

Reading Anything, Anytime, Anywhere:

**How successful was the National Year of Reading's Impact in
Sheffield Public Libraries?**

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Abstract

The second National Year of Reading ran between April and December 2008. The campaign was conducted by a consortium of agencies headed by the National Literacy Trust and supported by the national government. The aims of this initiative were to promote reading for pleasure and enforce the message that “reading anything, anywhere, anytime is good” (*Reading for Life*, 2009: 11). This Year also helped re-establish and promote libraries as vital to the community, promoting reading for pleasure and reader development.

This study was run in collaboration with Sheffield public libraries and aimed to assess the success of the Year across the library service with regard to the national campaign, tailoring events to target groups and creating effective, sustainable partnerships. Examples of best practice were to be identified to help Sheffield sustain the good work of the Year. These aims were then expanded to include investigation of the approach to the Year in Newcastle and Derbyshire providing valuable data for comparison.

There was a qualitative approach to this study using methodological triangulation with instruments of document analysis, questionnaires aimed at front line library staff at the thirty lending libraries across Sheffield and an interview with the NYR Coordinator of Sheffield. Unfortunately the NYR Coordinator was unavailable due to problems encountered earlier in data collection. This led to the questionnaire being redistributed electronically to the Newcastle and Derbyshire authorities and email interviews were conducted with the NYR Coordinators of these authorities.

The conclusions found in this study stress the success of the Year on a local and national basis. They indicated that the local aims of the Year reflected the national aims of the campaign. Although there was some evidence of events being tailored to target groups it was clear that events were planned and organised primarily around the monthly themes of the Year. Partnerships that were created during the Year have been effective but whether these are sustainable will have to be re-

visited over time. There were many examples of best practice provided and the sustainability of the Year has been continued nationally by the Reading for Life campaign. On a local level momentum has been sustained through maintaining partnerships and repeating successful events this year. There are recommendations for further study and future development for Sheffield libraries.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Reading and the Public Library

“The more you read, the more you know. Reading helps you connect, think, judge, decide and contribute. If you read, everything is within your reach.”

(National Year of Reading Mission Statement, 2008)

Public libraries were developed in the mid nineteenth century to promote and encourage the act of reading (Katz, 2001: 30). This can still be seen at the core of the public library service but has been somewhat overshadowed by the integration of information technology and the services that follow such as The People’s Network into libraries within the last twenty years. This has been a necessary step for libraries, evolving with modern society to provide free resources and remain a valuable public resource but has come at the cost of losing focus on the promotion of reading for pleasure and reader development. This opinion is reflected in *Framework for the Future* (2003), detailing the position of libraries and steps for ensuring their preservation and further development over the next decade. Within this report it is stated that “book stock is central to what public libraries offer” (15) and that “a library cannot claim to be successful unless it has a good range of books carefully selected to meet the needs of its community” (24).

With this taken into consideration it is not surprising that reader development has come into focus in public libraries over the last twenty to thirty years so that both the library as an organisation and users do not lose sight of this core service in the middle of the information technology era. Reader development and the promotion of reading is an area of service provision which can be used to reach out to potential users of library services, bringing in a new generation of avid readers. This has been advocated through initiatives and conferences including *Reading: The Future* in 1992 and the two National Year of Reading (NYR) campaigns set a decade apart.

Despite stereotyped opinion of libraries as drab, dreary places with librarians shushing users it is evident that they are still a popular public resource. With the creation of Idea Stores (Tower Hamlets) and Discovery Centres (Hampshire) libraries are listening and adapting their service to what users want, moving forward with the beginning of the new century and constantly evolving to provide crucial free services. More people visit libraries than the cinema or professional football grounds (*Framework for the Future*, 2003: 12) but the core services of reading promotion and development need to be actively promoted both within the library and in the local community bringing the benefits of reading to the attention of those who believe the stereotype; the hesitant and reluctant readers who believe reading is not for them.

1.2 National Year of Reading 1998

The view that reading enriches lives was shared and publicly advocated by David Blunkett who launched the first NYR in 1998 when he held the position of Secretary of Education within the government. The idea for this initiative came to light two years earlier whilst Labour was in opposition and an advisory committee was set up to investigate literacy soon after Labour won the election in 1997. The campaign was presented by the government and seen as a key part of their National Literacy Strategy (focussed on school children) and lifelong learning policies (*Building a Nation of Readers*, 2000: 2). Responsibility for the Year was contracted out and headed by the National Literacy Trust, bringing together a consortium of organisations from all reading sectors to promote reading for pleasure and the importance of literacy. Launched on the 16 September 1998 with the “stated aim of engaging the whole community in reading, for pleasure and for purpose, in order to build a nation of readers” (*Ibid*: iv), the Year was successful in bringing these issues to the foreground. The evaluation report draws attention to keeping this momentum and sustaining the good work started during the year, through promotion and maintaining effective partnerships across the sectors, aided by the National Reading Campaign (NRC).

“The National Year of Reading has brought home, in the most dramatic way, the vital importance of reading. The National Reading Campaign should make reading

not just a national priority for a year but a priority for life for all those for whom reading is still ‘a closed book’”

David Hart, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teacher – (*Ibid*: 52)

This opinion was shared by many involved in the original campaign and has evidently been taken into consideration a decade later with the organisation and execution of the 2008 campaign.

Reading is an activity that enriches lives and public libraries are one of the key venues to promote reading and reader development (along with schools and book retailers). To this end it is vital for libraries to play an active role in national literacy campaigns such as this. Another necessary step was to form effective partnerships with other organisations including schools and other local authority departments as well as different members of the reading sector in order to reach the maximum amount of potential readers. The effect of successful partnership working can be seen on both a local and national level. Public libraries have the advantage in this scenario of being a free public resource for users but need both local and national partnerships and the support they bring in order to advertise and promote their services whilst educating potential users as to the benefits of their local library service.

“Even the most misfitting child
Who’s chanced upon the library’s worth,
Sits with the genius of the Earth
And turns the key to the whole world.”

(*Hear it Again*, lines 52-55)

1.3 National Year of Reading 2008

The official report of the NYR 2008 has recently been published by the National Literacy Trust (April 2009) and gives a review of the campaign’s successes and challenges. It also provides recommendations for a framework which is seen as the legacy of the NYR, moving closer to the idea of “a nation of readers” (*Reading: The*

Future, 2009: 6). This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

All partners involved understood the social, educational and personal importance of reading in a person's development as a human being. This Year was only the beginning of a major initiative in reading promotion and is supported by Reading for Life, an ongoing project run by the National Literacy Trust to maintain the momentum of the Year. As we can see from the project's website, "Reading for Life promotes the benefits of reading at all stages of life, to provide opportunities, health, family happiness and overall enjoyment" (<http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/26/>); this is still working towards the original objective of the NYR - building a nation of readers.

1.4 Rationale

The National Year of Reading 2008 was a celebration and promotion of reading for pleasure, a national campaign with the support of government funding run by a consortium of organisations passionate about reading promotion. Previous research looked at the Year as a national campaign with highlights of success from different areas of the country but there has been little to no detailed research focusing on a single authority's efforts within the Year, making this study unique. Narrowing the scope of the study brings with it the benefit of a thorough analysis of the issues.

This subject was chosen for many reasons including its currency as the campaign finished nine months ago. As a result of this there is little published on the subject, the most important report being the review of the Year (mentioned above) published in April of this year. Evaluating such a campaign is vital to ensuring its sustainability as the Reading for Life campaign is trying to do. The focus of reading promotion in libraries in particular was long overdue and this momentum must now be sustained to reap benefits for the population. By learning what worked and what did not library services can build upon examples of best practice identified during the campaign. The possibility to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign on a local level will help Sheffield to continue their reading promotion development.

The campaign was investigated from the perspective of librarians and senior management who were involved and responsible for the planning, coordination and execution of events during the NYR. This area of research was actually suggested by the Sheffield library service and so they have a vested interest in its results and understand the importance of reviewing and improving upon campaigns such as this.

Sheffield itself is the fifth largest city in England and has a very diverse population of over half a million (Office for National Statistics) including 14% from BME communities including Pakistani, Caribbean and Chinese communities (Sheffield City Council Website). Due to the city being heavily industrially based in the past there are many areas of regeneration within the city along with disadvantaged areas providing challenges for the library service to provide the appropriate material. The data collected in this investigation will help Sheffield to identify codes of best practice in the different areas of the city and within different communities which will have a bearing on future events, building upon the successes of the last year.

1.5 Research Question:

How successful was the National Year of Reading's Impact in Sheffield Public Libraries?

1.6 Aims and Objectives:

Although the broad focus of the study is a review of the NYR there are a number of more detailed issues to be engaged with regarding the campaign's impact on Sheffield public libraries both during the Year and in the future, these includes investigating:

1. How well Sheffield's strategy regarding the NYR linked with the official NYR aims and objectives?
2. Were events in Sheffield tailored to the specific target groups identified by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)?
3. Were local partnerships established to help with the NYR? How effective

were these?

4. What are the lasting effects of the NYR in Sheffield? (Examples of best practice from the year)

Chapter Two: The National Year of Reading 2008

2.1 Introduction

After the success of 1998 a second year of reading was devised a decade after the original campaign. Gordon Brown launched this second National Year of Reading on 8 January 2008, describing reading as “the ladder out of poverty” and “one of the best anti-poverty, anti-depression, anti-crime, anti-vandalism policies you can think of” (*National Year of Reading Briefing Paper*, 2008: 1). This year was aiming to build upon the success of the original NYR with the objective of “building a nation of readers” (*Reading: The Future*, 2009: 6). The Year proved a success and built upon this idea of a nation of readers but also looked forward to providing a legacy, continuing the good work and momentum of the Year whilst maintaining focus on promoting the pleasures and benefits of reading in all varieties, enforcing the message of “Reading anything, anytime, anywhere is good” (*Ibid*: 11).

Other aims of the Year included creating effective partnerships and improving learning, achievement and individual prospects (See Appendix A for the NYR 2008 mission statement). The national campaign was run by a consortium of partners (showing the benefits of partnership working) headed again by the National Literacy Trust and included a lead partner for libraries; The Reading Agency. It was also supported by the government through the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

2.2 Target Groups

An important part of building a nation of readers was to identify and target groups within society who do not read for pleasure or have a higher proportion of people who find reading difficult and try to ascertain their attitude and behaviour towards this activity. To this end the DCSF and the DIUS strategies team identified eight different target groups that have a higher proportion of people who find reading difficult. These were:

- White working-class boys (defined as being on free school meals),
- Families from socio-economic groups C2DE—particularly fathers,

- Key Stage 3 children, especially boys,
- Bangladeshi and Pakistani children,
- Newly-arrived East Europeans,
- Dyslexic children and visually impaired children,
- Looked after children, and
- Adults seeking 'skills for life'.

It is these target groups that events and activities of the NYR were primarily targeted at and so it is these groups that were focused on when collecting and analysing data during the investigation.

Research was carried out during the year (due to time constraints which will be discussed later) and as further knowledge was gained events, activities and campaign messages were slowly tailored to these 'hard to reach' groups. By gaining insight into their reading habits the NYR along with consortium members and other partners were able to establish a variety of activities and programs to include these specific audiences and attract others by constantly refining campaign messages to reach these audiences. One example given in the evaluation of the Year was aimed at Asian women with the message "Love reading about love - enjoy reading romance" which ended up reaching over one hundred and sixty thousand Asian readers (*Reading: The Future*, 2009: 17). There is some debate within the evaluation report as to whether identifying target groups for the NYR goes against the ideas of social inclusion; that by focusing on these particular groups other sections of a diverse nation are being ignored. This is one of the reasons for devising a framework to carry on the research and good work from the year without losing momentum.

Although launched in January, the Year itself in terms of activities and events did not officially launch nationwide until April 2008, giving organisers time to prepare. To maintain focus throughout the campaign in terms of promotion and activities the Year was arranged into the following monthly themes:

- April – Read all about it
- May – Mind and body
- June – Reading escapes
- July – Rhythm and Rhyme
- August – Read the game
- September – You are what you read
- October – Word of mouth
- November – Screen reads
- December – Write the future

This helped libraries and other organisations to plan events, consult partners and engage with users on different subjects and promote how reading influences these different themes through a variety of media.

2.3 Partnerships

A key element of the NYR strategy as noted in *Reading: The Future* (2009) was to “create a network of partnerships to promote engagement with the Year, particularly education and libraries” (5). This was an objective taken from the original NYR which called for better partnerships within its own evaluation report *Building a Nation of Readers* (2000). The need for partnership working was reflected in the management of the Year with support and backing of a consortium of key agencies including local authorities, the media, organisations from the reading sector and schools. There was also 100% sign up from one hundred and forty library authorities (*Ibid*: 10). There are many examples which illustrate the effectiveness of partnerships highlighted by key successful events throughout the Year such as the creation of Reading Gardens and the securing of author activities with Reading Partners. With this in mind it is necessary to indicate that partnerships are also seen as key to sustaining the benefits of the campaign after the Year ended not only in terms of events and promotion but also in a research aspect. To enforce this opinion “secure partnerships for legacy” (*Ibid*: 111) was included as an objective within the NYR work plan.

This Year differed from the original campaign having a broader spectrum of activities and events aimed at whole communities and reluctant and emergent readers as opposed to the heavy focus on school children in 1998. Whilst saying this, schools provided an obvious and effective partnership which can be seen by those schools who achieved NYR accreditation within the Year through activities such as reading for ten minutes every day and featuring a poem of the week, author of the month etc (*The NYR in Sheffield Evaluation Report, 2009: 6*). Partnerships opened up new markets of potential readers and users of the library service and were seen as a necessary step taken by NYR organisers to reach these groups. To illustrate this there were also digital efforts at partnership via the NYR website with high profile organisations including Google and YouTube. Within each local authority NYR Coordinators were appointed to secure partnerships with a range of organisations outside those of the reading sector in order to reach those 'hard to reach groups' identified above.

2.4 Time Constraints

This is an issue that had significant impact on the Year and so some explanation of this is included. It is admitted within the evaluation report that there was only a two month period between the contract being given to the National Literacy Trust and the start of the NYR in January 2008. This meant planning was somewhat rushed and a lot of research into reading attitudes and behaviours had to be conducted within the Year rather than having that necessary insight prior to organisation. The results of this research had an effect on the tailoring of events and campaign messages in the latter stages of the year such as the Read Up Fed Up project aimed at teenagers. Another way in which the short planning period affected the smooth operation of the NYR can be seen in the filtering of information to local levels. Having only two months meant collaboration and forming effective partnerships with other organisations was difficult. There was not enough time to negotiate a detailed national and local agenda and to fit this in with the personal agendas of other organisations and local authorities for the coming year. To provide effective communication between parties there were one hundred and fifty NYR

Coordinators appointed within Local Authorities who spoke to their counterparts within the NYR team, this went some way to address confusion at the local level but with a longer and more detailed planning period these confusions could have been avoided altogether.

2.5 Framework for Legacy

This was seen as the objective for *Reading: The Future*, the evaluation report of the NYR 2008. The scope and purpose of the report was clearly defined in its own section within the aims and defines the NYR as a campaign and not an agency, building on and learning from the experiences of the 1998 campaign. This evaluation report is a comprehensive guide to the successes, challenges and lessons learnt from the NYR 2008. The framework set out in the recommendations shows a methodical approach to preserving the NYR's legacy in its new campaign Reading for Life. The framework is divided into six elements:

- Researching audience,
- Researching effectiveness and impact to build a stronger case for reading,
- Targeting activity using effective and tailored methods,
- Coordinating local initiatives,
- Enabling professionals and sharing good ideas, and
- Planning and coordination (*Ibid: 88*).

There are twelve recommendations which support this framework and as the evaluation states the "critical test of the framework will be how it is developed in the absence of such a campaign and team of national campaigners" (*Ibid: 98*)

One of the main points learnt by the campaign was that barriers to reading can be broken down by letting people first read what they enjoy and using this material as a foundation to lead them into more challenging reading. The public library is an essential service in this self discovery allowing users to freely browse shelves and challenge their development in a safe environment free of judgment and criticism.

Chapter Three: Reading Enriches Lives – Literature Review

3.1 The Need to Promote Reading

“Reading enriches all our lives” (*Reading: The Future*, 2009: 9) and as such the promotion of reading is seen as one of the core services of the public library and has been since their establishment in the nineteenth century. This is a view shared by professionals and scholars alike along with authors such as A.S Byatt who advocates that “Libraries are about books” (Van Riel, 1992: 15). Many also believe that an intricate part of a librarian’s work is “the determined effort to bring writers and readers together” (Hornby and Glass, 2008: 14). As crucial a service as promoting reading is there is inconsistency highlighted within the literature as to the public libraries’ approach to this service and its development over the last twenty to thirty years.

Living within the information age and all that this implies, including the implementation of I.T. and such initiatives that follow as the People’s Network being established in libraries, has had an adverse effect on book promotion. The importance of books and reading as an essential basic skill had been forced out of the spotlight. Although many agree with McKearney (2002) that “reading should be at the heart of the library offer to the nation, its core work, not just an add on” Goulding (2002) counter-argues that although I.T. has become an important issue, the expansion of reader development and fiction promotion work has also continued apace (2). There are examples of the two being successfully used together in the design of websites such as *whichbook.net* and *What Do You Fancy Tonight*, a website designed by the East Midlands Reader and Library Development Project aimed at sixteen to twenty-four year olds.

Within this information era there is a cry from the library sector for libraries not to forget their core purpose of

“...making books available to all who want them, together with specialist staff to make them accessible through advice and assistance in the choice and use of them, libraries are uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to the encouragement of reading”.

(Aslib, 1995 found in Elkin et al, 2003: 33).

This quote highlights the importance of social inclusion within libraries, advising and assisting users when possible and most importantly encouraging reading. It also shows the importance of specialised, qualified staff and the unique quality they bring to the library service in advising users. There is a multitude of ways in which this can be done that are reflected in the many local and national initiatives and campaigns run over the last twenty years. Aimed at children and adults alike they promote the need to improve their reading ability and pursue reading for pleasure in order to benefit in other aspects of life. *Framework for the Future* (2003) and many other academic works illustrate this point believing that the ability to read “is integral to both personal and social fulfilment” (McLoughlin and Morris, 2004: 38).

3.2 A Call to Arms

Such an important task as promoting reading to the population cannot be left as a responsibility solely for librarians (Van Riel, 1992: 3) and so libraries need the cooperation of other lovers of the written word (Ibid) to help spread this message to potential library users. The importance of partnerships internally within authorities and the reading sector including organisations such as The Reading Agency and the National Literacy Trust help to provide valuable research and much needed funding into reading promotion and development but libraries must also adapt to the modern world and establish partnerships with external organisations to reach hesitant and emergent readers who find the idea of visiting a library a daunting prospect. To do this effectively librarians must embrace all types of media for promotion finding any way they can to connect with all potential target groups.

Reading: The Future, a conference held in 1992 brought reader development and promotion into focus within the reading sector; the details of this conference were compiled and edited by Rachel Van Riel (director of Opening the Book and prolific

advocator of reader development and libraries in general). There is agreement within the academic world that this conference marked the beginning of a move towards greater professional awareness of the need to promote reading within all areas of the reading sector. It was also the first time that partnerships became a national issue within the library sector (Thebridge and Train, 2002). Over the two days that followed seminars and discussions were held to raise awareness and discuss the importance of a renewed effort behind reading promotion. This included calling for the support of the government, recognising what users actually want and need from their libraries and creating partnerships by which to better serve and understand user needs. This conference succeeded in re-invigorating librarians' attitudes and pride in their role toward reader development and reading promotion. As *Libraries for All* (1999) advocated "promotion should be continuous, and the opportunity should be taken to publicise success whenever it occurs" (21). This conference set the tone for the next decade in terms of a renewed approach to the active promotion of library services.

During the conference there was much discussion as to how libraries, suppliers, publishers and book retailers could work together and with other partners outside the reading sector to promote reading to the widest possible audience. The conference pointed out the significance of libraries in this battle - "the public library ought to be the place where the reading experience is shared" (Van Riel, 1992: 16) but almost as importantly the fact that this task of promotion cannot be left solely to librarians (Ibid: 3). Many of the prominent speakers including authors and professionals agreed that libraries provide people with a range of stock, and that "fiction together with other aspects of literature... is a very large proportion of what public libraries are about"(Ibid: 32). This in part is due to the employment of professional staff with the education and skills necessary to talk freely with customers about library stock whilst advising those users who seek assistance.

Within general discussion the I.T. issue became a common theme and it was pointed out that with the emergence of I.T. in libraries reading promotion had fallen behind and although seen as a fundamental part of a librarian's role, had been pushed aside by this new development. Research conducted on this point six years

later showed that whilst 93% of libraries rated reading promotion as essential, very important or important only 31% indicated a specific statement of aims or objectives regarding reading promotion or covered the subject in an overall policy document (Kinnell and Shepherd, 1998: 21). One conclusion from this survey was that reading promotion “is mostly seen as an end in itself, not rooted in strategic planning” (Ibid: 107), showing the need for a continuous effort in this area of the library service. This need can still be seen today as many public libraries are still without a reader development officer/librarian post. A suggested solution given at the conference was to “renew librarians’ pride and interest in their product” (Van Riel, 1992: 45), bringing the focus back to literature and the pursuit of reading described as “the key to a world of infinite riches” (Ibid: 20). This is a view echoed by Gorman who believes “all librarians should be involved in promoting literacy to one extent or another” (2000: 124).

3.3 Promoting Reading

Promotion is defined as “Any means by which libraries encourage people to read or to widen their reading horizons” (Kinnell and Shepherd, 1998: 7). This covers the wide spectrum of promotion from passive to active involving a variety of activities from table displays and posters to outreach events such as literary festivals and author visits with local schools. There are many criteria taken into consideration with the establishment of new initiatives and campaigns to promote the benefits of reading. Amongst these considerations are target groups, communication with the local community and establishing partnerships to promote these initiatives to a wider audience. There are also lessons to be learnt from previous experience and so evaluation of public library initiatives is essential to understanding and further improvement in this area (McLoughlin and Morris, 2004: 39). Whilst saying this it would be impossible to discuss here all the reading promotion and reader development initiatives of the last twenty years and so the focus will be on the issues libraries face related to promotion whilst using examples of successful initiatives to illustrate these points. Gorman comments “Active steps to guide users to reading are called for and the more methods... that the library employs, the better” (2000: 124).

Although there are approximately seven million adults with literacy problems in the UK (*Framework for the Future*, 2003: 24) the balance of reading initiatives is heavily focussed on children and young people; nurturing a love of reading from an early age whilst illustrating the benefits of the public library to parents who may not be aware. This is reflected in the IFLA/UNESCO guidelines stating that public libraries “have a specific responsibility to support the process of learning to read, and to promote books and other media for children” (Saur, 2001: 26) and can be seen through initiatives such as Bookstart which has been successfully run since 1992. This initiative is aimed at babies whilst giving guidance and advice to parents, other campaigns include the Summer Reading Challenge, aimed at school children encouraging them to read for pleasure within school summer holidays. It is argued that intervening with a child’s reading development is more acceptable as they are still exploring their needs and require greater assistance whereas adults can see reading and choosing a book as a very personal and solitary decision. This is a perspective advocated by Goulding (2006) who comments that “until recently library staff working with adult fiction have been slightly reluctant to promote fiction as dynamically as children’s libraries have been doing” (320). There is also the distinction of reading promotion for the literate and those who cannot read or may need more concentrated assistance and so it is crucial that the library reaches out to these people as the heart of the community and the “‘natural’ homes for the promotion of literacy skills” (Goulding, 2002: 3). This is a view raised by Goulding who acknowledges that

“Public libraries should be in the business of providing access to information, works of fiction and learning resources for the whole community, not just that section that can read”.

(Ibid)

Therefore it is vital that the library communicate effectively with the local community, defining users and potential users’ needs.

3.3.1 Connecting with the Community

A large part of library and reading promotion is devising ways in which to reach those who believe that the library has nothing to offer them, those who believe libraries are drab and dreary places full of dusty old books, those hesitant and emergent readers who are apprehensive and unsure of their reading ability. Those who believe the stereotypes of libraries and librarians and are not aware of the advances in library service provision which evolve with society as a whole.

“If you are dealing with people who have never experienced the pleasures of reading then you can’t just promote the books because it won’t mean anything . . . you have to promote the reading experience and what readers can get from it.”

(Mcloughlin and Morris, 2004: 44)

Within the DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) *Libraries for All* report (1999) this subject was broached; one solution offered was the collaboration of libraries with other public services including open communication with the community in decisions, design and implementation of initiatives and activities aiding the evolution of their library service (*Framework for the Future*, 2003: 41). By communicating openly with the community around them libraries can tailor services to suit the needs of the reader and then explore further afield. Libraries need to become more customer orientated (Kinnell and Shepherd, 1998: 77) and effective communication has to be maintained in order to receive feedback and comments. In the same vein, libraries themselves must keep library and reading promotion under constant evaluation to pick up on any challenges raised or to praise successes whilst learning from these experiences. This is a key part of the library service that staff can be involved with and gives the profession as a whole a chance to advocate the value of public libraries within the community.

3.3.2 Partnerships

Libraries for All (1999) was not the first advocator of partnerships within the library sector as seen above with the information on the Reading: The Future conference, but it is a consistent theme that has come into focus in recent years and an

appropriate route of action taken by libraries to identify and target promotion at hard to reach groups.

Partnerships are not limited to the reading sector and organisations such as The Reading Agency (Six Book Challenge and Summer Reading Challenge), the National Literacy Trust (National Reading Campaign and Reading Champions) and Booktrust (Get London Reading). There are many examples of initiatives which have been supported by external partners such as *Branching Out* (with the Regional Arts Board) and *Well Worth Reading* (consortium including Southern Arts and Dorset, Berkshire and Hampshire libraries), not to mention the two National Year of Reading campaigns set a decade apart from each other which illustrated the importance of partnership working from management to a local level. "Reading is a wider issue than literature, there are social policy and social exclusion implications" (Thebridge and Train, 2002), therefore it is only sensible that other council and external partners are involved in promoting this basic but essential skill and educate the population in doing so. This is reflected in the statistic that 33% of adults with a low literacy level have never visited a library (Carey et al, 1997 found in McLoughlin and Morris, 2004: 38).

Libraries have to advocate themselves within the community by building relationships with the local community and businesses, the more people that know about the benefits of the library service, the more potential there will be and word of mouth is one of the most reliable and effective methods of promotion. Therefore it is a widely acknowledged view that "Promoting reading is in the centre of the public library service... and that partnerships are ways of getting more done with limited resources" (Smith in Sugg, 1998: 2). With this in mind there has been the establishment of companies whose sole aim is to provide partnerships between the commercial sector and libraries, including The Reading Partnership (adult literacy) and Launchpad (children's literacy) who have conducted successful initiatives between libraries and large companies such as Asda, Random House and Waterstones.

Whilst discussing effective partnership working it is only fair to mention the input the Labour government has had in influencing reader development and literacy initiatives including the NYR campaigns, the *Libraries for All* and *Framework for the Future* reports and backing of many other initiatives since they came to office in 1997. To illustrate this we can look at the establishment and use of the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund which was established in July of that year. This fund provided money and support for five years worth of projects with the aim of enhancing facilities and services of public libraries. Between 2000-2002 forty nine projects focused on reader development activities and initiatives aimed at reaching new audiences were given funding (Goulding, 2006: 319). The National Literacy Trust chose to acknowledge this partnership commenting that

“It is encouraging that the importance of reading for pleasure has been recognised by the government and that a number of policy initiatives have been launched to promote wider reading and reading enjoyment in the UK”.

(Clark and Rumbold, 2006: 27).

For a more detailed review of promotion through partnerships, further attention should be paid to the Thebridge and Train article *Promoting reading through partnerships: a ten-year literature overview* (2002).

3.4 Other Barriers to Reading Promotion

Other barriers to the promotion of reading and the library in itself come from staffing and resource issues. Libraries need to make sure they employ qualified librarians who are aware of the importance of reading promotion and reader development and can offer assistance in these areas. They also need to employ staff that are innovative and creative and therefore will be able to express new ideas for library promotion including initiatives and activities. As aforementioned libraries need to continually evolve to be aware of current developments within their communities and the profession as a whole. This will help and guide libraries to provide the most sensible and relevant services and information for their users and to attract potential users. Budget restrictions have been indicated as a catalyst for the improvement of stock promotion (Goulding, 2002: 2), but this can be seen as a

necessary step in providing a variety of resources users want in their public library. It is also budget restrictions which can be seen as the catalyst for partnership working as pooling resources becomes necessary.

3.5 Conclusion

Libraries for All (1999) called for “a regenerated and pro-active library sector [that] can help both individuals and communities to develop skills and confidence” (4). Over the next ten years the good work begun by organisations such as Opening the Book, The Reading Agency and the National Literacy Trust gained momentum and have renewed the belief that

“...the main thing a library can do is to give people range, to give people space to browse and experiment and to take risks. People can take risks in a library, where the service is free, in a way they can't... in a bookshop”

(Van Riel, 1992: 33)

This highlights the unique role of libraries in the reading experience and in an individual's personal and social development. Once a library is aware of the needs of its users and potential users they can begin to develop initiatives to guide and help reading promotion and development contacting relevant organisations who can provide assistance in these tasks.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Research Purpose and Approach

“Qualitative methods can be used to obtain intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods.”

(Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 11)

This investigation was focused on ascertaining the views of Sheffield library staff whilst assessing the 2008 National Year of Reading campaign in relation to the aims stated in chapter one. It was decided that a qualitative, as oppose to quantitative, approach would be the most beneficial in ascertaining these opinions as it helps provide “a sense of vision” (Ibid: 8) being able to compare the strategy of the Year (the NYR aims and objectives and mission statement) with the actual outcomes, highlighting any particular successes or challenges faced by those working within Sheffield libraries during this Year and their opinions of the campaign.

A qualitative approach gave the added advantage of being forward thinking, looking at how the Year began and continues to influence further development in relation to reading promotion, sustaining effective partnerships and identifying examples of best practice. The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate when looking at the sustainability of the Year on a local level into 2009 and beyond as it is the participants of this research who have the responsibility of maintaining this drive; therefore their opinions, attitudes and thoughts are of crucial importance. Although quantitative data would provide statistics of library use, membership and issues these would not provide a wider picture as to the success of the Year as a whole. It is believed by some qualitative researchers that qualitative methods can provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data, investigating peoples’ perceptions of an event. Whilst saying this there was an element of quantitative research conducted in the form of a content analysis approach when analysing documents provided by Sheffield libraries

regarding the NYR. This was executed to provide essential background information which helped in forming both the questionnaire and interview schedule which will be discussed in more depth below.

There was an inductive approach to this data complementing the qualitative methods of data collection as induction relies on "...an accumulation of impressions... which eventually speak for themselves" (Seale, 1999: 23). Within this research a true impression of the impact of the NYR on Sheffield libraries both within the year and after in terms of its sustainability was trying to be obtained from those who were involved; the librarians and management team of Sheffield libraries. A different approach could have been taken by asking users of their opinions of the Year or a purely theoretical approach by conducting a detailed literature review but it was felt that these approaches would not result in an accurate depiction of the Year from which Sheffield could learn from.

4.2 Research Methods

Using a mixed method approach of document analysis, questionnaires and interviews allowed me to gain a wide and varied range of data as "one approach is rarely adequate; and if the results of the different methods converge then we can have a greater confidence in their findings" (Gilham, 2000: 2). This can be seen as a form of methodological triangulation "employing several methods at once so that the biases of any one method might be cancelled out by those of the others" (Webb et al. 1966 found in Seale, 1991: 53). Methodological triangulation can corroborate and enrich the evidence gathered whilst attempting to address weaknesses of each method of data collection. This aided the provision of a rounded and unbiased view of the Year from those involved both on the front line and in the more supervisory, strategic roles.

These research methods were used in an interpretive approach providing an "insider view" (Blaikie, 2000: 115 found in Mason, 2002: 56) of the Year and its accomplishments, including examples of best practice and the sustainability of effective partnerships. The interpretive approach values people and their interpretations as primary data sources which can then be gathered to create a

rounded view of Sheffield's approach to and conclusions taken from the NYR as a campaign and its sustainability within the Reading for Life project. Data was gathered from library staff; those who theoretically should have been actively involved in the planning and execution of activities within the year and therefore the best source of information to highlight successes and challenges that arose. The advantages of using a mixed method approach such as this is the ability to probe deeper and peel back layers with each method, these findings can then be integrated at a knowledge and evidence stage to provide a balanced assessment. It also provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the results from each data source showing whether front line staff and management had the same visions for the campaign and evidence as to how effective communication was between these parties which would be beneficial information for Sheffield library service.

The methods chosen to fulfil my study were a document analysis of key articles regarding the Year (provided by Sheffield libraries), followed by a questionnaire sent to front line staff and then an interview with the Sheffield NYR coordinator which will now be explained in more detail below.

4.2.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis includes the collection of facts from documents (Caulley, 1983). The documents were analysed using elements of internal criticism "in which the contents of a document are subjected to rigorous analysis" (Bell, 1999: 113) and content analysis – "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Krippendorff, 1980: 21 found in Bell, 1999: 111). This was done by choosing three categories that provided links to the objectives stated in chapter one:

- Target groups,
- Effective Partnerships, and
- Sustainability/Best Practice.

"Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952: 18 found in Bryman, 2004: 182). In this case, the documents were studied for

patterns of reference rather than the frequency of words to gain “insight into people’s thoughts, ideas and beliefs” (Prior, 2003: 122). Whilst analysing documents the possibility of bias was kept in mind as the sample of documents was chosen and supplied by Sheffield libraries. The sample analysed included eight documents which were created over a space of ten months from the Briefing Paper for the Year compiled in March 2008 to the minutes of a local review meeting of the Year held in January 2009.

Analysing documents can help determine an organisation’s views on a certain subject or subjects. In this case it was used to examine Sheffield’s preparation and strategy if any towards this national campaign in regards to the aims and objectives of the Year stated by the National Literacy Trust which included the three categories chosen for the content analysis.

4.2.2 Questionnaires

Oppenheim (2001) describes questionnaires as a “measurement tool, an instrument for particular kinds of data” (10). Although it can be argued that focus groups may have provided enriched data, questionnaires were chosen as a more suitable method of data collection for the views of frontline staff as they would be less time consuming and would result in a more varied and rounded response than conducting focus groups. Due to the participants of the study (at this stage) being front line library staff it was deemed inconvenient and inappropriate to ask them to give up approximately two hours of their time to attend a focus group which would have resulted in a smaller data sample. At least five focus groups would have had to be conducted across the city incurring travel expenses for the researcher and participants which was not deemed necessary or appropriate when the same data could be collected via a well structured questionnaire. Therefore a fifteen minute questionnaire was designed which could be sent out to all libraries providing a significantly higher response rate.

From the information gathered by the completion of the document analysis, and bearing in mind the projects objectives, a questionnaire was compiled to ascertain the views of Sheffield libraries’ staff at the thirty lending libraries around the city.

This was designed to provide information on how heavily involved and consulted those in front line services were during the campaign, it also aided creation of an interview schedule which would then be put to the NYR Coordinator to compare perceptions of the Year. As Sheffield libraries do not have an intranet portal such as Blackboard or Web CT where a questionnaire could be electronically posted they were sent via post to the thirty lending libraries in Sheffield identified from the Council website. Each set of questionnaires was sent out with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the project and analysis of the results gathered.

Closed questions with fixed response categories covered general information about the Year both on a national and local level to ascertain how much was known about the campaign within libraries. One question used the likert scale instrument to provide general opinions of different aspects of the Year before the questionnaire finished with open ended questions giving participants the opportunity to share their views on how the campaign was run within the library service. The structure of beginning with closed and finishing with open ended questions was designed to promote ease in participants increasing the probability of honest thoughts and opinions giving a sample of rich data to work from.

The questionnaire was piloted at one library to discover its effectiveness. Piloting was necessary to make sure that the language was correct and the relevant questions were being asked before distributing the questionnaire city wide. With minor changes added, three questionnaires were then distributed to each of the thirty lending libraries in Sheffield. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances the questionnaire had to be re-distributed after a period of a fortnight due to a low response rate. The second distribution was carried out via Sheffield Council's internal mailing system and returned to the Central Lending Library where they were collected. Using the internal mail system was seen as an advantage to raising the response rate.

This delay also resulted in the questionnaire being distributed online in an electronic format via SurveyMonkey. Contacts from Newcastle and Derbyshire library authority were contacted to ask for their assistance in the study providing

the opportunity to compare the approaches of the NYR in three separate counties. After collecting the data from these two counties, email interviews were conducted with the NYR Coordinators of these authorities and comparisons made between firstly questionnaires and interviews and then these authorities against Sheffield's performance.

4.2.3 Interviews

"Qualitative interviewing provides an open ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience" (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003: 312)

This instrument was chosen to pursue and explore opinions given in the questionnaire as "interviews seem to gain in depth and validity" (Gillham, 2000: 84). The interview schedule was designed with the interviewee (NYR coordinator) in mind and sought to explore the NYR Coordinator's role within the campaign and particularly the involvement of the Coordinator with the library service. This method of data collection provided information in a form that could be easily compared with the opinions taken from the questionnaires to see whether the same vision for the Year was met by all members of staff.

The interview schedule was designed to be semi-structured; this gave the advantage of letting the interviewee elaborate on any points if deemed necessary whilst still maintaining focus on the subject as a whole. It also provided latitude in the ordering of questions and further questioning should the need arise. Questions were created from a number of sources including the NYR Coordinator job description found on WikiReadia (part of the Reading for Life website <http://www.readingforlife.org.uk> which provided vital background information of this role), completed questionnaires and whilst keeping the overall objectives of the project in mind with questions involving partnerships and the sustainability of the Year.

Due to the circumstances encountered with the response rates of questionnaires it was not possible to schedule an interview with the Sheffield NYR Coordinator (further details discussed below). The interview schedule was emailed to the NYR

Coordinator of the Derbyshire and Newcastle authorities which provided data to which I could compare the evidence already gathered from Sheffield. Email interviews were chosen due to time restrictions and added expense but provided valuable comparable data within attached documents and opinions.

4.3 Sample

This study focuses on the NYR from the librarian's perspective and so the data sample had to come from this group of individuals. This provided an honest reflection of the Year from which lessons could be learnt for future initiatives. The choice to pursue this investigation from a librarian's perspective as opposed to a user perspective was decided as the data collected and results compiled would benefit Sheffield libraries more so in terms of improvement to the service; giving them examples of best practice that could be used and developed in the future. To ensure a rounded view of the Year data was gathered from both the frontline staff and those in a more senior position, anonymised questionnaires promoted honesty resulting in an enriched sample of data. As data was gathered solely within the three local authorities there is the possibility of bias but "awareness of the problem plus constant self control can help" (Gavron, 1966: 159).

4.4 Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations that need to be taken into consideration when carrying out any piece of research. For example, due to the time constraints of this study there were limitations as to the scope of study, it also had an impact on the depth of analysis conducted within the different methods of data collection. With any research conducted there are certain issues and difficulties to overcome. As this was a three month study there were time issues which had an impact when difficulties arose with the collection and re-distribution of questionnaires (discussed above) having a roll on effect with the design and conduct of interviews. This was felt more so in Sheffield as the NYR Coordinator was unavailable for interview by the time the interview schedule was designed; the evidence gathered from this interview would have no doubt been of value to this study and would be conducted if the time period of the study were longer. Unfortunately this is the case of social research and unfortunately not all participants are available when needed. It was

felt that the data gathered from the document analysis and completed questionnaires gave a wide enough overview of the librarian's perspective of the Year to compare with those of Newcastle and Derbyshire. Due to interviews having to be conducted over email they were not as detailed and probing as if they had been conducted in person, this limited comparability over the three counties but still provided valuable data.

4.5 Ethical Aspects

This research project has been classified as "low risk" meaning that it may touch upon issues that could affect the well being of participants or other factors that could affect their decision to participate. An information sheet was provided for all participants to inform them of the purpose and rationale of the project. It also detailed methods of recording and storing data and the issues of anonymity, data protection and confidentiality. In addition to this a further consent form was created for those participants interviewed. Approval had been granted on the basis of details stated above. As interviews were conducted over email, the completion and receipt of interview schedules was taken as implied consent from participants.

Chapter Five: Promoting Sheffield as a Reading City - Document Analysis Findings

5.1 The Documents

Sheffield public libraries provided eight documents regarding the NYR for analysis.

These were:

1. The National Year of Reading in Sheffield April 2008 – March 2009 Evaluation Report,
2. National Year of Reading Review Meeting Minutes (Burngreave Library Tuesday 13th January 2009),
3. National Year of Reading Briefing Paper for the Executive Management Team (18th March 2008),
4. National Year of Reading spreadsheet of activities sorted by theme including lead group/team, contact person and partnerships ,
5. Libraries and the National Year of Reading Society of Chief Librarians Briefing note 4 – The Library Membership Campaign – update (19 March 2008),
6. National Year of Reading 2008: Sheffield Libraries, Archives and Information – Children’s Activities Undertaken,
7. Libraries, Archives and Information Service - National Year of Reading 2008 Adults Activities Undertaken to date (October 2009), and
8. Six Book Challenge 2008 Celebrated in Sheffield.

These will be referred to as documents one to eight from now on.

The documents were studied to gain a better understanding of how the campaign was conducted within Sheffield in regard to my overall objectives. The analysis was focused on any record within the sample of target groups within Sheffield, establishing local and regional partnerships and any examples of best practice or sustainability of the success of the Year. This method of data collection and analysis was seen as the best approach to finding evidence regarding the first of the objectives stated in chapter one; how well Sheffield’s strategy linked with the official NYR aims and objectives. These documents with the exception of one were internal; created and supplied by staff who were directly involved in the planning

and execution of activities during the year. The possibility of bias in these documents was small but relevant as these documents were created and supplied by Sheffield library service but the information found in them gave valuable background knowledge to the Year and helped in the design of both the questionnaires and interviews at later stages of the study. Below are the results of this analysis.

5.2 Target Groups

Before analysing what has been found in the documents provided it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the eight target groups identified by the DCSF and DIUS:

- White working-class boys (defined as being on free school meals),
- families from socio-economic groups C2DE—particularly fathers,
- Key Stage 3 children, especially boys,
- Bangladeshi and Pakistani children,
- newly-arrived East Europeans,
- Dyslexic children and visually Impaired children ,
- Looked after children, and
- Adults seeking ‘skills for life’.

The importance of target groups to the Sheffield NYR is reflected in the aims and guiding principles stated in document one. Five out of eight of the aims and principles can be seen to involve the identified target groups:

Aims	Guiding Principles
Develop life long learning	Broaden attitudes to reading
Secure family involvement	Ensure wide participation
Engage and enthuse all schools in promoting reading	

These principles broach upon the wider issues of social inclusion and the idea that “reading enriches all our lives” (*Reading: The Future*, 2009: 25). The commitment to the City Wide Literacy Strategy is also apparent. Within document one it is stated

that the year “has engendered wide enthusiasm for reading and has been broad and inclusive”; this is a very general, sweeping statement with no data to support it. There are details in document one of key successes under which “emphasis was placed on making reading inclusive and accessible to all including socially disadvantaged groups” with reference made to refugees and asylum seekers, the visually impaired and adults with learning and physical difficulties that fit into the identified target groups listed above. There is also documentation of ongoing projects regarding young offenders and young adult school refusers.

Within this sample of documents there are many examples of successful projects with target groups and a lot of attention paid to the Six Book Challenge and the Summer Reading Challenge. The Six Book Challenge was launched as an annual incentive scheme aimed at adult learners, emergent readers and non-library users. Document three quotes a target of one hundred and fifty people to complete the challenge and “develop more confidence in reading”. Although this was not reached two hundred and eight adults were recruited for the challenge, eighty one completed it and seventy three became library members as a result of the scheme. This was seen as a successful campaign. On a national scale Sheffield’s Six Book Challenge was the most successful in the country and can also be seen as an example of excellent partnership work bringing eight local organisations together.

A successful children’s event which can be seen to have helped “engage and enthuse all schools in promoting reading” was the Summer Reading Challenge. This is an annual initiative implemented by The Reading Agency and ran for its tenth year during the 2008 NYR inviting every child to be involved. Document one gives a target of an increase of 13% in children completing the challenge (3,184 to 3,957). During 2008 over six thousand children across Sheffield took part in the Summer Reading Challenge, there was a 9% increase in the amount of children completing six books compared to 2007 and approximately two and a half thousand children attended events in libraries and other venues linked with the reading challenge. This example shows how successful partnerships with local schools was essential in promoting reading to children, especially with a 10% increase in the amount of boys completing the challenge. None of the documents supplied relate to specific target

groups when discussing the Summer Reading Challenge although we can assume that as the scheme was run through schools the likelihood of involving children from the identified target groups was high.

Other successful events aimed at target groups documented within the sample include:

- Loud and Live at the Library targeted at teenagers,
- Successful consultation meetings with Eastern European Groups surrounding issues of stock,
- Dual-language story telling events in Darnall where 75% of attendees were from BME families,
- Partnerships with the local Chinese and Bengali communities throughout the year, and
- A celebration of African and Caribbean communities during October (Black History Month).

On an interesting note, many of the activities targeted at children were done so with the cooperation of local schools, including Bag a Book Day, groups of male role models within classes, Roald Dahl day and Boys into Books. Schools have provided an effective partnership which will hopefully be sustained as it can also be used as a channel for reaching families who may not necessarily read regularly and therefore do not use library facilities.

Many conclusions of the NYR show it to have been “inclusive and far reaching” (document one). In document two it is stated that “the Year has helped establish links with hard to reach groups”; these are sweeping, general statements which are left with no further clarification as to who these groups were and whether they fit into the identified target groups. Likewise document two comments that the Extreme Reading event “was well received by young people who are one of Sheffield’s target groups”. This leads to the conclusion that Sheffield had identified their own target groups set aside from those identified by the DCSF and DIUS and yet there is no further information to be found on this subject within the sample of documents provided.

Amongst the information given in document four there is no mention of the target groups events may serve and so it can be inferred that events were not tailored around certain groups but rather around the monthly themes of the year. It can also be argued that tailoring events to specific target groups would not result in wide participation and inclusivity although this is a personal opinion with no supporting evidence.

Detailed in future work within document two it was agreed that priorities for the service must include outreach particularly for emergent readers and overseas incomers. This shows that Sheffield was planning to build on the success of the Year whilst identifying local target groups to focus on in the future.

5.3 Partnerships

Reading: The Future (2009), the official report and review of the NYR 2008 states that part of the NYR strategy is comprised of “creating a network of partnerships to promote engagement with the Year, particularly with education and libraries” (5). To this end document one has dedicated a section to “Establishing Partnership Working” showing the importance of the subject within Sheffield’s plans. This includes a diagram of partnerships within the City Council and Services District. The diagram shows the key players in a bi-monthly reference group, which document one states “act as a catalyst for action across the city”. It is interesting to note that schools and libraries are expressly mentioned and identified as key partners to the success of the Year as a city wide initiative run by the City Council. This also ties into the aim of “engaging and enthusing all schools to promote reading” (document one). There is also a reference to the close working relationship between Sheffield library service and the learning and achievement service which “secured cross-directorate working and enabled a wide range of activity to be planned” (Ibid).

From these documents we can identify how wide spread participation was through the different industry sectors in Sheffield in terms of partnerships. There are many examples available including Supertram, Music in the Round, SPELL (School-wide Preparation for English Language Learners), EMBRACE (organisation for refugee children), REACT (Refugee awareness raising organisation), Endeavour and many

other local partnerships such as those with the local communities, schools and businesses which made activities possible. There are also examples of cross-directorate working within the council including the library service's partnership with the CYPD (Children and Young People's Directorate) and the fact that there is documentation of the NYR being discussed at Cabinet level along with cabinet representatives present in the steering group meetings.

There are three working groups noted that had been developed following the first reference meeting – Sheffield University, Family Learning and Youth Action South Yorkshire referred to in document three whilst discussing the city wide reach of the year along with other high profile local organisations including South Yorkshire Police, BBC Radio Sheffield, The Star newspaper and Sheffield Homes. Another interesting point depicted in document three is the work of the Chamber of Commerce who contacted over one thousand businesses asking for their involvement in the Year.

We can see how important schools are in terms of partnership through document three which states planned activities with schools in its own appendix, but there is no reference as to how these events will be made possible. Document one refers to a partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education within the legacy section. This shows a sustainable relationship with the hope of ensuring reading enriches the broader curriculum from a national organisation. Local highlights in document two refer to work with Stannington and Hillsborough schools, promoting the library service through general outreach activities. In theory these activities and therefore this partnership should be sustainable and includes promoting the service to children identified within the target groups but there is no further evidence for this.

Document one comments on partnership working within the Year as “successful and well co-ordinated”, it can also be seen to have sustainability in ongoing projects including the council backing of the Imagination Library (a project begun during the Year between Burngreave and Shiregreen Districts and local businesses). This has

created an atmosphere for “innovation and willingness to pilot new partnerships” such as work with youth offending teams.

From the documents there is an overall sense of success regarding establishing and maintaining effective partnerships across the city. However, within document two it is commented that “The city wide steering group could have been more inclusive. Some groups and organisations did not sustain their involvement”. Unfortunately there is no further discussion within the documents as to who these organisations were or why they ceased their involvement; however there is a list of those that did attend the original meeting showing the awareness and promotion of city wide participation and reach of the Year. Representatives included the Chief Executives’ office, the Chamber of Commerce, the Cultural Industries, the Universities, Life-long Learning, schools, Study Support, the Library Service and Media. Further links have also been made with Health, Housing, the Voluntary Sector, faith communities and Service Districts among others.

Within document four there is a column for partnerships for certain activities, this column is surprisingly empty but there is also no indication as to when this document was created or whether it was maintained during the Year, it can be assumed that it was not as it does not refer to partnerships recorded within other documents in the sample. Each month is accompanied by a list of authors booked for events which can be termed as partnerships formed but how effective or sustainable these are is questionable. An example of a profitable partnership is that of the flying poet, Craig Bradley who visited a number of libraries bringing just fewer than two hundred people into drop in sessions as documented in document seven. As afore mentioned partnership working was key to the success of the Six Book Challenge within Sheffield and was used to promote the diversity of reading, especially successful within community groups including Chinese and Bengali as stated in document one.

There are a number of references to the Sheffield First Agreement (The Local Authority Agreement) when talking about partnership work and the link between these two in facilitating local advocacy for the year and its events. What stands out

from these documents is the lack of discussion of how or why these specific partnerships were formed and very little as to whether they are sustainable.

5.4 Best Practice/Sustainability

It is difficult to separate these two categories when analysing the sample of documents, this is evident through looking at sustainability within the NYR strategy – “developing ways to sustain the campaign locally after the end of year” and “providing the means for the Year to have a long-lasting impact” (*Reading: The Future*, 2009: 6). To succeed in the latter examples of best practice must be identified. Sustainability was also a focus of the Year as seen from the guiding principles stated in documents one and three. Therefore it is interesting to note that there is no further reference to sustainability within document three. There is a vision “to develop life long readers”, a mention of creating lasting partnerships with other organisations and a list of expected outcomes that are central to the Sheffield First Agreement:

- Educational attainment,
- Skills for life,
- Economic regeneration, enterprise and employment,
- Community cohesion,
- Participation and empowerment,
- Narrowing the social gap, and
- Social inclusion, health and well-being.

These can be interpreted as sustainable aims but this in itself is a subjective view. Through the sample of documents there is reference as to how reaching target groups and forming effective partnerships could go some way to achieving the outcomes stated above.

The topic of the legacy of Sheffield’s NYR is discussed at length within documents two and three. Within document two there is a list of positive spin offs from the year and areas of improvement highlighted. Spin offs include establishing links with

hard to reach groups although there is no further details as to who these groups are. This shows that Sheffield are looking to the future and how to maintain the success of the year, whilst highlighting areas in which more research and work needs to be done. Areas of improvement documented include sections on publicity and the improvement of the internal library organisation. Within publicity there is an explicit reference to a “disappointing level of publicity for library events”, also opinions that “monthly themes were good but fewer would have been more effective” and that focus was “lost a little after October”. There were ten points stated under the libraries internal organisation including giving staff more opportunity to contribute ideas, the need for outreach work within the community and the need for a longer lead in time to the Year along with the afore mentioned low levels of publicity. Document two also provides information on future work improving campaigns such as this within the library service with the need to plan further in advance, focusing on fewer themes and the need of good quality core material amongst others.

It is mentioned within the sample that there is still money in the Sheffield NYR budget to be spent which will go towards activities run in 2009. What stands out most from the legacy section is the mention of the conference held in May 2009 - Eat my Words: Feed the Need to Read which was conducted in the hope of reinforcing “the fact that NYR activities must be sustainable” (document one) and gives reference to the Reading for Life campaign which is the National Literacy Trust’s follow up campaign to continue the good work of the NYR and promote sustainability. Within document one we are told that on a local scale “partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education will continue in order to ensure reading enriches a broad curriculum”, there is also as afore mentioned backing for the Imagination Library from the council and local businesses involved in the project within the Year. Documents six and seven provide details of activities for children and adults respectively and details successful partners and positive feedback which resulted from these events. These can be used to identify why events were successful and whether there are any examples of best practice that can be learnt from them.

The first library membership drive was run during the 2008 NYR; the national target was to recruit three hundred and fifty thousand new members during the Year, unfortunately there is no data available in the documents sampled as to how successful this was in Sheffield although “membership did increase by a monthly average of 9% between April and December 2008 as opposed to the same period in 2007” (document one). A positive outcome from the membership drive which is documented is the relaxation of application procedures to join the library which means that only one form of ID is now necessary, making the library more accessible. But this is followed by a word of caution in document five that libraries “must develop ongoing relationships with new members” so they remain active members of the library and additional services. This promotes the sustainability of the library and ensures its future importance.

City wide strategies such as the City Wide Literacy Strategy (CWLS) and the NYR accreditation of schools which have paved the way for Every Sheffield Child Articulate and Literate show Sheffield’s commitment to continuing the good work begun in the previous year. There is also documentation of positive responses to events including the Six Book Challenge, Poetry Slam on the Tram and Loud and Live in the Library which could be investigated in terms of lessons learnt and reason for success.

5.5 Sheffield and the National Aims of the Year

These documents outline Sheffield’s aims and outcomes for the NYR. In terms of these being successful we need to hold them up to some kind of criteria and so the Sheffield strategy outlined and highlighted within these documents can be looked to in terms of the NYR mission statement found on the WikiReadia website (an off shoot of the NYR website which is still running as part of the Reading For Life campaign) and the national aims and objectives stated in the evaluation report. The obvious point to make about the NYR missions statements is that it is not solely focussed on the NYR in public libraries but the national initiative as a whole. Whilst saying this it does have explicit references to target groups and social inclusion and more subtle references to the opportunities offered by partnerships across the sectors. What is important to note is the reference to the particular

“...focus on the fundamental principle behind our network of public libraries; ideas available for free, to everyone, offering reading as a tool of personal emancipation, and an expression of a democratic society.”

If we look at the mission statement we can link it to the aims and guiding principles created by Sheffield displayed in documents one and three, shown in the table below.

Aims	Guiding Principles
Promote Sheffield as a reading city	Be celebratory
Develop life long learning	Broaden attitudes to reading
Secure family involvement	Ensure wide participation
Engage and enthuse all schools in promoting reading	Be sustainable

The mission statement talks at great length about social cohesion which is reflected in ensuring wide participation. “We need to reach hesitant readers, reluctant readers, those who do not consider themselves readers (but who are!)” (mission statement), this is reflected in the target groups identified but on a Sheffield scale can be linked to broadening attitudes of reading. It also comments on promoting the central role of family and the impact of reading to education although there is no explicit reference to engaging schools. Again, there is no reference to life long learning as such but there is mention of engaging CEO’s nationwide to support reading and literacy development both in and out of the workplace. In the penultimate paragraph there is a commitment to extending “the impact of the Year beyond ‘conventional’ and established audiences for reading” (Ibid) which can be seen in the partnerships chosen within the city, engaging different groups of people.

It is interesting to note there is no explicit reference to effective partnership working in either the mission statement or the aims for Sheffield but it can be seen as an underlying need for the success of the year in broadening attitudes and ensuring wide participation.

When looking at the national aims of the Year:

- Promote reading in the family and beyond,
- Help to build a nation of readers,
- Encourage reading for pleasure, improving learning, achievement and individual prospects, and
- Establishing a network of partnerships promoting engagement.

(Reading: The Future, 2009: 5)

We can see that Sheffield's aims and guiding principles reflect these national aims. The evidence taken from these documents shows how a network of partnerships has been developed within Sheffield; especially the partnership with schools which if maintained can help the next generation become "a nation of readers" (ibid).

Chapter Six: The Librarian's Perspective - Sheffield Questionnaires

6.1 Introduction

Questionnaires were sent to the thirty lending libraries over Sheffield to ascertain their views on the planning and execution of the NYR within libraries (for the full questionnaire see appendix C). Of the ninety questionnaires distributed over two periods thirty responded, giving a response rate of 33.3%, this low response rate could be due to the troubles encountered with the questionnaires explained in the methodology. Another reason could be the heavy workload of librarians leaving little time to complete questionnaires before the deadline. Questionnaires were received from fourteen of the thirty libraries across the city and the majority of participants completing questionnaires stated their job role as library/information assistants (17) or library assistants (6), showing that the questionnaire reached the intended participants. Other respondents included community development librarians (4), a service development librarian and a children's library assistant. Below are the results of these questionnaires.

6.2 General awareness

The following three questions (3, 4 and 5) were asked to ascertain the awareness of the NYR aims by librarians on the front line, those who were essential in promoting the Year and communicating these aims to Sheffield's user base. The first two questions asked participants of their awareness of the national aims of the Year and the Sheffield's aims of the Year respectively. Data gathered from these questions are shown in figures 1 and 2 below. Interestingly, staff were more aware of the national aims of the campaign rather than Sheffield's own aims which suggests a breakdown in communication at some point. It must be remembered that anonymity was promoted in the information sent out with questionnaires and should have limited the amount of false data collected.

Of the four national aims encouraging reading for pleasure, improving learning, achievement and individual prospects recorded the highest response with twenty nine out of thirty respondents affirming their awareness. This aim also reflects one of the library's core missions as a public service and shows how important the

promotion of reading still is in a modern library facility. In contrast to the national aims of the Year, the Sheffield aim with the highest response was that of life long learning (28). These aims can be seen to compliment each other and show how Sheffield’s strategy for the Year reflected that of the national campaign. In the same vein the national aim of promoting reading in the family and beyond can be linked with Sheffield’s aim of securing family involvement which gained twenty seven and twenty two responses respectively. Likewise helping to build a nation of readers (24) was translated into promoting Sheffield as a reading city (19).

Figure 1. Were you aware of the national aims of the NYR? (Tick those that apply)

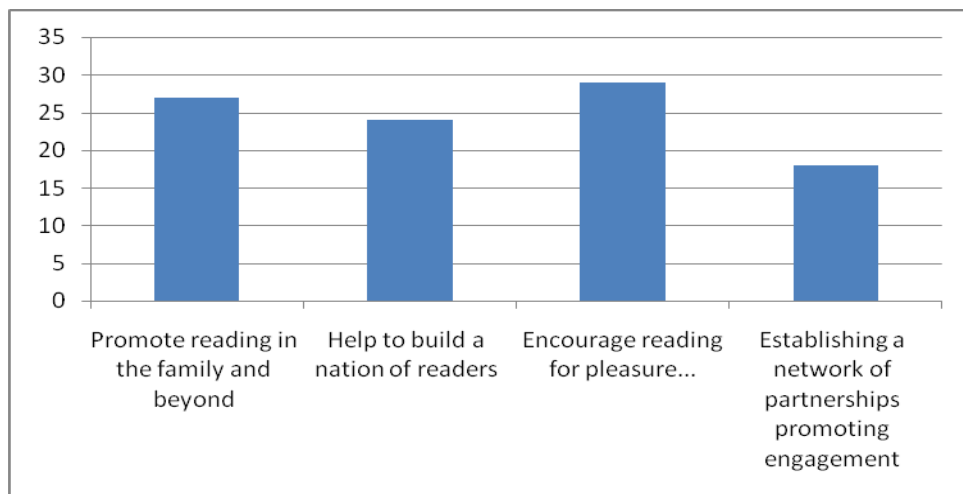
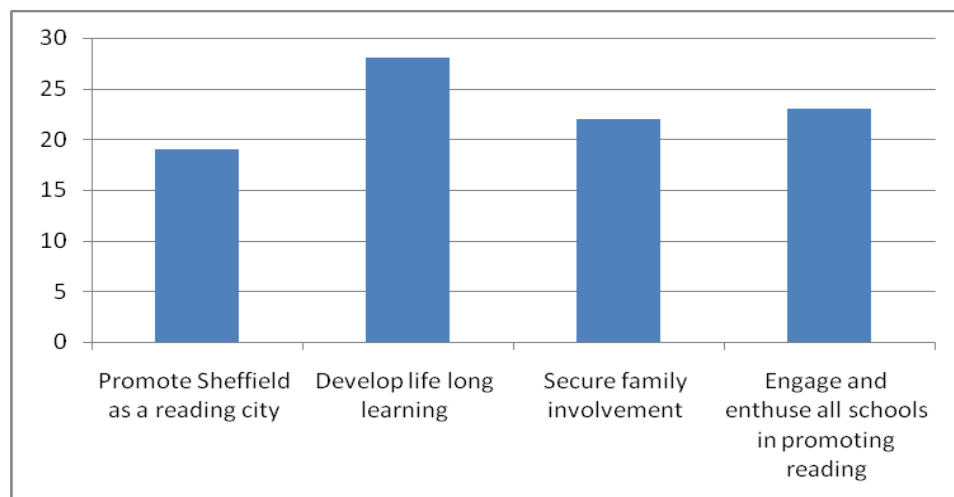
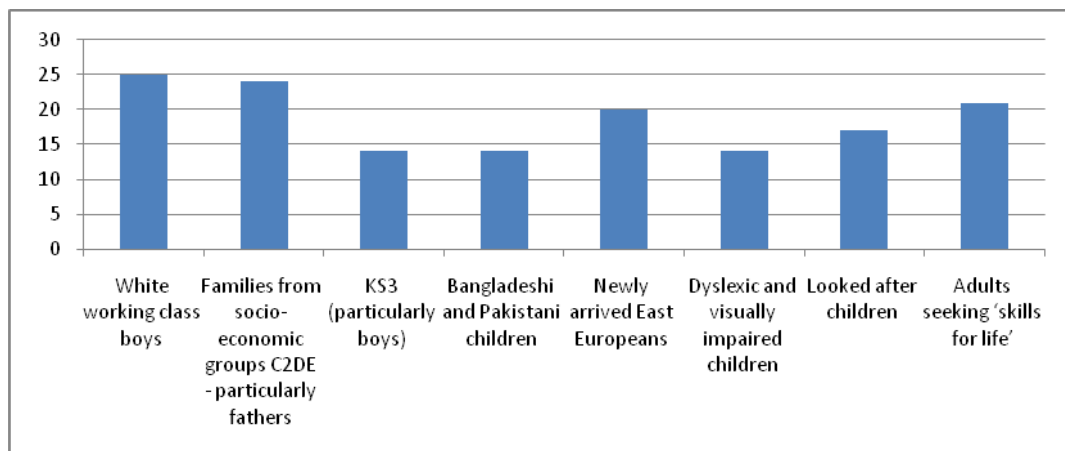


Figure 2. Were you aware of the aims of the NYR in Sheffield? (Tick those that apply)



The next question identified how many of the eight target groups identified by the DCSF and DIUS were part of Sheffield’s user base. Figure 3 shows that out of these eight groups white working class boys and families from socio-economic groups were users at most libraries whereas KS3 (particularly boys), Bangladeshi and Pakistani children and dyslexic and visually impaired children were identified as users by only 46% of respondents. This information can be used in tailoring future events and in retrospect it would have been helpful to have a before and after question to analyse, seeing if any one target group had increased their use in libraries after the campaign. This question was followed up by one of the opinions in the table of question six, accompanied with a likert scale. Participants were asked if events during the Year were planned around target groups, whilst 43% agreed that they were 13% disagreed and 6.6% offered that events were planned around monthly themes rather than target groups.

Figure 3. Which of the eight target groups (if any) identified by the DCSF and DIUS are customers at your library? (Please tick all that apply)



6.3 Participant Opinions of the Year

Question six asked for participants to rate ten statements concerning different aspects of the Year on a simple likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The full tabulated results of this question can be found in appendix D. These statements included subjects such as the tailoring of events, creation of effective partnerships and communication between management and libraries. Unsurprisingly 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the library

was actively involved in the NYR, with only three respondents found in the three lower boxes.

One of the more surprising results was that recorded in response when asked whether there had been an increase of library users in the library since 2008. Whilst 48.1% of respondents were found in to agree or strongly agree, an overwhelming 37% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. This result can be seen as evidence that interest in users and new users in particular must be sustained and new relationships worked at to keep users returning to the library after campaigns such as this finish. This could also be looked at in terms of particular libraries which would be beneficial if there was more time in this study.

Statements relating to events looked at whether participants were consulted in planning and were actively involved in the running of these activities. The results below show that although 50% of respondents were actively involved in the running of events only 37% agreed they were active in the planning and consultation of said events.

The results in charts 1 and 2 below are evidence that although front line staff were actively involved in the execution of activities they had little active role in planning, with 19% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing any involvement. This could be an area of improvement for Sheffield libraries. By giving voice to those who actively run events and activities future projects can learn from these experiences. In conjunction with this, it was agreed that the promotion of events was seen as successful by 46.6% of respondents.

There was little opinion on the subject of local partnerships with just under 50% of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing that these partnerships were effective. It would be interesting to follow this up and see how many of the partnerships established in the Year were still good working relationships now and if this project covered a longer period this would be one avenue of investigation.

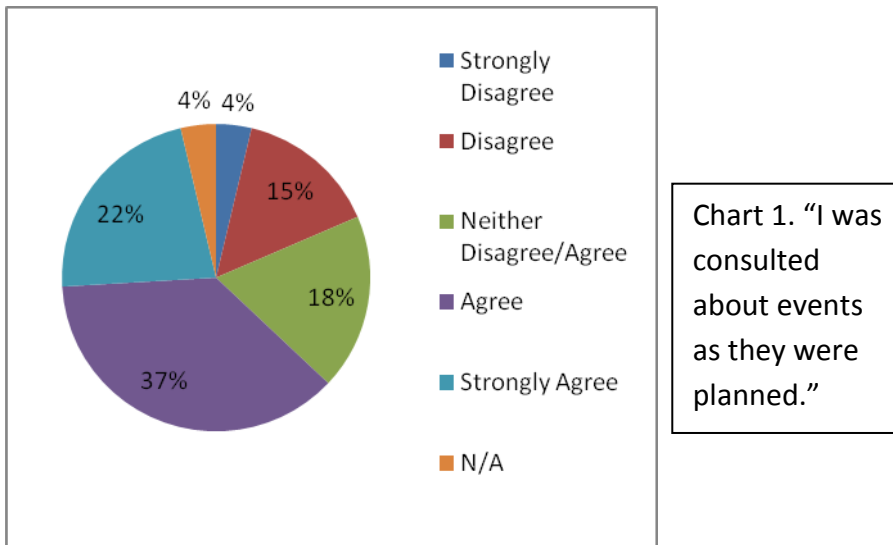
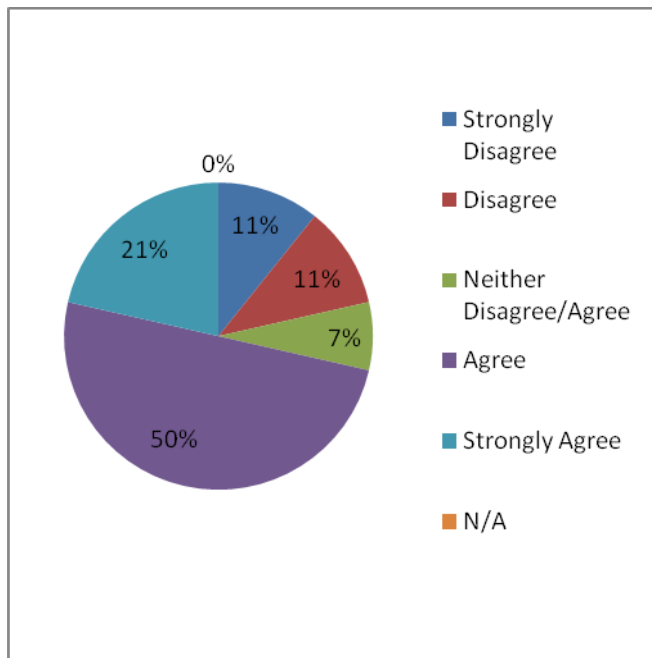


Chart 2. "I was actively involved in events."



The last two statements in the table regarded the level of support felt by front line staff from the executive management team and the NYR Coordinator. The results recorded for these two statements are represented in charts 3 and 4 below. Opinions regarding this statement were mixed and in both cases the majority of respondents (55% in both cases) chose to neither agree nor disagree with these statements. These results indicate an issue arising with communication down the management structure. Further reference to the support and communication between management and front line staff will be discussed in the following section.

Chart 3. "I felt supported by the Executive Management Team"

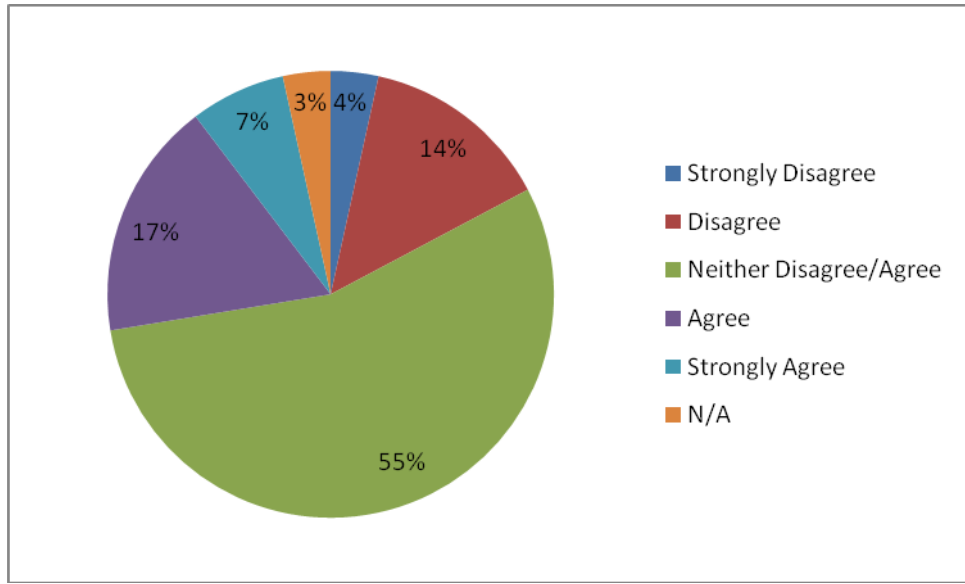
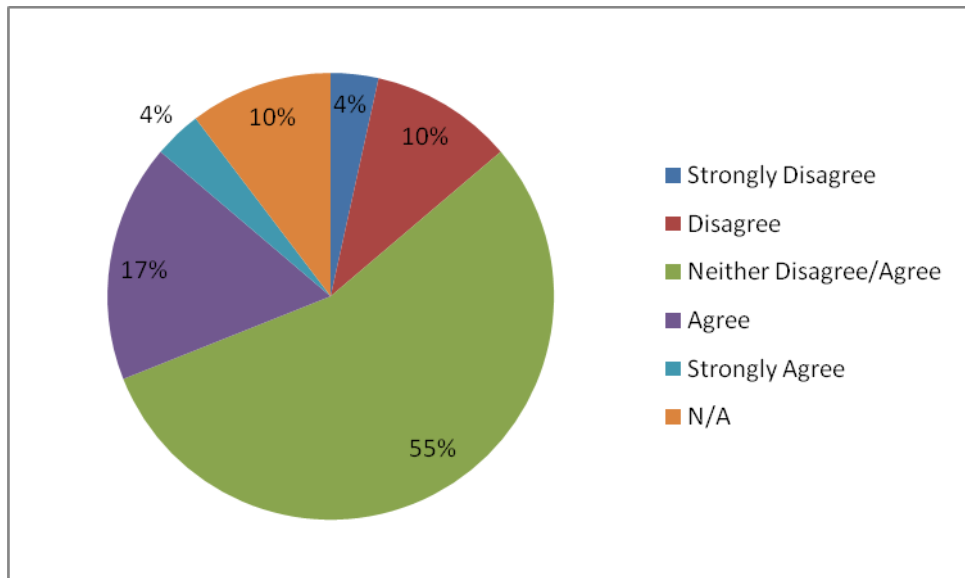


Chart 4. "I felt supported by the NYR coordinator"



6.4 Events

Question seven asked for participants to give a brief description of any events they had been involved in. The spectrum of events was varied, mixing traditional events such as author and poet visits, school visits and reading groups with events such as Slam on the Tram and manga workshops. The data also shows that events were held both in libraries and out in the local community therefore reaching the widest potential audience. These events can be seen to be tailored more towards the monthly events rather than target groups. There are only four events recorded on the sample of questionnaires targeted at particular groups including a Refugee event where Refugees and Asylum Speakers spoke to other library users about their experiences and Chinese New Year promotions, along with new Chinese book stock consultation and a writing competition run in one of the libraries. Apart from this there is evidence of some events targeted toward teenagers, which through the document analysis we learnt were a particular target group of Sheffield. These events included Loud and Live in the Library with three live bands playing at the Central library on Surrey Street and the manga workshop with Joe Logan aimed at ten to sixteen year olds.

Three of the participants were involved in the Sheffield launch of the NYR at Meadowhall, this was a high profile event held at a shopping mall to attract as many potential readers as possible at the beginning of the Year. School children were also invited to this successful event.

Within the sample of responses recorded there is evidence of partnership work with events such as Slam on the Tram, a poetry event held in partnership with Supertram and Music Box in partnership with Music in the Round. Mind and Body sessions were held at Sheffield College Beauty Department with a collection of stock to promote the library. Also within this category we must mention the volume of author, poet and illustrator events, in particular those of the "Flying Poet" Craig Bradley and storyteller Steve Weatherill which were mentioned by multiple respondents. There was also (as expected) a lot of activity in schools in conjunction with the library such as an author event with David Harmer and poetry visit by Bali Rai.

Some respondents indicated that successful events such as the Join a Library Day, and traditional annual events such as the Six Book Challenge, the Summer Reading Challenge and the literary festival Off the Shelf have been repeated this Year with success, learning from the experiences of last year.

Below is a list of the variety of events carried out over Sheffield during the NYR:

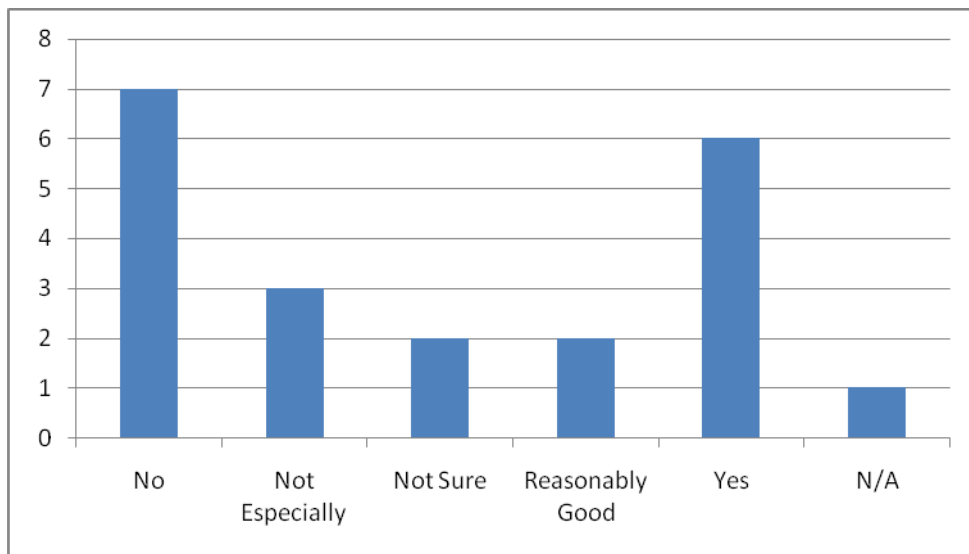
- Tea and Cakes with your favourite book – general invite for conversation,
- Booked Up – a national initiative supported by the DCSF,
- “Trace your Routes” film show – Local History event,
- Extreme Reads – photos submitted of readers, reading in extreme situations,
- Fright Night – with poet Chris White,
- Creative Dance workshop,
- Chatterbook sessions organised around monthly themes,
- Read the Game – Series of Summer activities throughout August, and
- Book launches held at the library.

6.5 Effective Communication

Question eight asked for participant’s opinions if there had been effective communication between libraries and the executive management team during the Year. Twenty one out of the thirty respondents (70%) answered this question. Although left as an open question with space for details many participants opted for a simple yes or no answer with varying degrees. These have been formatted into figure 4 below.

As you can see 33.3% of respondents viewed there was not effective communication within the Year but did not elaborate as to why this was. There were very few comments made in relation to this question but those that were made were in praise of the executive management team being referred to as “committed and supportive” by one participant and providing an “informative agenda”. One respondent commented that there was effective communication via email but not much person to person communication suggesting that the management team need to interact more so with front line staff.

Figure 4. Do you feel there was effective communication between libraries and the executive management team during the Year?

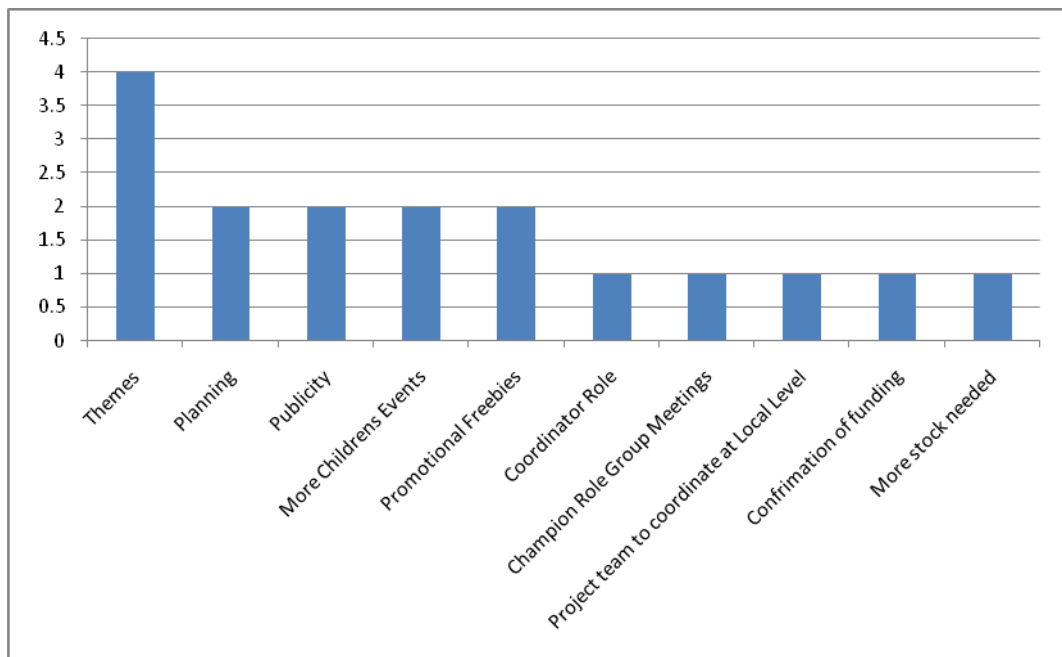


6.6 Improvements

Question nine asked for opinions of elements of the campaign that could have been handled better within the Year, giving evidence for improvement to the service and the way Sheffield libraries approach promotion and events management. There was a mix of responses brought forward by this question, out of seventeen responses; three believed there was no need for improvement. Many of the remaining responses were related to promotion in one way or another including planning and themes which will be discussed later. The results are represented in figure 5 below.

Comments from participants regarding themes included clearer guidance and instruction as one respondent noted “Not all libraries seemed to be displaying the same or similar books”. The themes for some months were “difficult to interpret on a child’s level” and it was deemed that activity suggestions would have been helpful here. Other responses to this question provided insight into improvements for the library service. For example, one respondent highlighted that publicity “could have been better but we do usually fall down in this area!” This is obviously an area that Sheffield library service is developing but there is still room for improvement as can be seen from figure 5.

Figure 5. Are there any elements of the NYR which you feel could have been handled better?



Two respondents suggested earlier planning on both a national and local level was needed along with a confirmation of funding for the Year. This was a topic covered within the national evaluation as there was only three months between the National Literacy Trust winning the contract to head the NYR and its start in January 2008. Other responses which were somewhat expected included an increase of promotional freebies such as bookmarks etc and the need for more stock for displays.

One participant commented on the effectiveness of Champion Role Group Meetings in regards to reader development and lifelong learning were a good idea but “were perhaps too large to be highly effective”.

Perhaps most worrying was one respondent’s suggestion that “a coordinator who oversees the plan of the NYR in Sheffield” was needed. This indicates that not all front line staff were aware of the role of the NYR Coordinator during the Year.

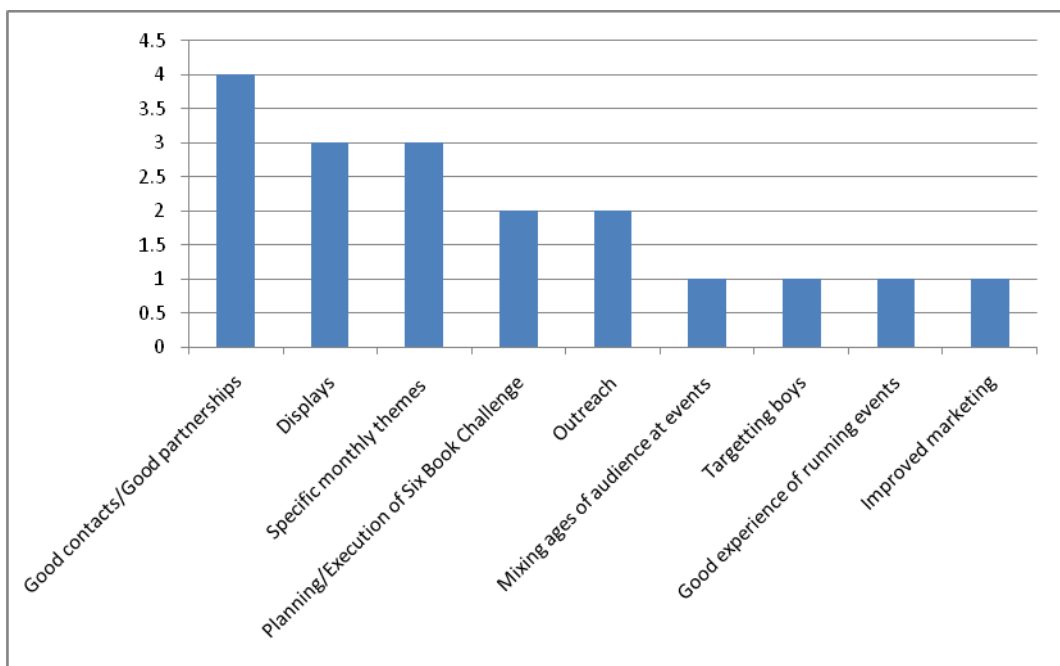
6.7 Examples of Best Practice

The final question asked for examples of best practice retained from the Year. There was a 50% response rate to this question with varying opinions of best practice;

unfortunately four of these responses were that there were no examples of best practice. The low response rate may be due to the interim period between the end of the Year and the distribution of questionnaires. The results recorded from this question are represented in figure 6 below.

Importantly, reflecting Sheffield’s aims and that of the NYR on a national level, creating and sustaining effective partnerships was pointed out as an example of best practice by 26.6% of respondents. This is surprising when compared to the results of question six where respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that local partnerships were effective. The implementation of monthly themes was seen as a good way of focusing promotion and displays although it was previously noted that more guidance was needed along the lines of these themes.

Figure 6. Are there any examples of best practice you have retained for this Year?



The awareness of displays and the use of them as a simple promotion tool which has immediate impact were noted by participants. One respondent commented that they were now using something very similar to themes under the Reading for Life banner; the ongoing project to sustain the momentum of the NYR. Others added that “themes for stock promotion have been a good idea for raising the profile of stock” and maintained focus on the themes.

Other points made by respondents included:

- Mixing ages of audience in reference to the success of the Craig Bradley event,
- Targeting boys (especially) when we have something that should interest them,
- Using experience of other events to build on for future events and general outreach work at schools and colleges.

One respondent pointed out successful events of the Year including the Six Book Challenge, Refugee Week and the Fargate marquee membership drive have already been repeated this year and have aided the promotion of the library service.

An interesting note to conclude on is the thoughts of one respondent who believed they hadn't retained any example of best practice and made the comment that "a lot of the events etc, would have happened regardless of the NYR, and continue to happen but I think the NYR was a good 'push' for libraries in general".

6.8 Summary

From the analysis of these questionnaires it can be seen that front line staff were heavily involved in the execution of the NYR in terms of activities and events although they had less responsibility for the planning of activities within lending libraries. Participants were more aware of the national aims of the Year although many were aware of Sheffield's aims as well.

The evidence gathered from questionnaires shows that although each of the eight target groups identified by the DCSF and the DIUS were found in libraries over the city, events and activities run throughout the Year were heavily tailored to the monthly themes as oppose to these groups. However, whilst saying this there are some examples of events tailored to target groups including a Refuge event and many activities tailored to and run in partnership with schools reaching children and fulfilling one of Sheffield's aims to engage and enthuse all schools in promoting reading.

There is some evidence within the sample to suggest that the creation of sustainable, effective partnerships was successful with local businesses including Supertram and Music in the Round along with local authors and poets such as Craig Bradley and David Harmer. Whether these partnerships are sustainable will only be evident over a longer period of time.

Questionnaires also highlighted areas of improvement in the conduct of campaigns such as the need for better communication between front line staff and the executive management team and better understanding of the role and responsibilities of the NYR Coordinator in relation to front line staff.

The response from these questionnaires also provided a wealth of data regarding examples of best practice in regards to the promotion of events and creation of effective partnerships. Some of these examples have already been used this year during annual events such as the Six Book Challenge and the second Join a Library day held in Fargate.

Chapter Seven: The Librarian's Perspective - Newcastle and Derbyshire

Questionnaires

7.1 Introduction

After the problems encountered with the Sheffield sample of questionnaires it was deemed appropriate to investigate further afield, thereby providing data with which the Sheffield approach to the NYR could be compared. With this in mind contact was made with Newcastle and Derbyshire to ask for their assistance. As both accepted they were sent a link to the questionnaire which was adapted to an electronic format using SurveyMonkey.com. Within the two weeks that the questionnaire was available online there were only six responses from Newcastle library staff and eight responses from Derbyshire library staff. The participants from both authorities represented a range of front line staff.

Of the six responses from Newcastle half were from library/information officers, other participants included a librarian, and two service managers. Of the eight respondents from Derbyshire 37.5% were from principal librarians, 25% from community learning and information librarians, the remaining 37.5% included a librarian, the assistant head of librarians and a reader/audience development officer. Although this is only a small sample from two large counties the data collected provided valuable insight into the running of the NYR within Newcastle and Derbyshire.

7.2 General Awareness

Both authorities were heavily aware of the national aims of the Year with over 60% from each authority checking all four aims. As there was no access to internal documents from either of these authorities as was the case with Sheffield, participants were then asked if they were aware of any local aims of the Year which received a variety of responses in both cases. Both the Newcastle and Derbyshire council websites were investigated prior to the distribution of questionnaires but as the campaign finished nine months ago there was very little relevant material on either site. One note of interest was the mention of the NYR within Newcastle City Council's Corporate Plan 2008/09 which stated under the heading of cultural, leisure and customer service that a key priority was to "...deliver an outstanding

National Year of Reading for Newcastle, to encourage children, families and all learners to understand the benefits of reading” (Newcastle City Council's Corporate Plan – Newcastle City Council website). This indicates the importance of the Year to Newcastle City Council and the all inclusive role of the library service.

Other Newcastle aims provided by participants included:

- Widening the scope of reading of all types,
- Achieving joined up working (partnerships) with all council departments to promote reading, and
- Gearing the national aims of the Year to the community profile.

Derbyshire aims included:

- Increasing library use and book issues,
- Reaching hard to reach groups,
- Establishing countywide corporate representation and commitment to the Year,
- Establishing a countywide literacy strategy, and
- Encouraging city council staff with initiatives such as the Autumn Reading Challenge (this will be discussed further below).

Both authorities indicated that a high level of the identified target groups were already users of library services as shown in figures 7 and 8 below, this reflects the diversity of the user base in each authority, but it can be easily assumed that each person from these target groups using the library represents ten potential users who are unaware of the benefits of using the library and its services.

7.3 Participant Opinions of the Year

The full results tables for question six can be found in Appendix E.

Newcastle – There was a 100% response rate to question six by respondents from Newcastle. Within the table as a whole only two responses were recorded below the Neither Disagree/Agree threshold, whilst saying this there were no unanimous

results. 66% of respondents strongly agreed they were heavily involved with the execution of the NYR and that library users had increased since 2008.

Figure 7. Newcastle - Which of the eight target groups (if any) identified by the DCSF and DIUS are customers at your library? (Please tick all that apply)

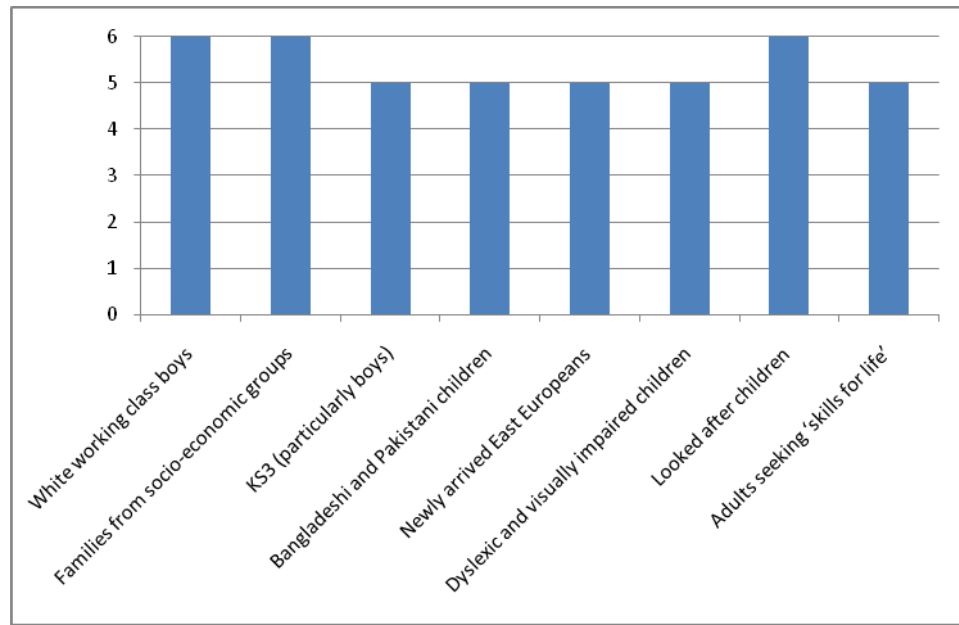
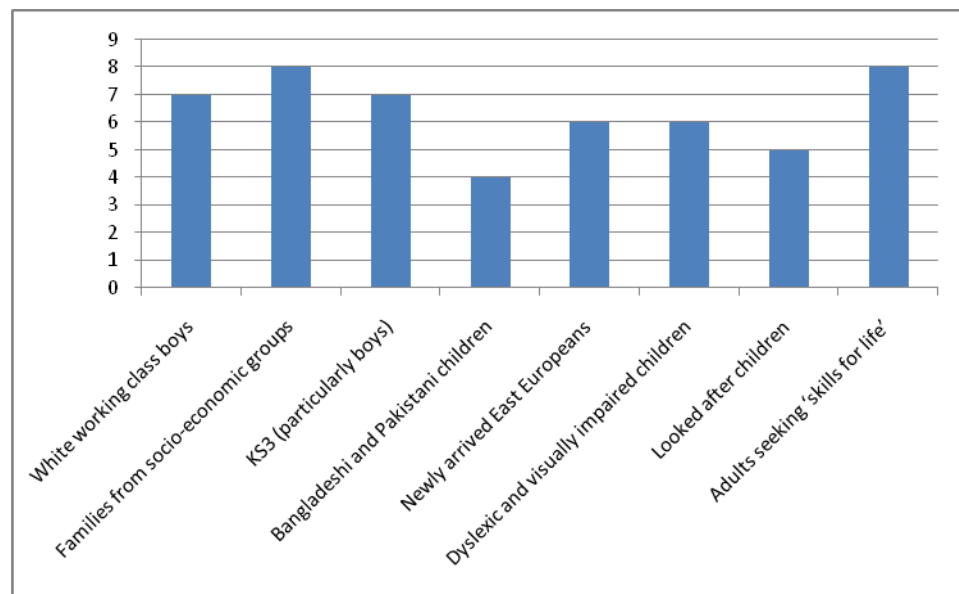


Figure 8. Derbyshire - Which of the eight target groups (if any) identified by the DCSF and DIUS are customers at your library? (Please tick all that apply)



When comparing with the other two authorities it is interesting to note that 83.3% agreed they were consulted during the planning of events. With this in mind it is surprising that respondents did not have more examples of best practice in this area or particularly successful events which will be discussed below.

There was a positive response to the successful promotion of events and the effectiveness of local partnerships. 66% of respondents agreed that they were aware of monthly themes and that events were tailored around target groups but later questions provide evidence that targeting was more tailored to monthly themes.

The final two statements asking about support from the management team and the NYR Coordinator found the majority of responses in the agree column; 33.3% in both cases strongly agreed with these statements. The only two statements which received a disagree response included “events were tailored to target groups” and “I felt supported by the NYR Coordinator”.

Derbyshire – 75% of respondents rated their responses to different statements regarding aspects of the NYR. 83% of respondents strongly agreed that they were actively involved in the Year as well as being aware of the monthly themes.

Again as with Newcastle, within the table as a whole only two responses were recorded below the Neither Disagree/Agree threshold and interestingly within the same categories. There was a varied response as to the increase of library users after 2008 with the six responses shared over columns three to five – Neither Disagree/Agree to Strongly Agree.

The last two statements concerning support received during the Year recorded a varied response from participants. There was an equal response between columns three, four and five in the case of support from the management team whilst the majority of responses for the NYR Coordinator were found in the Neither Disagree/Agree column. This can indicate two things, either staff were not aware of the NYR Coordinator or there was little communication between front line staff and the Coordinator to make an impact.

7.4 Events

Question seven provided participants with an opportunity to describe any events they were involved in during the Year.

Newcastle – 33% of participants did not respond to this question. Of the examples that were recorded many can be seen as traditional events such as reading groups. There were also activities organised around the monthly themes, for example May's theme of Mind and Body tied into Adult Learners Week with taster sessions on complementary and alternative therapies. One respondent commented that within their branch they had tried to organise an event for each month but this "wasn't always possible"; this could be for a number of reasons including issues connected with staffing and the time involved in organising events. Another respondent noted that normal events for children were run but were influenced by NYR themes; unfortunately there was no further elaboration here.

The August Read the Game theme included events run in partnership with Newcastle United Football Club and this was the only example given of partnership working by the Newcastle participants with regard to events.

Derbyshire – Only 50% of respondents answered this question. From the four responses there were the expected responses of reading and listening groups, book promotions and monthly/weekly story times. One respondent mentioned the library's attendance at a local carnival which was targeted at the local community, particularly children and teenagers. There was also the mention of an internet taster session targeted at those wishing to develop their computer skills. These examples can be seen to cater to the national target groups identified by the DCSF and DIUS.

One respondent commented that they had been involved in too many activities to list including thirty activities in thirteen different libraries and events staged at two prison libraries. This shows the vibrant schedule of events organised by the Derbyshire authority and provides an example of outreach working.

From the evidence gathered we can see that much like Sheffield, events and activities seem to be tailored around the national monthly themes as oppose to

target groups although there are some examples above of successfully targeted events.

7.5 Effective Communication

Over 60% of respondents in both authorities answered this question about effective communication but there was little elaboration on this point.

Newcastle – Effective forms of communication recorded by respondents included the distribution of an internal newsletter. There was also the belief that effective communication had a great impact at the beginning of the Year but tailed off towards the end. 33% of respondents answered this question with a simple yes without elaboration. These answers do not reflect the positive responses of support seen within the table of statements discussed above.

Derbyshire – There was a mix of responses recorded from Derbyshire; 25% answered with a simple yes, 12.5% with no, not really. One respondent elaborated on their answer commenting that there was effective communication via the NYR Coordinator due to their attendance at reader development meetings. This shows the positive involvement of the NYR Coordinator in local activity, promoting the campaign which does not tally with the responses from the table discussed above.

7.6 Improvements

The responses to this question seemed to take a national rather than local focus.

Newcastle – Responses tended to lean towards national issues in this area including the improvement of national advertising and promotion along with the need for increased press coverage. The answers from this question could have been tailored to improvements at a local level but this was shown to be an ambiguous point of the question.

Derbyshire – Respondents here also picked up on the issue of national publicity but also commented on the issue of the lack of time to properly plan and organise events. This was mentioned by Sheffield respondents in reference to the planning of events and had also been highlighted by the national evaluation published in April. One respondent commented that Derbyshire did not receive promised

national/local authors; this indicates a breakdown in communication between the national NYR team and local authorities (NYR Coordinator).

7.7 Examples of Best Practice

Due to the limited amount of responses from both authorities there were not many examples of best practice recorded.

Newcastle – One respondent gave a general statement that the library service were attempting to build on all successful elements of the last year's work whilst another responded that their membership process had been relaxed by not asking for a proof of ID from new members.

Derbyshire – Work with some of the partners was ongoing showing that the creation of sustainable partnerships has been successful in this short period of time. One respondent put forward the suggestion of branding the library to make the service more recognisable. 25% of respondents noted the repetition of the Autumn Book Challenge in 2009. This was an initiative which was originally aimed at city council staff but is being rolled out to library users this year. This event runs along the same lines of the Six Book Challenge but as the name indicates is run in the autumn and is open to all users aged twelve and above with the incentive of a chance to win £100 worth of book tokens.

7.8 Summary

Although a small sample of questionnaires was collected from these two authorities the evidence they provided of activities and opinions of the Year are invaluable. Within both authorities it was strongly agreed that libraries were involved in the Year and most participants were aware of the national aims of the Year and monthly themes. Noted local aims included increasing library users and book issues and partnerships within the council.

Events are indicated to have been tailored to monthly themes rather than target groups although there are a couple of examples of events targeted to particular groups of users. There was little data gathered pertaining to partnerships although Newcastle's partnership with Newcastle United football club, if sustainable, would be advantageous in reaching a number of target groups including KS3 boys and

fathers. Questionnaires from the two authorities highlighted the need for improvement of national publicity and promotion but did not venture many areas of improvement on a local level.

When comparing this data with that from Sheffield it is apparent that front line staff were heavily involved in the NYR but the majority had little involvement in the planning of events and activities. Each of the three authorities highlighted the need for more promotional materials including a heightened sense of national publicity for the Year. Although it is clear that there are examples of best practice from the three authorities there was little detail given by Newcastle or Derbyshire whilst Sheffield examples included being aware of the impact of displays and the need for good contacts and partnerships.

Events held within the three authorities seem to have relied on traditional events such as reading groups and numerous events such as story telling and author/poet visitors. It is also evident that these events have been organised around monthly themes more than identified target groups. Whilst discussing this it is important to note that each of the three authorities showed a large percentage of the national target groups identified as users of their libraries. What would have been beneficial here is a before/after question to assess the increase of users belonging to these target groups but this may not be information front line staff are privy to. There are few examples of successful partnerships, the bulk of these given by Sheffield but whether these are sustainable effective partnerships will become clear over a longer period of time.

Chapter Eight: The NYR Coordinator's Perspective - Email Interviews with the Newcastle and Derbyshire NYR Coordinators

8.1 Introduction

Interviews were conducted to gain further insight into the role and responsibilities of the NYR Coordinator but also as a means of comparison with data collected from questionnaires to investigate whether front line and management staff had the same perspective and approaches to the Year as a whole.

Due to the unforeseen circumstances previously detailed email interviews were conducted with the NYR Coordinators of Newcastle and Derbyshire to compare with questionnaire results gathered from these authorities. The email interview structure can be seen in appendix F. There are obvious limitations involved in conducting email interviews as one cannot go into as much detail or ask interviewees to elaborate on answers as you would person to person but these interviews still provided valuable data into the Coordinator's role and their view of the Year. The results of these interviews are found below.

8.2 The Newcastle NYR Coordinator

The participant took on this role for the Year as part of their existing role as Libraries Development Officer. They commented on the role of the Coordinator as coordinating the delivery of NYR events, activities and promotion and chairing the strategic NYR cross council services group which can be deemed as Newcastle's steering group. When asked if the steering group was a successful part of the Coordinator's role the respondent answered in the affirmative but provided no further elaboration on this point. When asked about their own aims for the Year the participant responded with three points:

- To promote literacy,
- Raise awareness of library services, and
- Improve the links between departments, schools, services and agencies supporting literacy in Newcastle.

These points can be seen to reflect the national aims of the Year including encouraging reading for pleasure and establishing a network of partnerships promoting engagement. The final aim of the Coordinator was reflected in questionnaires from frontline staff who stated one of Newcastle's aims as achieving joined up working with all council departments to promote reading. This shows that aims of the Year have been effectively communicated to an extent between the Coordinator and front line staff.

When asked "Did you take any steps to promote your role within the library service?" the interviewee responded that "All staff in the library service were aware of my role in the NYR" which can be reflected by the 83.3% of front line staff agreeing that they felt supported by the NYR Coordinator within the questionnaire. The respondent goes on to say that alterations to library regulations were communicated to staff through many lines of communication illustrating this with the example of the library membership campaign. However, this was not reflected in questionnaire responses showing a divided opinion on the subject of effective communication.

When asked about the effectiveness of partnerships and providing a legacy for the NYR in Newcastle the participant attached certain files illustrating their work during the Year, these included an itinerary for the Newcastle NYR legacy conference entitled "Love Books" held at the Seven Stories Centre for Children's Books. This seems to have been a profitable and effective partnership. Whilst looking at the itinerary there seems to be an overwhelming focus on children including discussion of the Booked Out initiative and a group session on inspiring and motivating teenagers. This works towards the building of a nation of readers from an early age.

Other documents included information on the library membership drive (already mentioned above) and minutes from the Newcastle City Council and partners meeting in October 2008. These minutes provide information on promotion and preparation for the legacy conference held on 2nd December 2008. Discussion of events such as the Booked Up promotion and "major events for young people"; Juice and the Northern Children's Book Festival are recorded. There are also

comments on a number of events being coordinated showing that momentum at the end of the Year was still high and would move into 2009. Most interesting of these minutes is the actions recorded at the end which illustrate the variety of promotion both through networks and the council's web page. The last action is to "Draw together a report of the NYR in Newcastle"; this would be a very interesting document to analyse which would give valuable information as to the successes and challenges of the Year. If this research was to be extended the analysis of documents such as this would be included as another form of comparison.

The limitations of the email interview can be seen with the final questions including whether the Coordinator's work has continued this year in sustaining momentum and whether this has successfully been maintained were both answered with a simple yes with no further elaboration of how or why.

The data gathered from this interview illustrates the success in establishing successful partnerships and the success in continuing the momentum of good work and promotion into 2009. There is also evidence of the success of the Newcastle NYR steering group bringing together key agencies supporting literacy in Newcastle.

8.3 The Derbyshire NYR Coordinator

The NYR Coordinator for Derbyshire took this role on as Head of Libraries and Heritage and Deputy Director of Cultural and Community Services. Within their description of their role as Coordinator the participant included:

- Raising the profile of the NYR,
- Coordinating and leading the corporate steering group,
- Supporting the departmental working group, and
- Encouraging and promoting the activities to raise the profile and enjoyment of reading.

In the personal aims for the NYR Coordinator the participant included working "with a range of partners to deliver reading based activities throughout Derbyshire" and "to increase library members by 20,000". The latter of these aims was achieved with

library members increasing by 35,000. This was also one of the local authority aims noted by front line staff within questionnaires.

When asked about the NYR steering group the participant commented that the steering group met at bi-monthly meetings of approximately ten senior officers to review progress and discuss future plans. These meetings helped to “raise both the profile of reading and the role of libraries within the authority”.

In response to promoting the role of the NYR Coordinator within the library service, the participant explained that all staff were aware of the NYR through team briefings and newsletters. This is reflected by 83% of front line respondents agreeing they were actively involved with the NYR. The participant also noted that library staff were encouraged to undertake reading based activities and offered an incentive to the library which attracted the most new members of funding to buy new resources/equipment of their choice.

When asked about creating effective and sustainable partnerships the participant gives details of a Partnership Day “to explain the aims of the campaign, raise the profile of the library service and to share good practice”. This shows the importance of partnerships and commitment of the NYR Coordinator and Derbyshire County Council as a whole towards the NYR and the promotion of the library service. The participant provides examples of successful partnerships being sustained including Sunday library openings to promote District Council activity events and the coordination of reading groups with Adult Social Services and the Primary Care Trust. This shows that partnerships have been sustained not only for the benefit of the library service but that partners have realised the library as the heart of the community and a place to promote other council events.

The NYR Coordinator reflected comments given by front line staff in response to providing a legacy for the Year. These were that there should have been more national support both during the Year and for the legacy. There is an explanation of Family Reading Matters, a pilot project launched by the National Literacy Trust rolled out to four authorities including Derbyshire. This is a partnership project led by Read on Write Away (the Derbyshire/Derby literacy partnership) and indicates

work across a number of agencies which will keep partnerships alive in the near future.

Successful library events included the Autumn Book Challenge which was also highlighted by many respondents in the questionnaire showing the true success of this initiative, the Coordinator goes on to say that there were “numerous very successful events held locally” but too many to list. Within this question the participant was also asked for any examples of best practice but there was no response to this part of the question, again showing the limitations of an email interview as a person to person interview would have followed up on this.

The last questions covered promotion of the library service and the sustainability of the Year; being able to keep momentum into 2009. The Coordinator responded that not only has this work been sustained but also developed along with many other initiatives.

“In Derbyshire one of our strengths for many years has been reader development and promoting reading in innovative ways. We used NYR as another way of promoting and developing our good practice.”

In the any other comments question at the end of the interview the participant took the opportunity to again stress the need for earlier planning by the government, which is a point that was stressed in the evaluation report and discussed in chapter two, they comment that “ This would have allowed local authorities more time to plan more effectively”.

8.4 Summary

Both NYR Coordinators took on this role as an extension to their managerial roles and had substantial experience to advocate the importance of libraries in this Year. Each went into the Year aware of the national and their own local aims which reflected those mentioned by the frontline staff to a certain extent.

Both participants felt that steering groups were successful and that library staff were aware of the Coordinator’s role within the Year. This point seemed less clear to those who participated in questionnaires. In both cases examples were given of

successful events and work towards sustaining partnerships internally within the authority and externally both as part of the campaign and into 2009. Within the interviews there was little evidence of best practice apart from the change of library regulations in Newcastle with no elaboration as to what these were.

Comparing responses from questionnaires and interviews shows us that overall NYR Coordinators and front line staff had the same views regarding the NYR's local aims, the need for further preparation on a national level and towards the creation of effective partnerships. The only real point of contention was in the awareness of front line staff as to the Coordinator's role, this could easily be resolved with more effective communication or visits conducted to each of the libraries at the beginning of a campaign such as this, making front line staff aware that there is a point of contact for them.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

The National Year of Reading in both the national evaluation and Sheffield's own review was admitted to be an outstanding success in the promotion of reading and sending the message that "Reading anything, anytime, anywhere is good" (*Reading: The Future*, 2009: 11). The success of the Year spread to public libraries with the first national library membership drive resulting in 2.3 million new members (*Ibid*: 06). The creation of effective partnerships helped to reach potential, hesitant and reluctant readers and promote

"...the fundamental founding principle behind our network of public libraries; ideas available for free, to everyone, offering reading as a tool of personal emancipation, and an expression of a democratic society".

(National Year of Reading Mission Statement, 2008)

From the document analysis conducted local successes had been illustrated which include successful partnership working particularly with schools reflecting Sheffield's aim to enthuse and engage schools; this can also be seen with over one hundred primary schools achieving NYR accreditation during the Year. Successful events including the Six Book Challenge and Fargate outreach event to recruit new library members. These provided chances to reach potential users and promote the benefits of the library and the many services therein to the local community.

9.1 .1 Sheffield's Strategy and the National Campaign

Sheffield's strategy for the NYR can be seen to have linked well into the national campaign. Local aims of promoting Sheffield as a reading city, developing life-long learning, securing family involvement and engaging and enthusing all schools in promoting reading reflect the inclusion of target groups identified by the DCSF and DIUS. Looking at the guiding principles of Sheffield; to be celebratory, broaden attitudes to reading, ensure wide participation and be sustainable can be seen as necessary steps to help to build a nation of readers whilst reflecting the aims of the national campaign. The City Wide Literacy Strategy (CWLS) illustrates social

inclusion and accessibility to all which can also be seen from the wide and varied examples of events found in documents and mentioned by frontline staff.

With regard to the data collected from Newcastle and Derbyshire each spoke of working towards effective partnerships and whilst Newcastle spoke of widening the scope of all reading of all types, Derbyshire commented on the need to reach hard to reach groups reflecting national aims of the Year. The interviews with NYR Coordinators showed that their role aided the completion of national aims on promoting literacy and establishing partnerships in order to help them do this. The success of steering groups in both counties can also be seen as a key attribute to the successful completion of these aims.

9.1.2 Events tailored to Target Groups?

All evidence gathered indicates that events were tailored to monthly themes as oppose to target groups. This indicates the library service's commitment to social inclusion within the Year. From questionnaire results it can also be commented that the reason this was the case is because there was already a large number of members from the target groups identified as existing library members.

There are few examples of events specifically targeted to groups in Sheffield but those that are mentioned include refugee events and the consultation of libraries with the local Eastern European community with regard to new book stock. There were also examples from one library of events tailored to the local Chinese community including competitions and the promotion of specialist book stock, along with a successful dual language story telling event in Darnall library where 75% of attendees were from BME families.

It should be noted that events such as the Summer Reading Challenge and Six Book Challenge which are long running initiatives targeted at emergent and hesitant readers and school children respectively were run with successful results within the Year showing that Sheffield and further afield are committed to reading promotion and development. Evidence also shows that events in Sheffield were tailored to

specific target groups identified by the service such as Loud and Live in the Library which targeted teenagers.

Newcastle and Derbyshire responses agreed with Sheffield that events were tailored to monthly themes as oppose to target groups and again large percentages of each target group were found as existing members of the library. With this in mind examples of events were described in reference to partnerships and monthly themes as oppose to target groups. Newcastle's Coordinator alluded to major events targeted at children including the Northern Children's Book Festival being successful. The Derbyshire interview recorded too many events to list but there was no comment indicating that these were focused on target groups.

9.1.3 Effective Partnerships?

Local partnerships were established during the Year both internally (within the Council) and externally with local and national organisations. These have been identified as successful partnerships such as those with Supertram, Music in the Round and individual authors such as the flying poet Craig Bradley but there is little evidence to show the sustainability of these partnerships. This is something that will have to be monitored over a longer period of time to ascertain their sustainability without the backing of a national campaign. The evidence suggests that partnerships have been successful in reaching potential users, hesitant and emergent readers and this is one aspect that Sheffield's library service are focusing on; continuing the good work started with partnerships during the Year. Front line staff had a mixed view towards partnerships and their effectiveness but the evidence gathered in the document analysis shows this to have been a success of the Year. This response may be due to the fact that it is primarily part of the NYR Coordinator's role to establish these partnerships in the local community and further afield.

Newcastle and Derbyshire authorities had examples of successful partnerships including Newcastle's work with Newcastle United Football Club during August with the theme Read the Game. Questionnaires showed the effectiveness of partnerships within the Year but the same question of sustainability applies here.

The subject of partnerships was taken seriously by Derbyshire with a Partner's Day event at the beginning of the Year; the Coordinator also alluded to the benefits for partners as well as the library.

9.1.4 Lessons Learnt and Best Practice

The momentum of the Sheffield NYR has been maintained to a certain extent through the repetition of successful events such as the Fargate outreach event promoting the benefits of library membership. Outreach work such as this was seen to have a positive effect during the Year and was commented on during questionnaires as an area that the library service needed to improve on.

There has also been much conversation about the development of projects with hard to reach groups such as youth offender teams and school refusers. Unfortunately front line staff failed to mention these ongoing projects indicating that outreach work such as this may be organised by higher level management. The reason for this omission may simply be that with a response rate of 33% there were many examples of success and challenges which have not been identified. Other projects noted included the Council backing of the Imagination Library, an ongoing project with Burngreave and Shiregreen districts.

There have been examples of best practice from the Year including the relaxation of library regulations such as providing only one form of ID during the library membership process. Other examples include the mixing of audiences at events and the need for monthly themes to be clearly defined (alluding to a breakdown in communication with the national team) with guidance and suggestions for events and activities in a campaign such as this. Many participants identified the need for a focus on publicity and promotional material and the need for a longer lead in period before launching a national campaign such as this. This point was also evident within the document analysis.

Newcastle and Derbyshire both commented on the need for better national publicity and promotion of the Year and like Sheffield, Newcastle have relaxed library regulations regarding proofs of ID so that none are needed when joining the library. Derbyshire results focused on the roll out of the Autumn Book Challenge to

library users (as opposed to Council staff during the Year) and the pilot project Family Reading Matters whilst each of the three authorities wish to build on the good work conducted in the Year.

Both Sheffield and Newcastle provided information regarding legacy conferences held at the end of the Year to highlight successes and challenges along with discussing the sustainability of the Year.

9.2 Limitations

This study has had its share of limitations due to the unforeseeable circumstances regarding the distribution of questionnaires. This had a roll on affect on the rest of the data collection but has not affected the value of the data or conclusions made from it. Analysing the answers from questionnaires and email interviews there could have been some modifying of questions but this will always be the case when conducting research as routes of the research are bound to develop during the study.

Due to problems stated above and the time delay occurred the NYR Coordinator of Sheffield was unavailable for interview by the time a suitable schedule had been designed. This meant that the Sheffield sample of data was lacking a management perspective but it was viewed that there was enough rich data collected and analysed from the document analysis and questionnaire responses providing a general overview of the Year.

These problems encountered are an unfortunate occurrence of conducting qualitative research in the field and are part of the reason for the additional online study being undertaken in the counties of Newcastle and Derbyshire. This additional data enriched the study by providing the opportunity of comparison of approaches, aims and best practice and will benefit Sheffield library service.

9.3 Recommendations

Following the conclusions of this study there have many been many lessons learnt and information that can be passed on to the authorities involved to help them improve their individual services but firstly there is discussion of some of the many

different avenues of further research indicated throughout the study and from the conclusions above.

9.3.1 Further Research

There has been a lot learnt from this research which will help Sheffield in improving their service, especially when comparing their approach to the Year with those of Newcastle and Derbyshire. The NYR has so many avenues of research as a national campaign that any one of the objectives stated could be looked at on a national level. Through this research many elements of further research have been found which could be followed if this study were undertaken over a longer time period. These include:

- Comparing Sheffield's 1998 NYR to the 2008 NYR,
- Continued monitoring of partnerships to ascertain sustainability on an annual basis,
- Case studies of the benefits for partners from a partnership with the library,
- User approach to the NYR to see their perspective and compare this with that of the library staff and management, and
- More detailed analysis of Newcastle and Derbyshire's approach to the Year with analysis of internal documents.

These are only a few of many different aspects of the Year that warrant further research.

9.3.2 Timing

This was an issue which was brought up both on a national and local level in terms of forward planning and execution of the Year as a whole and with individual events. It is widely agreed that the National Literacy Trust and consortium of members would have benefitted from having a longer lead in time to the Year which stalled information filtering to local authorities. Another reason for a longer lead in would have been to carry out the necessary research to be able to tailor events to target groups from an earlier stage in the Year on a national scale; this would have also aided preparation and promotion of events on a local level.

9.3.3 For Sheffield Library Service

Sheffield libraries can benefit from the results of this research which show a need to continue work and improvement on provide effective communication between management and front line staff during initiatives such as this. There is also the issue of improvements regarding promotion of the library service and publicity which was identified as a weakness by questionnaires and within the document analysis. Sheffield library service can build upon and learn from the experience of the NYR 2008 continuing communication with the local community and users of the library and being creative and innovative through promotion, events and partnerships to attract potential users.

Opinions taken from participants at the questionnaire stage of the study should be taken into consideration and worked into strategic planning for the library service and future events.

Word Count: 21, 824.

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Appendices

Appendix A. NYR Mission Statement

National Year of Reading Mission statement

(This document was produced for all NYR Co-ordinators on 11 February 2008)

The more you read, the more you know. Reading helps you connect, think, judge, decide and contribute. If you read, everything is within your reach.

Reading and effective literacy are fundamental to social cohesion, individual opportunity and personal success. For the 2008 National Year of Reading to succeed we need to have conveyed the significance and positive impact of literacy and reading on the success of the country, and the opportunities it provides for active citizenship for everyone.

We need to reach hesitant readers, reluctant readers, those who do not consider themselves readers (but who are!), and those who are in a position to influence someone's future reading potential - and make a compelling case to them all for greater engagement with reading.

This means reaching and engaging every parent and carer, as well as extended family members, in order to promote the central role of the family and the home environment, as well as the impact of education, on any child's reading life and future potential. We will also need to engage CEO's nationwide and encourage them to support reading and literacy development within and outside of the workplace.

The 2008 National Year of Reading is not just about books, but is a celebration of words in every form and through every possible media. We are at a cultural crunch point – at a moment when we need to embrace whole new networks of reading through digital media, and at the same time celebrate everything that is relevant

about traditional forms of reading and access to reading.

The 2008 National Year of Reading will also showcase artistic production – ideally every variety of spoken, sung and written words – and the role of the artist in expressing the capacity of words to move us, to change lives, to divert and delight us. Artists will be essential in our drive to extend the impact of the Year beyond ‘conventional’ and established audiences for reading.

Most of all the 2008 National Year of Reading is about the power of words and reading and the ideas they can illuminate - it will particularly focus on the fundamental founding principle behind our network of public libraries; ideas available for free, to everyone, offering reading as a tool of personal emancipation, and an expression of a democratic society.

Found on Wikireadia -

http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/wikireadia/index.php?title=National_year_of_reading_-_mission_statement

Appendix B. NYR Coordinator Job Description

(This document was produced as guidance for all NYR Coordinators on 8 January 2008)

Key accountabilities

1 To form, chair and maintain a NYR Steering Group with representatives from a range of service areas in order to plan and deliver the year in partnership. These departments may include:

- Adult learning provision
- Business and economic development units
- Children and young people's services
- Housing departments
- Libraries and leisure
- Local health services
- Policy and strategy

2 To build external partnerships that fit with local strategic priorities, reach the primary target audiences and can be sustained beyond the life of the campaign, such as with:

- Community groups
- Employers and business organisations
- Faith groups
- Further and Adult Education providers
- Local strategic partnership partners
- Supplementary schools
- Voluntary sector organisations

3 To coordinate all NYR activity within the authority to ensure the maximum benefit from national, regional and local events and projects.

4 To work with the NYR Local government manager, Emily Thorne and wider NYR team

5 To disseminate and act upon information and guidance sent out from Emily and the NYR team by

- Responding to requests for information from Emily and the NYR team
- Using the website to register events and local case studies

6 To prioritise sustainability and legacy of both the partnerships and projects developed during the year by:

- Engaging with their authority's Local Area Agreement and the need for a cross-service strategic approach to literacy

- Engaging with the Chief Executive, elected Members, service heads and senior managers
- Advocating the policy context and strategic significance of literacy to all staff within the authority

7 To evaluate the success of events throughout the year and maintain an evidence base of both quantitative data and qualitative case studies.

Person specification:

- Passionate about reading in all forms
- An understanding of the policy context of literacy and the social impact of literacy
- Ability to broker partnerships with internal and external stakeholders
- Ability to engage senior managers
- Profile, reputation and experience to lead on the NYR for the authority
- Understanding of the potential of the NYR and ability to exploit opportunities creatively to take forward both national and local agendas

Found on Wikireadia -

http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/wikireadia/index.php?title=Profile_for_National_Year_of_Reading_Coordinator_role

Appendix C. The Librarian's Perspective – Questionnaire

National Year of Reading in Sheffield Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire, please make sure you have read the enclosed information sheet before continuing. All information recorded on these questionnaires will remain anonymous; the final publication of this study will be made public to Sheffield library.

1. Library:

2. Job Role:

3. Were you aware of the national aims of the NYR? (Tick those that apply)

Promote reading in the family and beyond

Help to build a nation of readers

Encourage reading for pleasure, improving learning, achievement and individual prospects

Establishing a network of partnerships promoting engagement

4. Were you aware of the aims of the NYR in Sheffield? (Please tick those that apply)

Promote Sheffield as a reading city

Develop life long learning

Secure family involvement

Engage and enthuse all schools in promoting reading

5. Which of the eight target groups (if any) identified by the DCSF and DIUS are customers at your library? (Please tick all that apply)

White working class boys

Families from socio-economic groups C2DE - particularly fathers (C2DE Skilled working class, working class and underclass)

KS3 (particularly boys)

Bangladeshi and Pakistani children

Newly arrived East Europeans

Dyslexic and visually impaired children

Looked after children

Adults seeking 'skills for life'

6. Please read the following statements and put an (X) in the appropriate box

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The library was actively involved in the NYR						
I was consulted about events as they were planned						
Events were planned around target groups						
I was actively involved in events (Please see Q7)						
I was aware of the different monthly themes						
Local partnerships were effective						
Promotion of events was successful						
There has been an increase of users in our library since 2008						
I felt supported by the Executive Management Team						
I felt supported by the NYR Coordinator						

7. Please give the name and basic description of any events you were involved in.

Name	Brief Description

8. Do you feel there was effective communication between libraries and the executive management team during the year?

9. Are there any elements of the NYR which you feel could have been handled better?

10. Are there any examples of best practice you have retained from the year?

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire

Appendix D. Table for Sheffield

6. Please read the following statements and put an (X) in the appropriate box – Sheffield

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The library was actively involved in the NYR	1 (3.4%)	0	2 (6.8%)	11 (37.9%)	15 (51.7%)	0
I was consulted about events as they were planned	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	5 (17.2%)	10 (37%)	6 (22.2%)	1 (3.7%)
Events were planned around target groups	0	4 (13.3%)	9 (30%)	13 (43.3%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)
I was actively involved in events (Please see Q7)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	2 (7.1%)	14 (50%)	6 (21.4%)	0
I was aware of the different monthly themes	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.4%)	8 (27.5%)	18 (62%)	0
Local partnerships were effective	2 (6.8%)	1 (3.4%)	13 (44.8%)	9 (31%)	2 (6.8%)	2 (6.8%)
Promotion of events was successful	0	0	11 (36.6%)	14 (46.6%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)
There has been an increase of users in our library since 2008	1 (3.7%)	0	10 (37%)	9 (33.3%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (10.3%)
I felt supported by the Executive Management Team	1 (3.4%)	4 (13.3%)	16 (55.1%)	5 (17.2%)	2 (6.8%)	1 (3.4%)
I felt supported by the NYR Coordinator	1 (3.4%)	3 (10.3%)	16 (55.1%)	5 (17.2%)	1 (3.4%)	3 (10.3%)

Appendix E. Tables for Newcastle and Derbyshire

6. Please read the following statements and put an (X) in the appropriate box – Newcastle

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The library was actively involved in the NYR				2 (33.3%)	4 (66.6%)	
I was consulted about events as they were planned			1 (16.6%)	5 (83.3%)		
Events were planned around target groups		1 (16.6%)		4 (66.6%)	1 (16.6%)	
I was actively involved in events (Please see Q7)			2 (33.3%)	3 (50%)		1 (16.6%)
I was aware of the different monthly themes				4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)	
Local partnerships were effective			2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	
Promotion of events was successful			1 (16.6%)	3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)	
There has been an increase of users in our library since 2008			1 (16.6%)	1 (16.6%)	4 (66.6%)	
I felt supported by the Executive Management Team				4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)	
I felt supported by the NYR Coordinator		1 (16.6%)		3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)	

6. Please read the following statements and put an (X) in the appropriate box – Derbyshire

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
The library was actively involved in the NYR				1 (16.6%)	5 (83.3%)	
I was consulted about events as they were planned			4 (66.6%)	1 (16.6%)	1 (16.6%)	
Events were planned around target groups		1 (16.6%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (50%)		
I was actively involved in events (Please see Q7)				5 (83.3%)	1 (16.6%)	
I was aware of the different monthly themes				1 (16.6%)	5 (83.3%)	
Local partnerships were effective			3 (50%)	3 (50%)		
Promotion of events was successful			3 (50%)	3 (50%)		
There has been an increase of users in our library since 2008			1 (16.6%)	3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)	
I felt supported by the Executive Management Team			2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	
I felt supported by the NYR Coordinator		1 (16.6%)	3 (50%)	1 (16.6%)	1 (16.6%)	

Appendix F. Interview Schedule

1. Brief employment history before taking the NYR co-ordinator role

2. What made you choose to pursue this role?

3. Could you please give me a detailed description of your role as NYR co-ordinator?

4. What were your aims for this year when you took this role?

5. Part of your role included forming, chairing and maintaining the NYR steering group:

Was this a successful part of your role?
How many representatives were there?
How often were the meetings?

6. Your role spread across the authority, how much contact did you have with the library service within the year? (%)

7. Did you take any steps to promote your role within the library service e.g. to front line staff?

8. Did you have much communication with the local government manager; if so was it a supportive role?

9. The establishment and sustainability of effective partnerships was both a national and Sheffield aim of the year and a priority of the NYR co-ordinator. How did you approach this part of your role?

10. Can you give me any examples of successful partnerships which have been sustained into this year?

11. The NYR was supposed to provide a legacy for future development of projects etc. Do you feel this was achieved? How so?

12. Can you think of any examples of successful library events and examples of best practice than can be taken from this?

13. Were you consulted on methods of promoting the library service during the Year, have these been sustained built upon this year?

14. Has your work continued this year in sustaining momentum after the year ended?

15. Do you feel the momentum of the Year has been maintained?

16. Is there anything else you feel is important that I've missed, or that you would like to say?