go to Q32
- No  → Go to Q33

**Q32. What is the nature of this disability or illness? (Tick all that apply)**

- Mobility
- Learning
- Hearing
- Mental Health
- Sight
- Other (please specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

## Equality Considerations

**Q33. Under our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity between certain groups within society, Libraries NI needs to consider the equality implications of the proposed changes to the public mobile library service. A report on the potential equality implications is available on the Libraries NI website.**

**Do you believe some or all of the proposed changes to the public mobile library service would have an effect on you (or your organisation) because of any of the following...**

**...religious belief; political opinion; racial group; age; marital status; sexual orientation; gender; disability; or dependants?**

Yes  → Go to Q34

No  → Go to Q35

**Q34. If 'Yes', in which regard would you (or your organisation) be affected? (Tick all that apply)**

- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Religious belief   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Political opinion  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racial group       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Age                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Marital status     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexual orientation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dependants         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Please give the reason(s) for your answer(s):**

## Rurality Considerations

**Q35. Under our commitment to considering the impact of our strategy on rural dwellers, Libraries NI needs to consider the rural implications of the proposed changes to the public mobile library service. A report on the potential rural implications is available on the Libraries NI website.**

**Would you describe the place where you live (or where your organisation is based) as... (Tick one only)**

- |  |                          |   |            |
|--|--------------------------|---|------------|
| A big city                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | } | →Go to Q37 |
| The suburbs or outskirts of a big city | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |            |
| A small city or town                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |            |
| A country village                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | } | →Go to Q36 |
| A farm or a home in the country        | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |            |

**Q36. If you live in a country village, a farm or home in the country (or your organisation is based in a rural area), to what extent would you or your local community be affected if some or all the proposed changes to the public mobile library service were introduced?**

A lot	Quite a bit	A little	Not at all	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>				

**If you consider that you (as a rural dweller) or your local community will be affected a lot or quite a bit, please give the reason(s) for your answer:**

## **General Comments**

**Q37. Are there any other comments you would like to make or is there anything else you think Libraries NI should be aware of with regard to the public mobile library service?**

- Yes  → Go to Q38  
No  → Go to end

**Q38. If 'Yes', please give details:**

**You have now reached the end - Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!**

This questionnaire asks for your views on the proposals, including any potential equality or rural proofing issues which you think might arise as a result of the proposals. We would be grateful if you would complete the questionnaire and return it to us either by:

- handing it in at your local library;
- OR**
- online at [www.librariesni.org.uk](http://www.librariesni.org.uk);
- OR**
- by post to: Ms Helen Osborn  
Director of Library Services  
Omagh Regional Administrative Centre  
1 Spillars Place  
Omagh  
Co Tyrone  
BT78 1HL

**The closing date for receipt of completed questionnaires is 14 December 2012**

If you require this questionnaire in an alternative language or format, please contact Anne Todd on 028 25 664 137.