

An investigation into Yorkshire public library
outreach projects aimed at homeless people

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts in Librarianship

at

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

Rebecca Broadley

September 2010

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who was agreed to take part in this research. I appreciate it immensely as, of course, I would have been unable to write this dissertation without your help. Thank you also to my tutor, Peter Willett, for his guidance and advice.

Abstract

Background.

It is clear from the literature that homeless people are one of the most socially excluded groups in the UK; furthermore, being homeless can bring with it multiple and serious negative effects. Public libraries have a large role in serving the socially excluded segments of our population, and yet there is doubt, expressed in the literature, that public libraries are serving homeless people effectively.

Aims.

This research aimed to discover good practice for conducting outreach for homeless people, in order to inform and aid current and future librarians. To fulfil this aim, the research had several objectives: to identify any projects that have been, or are being, run; to determine the barriers to, and problems with, running these projects; to identify current perceptions; and to discover the successful elements of these outreach projects.

Methods.

Two strands of methodology were utilised for this dissertation: four case studies that were taken from library and information sector literature were examined, and six semi-structured interviews were carried out with outreach and/or inclusion librarians from library authorities in South and West Yorkshire. Both sets of results were thematically analysed.

Results.

The results of the case studies identified some tentative suggestions of how to plan, conduct and evaluate homelessness outreach, as well as some potential problems and solutions. The results of the interviews described the homelessness outreach currently being run and identified a number of barriers to organising such outreach, as well as solutions to some of these problems. The results also identified three suggestions for successful outreach. Both sets of results were then contrasted and compared in order to elicit areas of consensus.

Conclusions.

The research concluded that most of the objectives had been met, though some were only partially met. The conclusions summarised the main issues that had emerged from the research, and then gave eight final recommendations for good practice for homelessness outreach. The conclusions ended with three suggestions for future research.

Word count: 321.

Contents page

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
1. Introduction.....	8
1.1 Background and rationale.....	8
1.1.1 Homelessness.....	8
1.1.2 Public libraries and homelessness.....	9
1.2 A definition of homelessness.....	11
1.3 Yorkshire Public Library Authorities.....	12
1.4 Aim and objectives.....	12
1.5 Structure of the dissertation.....	13
2. Literature Review.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Attitudes towards homelessness.....	14
2.3 Barriers to access and problems in provision.....	15
2.4 Solutions and recommendations.....	17
2.5 Conclusion.....	18
3. Methodology.....	19
3.1 Approach.....	19
3.2 Data Collection.....	20
3.2.1 Tertiary data.....	20
3.2.2 Primary data.....	21
3.3 Pilot.....	23
3.4 Analysis.....	23
3.5 Ethics.....	24

3.6 Limitations	25
3.6.1 Limitations of the approach	25
3.6.2 Limitations of the tertiary data.....	25
3.6.3 Limitations of the primary data.....	25
4. Results and Discussion.....	27
4.1 The case studies	27
4.1.1 Introduction.....	27
4.1.2 The context.....	27
4.1.3 Preliminary work.....	28
4.1.4 During the outreach.....	32
4.1.5 Evaluation	36
4.1.6 Conclusion	37
4.2 The interviews.....	40
4.2.1 Introduction.....	40
4.2.2 What outreach projects are being run in South and West Yorkshire?.....	41
4.2.3 Perceptions of outreach aimed at homeless people.....	43
4.2.4 Barriers to providing outreach for homeless people, and problems that can occur	44
4.2.5 Overcoming the barriers and problems.....	49
4.2.6 Ideas for good practice and success	50
4.2.7 Conclusions.....	52
4.3 A comparison	54
4.3.1 Introduction.....	54
4.3.2 Similarities	54
4.3.3 Differences	55

5. Conclusions	56
5.1 Summary	56
5.1.1 The aim and objectives.....	56
5.1.2 Issues raised	57
5.1.3 Final recommendations	59
5.2 Recommendations for further research.....	60
Bibliography	62
Appendices	66
Appendix one: Information sheet.....	66
Appendix two: Participant consent form.....	68

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

1.1.1 Homelessness

In the latest English government statistical report (from the 1st quarter of 2010) 9590 households were assessed by the government as being homeless (Communities and Local Government, 2010a). This is a figure which, encouragingly, had fallen from the previous year, but it is deceptive when taken alone, as the government statistics only take into account people who have applied for housing assistance and who fulfil certain government parameters (Crisis and the New Policy Institute, 2003). When this figure is supplemented with the estimate that there are 380 000 hidden homeless people in Britain (Crisis and the New Policy Institute, 2003), the picture appears much more serious, with the numbers of homeless people increased perhaps tenfold. Admittedly this estimate is now several years old, but the up-to-date website still supports the figure – and in fact increases it to 400 000 (though the reasoning behind this figure is not transparent) (Crisis, 2010). The extent of homelessness as suggested by these figures is significant, and justifies an investigation of public library provision for this user group.

The potential causes of homelessness are numerous, ranging from ill-health, suffering abuse, unemployment, addiction, bereavement, etc. However, this is not the appropriate place to discuss this issue, as public libraries do not have an explicit or significant role in preventing homelessness. Suffice to say that the causes can be manifold and complex (Hersberger, 2005; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006; Crisis, 2010).

People who are homeless suffer significantly as a socially excluded group. The Crisis website (2010) highlights many of the problems associated with homelessness which this dissertation will now detail, so to avoid excessive repetition of citation, where another source also concurs, the Crisis citation will be omitted.

Being homeless brings many obvious disadvantages, such as the negative effects on health and personal safety. Homelessness can exact both a physical and psychological toll from living in unstable, unsafe and unhealthy environments: this applies not only to rough sleepers, but those living in squats, overcrowded and temporary accommodation, and hostels -which often require residents to leave very early in the morning, regardless of the weather conditions (Daly, 1996). A St Mungo report from 2005 calculated that over two thirds of homeless people that were living in hostels at the time suffered from physical health problems. Health issues are exacerbated by the problem of accessing health care without a fixed address (Daly, 1996). A piece of Crisis research (2002) found that homeless people were 40 times less likely than the general population to be registered with a GP.

It is also more difficult to gain educational opportunities and employment, which, of course, then makes it more difficult to get housed (Kambo, 2004). Homeless people are five times less likely to be employed than the general population; this can sometimes be due to the issues associated with homeless (such as substance abuse), or due to lower than average skill-sets and qualifications, but it can also be due simply to having no fixed address (Crisis, 2010). Lack of access to computers or telephones can also make it very difficult to apply to jobs or be contacted by potential employers (Kambo, 2004).

Furthermore, being homeless can damage relationships and lead to social isolation (Crisis, 2010). It can have a catastrophic effect on people's self-image, their self-confidence and self-esteem, their sense of hope and generally, their mental well-being (Daly, 1996). The negative psychological effects of homeless intertwine with, and add to, all the problems mentioned above.

1.1.2 Public libraries and homelessness

Social inclusion is one of the most important roles of the public library. This has been underlined by numerous government reports and professional literatures (for example, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999; Dolan, 2007; CILIP, 2009). In the last ten years there has been an increased emphasis on outreach for excluded groups, probably at least partly due to the influential report "Open to all?"

which criticised the passive approach that too many public libraries were taking towards disadvantaged and minority groups (Muddiman et al., 2000). A passive approach "fails to recognise the core causes and results of social exclusion, as well as the barriers [...] that public libraries create" (Muddiman et al., 2000: 5). The report particularly highlighted homeless people as a group that was, too often, not considered a priority (Muddiman et al., 2000). Pateman – one of the authors of "Open to all"- neatly reiterated the report's justification for outreach programmes and for prioritising groups which are in the minority, in a speech from 2005: "customers are not all equal in their life experiences and chances; so we should not treat all of our customers equally, but in a way that meets their individual needs" (Pateman, 2005: 1).

Public libraries can offer homeless people valuable services. The chief of these is, of course, information. Public libraries can provide information on a range of important topics, for instance, employment, education, finances, child care, relationships, transportation, health, as well as referring people to other public services (Cohen, 1998; Molyneux, 2004; Hersberger, 2005). Public libraries can provide non-fictional and educational materials which can help homeless people improve their literacy, knowledge and skills (Heffernan, 2009), and they can provide valuable internet and computer access, which can be used to improve IT skills, access information (Flagg, 2000; Middleton, 2003; Ayers, 2006) and search and apply for employment. Furthermore, libraries can supply recreational materials for relaxation, enjoyment, and escape (Heffernan, 2009). And furthermore, they can provide socially excluded people with social interaction, both face-to-face in the library (Heffernan, 2009) and through email and social networking via the internet (Flagg, 2000; Middleton, 2003; Ayers, 2006). These services, unsurprisingly, are the same services from which all members of the community can potentially benefit.

In light of the above points, the researcher decided to investigate public library outreach schemes that were aimed at homeless people. The following dissertation presents the processes and results of this research.

1.2 A definition of homelessness

Before proceeding any further, it will be useful to explain the definition of homelessness that was used throughout this research. A broad definition was used, in order to encompass the whole spectrum of homeless and vulnerably housed individuals. This definition was informed by the definitions of Shelter and Crisis – two homelessness charities - and their emphases on 'home' as opposed to 'house': "even if you have a roof over your head you can still be homeless" (Shelter, 2010), because "a home is not just a physical space [...] provides roots, identity, a sense of belonging and a place of emotional wellbeing" (Crisis, 2010). The definition of homelessness used in this research thus included people who:

1. Sleep rough,
2. Stay in hostels or shelters,
3. Are living temporarily with friends or relatives because they have nowhere else to go,
4. Live in a B&B,
5. Squat or live somewhere with no legal rights to the dwelling,
6. Stay in a refuge,
7. Live in severely overcrowded accommodation.

It should be pointed out, as well, that the term 'homeless people' covers a disparate collection of individuals – including elderly people, children and youths, people with disabilities, people of ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, families, and both men and women. Some groups are more vulnerable to homelessness, due to disadvantages, discrimination or special needs; this includes people with mental health issues, people with low educational attainment, and people on low incomes, etc (Shelter, 2010). These are all people to whom public libraries should be paying especially attention, if they truly wish to tackle social exclusion.

1.3 Yorkshire Public Library Authorities

This research is restricted to two English counties, West and South Yorkshire, due to constraints in time. These counties were chosen because of their geographical placement around the domicile of the researcher, due, again, to the constraints of time and also resources. South Yorkshire consists of four Public Library Authorities (PLAs): Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster. West Yorkshire has five PLAs: Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees, Bradford and Wakefield.

The most recent Communities and Local Government statistics (2010b) help give a general view of the extent of homelessness in these different PLAs, though again it must be emphasised that these official statistics cannot give the full picture, because they only count households who apply for help and who fulfil government criteria (Crisis and the New Policy Institute, 2003; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). From January to March in 2010, the local councils of each area accepted the following numbers of households as being owed a housing duty (to be re-housed by the council): Sheffield – 198, Kirklees – 96, Wakefield – 50, Leeds – 49, Bradford – 27, both Rotherham and Barnsley – 16, Doncaster – 15, and Calderdale – 8. This disparity in numbers may become significant in the analysis stage of the research.

1.4 Aim and objectives

The aim for this piece of research was to discover good practice for providing public library outreach projects for homeless people. To fulfil this aim, this research planned to achieve five objectives:

1. To collate relevant projects from the library and information sector's literature, and highlight the common themes from these projects (identifying what works and what does not, as evaluated by the projects).

2. To identify any existing projects currently being run in South and West Yorkshire.
3. In areas where projects are not being run:
 - To identify barriers to providing such projects,
 - To identify perceptions of projects aimed at homeless people.
4. In the case of projects being run:
 - To identify problems and barriers to beginning and running projects,
 - To identify if and how problems and barriers have been overcome and solved,
 - To identify the perceived successes of the projects.
5. To create a set of recommendations for best practice in running projects for homeless people.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

The second chapter of this dissertation will review the literature to give a solid background to the subsequent chapters. This will be followed by a description of the methodology of the research, including the approach, the data collection, the analysis, the ethical considerations and the limitations of the research. Next, the results of the research will be presented: first the case studies, then the interviews, and then a comparison of the two data sets. These will be structured by the objectives of the project, and will culminate in a set of recommendations for best practice. The dissertation will then conclude with a summary of the research and some recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This review will approach the literature thematically, to gauge the current attitudes towards homeless people and to determine what approaches public libraries are taking. The review will be structured by three themes: attitudes towards homelessness, barriers to access and problems in provision, and solutions and recommendations. These themes relate to the context and objectives of this research. There are also several case studies in the literature which detail outreach projects aimed at homeless people (Middleton, 2003; Molyneux, 2004; Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006; Heffernan, 2009). However as a more thorough analysis of these case studies will take place further on in this dissertation, in the results section, this literature review will not look at these case studies in detail.

2.2 Attitudes towards homelessness

An examination of the literature reveals various different attitudes towards homeless people. The literature which looks generally at social inclusion takes an universally positive attitude towards homeless users and non-users where they are mentioned specifically (Muddiman et al., 2000), and to minority or excluded groups in general (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999; Dolan, 2007; Working Together project, 2008; CILIP, 2010); this is because these texts all have an aim of either advocacy, of providing a guide for good practice, or both. Literature which discusses good and bad practice for providing services for homeless people (Flagg, 2000; Hersberger, 2005; Ayers, 2006; Harris & Simon, 2009) or describes case studies of outreach projects (Middleton, 2003; Molyneux, 2004; Heffernan, 2009) all, logically, also take a positive attitude towards homeless people.

However, other texts take a more negative stance towards homeless people (usually, specifically, the homeless library user). Murphy, in a literature review from 1999, highlights certain negative texts from the 1980s and 1990s: for example

Manley from 1991, and Morris from 1986, who is quoted as advising that "smelly, verminous individuals" should be kept out of public libraries (in Murphy, 1999: 57). More recent texts are not so vituperative, and largely try to highlight the potential problems that they believe homeless library users could cause for other library users - for instance Warnica (2010) and Bullard (2002), who both write about the intimidating effect that some homeless people can have on other users. This negative stance is more prevalent in American literature, perhaps understandably, as the USA has a more significant homelessness problem than the UK.

2.3 Barriers to access and problems in provision

As much of the literature advocates a more inclusive attitude towards homeless people, this is often combined with an examination and criticism of the current barriers in place that can prevent homeless people using libraries. There is a large amount of consensus about these barriers, many of which are inter-linked. Venturella (1998), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (1999), Ayers (2006), the Working Together project (2008), and Harris and Simon (2009) all agree that institutional barriers such as fines, or the need to provide identification and proof of address in order to get library membership, significantly reduce the number of homeless people who can use public libraries. Harris and Simon (2009) examined PLA websites in Wales and found that 19 out of the 22 authorities required people to provide identification before they could join a library, and out of those which explicitly stated the types of identification required, all required a proof of address. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's report "Open to all" (1999), which looks generally at the common barriers to library usage for all socially excluded groups, divides the barriers into four areas, one of which is 'institutional barriers' and the report includes both fining for overdue materials and implementing inappropriate or discriminatory rules and regulation under this heading. This second barrier could include the requirement for ID. Molyneux (2004) argues that institutional barriers, plus the often imposing impression that libraries give, can combine with some homeless people's low self-esteem to create a self-perception among homeless people that they do not belong in public libraries. Lastly, FLIF (2010), when discussing

libraries in the USA, criticises policies that exclude library users who have bad body odours or who have large backpacks or bedrolls, as being particularly targeted at, and discriminatory to, homeless people.

Several authors also agree that staff attitudes can be a barrier to use (Muddiman et al., 2000; Molyneux, 2004; Hersberger, 2005; Working Together project, 2008; Harris & Simon, 2009). Hersberger (2005) criticises the tendency of some librarians to class homeless users as 'problem patrons'; she points out that such stereotyping is discriminatory and can lead to action, or inaction, that excludes homeless people. Harris and Simon (2009) identify negative staff attitudes as one of the driving forces behind identification requirements: they surveyed frontline staff in Welsh public libraries and found that 71% did not agree with homeless users borrowing materials without providing proof of address. The Working Together project points out that "staff cannot assess the barriers to library services faced by socially excluded people because they are not themselves socially excluded" (2008: 22).

The literature makes it clear that inactivity and inaction are a very large barrier to homeless people's usage of public libraries: many texts emphasise the need for conducting outreach to homeless people (Muddiman et al., 2000; Hersberger, 2005; Pateman, 2005; Ayers, 2006). Moreover, Lampman (1998), Muddiman et al. (2000), Hersberger (2005), and Harris and Simon (2009) all point out that failing to mention homeless people in mission statements and policies leads to a lack of consideration and awareness of homeless people, a lack of outreach services or targeted initiatives, and a lack of resources aimed at homeless people. The "Open to all?" report calculated in 2000 that only 5% of the public library authorities that they questioned (from a sample of 129) identified homeless people as a priority group in their policies – and only 4% had permanent services in place for them (Muddiman et al., 2000). These figures are now ten years out of date, but the link between policy and service is evident.

2.4 Solutions and recommendations

As much of the literature advocates greater action by public libraries for homeless people, several recommendations emerge for the best way for libraries to address homeless people's needs. These solutions come from literature written in the UK, the USA, and Canada, but there is no significant difference between the way in which these nations recommend change, possibly because the barriers which they are trying to overcome are very similar: most of the following recommendations come from two or more of the countries.

Warnica (2010) makes the suggestion that libraries should bring in behaviour based policies and rules in order to ensure homeless library users behave appropriately. This suggestion is designed to benefit other library users by reassuring them and making them feel comfortable in the library, rather than actually improving the library service for homeless users. However Murphy (1999) points out that this kind of rule could also lead to homeless library users who *do* behave appropriately being less discriminated against. Murphy highlights the difference between the above recommendation, which she classes as a "conservative, reactive" solution, and more "positive, proactive solutions" that try to reach out to homeless people and improve services for them (1999: 54). The following recommendations fall under this second category.

The first of these is to, in the first place, instigate outreach programmes. This of course has already been mentioned above, but Pateman (2005) goes further in advising that successful outreach projects should be mainstreamed to ensure continuation and sustainability; the Working Together project agrees with this suggestion, and emphasises that "token programmes" which are liable to be cut in economic downturns are inadequate and unsuccessful (2008: 6).

There is also a large consensus that partnerships should be formed with appropriate organisations in order to ascertain needs, utilise others' expertise, provide more effective services, and hopefully save on time and money through collaboration (Lampman, 1998; Muddiman et al., 2000; Molyneux, 2004; Vincent, 2005; Ayers, 2006; Dolan, 2007; Heffernan, 2009). Knight (2010) describes the work of a San

Franciscan library that formed a partnership with a Department of Public Health and so had the resources and pooled creativity to hire a social worker as a member of library staff. She points out that this has been a very successful initiative so far, with 150 homeless and vulnerably housed individuals now in contact with social services.

Several of the sources agree that consultation with the user group is necessary to ensure that the service which is provided is the right one (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999; Molyneux, 2004; Hersberger, 2005; Working Together project, 2008). The Working Together project points out that homeless people are often not represented in the statistics and user surveys that many libraries use to plan their services, and thus will need to be sought out and consulted. The project also suggests that this consultation can empower and engage potential and current users. Lastly, consultation with potential library users can also help promote the services (Working Together project, 2008; Heffernan, 2009).

The last recommendation which several authors make is to fully train staff in order to improve their behaviour, attitudes and skills in relation to homeless people for instance, assertiveness training or awareness training (Muddiman et al., 2000; Pateman, 2005; Harris & Simon, 2009).

2.5 Conclusion

The literature is largely in agreement about the issues of homelessness and the approaches that should be taken, though certain American texts display a more negative attitude towards homelessness than is standard in the British literature. Due to the general consensus this literature review may seem rather truncated; a large proportion of the texts are opinion pieces, and, as they are mostly in agreement, this does not leave much scope for discussion. Some authors, of course, emphasise certain aspects of the issues over other aspects. This has the effect that the sources complement each other upon the last two themes outlined above: in describing and criticising the barriers that prevent true inclusion, and in providing specific recommendations for improving services. The literature provides a valuable context for this dissertation, as it describes current thoughts and attitudes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Approach

The general approach for this research was inductive. This was policy-orientated research, with the over-arching aim of developing a set of recommendations for best practice; thus an inductive approach, which aims to develop theory, was more appropriate than one which aims to test hypotheses.

Qualitative data are the most revealing type of data for complex situations and events, and their multiple causes and outcomes. By collecting qualitative data, a researcher can also ascertain individuals' opinions, motivations and actions. Qualitative data can help *explain* situations, as well as describing them, because they can give much more contextual information than quantitative data (Richards, 2005). Accordingly, qualitative data combines well with the exploratory approach of inductive research. For these reasons, it was decided for this project that qualitative data would be collected.

In an ideal situation this research would have followed the approach of the Glaser school of Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory was originally developed for inductive approaches such as this one: in order that theories could emerge from data, instead of data being used to test theories (Kelle, 2010). 'Grounding' the theory within the data which a researcher collects and analyses prevents the theory "being forced to fit an existing theoretical framework" (Noerager Stern, 2010: 114). Moreover, by constantly referring to empirical evidence, the theory can demonstrate that it is "in touch with reality" (Denscombe, 2007: 104).

Due to the scale and scope of this project, however, a full adoption of the Grounded Theory was not possible. Constraints of time meant that central tenets such as theoretical sampling and data saturation were not practical. Nonetheless as far as possible this project was informed by Grounded Theory principles and techniques, as the following sections will detail.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Tertiary data

In order to fulfil the aim and objectives of this research, two types of data were collected. The first of these was tertiary data (tertiary data is data that has been both collected and analysed by other researchers (Blaikie, 2010)). It consisted of case studies of public library outreach projects aimed at homeless people, collected from professional and academic literature. These data were selected according to some broad and simple criteria:

1. The literature must be reporting real-life activity,
2. This activity must be organised or assisted by one or more public libraries,
3. The activity must be explicitly aimed at homeless or vulnerably housed people (but could also be aimed at other groups as well),
4. The activity must have taken place within the last decade.

This last criterion was included in order to exclude case-studies which would be too out-of-date in terms of professional theory and practice.

The data were mainly collected through the database LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts): this database was used because it is a database designed specifically for librarians and information professionals, and so has a good coverage of relevant journals. Proquest, Google Scholar and WOK (Web of Knowledge) were used to supplement LISA, to try and ensure that all relevant articles were found. Literature that was found serendipitously was also included.

3.2.2 Primary data

The second type of data collected was primary data. This was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with individuals, lasting from 30 minutes to one hour. The interviews were recorded so that transcripts could be made, which enabled full analysis of the responses.

Interviews are one of several good methods for collecting qualitative data. They can provide a thorough amount of detail, and are especially helpful for eliciting meaningful information about complex situations and for providing insight into individuals' personal views (Denscombe, 2007). Semi-structured interviewing was chosen because of its flexibility. New questions could be introduced into interviews depending on interviewees responses: this meant that interesting or complicated answers could be probed more deeply to extract valuable data. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews could reveal the interviewees' priorities, as they were able to speak more fully on topics which interested them, and also to explicitly state their priorities (Denscombe, 2007).

The population from which the data was collected was professional librarians from South and West Yorkshire who had a job role involving inclusion and/or outreach. This population was identified as being the most likely to be able to provide information which would fulfil the objectives of the research. As there was no likelihood of being able to find an exhaustive list of all members of this population, the sampling method – by necessity – was a non-probability sample.

The sampling methods was largely purposive, with the potential participants selected from the population because of their relevance to the research. One of the main considerations was that the participants must all be from different Public Library Authorities in West and South Yorkshire. This was so that the research could gain the viewpoints of librarians from authorities with different cultures, policies and priorities, and so obtain an overview of the area. As there are nine Public Library Authorities in West and South Yorkshire, this, of course, meant an ideal sample of nine interviewees. Seven interviews were eventually conducted, as two PLAs felt

unable to participate in the research. Though this sample might seem rather small, it is appropriate for the scale of the research.

Where possible, the second criterion for selection of individuals from the population was current personal involvement in an outreach programme aimed at homeless people. This was because these individuals could provide information particularly relevant to certain objectives of the research, and because such individuals seemed less prevalent in the population. It was hoped that by interviewing both librarians who were currently involved in an outreach scheme, and those who are not, that an element of triangulation could be utilised. Though triangulation does not of course "automatically convey validity" (Richards 2005: 140), it can offer dual viewpoints on particular issues. In this case, it was hoped that objectives three 'a' and four 'a' (the problems and barriers to providing outreach services for homeless people) would be particularly illuminated.

In practical terms, potential interviewees were identified through the local council websites for each area, and, where insufficient information was given on these websites, through the library enquiry services. This technique was flawed to some extent because it had to rely on the enquiry services to interpret their brief correctly, and so provide the best contact details possible. However, no other practical method was available, as the researcher had no prior contacts in the area.

When constructing the interview schedule, questions were structured around the objectives of the research, and were informed by the case studies and literature review. Whilst Grounded Theory methods would suggest that interviewers should conduct their interviews free of too much prior knowledge and assumptions (conducting literature reviews is especially frowned upon), pragmatically, this rarely occurs. Taken too far, this tenet just becomes naïve empiricism; it is generally accepted that a researcher cannot but help taking his/her own values and expectations into the field (Richards, 2005; Kelle, 2007); to avoid this Grounded Theory texts advise 'theoretical sensitivity' - a state of mind which theorists agree is difficult to achieve (Goulding, 2002). For the scale of this research, it was decided that keeping an open mind (as opposed to a blank or a theoretically sensitive one), as Richards (2005) advises, would be sufficient. The researcher's prior knowledge, gained from

reading the literature, was useful for constructing the interview schedule, and also, when analysing data, for identifying patterns beyond the obvious (Goulding, 2002).

Two strands of questions were created to address the two potential types of interviewee – those who were currently involved in outreach directed at homeless people, and those who were not. However during the interview process, it was found that these two types of interviewee were more amorphous than previously thought, and thus individuals were often asked questions from both strands, were applicable.

3.3 Pilot

This project had no official pilot, for two reasons. Firstly because it already had a relatively small sample size: conducting a pilot where the data could not then be analysed would have been wasteful of valuable data. And, secondly, because the collection and analysis of data was iterative, which meant that the interview schedule altered throughout the collection process to ensure that the questions were relevant to the objectives of the research. Instead, the interview schedule was tested through application to friends and colleagues, who were able to identify possible repetitions or gaps in questioning, and who helped to clarify phrasing and meanings.

3.4 Analysis

The analysis of both data sets, primary and tertiary, was informed by Grounded Theory techniques. The method could be described as thematic analysis, as the data were coded thematically in order to identify meaningful similarities, differences and patterns. These thematic codes were not pre-defined, but arose from the data – and throughout were open to alteration: this ensured that the analysis was "parsimonious", or true to the data (Goulding, 2002: 45; Denscombe, 2007) in line with Grounded Theory principles. By looking thematically at the data it was hoped that the analysis would go beyond merely describing the data.

Whilst the data sets would not be large enough for Grounded Theory's constant comparison techniques, the analysis began as soon as the first data were collected, in order that the data collection could be informed by, and so test, emerging theory in an iterative fashion.

3.5 Ethics

The methodology for this research was ethically approved by the Department of Information Studies, Sheffield University, and several steps were taken towards ensuring that the research was ethically conducted. Firstly, the interview schedule was carefully created to guarantee that the interview questions were not of a sensitive nature, and so the interviewees did not suffer any disadvantages from participating in the research other than the inconvenience incurred by the time spent being interviewed. Moreover, the participants were fully informed about the purposes and processes of the research through an information sheet which they all signed before the interviews commenced (see appendix one for the template). They were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. This meant that all of the participants gave fully-informed consent to taking part in the interviews. They were aware of how the collected data was to be used, as they all also signed an informed consent form (see appendix two for the template). The participants were also aware that they did not have to answer any question which they did not wish to, and they knew that they could withdraw from the research at any point. Lastly, though the data from the interviews was recorded, these recordings were only heard by the researcher, and were destroyed after the analysis was complete. All the data was anonymised, so that no interviewees can be identified.

3.6 Limitations

3.6.1 Limitations of the approach

It is the nature of both qualitative research and Grounded Theory that the interpretations and theories are created from the researcher's perspective; 'reality' is always subjective, and that researcher plays a large part in creating the data -as opposed to just collecting it (Richards, 2005; Denscombe, 2005). In this respect the approaches are thus "fallible" (Goulding, 2002: 70), and that is unavoidable.

3.6.2 Limitations of the tertiary data

Using tertiary data has obvious limitations: as the raw data cannot be accessed, the potential biases or accidental distortions created by the original researchers cannot be circumvented, or, often, detected – thus making any analysis of the data more unreliable (Blaikie, 2010). However, due to the limited geographical reach of this project, it was thought that the wider context that these data could bring was valuable enough to justify using tertiary data, as long as the limitations were acknowledged.

When collecting the data, it was not always possible to access all of the relevant literature, as the researcher's access was restricted to those journals to which Sheffield University had subscribed; this meant that the sample was not truly exhaustive, which may have potentially affected the analysis and results. Moreover, relevant articles may have been missed because of the search term which were used, with the same effect.

3.6.3 Limitations of the primary data

It was mentioned above, that an element of triangulation was hoped for by interviewing both librarians who were currently involved in outreach project aimed at homeless people, and those that were not. However, much more valuable

triangulation would have been achieved had the research been able to interview homeless or vulnerably housed people as well. This was not possible as, ethically-speaking, homeless people are too vulnerable for an inexperienced Masters student to interview. This was a drawback for this research, as it is unlikely that librarians would truly be able to see the limitations of their outreach projects from the perspective of homeless individuals (Working Together Project, 2008).

There were also some limitations with using the interview technique to collect data. One of the chief problem is that participants may have potentially distorted the truth, whether purposefully or accidentally (Blaikie, 2010). The interviewer, the interview technique and the nature of the research may all have affected the interviewees' responses (Blaikie, 2010). It was hoped that the multiple viewpoints of different participants would negate these effects, but with a relatively small sample, distorted data could have had a dramatic effect on the analysis and findings of the research.

The sampling method was a non-probability sample which meant that the selection from the research population may not have been representative. This negatively affects the generalisability of the research. Furthermore, the original sample did not all respond or agree to participate in the research, which meant that there was an element of self-selection to the sample, with the resultant possibility of sample bias.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The case studies

4.1.1 Introduction

This section of the dissertation will present the analysis of the case studies that were selected from the LIS literature. The analysis was thematic, and the results will be presented to reflect this. This section of the results relates to objective one of the research, and so will identify what about the outreach projects worked and what did not – though it must be pointed out that this evaluation is dependent upon the self-evaluation of the projects, and in some cases, success was asserted without the provision of proof: the analysis will attempt to make it clear where that is the case. The results are divided into three general strands: actions taken as preliminary work, actions taken during the outreach, and the post-outreach evaluation. These are then divided into subsections, for greater depth and discussion. The results will first begin with a description of the four case studies that were looked at (presented chronologically by their publishing dates), in order to give the context for the results.

4.1.2 The context

The first case study which this research examined was Friends at Christmas, taken from an article by Sally Middleton (2003). This project was organised by Gloucestershire County Libraries & Information Service in 2002. It was a one-off two day long project, over the Christmas period, which took computers with internet access into a homeless shelter, and provided outreach librarians to help facilitate the use of the computers.

The second case study was Your Choice Books. The information about this project was gleaned from Wendy Molyneux's 2004 report. The project was run by Warrington Library, Museum and Archives Service in 2003, initially as a three month trial, but it then received permission to continue after the trial period ended

(until 2005). Its aim was to "create awareness amongst homeless people in the area of the education, recreational and leisure benefits available to them [...] and encourage active membership" (Molyneux, 2004: 15); it tried to achieve this by housing a collection of stock in a local YMCA centre.

The next case study was The Play and Learning Project, organised by Tameside Libraries and presented on the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council website (2006). This project was aimed at homeless families, and particularly the children of those families. It involved providing the children with individual book and information packs, leaving a collection of stock at the Homeless Persons Unit (HPU), and running events and activity sessions at Tameside public libraries and the HPU. The project ran from 2003 until 2008.

The last case study was Outside Story. This case study was unique in that the information about it came from two sources: the Outside Story project website (2009) and an article by Fiona Heffernan (2009). The project began in September 2008 and is still ongoing. It is primarily organised by Brent Libraries, Arts and Heritage, with the involvement of six other London library boroughs: Bromley, Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Lambeth, and Lewisham. The project aims to "improve access to reading, learning and information services" for homeless people (Outside Story project, 2009); it is trying to achieve this through multiple activities in different boroughs: this includes hosting collections in homeless shelters and day centres.

4.1.3 Preliminary work

Several themes emerged from the case studies which related to decisions and activities which needed to take place before an outreach project could begin. One of these was the requirement of aims and objectives for the outreach. Only one of the case studies explicitly mentions the need to establish objectives: Your Choice Books openly states that "developing objectives" (Molyneux, 2004: 16) was one out of six processes for executing the project, following guidelines from the DCMS's 'Libraries for All' report (The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999). It does not

explain why this was necessary however, and it does not stipulate any particular principles for constructing the aims or objectives.

Three out of the four case studies are clear in stating what the objectives of the project had been. The exception, Friends at Christmas, is the briefest and most loosely structured of the accounts, as well as being the shortest-lived project: it is thus uncertain whether or not the project had explicit objectives. All of the other three case studies have explicit aims and objectives, and they all noticeably had a mixture of abstract and measurable objectives. Outside Story, for instance, aims "to ensure that library services are available for homeless people in a way that is appropriate and meets the needs of service users" (Outside Story project, 2009) – an aim which is intangible, when one thinks of how to evaluate the success of the project; but it also aims to "increase the use of libraries by homeless and vulnerably housed people" and "improve the satisfaction with library services for [homeless people]" (Heffernan, 2009: 6), both of which are potentially measurable. Similarly, Your Choice Books aimed to "help create awareness amongst homeless people", "challenging the ways libraries are perceived", which again is fairly abstract, as well as encouraging "active membership" – which can be measured through library user statistics (Molyneux, 2004: 15). The Play and Learning Project had a long list of aims and objectives (15 all told), some of which were repetitive and overlapping, but they again were a mixture of intangible and quantifiable: "to secure equality of opportunity" versus "to ensure that every child taking part has a book of their own" and "to raise literacy levels" (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006).

The potential value of using quantifiable objectives combined with more general aims became apparent, to some extent, when the case studies began evaluating their outreach, and when they discussed their results and outcomes. For instance, Your Choice Books partly evaluated its success by the fact that "several visitors to the YMCA eventually became registered library users" (Molyneux, 2004: 21) fulfilling its aim to increase membership. Your Choice Books did not solely use measurable objectives to assess the project – but this will be discussed below, in the third strand of the results. Secondly, The Play and Learning Project's 'outcomes' included the statement "improvements in literacy and numeracy have been recognised by children's parents, carers and teachers", which related to one of the

objectives of the project (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006). However, though literacy can be a measurable entity, the case study did not mention whether or how it was measured, and merely asserts that it was 'recognised', which somewhat undercuts the force of their outcome. Neither Heffernan (2009) or the Outside Story project website (2009) include a full evaluation of the project, possibly as the project is still on-going, so the utility of its quantifiable aims is unknown. So, admittedly, none of these three case studies provides unadulterated evidence for the usefulness of measurable aims, but they do suggest a potential utility.

All of the case studies, understandably, mention the needs of their target group; this is usually mentioned in relation to the activities or aims of the outreach. Heffernan (2009) mentions literacy (as a skill, but also for future pleasure and recreation), social interaction, recreation, learning and information as all being needs of homeless people which public libraries, and in particular the Outside Story project, can help fulfil. Molyneux mentions the "educational, recreational and leisure benefits" that Your Choice Books can bring to homeless people (2004: 15). Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (2006) states that The Play and Learning project can help meet such needs as health (including, physical, emotional and developmental health), self-esteem, literacy, information literacy, and parenting skills – for homeless children and their parents. Again, Friends at Christmas was somewhat of an exception: Middleton was occasionally explicit about the needs of homeless people, for example "[they] won't have access to a whole world of information and communication" (2003: 5), but the needs were more often implied and interwoven with a narrative and personal account of one homeless man's participation in the project. "Alfie starts talking about a health problem", he "is suddenly more confident", "he can't remember the last time anyone asked him for his opinion" (2003: 5-6): these quotes are indicative of needs related to health, self-esteem, and perhaps social interaction. As these quotes are from a narrative description of the project it is strongly suggested that the project was meeting these needs. However, as the Middleton report did not, as we have seen, include any aims or objectives of the outreach, it is not made explicit whether it was the intention of the project to meet these needs. Nonetheless, it appears clear that a consideration of the multiple needs of homeless people took place before commencing the outreach

projects; and the fact that the projects were all aiming to fulfil slightly different needs also suggests that an evaluation or comparison of the many possible needs took place in order to decide which to address (though this may also be due to different levels of resources, or other similar considerations).

Another theme which emerged from the literature is that of consultation. Heffernan makes clear that consulting with the target audience was vital for the success of the project. She draws a link between a service which is "appropriate and user led", emphasising that homeless people informing the project of their needs was "key" (2009: 6). Heffernan states that communication between library staff and library users can lead to both groups learning more about each other, and indeed that it could train the groups how to positively interact. Heffernan gives real-life examples of useful information given by homeless people, for instance about the barriers to using public libraries – this enabled Outside Story to try and "remove the barriers presented to us" (2009: 6). Molyneux also stresses the benefits of consultation: she points out that it can help "confirm requirements, access current practice and help develop how these needs could best be met"; she considers this "critical to the project's success" (2004: 16). The very name of the project demonstrates the emphasis that was placed on consultation: for stock selection, Your Choice Books discussed the options with homeless people in order to purchase books which were wanted and needed. The two remaining case studies do not explicitly mention target audience consultation, though Middleton does give an example of the utility of communication with homeless people. When discussing how to improve the scheme in the future, Middleton's first suggestion for improvement emerges from her interactions with homeless people: "a photocopier would be useful. More than one person showed me documents they kept safe [...] which were now dog-eared or faded" (2003: 5). The emphasis on user consultation makes logical sense, for who else but the target audience would know best their needs, but the case studies also provide concrete examples of consultation being beneficial in practice.

The methods which the case studies used to consult the target audience were as follows. Outside Story used a survey initially, to gauge homeless people's current opinions on libraries and their hopes for future improvement. They followed this with face-to-face casual interaction in centres and shelters, in order to gain on-going

feedback on any emerging problems. Heffernan evaluates this type of consultation as most effective for "reaching the residents who are most difficult to communicate with" (2009: 6), as it gradual, in their own safety zone, and is informal. Your Choice Books used regular focus groups for the selection of stock, and also participant observation, casual visits to the YMCA, and questionnaires. Both projects used multiple methods of consultation, suggesting that this is the best way to gain the views of as many homeless people as possible.

4.1.4 During the outreach

The second strand of the results appertains to decisions, actions and problems which occurred during the outreach activity. The first theme to be discussed is that of partnership. All of the case studies had partners who helped them achieve the outreach, but to different extents. Middleton's brief report (2003) does not provide much information about the Friends at Christmas' partner/s, but the fact that the outreach took place within a homeless shelter indicates that the project had help, if nothing more than permission to host the project. Unfortunately, Middleton gives no more useful information. The Play and Learning project was run in partnership with the New Charter Housing Trust, the Health Visitor, and "other agencies", yet the only reason that the website cites for working in partnership is in order to "best achieve our aims" (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006).

The Outside Story project is to some extent a partnership between seven London library authorities, but it also partners with hostels, council housing departments, and homelessness charities (Homeless Link, Look Ahead, St Mungo's, Crisis, Brent Homeless User Group and Quaker Homeless Action). Heffernan (2009) gives three examples of practical help that being in partnership with these organisations provided. She mentions how discussion with hostel staff and the council housing departments helped to identify the best methods for encouraging hostel residents into the libraries; she also talks about training for staff which was "held in association with homeless link", using the specialist organisation's knowledge of homelessness issues to educate library staff (Heffernan, 2009: 7); lastly, Heffernan reveals that 16 book collections were deposited in hostels and

centres, with the permission and help of these establishments. Heffernan makes the general point that working in several different partnerships in different areas can help to adapt and customise the service for these different areas, through the expert knowledge of the partner institutions.

Your Choice Books was partnered with the Warrington branch of the YMCA, Warrington Borough Council's Policy and Research Unit, and the Millennium Volunteers. This, as with some of the other projects, enabled the depositing of a book collection in the YMCA centre. Your Choice Books' partnership with the YMCA helped the project gain valuable information about their target audience, both through their co-operation with circulating questionnaires and permitting observations and other visits, and through the YMCA staff's insights, for instance: "staff at the YMCA raised the issue that some of the visitors to their premises had low literacy levels" (Molyneux, 2004: 17). Other practical help which was given included the provision of volunteer 'book buddies', from the Millennium Volunteers. Lastly, for Your Choice Books, their partners put the libraries into contact with other relevant organisations, or at least funnelled their knowledge through to the libraries: "The YMCA [...] liaises closely with Warrington Action for the Homeless" (Molyneux, 2004: 16). So, to re-cap, the case studies all act as advocates for partnership working: none of them mentioned any negative effects of being in partnership, and the positive benefits that they listed include: being a venue for activities or book collections, providing knowledge, information and training, and contacts with other organisations.

Few of the case studies were specific about their strategy or method of planning and implementation for the projects, so the analysis was unable to look in detail at this element of outreach. However, Molyneux did briefly outline the "strategy for implementation" which Your Choice Books used: they based their strategy on the DCMS's Libraries for All report which advised a six point process "identifying the audience, assessing current practice, developing objectives, developing services, implementing those services and evaluating outcomes" (2004: 16). The utilisation of a step-by-step implementation plan suggests that the outreach was both structured and well-organised. Middleton also briefly mentions the implementation of Friends at Christmas; "we had no meetings, as a team, to discuss it

[...] we just ran with it until we delivered it" (2003: 6). Clearly, the implementation of that project was much less organised. This may have been because it was a project on a far smaller scale: in terms of activity and time (two days versus three months).

In terms of practical advice for encouraging maximum participation by homeless people in an outreach project, Outside Story was the only case study to offer tips. Heffernan (2009) stresses two pieces of advice which emerged from the project. The first was to build up the relationship between the outreach librarians and homeless people through casual and regular visits and interaction, thus encouraging mutual trust and confidence; it is advised that librarians should go to the hostels and meet homeless people in their own territory. The second tip is to offer incentives to attend library events (or to look at it another way, to remove the possible barriers to attendance) such as transport, money for fares or rewards. These both seem like fairly non-context-specific pieces of advice which would be applicable to other outreach projects aimed at homeless people.

The last theme which emerged, for this strand of the results, was that of problems which occurred during the projects. Both Your Choice Books and Outside Story detail multiple problems and barriers, and give some suggestions to overcome them, Friends at Christmas implies some potential problems, whilst The Play and Learning Project does not make mention of any such issues. One of the problems that arose in several of the projects was that of staff attitudes. As part of Your Choice Books, a survey of staff attitudes was made and it highlighted some negative opinions about homeless people using library resources; Molyneux (2004) implies that negative attitudes could help create an off-putting library culture, which can reduce the effectiveness of outreach work. Conversely, Outside Story points out that "visiting hostels can be daunting for library staff" (Heffernan, 2009: 7): it makes the suggestion that training courses on assertiveness, setting boundaries, and awareness can be useful for combating this problem. This could also be effective in combating negative staff attitudes as well, through raising their awareness of homelessness issues.

Another problem which was mentioned was that of the attitudes of homeless people. Both Your Choice Books and Outside Story state that the self-perceptions of

some homeless people could prevent them from participating in the outreach project, as they do not feel they belong in a library, due to a lack of self-esteem and confidence – this is partly related to the intimidating impression that some libraries can give. Middleton also implies that a lack of confidence could put people off using library facilities, if unused to them: "He's a bit nervous of the technology [...he's] never had access to the internet" (2003: 5). Outside Story, as stated above, suggests that libraries need to gain the trust of homeless people to combat this problem, through going into hostels and centres and talking to them. In the example that Middleton gives, she reduces the man's nervousness by offering him help in using the new technology.

A further problem is that of funding. The Play and Learning Project mentions that it was successful in securing funding for a further two years but that it was to "be reduced by a percentage each year" whilst the project looked elsewhere for new funds (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006). The project provides its annual financial costs, and they are significant: for 2004-5 it cost £35 200, and in 2005-6 it cost £32 817. Clearly the project needs a certain amount of money to keep it going, and its funding was stable (and reducing) for two years only. Molyneux points out that "economic sustainability is one of the major issues facing outreach projects", but that Your Choice Books was "economically, a viable programme" because it had low costs (2004: 21). The project used existing stock and few of these books were lost or damaged. Moreover, the project used some volunteers to help support it, and this reduced the costs. From these two case studies, then, it can be seen that funding can be an issue, but that it is possible to run outreach schemes aimed at homeless people for fairly low financial costs.

The last problem mentioned is only brought up by Outside Story. This project highlights that the need for ID to join libraries acts as a barrier to homeless people, and that it meant they were much less likely to join a public library as a result of the outreach. In some respects this relates back to negative staff attitudes – as it is librarians who can control the joining requirements of a library. Outside Story attempted to remove this barrier by eliminating the ID requirement in London libraries. This was only partially successful as certain library authorities still insisted

that homeless people provide letters from temporary accommodation such as hostels, or provided reduced services for people without ID.

4.1.5 Evaluation

The last strand of the results refers to the post-project evaluations. All of the case studies made some attempt to evaluate the projects, but to different extents and with different methods. Some of the case studies use government measurements to help assess the success of the projects. The Play and Learning Project uses the Every Child Matters targets, and Outside Story uses 26 National Indicators. Your Choice Books uses its statistics to contribute to Public Service Agreement targets, but does not primarily use these targets to evaluate the project. These statistics consist of issue figures, visit figures and the registration figures of new borrowers. These are described as "traditional performance indicators" (Molyneux, 2004: 21), and it is emphasised that these alone do not do full justice to the success of the project. Thus Your Choice Books also uses qualitative data for evaluation, through observations and personal feedback. The project used a qualitative case study to demonstrate to Warrington Borough Council's Antipoverty and Social Exclusion Forum the effect that the outreach had had on an individual; this "received a vote of confidence [...and resulted in] the project's continuation", demonstrating the potential benefits of qualitative data if presented to the right people (Molyneux, 2004: 21). The Play and Learning Project also combined quantitative and qualitative data for evaluation: it measured both any new library registrations and the number of outreach sessions held, as well as writing case studies on the children involved in the project. These case studies were written "with referral to the targets set by The Children's Fund" (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, 2006), to ensure, presumably, that they acted as consistent evaluations, and so that they were taken seriously by The Children's Fund (which funded the project). Molyneux also states that the Your Choice Books was evaluated by "the political, economic and social viability of continuing" (2004: 22). This seems a rather vague method, and in all probability is subjective - but at least is holistic. It thus seems that a combination of evaluation techniques can be useful to measuring the success of a project, and that considering

the targets and interests of stakeholders (either funding bodies, local or central government) may be politically wise.

Friends at Christmas does not mention any formal methods of evaluation. It seems to have mostly used casual feedback "received on the day" (Middleton, 2003: 6). Again this may be due to the brevity of the project and/or the write-up, or it may be due to the comparative disorganisation of the project (see above for planning and implementation). This makes it more difficult as an 'outsider' to the project to assess how successful it was – which then suggests a valuable use for formal evaluation. However, reflective thinking by the librarians clearly took place, as the case study included several ideas for improvements should the project be repeated. This does display the need to adapt as the needs of homeless people become more apparent.

4.1.6 Conclusion

The analysis of these four case studies was difficult in some respects because of the different amount of information provided: Middleton (2003) for instance provided much less information about Friends at Christmas than some of the other authors did about their projects: this meant that it was difficult to compare the different projects fairly, and of course, in the case of brief accounts, some valuable information may not have been included. Moreover, all of the case studies may have been more forthcoming about those aspects of the projects which were successful, rather than on those that were not (perhaps from accidental bias or because problems were solved as they went along); certainly more information was found about the successes of the projects than about any downsides. The suggestions drawn from the analysis are thus tentative, but this conclusion will now briefly summarise them.

When planning an outreach project:

1. The development of a combination of abstract and measurable objectives may be useful when it comes to evaluating an outreach project.
2. A consideration of homeless people's needs should occur when planning a project.

3. Consulting with homeless people can bring several benefits, including:
 - Properly establishing their needs,
 - Gaining information about the potential barriers to a successful project,
 - Discovering the best way in which to conduct the project,
 - And developing a mutual knowledge and trust between library staff and homeless people.
4. The most effective way to consult homeless people is to use several methods, including visiting homeless centres regularly to discuss the issues face-to-face in a casual and informal manner.

When conducting an outreach project:

5. Partnership with various different types of organisation can bring several benefits, including:
 - Gaining access to potential venues for the outreach,
 - Gaining specialist knowledge and information,
 - Gaining training opportunities,
 - And gaining new, useful contacts through one's partner.
6. An organised implementation strategy may be more important in a large scale project.
7. Two pieces of practical advice are:
 - To try and build up trust through regularly visiting homeless centres and interacting with the residents,
 - And to offer incentives to encourage homeless peoples' participation in the project.
8. Some problems which could occur are:
 - Negative staff attitudes when create an off-putting library culture,
 - Negative self-perceptions of the part of homeless people which create a barrier to participation,

- A lack or reduction in funding which makes the outreach unsustainable,
- And, specifically, ID requirements for joining the library, which undo the positive effects of the outreach.

9. Possible solutions for these problems (in the same order) are:

- Training for staff in awareness and skills
- The building up of trust through (see above, number seven) and the offering of assistance,
- The development of cheaper and sustainable outreach,
- The removal of ID requirements, through adjusting staff attitudes.

When evaluating an outreach project:

10. A combination of evaluative techniques, for instance both quantitative and qualitative techniques, can be more thorough and representative of the outcomes of the project.
11. A consideration of stakeholder targets and interests can present successes more persuasively.
12. Formal evaluation can be used to inform and persuade outsiders of successes.
13. Evaluation can be useful for improving and adapting an outreach project.

Some of the suggestions made here are a result of recommendations or results from only one or two of the case studies, and do not emerge as a consensus from the literature. Their general applicability are thus questionable. A comparison between these conclusions and the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the interviews will then be both interesting and potentially useful. This will occur further on in the dissertation.

4.2 The interviews

4.2.1 Introduction

This section of the dissertation will present the results of the interviews. There were six interviews, conducted with representatives from the PLAs of Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Sheffield: to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, these PLAs will be referred to throughout as authorities A – F. The interviews had various job titles including, reader development officer, service development manager, neighbourhood renewal manager, development manager, early years development officer and access and inclusion librarian; those some of these titles, as the interviewees pointed out, were rather out of date. All of the interviewees had outreach or inclusion as part of their remit.

This section of the research related to objectives two, three and four. It is thus hoped, to meet objective two, that the results will identify any existing outreach currently being run in West and South Yorkshire. To meet objective three, the results are intended to identify barriers to providing projects and to identify perceptions of projects aimed at homeless people, in the areas where outreach is not currently being aimed at homeless people. Lastly, to meet objective four, these results are intended to identify any problems and barriers to beginning and running existing outreach, and if and how problems and barriers have been overcome and solved; the results will also identify the perceived successes of the projects.

The presentation of results will not be strictly structured by the objectives, due to the unexpected fluidity between those PLAs who perceive themselves to be running relevant outreach projects and those that do not. (This fluidity will be discussed in greater detail in 4.2.2, immediately below this paragraph.) Instead, the results will be presented to reflect the thematic analysis of the interviews. This will enable greater clarity of discussion and will present more holistic views of the results. The exception to this will be the presentation of objective two, which will immediately follow this introduction; this is due to the relative simplicity of

objective's subject matter, and also because it will then serve as the context for the following results and discussions.

4.2.2 What outreach projects are being run in South and West Yorkshire?

Four of the interviewees (A, C, D and E) did not perceive their authorities to be currently running outreach activities aimed specifically at homeless people. However, as the interviews continued it became apparent that all of the PLAs were involved in one or more activities which could be classed as outreach towards homeless people, even if, as was the case with some PLAs, these activities were on a very small scale. One of the reasons for this somewhat erroneous self-perception does seem to have been the small scale or casual nature of the outreach, for example book deposits; the word 'project', as used in the information sheet to describe this research, perhaps implied that only large activities were of interest. Another possible reason is the difficulties in defining homelessness. Whilst all of the interviewees initially gave broad definitions for homelessness, several appeared to consider that if they were not addressing rough sleepers or those living in hostels, then they were not properly providing outreach services to homeless people. Conversely, some other interviewees who did perceive their authority as currently running relevant outreach activities, did not quite fit into the researcher's own criteria. For instance, as some of the interviewees included travellers and gypsies in their definition of homelessness, they obviously perceived outreach to this group as being outreach to a homeless group. Though the definition of homelessness that this research used did not include travellers (as it was felt that they had a home if not a permanent address) the outreach of the Yorkshire PLAs towards this group will still be included in these results, because of the similarities between travellers and other homeless groups, and because of the interviewees' perceptions of homelessness. Several of the PLAs also mentioned asylum seekers and refugees, and though this group was not specifically referred to in this research's definitions, homeless refugees can fit under several of the categories described, and this group is acknowledged by the researcher as being vulnerable to homelessness.

The dividing line between those PLAs running relevant outreach projects and those that were not was more of a grey area than the researcher had anticipated. It is encouraging, however, that all of the participating PLAs in South and West Yorkshire are, or have recently been, engaged in activities (of varying scales) with homeless people.

A, C and D all deposit book collections with hostels and refuges. B, D, E and F all have mobile library stops at hostels, travellers sites or refugee and asylum seeker centres – though F has recently decided to discontinue their stop to a local hostel due to lack of interest. Both B and E help to distribute Bookstart packs to refuges and hostels for homeless children; E also organises related activities, "encourage[s] them to join the library", and "invite[s] them to come along to events". Two of the PLAs also organise more unusual projects. As part of a larger project called the Six Book Challenge, F made contact with a homelessness drop-in centre, resulting in the participation of rough sleepers and hostel residents: the scheme presents prizes to those who manage to read six books. F also makes regular visits to an asylum seeker and refugee club to promote library services. Lastly, E makes regular contact with a homelessness drop-in centre close to their central library, and also runs 'Studio 12', a digital multimedia suite which provides access to, and training and qualifications in, various creative technologies: though not specifically aimed at homeless people, E has ensured, through working with other organisations, that homeless people have been able to utilise the service. In the past E also collaborated with the Big Issue to gain work placements for homeless people with the branch libraries.

E and F both seem involved in larger scaled outreach for homeless people; this possibly reflects the extent of homeless in their areas. The Communities and Local Government statistics (2010b) were mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, and though it should be reiterated once more that these official statistics do not present the full extent of homelessness, it is likely that they reflect the differing levels of homelessness in the different PLAs. E and F are shown by the statistics to have the largest number of people applying to the council for housing duty, and so their larger scale of outreach may be due to the fact that there is more extensive homelessness in their areas. Equally, A and C's comparative lack of

outreach may be due to the fact that homelessness is relatively reduced in their areas. An anomaly to this trend is D, which has the second largest number of households applying for housing duty; however, this PLA has been planning to increase its homelessness-specific outreach, with a working group arranged to meet soon and discuss the issues.

4.2.3 Perceptions of outreach aimed at homeless people

Three of the four interviewees who perceived their authorities as not currently being involved in relevant outreach expressed interest in improving their current engagement with homeless people; the fourth, E, did not – however, as is mentioned above, this authority was already involved in a considerable amount, even if the interviewee did not believe so. A and C both agreed that directing outreach specifically at homeless people had simply not occurred to them: "Yeah I think it's a really good idea. It's not something I've explored", it's "just that we hadn't thought of it!" (A), "this has been quite useful to me because things have just been rolling along as they tend to, and it's made me think about what we do and what we don't do" (C). D, of course, as mentioned above, was already planning to increase its outreach aimed at homeless people. D, too, cited an increased awareness of the issues as being motivation to do so: "the Quaker Homeless Action people brought their mobile library, and seeing what they've done and the benefits of it...".

Almost none of the interviewees had any awareness of other outreach schemes being run in the other authorities in Yorkshire, or the surrounding area; only B could mention another scheme, one involving travellers. Nonetheless several PLAs expressed interest in hearing about such schemes: "No, but I mean to find out!" (A), "I'm always interested in ideas" (E). It is hardly plausible to suggest that a lack of awareness of existing outreach projects aimed at homeless people in nearby PLAs leads to inactivity in that particular area, as there is equal unawareness by nearly all the interviewees, regardless of the extent of relevant outreach that they are doing. However, as three interviewees suggest that an increased consciousness of homelessness outreach prompted them to think more about what they could do for homeless people, it is possible that the sharing of ideas, practice and perhaps the

greater promotion of successful schemes in professional literature or through professional networks would increase consideration of homeless groups; as F stated "I do get the [CILIP] magazine and I do read it, so I usually do have some inkling of things but [...] nothing's springing to mind from recent times".

4.2.4 Barriers to providing outreach for homeless people, and problems that can occur

One of the barriers to providing outreach for homeless people, according to B, D and E, is the lack of participation in outreach by homeless people. This can be due to some homeless people's perceptions of libraries: "they feel that perhaps the place is not for them" (D), "possibly [their] perception of what a library is", is a barrier (E); B specifies that certain groups, for example travellers, may be "quite suspicious" of council-run bodies such as libraries - E agrees that the library may have to "build up that trust". Of course, all three recognise that different homeless people have different perceptions and attitudes, for instance D: "others, they're very happy to use it". E and F also mention the uncertainty of schedule or life that many homeless people experience; this can be a bar to participating as "ongoing commitment to something can be difficult" (F), or can mean that as homeless people can "live quite chaotic lives, it may be difficult to remember to bring books back" (E). Another homeless group, those living in refuges, may be unable to attend library events outside the refuge: "there's got to be a lot of secrecy around" (B), there's "obviously all sorts of problems" (A). It is clear that without the participation of homeless people, an outreach project could not be successful and would not continue.

Institutional barriers often reinforce the negative perceptions of homeless people. A, C and E all agree that membership requirements of identification, "the fact that they may be asked to show some kind of identification" (E), can be unwelcoming for potential homeless users.

A major barrier is that of resources. Budgets are often limited, as A, B, D and E all point out. This is especially true in current circumstances, under a new government in a recession. Libraries are to an extent "just keeping services going for a bit until we know what the comprehensive spending review is going to be" (E), as

"obviously none of us quite know what the future will hold with all the cuts" (D). Lack of money of course means less staff, "we are fairly short staffed" (E), "there's always the staffing issue" (F); and less staff means less time: "I've actually been staffing here as well as trying to do my own job" (C), "I can't take on too much because I can't physically cope" (F). Balancing the needs of different groups becomes both a necessity and much more difficult: "[the mobiles are] balancing their different, the different needs" (F). Homeless people are of course just one of many excluded groups, and can be "a tiny part of my job" (F). It is necessary to ensure, however, that homeless people are not forgotten, when time and resources become more limited.

One particular problem is the need for PLAs to achieve high number of issues, and other similar statistics: "what we are looking for is to increase library usage" (F), "we would hope that that would lead on to issues" (B), it "is about book issues, 'cos that's what national statistics [measure]" (E), "the main aim was getting as many people as possible coming into the library", it's "sort of addressing numbers, isn't it?" (A). Whilst often outreach to homeless people may not result in high numbers of new registrations etc, despite the potential human benefit: "if you're just going to go into a hostel and get, maybe 20 or 30 new borrowers, then do we put the time and effort into that, rather than going somewhere else where you can do globally thousands of people?" (A). Moreover, homeless people are often difficult to see in the statistics: "use of F's outreach by homeless people would not be accessible, because it's not anything that's in their record", (F) "we wouldn't be able to pick them up on our [records]" (B), "possibly homeless people, I don't— because we don't ask questions" (E): which could mean that the benefits of outreach may not be easily visible. These problems are to an extent unavoidable, as they are inflicted by the higher authorities of local councils and central government.

These higher authorities also appear to have a large effect on the priority groups of the PLAs: "I think the council kind of decides those" (F), "the council has priorities, and those fit in with the priorities" (B), "the libraries just actually go along with, probably with the council", "we work with the bigger council to support what their priorities are" (E), "...because of the government's digital inclusion programme [...] I suppose it's the easy options really" (C), "it's part of the whole inclusion

agenda of the whole council" (D). Only one PLA, A, did not mention council priorities having an effect on library priorities, and only one PLA mentioned another method of deciding priority groups: "it can come upwards from staff" (D). Of course, supporting council priorities is essential: it is politically astute and ensures that libraries become valued and visible. However, solely following council objectives can mean that some socially excluded groups can be become ignored. The government is committed to preventing and stopping homelessness (Communities and Local Government, 2010c), but this is not the same thing as alleviating the social exclusion of homeless people. It is questionable whether homelessness can ever truly be ended, so helping include people while they are homeless is important.

It is also possible that the structure of different PLAs and the job roles thus available has an effect on whether homeless groups, and other less obvious socially excluded groups, are considered: for instance, as B points out "originally when the development section was set up, those [groups] were identified as key" – the structure can ensure that there is focus on particular groups. Moreover, if the structure of a PLA does not enable specific inclusion or outreach roles, then outreach generally may not be a priority. For example A stated that they had not done any past outreach to homeless people because "there wasn't anybody in position who could have done so". This was also apparently the case with one of the PLAs which did not participate in the study: a contact explained to the researcher that they would not be able to help, as no librarians had a special role in outreach or inclusion. This can be compared to the authorities which did participate, and which all did a considerable amount of outreach work, and which all did at least some outreach work directed at homeless people: for example, F - "you know Framework for the Future? That was the founding document of our last restructuring, and so we were majoring on life-long learning, reader development, digital resources and things, and *there was one for equality and diversity*. And so that dictated, if you like, the roles of the staff", and D - "we have nine development librarians and we're each in a particular area [...] a physical area of D, and then they have a subject specialism [...] *mine is social inclusion*" (researcher's own emphases).

One of the issues discussed in the interviews was whether the inclusion (or omission) of homeless groups from inclusion policies or library plans had any effect on practice. Most of the PLAs did not have policies which specifically mentioned homeless people, though a couple, C and D, said that they did. Neither C or D particularly mentioned whether this made a difference to practice, and neither PLA were one of those who were conducting the largest amount of relevant outreach. Several of the PLAs mentioned that they followed general equality and diversity policies: "We adhere to council – the council has policies about equality and diversity and I suppose that's our underpinning" (F), "We've obviously very, we've got equal opportunities policy, which is a very, we're very hot on. It doesn't specifically mention homeless people" (B). They argued that homeless people were covered by this policy, and that it would be too exaggerated to include all minority or excluded groups by name: "the way that the policy is worded anyway, it just basically said that everybody should have opportunity to access the services [...] I think if you took it to extremes you'd have such a long list, but it doesn't mean to say they're not part of the policy" (B), "you'd have a whole book of different of groups of people" (E). This is probably true, but nevertheless, the addition of a brief statement to the effect of 'not discriminating against poverty', could cover several excluded groups, and ensure that they are considered. Of course it does seem, from the vagueness of many of the interviewees over policies that such policies perhaps do not have a massive effect on practice: as A puts it "we need to be doing rather than making policies".

There is also an unwillingness to lose resources, which could act as a barrier for conducting outreach for homeless people, as "generally research [indistinct] around homelessness is that there is a huge amount of loss" (D). A number of the interviewees mentioned the problem of losing stock, though most were accepting of the risk in return for benefits of doing the outreach: "if we lose a few, then the benefit of getting all those extra people..." (A), "with the understanding that this material may go missing, because of, so people move on, don't they?" (C). However in some cases, where loss of resources is extensive, this risk can affect the continuation of projects: "at one bit, we wouldn't let people join from [X] hostels, 'cos we had so

many problems with losing material" (F), "it was to such an extent that really we couldn't sustain the service" (D).

Another problem is the heterogeneity of homelessness. The definition that this research used was quite broad, and some of the definitions of the interviewees were even broader. Homelessness can cover such disparate groups as refugees, rough sleepers, women in refuges, homeless families, and perhaps travellers. These different groups have different needs and different situations, so a single outreach scheme would not attract or help all of them all: "I think asylum seekers and refugees are very different [to travellers]" (B), "different people have very different needs, don't they? Different wants, never mind needs" (C), "the definition of homelessness is quite broad, isn't it, because there's people who're literally living on the street [...] but then there's people who are having to share homes to the detriment of the health of the families" (B). And again, within those groups there are a range of people: "I think for some homeless people it's a step too far, something like the Six Book Challenge, for some homeless people, they're way beyond it" (F), which compounds the problem. This can also potentially mean that certain homeless groups get more attention, while others are neglected: "Homelessness is almost second place to the asylum seekers and refugees [...] I think they are possibly more obvious. I don't know if there are more of them, but it seems that there is [...] maybe homeless people are more low key" (F).

One last problem can be that the extent of homelessness in an area can be difficult to assess. All of the interviewees were fairly uncertain about the extent of homelessness in their area: for instance C - "there does seem to be, 'cos we do have the hostels, we do seem to have a sort of fairly roving population", B - "we do get the impression", F - "there should be something on a website somewhere", and D - "I understand it's on the increase. I haven't got any figures". This is because homeless people often do not show up in standard statistics: "people who are quite transient, and suspicious of authority as well, it's very, very difficult to get firm numbers [...] we tend to get a feel of things that are happening through the health visitors [...] just by anecdotal evidence (B), "there will be figures but I don't think anyone really knows how accurate they are sometimes [...] it's a kind of moving thing as well" (A).

4.2.5 Overcoming the barriers and problems

Some of the problems described are very difficult to solve, but for others there are some possible solutions. Partnership was often mentioned as being beneficial for several of the problems. Firstly, for the problem of limited resources partners can be helpful in either sharing the financial load or in providing funding and resources in exchange for services: "we haven't got any money to actually distribute those packs so we rely on partners", "we use those vans for free, so that's fantastic", "the amount of funding we receive from partners" (B); it's "more and more important if we're looking at savings" (E); "funding, for example, has been a huge pro" (D).

Secondly, of overcoming some homeless people's negative perceptions of libraries, or themselves, partners who already work with homeless people can provide advice: "if you're going to work with people who are homeless, ask for advice from people who do work with them" (A), "we can ask their advice" (B). And also "you probably get some kind of trust if you're recommended by another organisation" (E) – "they will hopefully have things like trust because just going in cold is quite difficult" (D). This barrier can also to some extent be alleviated if public libraries work to build up a relationship of trust with homeless groups, through longevity: "if we had a regular presence there, they felt that, that it would, the travellers would start accessing the service" (B), "it's probably about three years it's taken to actually get there, to be trusted" (E).

Partners can also be valuable by helping to provide awareness training, as E and B point out: "we've had the department of education in to do some staff training, just to tell them what's happened, and the history of Roma", "they went with us and they did some training with our staff about working with people, working with travellers". Though these two examples refer to travellers, this would also be applicable to other homeless groups.

The barrier of membership requirements of identification can be overcome by relaxing them, or removing them completely, as D and F have. Both C and B accept letters from hostels, refuges and centres, in place of ID. The interviewee at C

described their ID requirements as being "very flexible", whilst A, B and E all accept temporary members without ID, who are able to take out a limited loan. E also ensures that if a temporary member takes out and returns books three times, then they are joined as a full member, as they have proved their reliability.

Lastly, to combat the heterogeneity of homelessness, a PLA needs to adapt their services to each particular group, to ensure that needs are met: "you've got to adapt to what they want" (A), "we usually give it a few months. With the travellers it might take a bit longer", "you have to be sensitive to the travellers' different..." (B), "for homeless people [...] we'll approach that differently" (D).

4.2.6 Ideas for good practice and success

The interviewees identified several things which were successful about their outreach activities, or which contributed to its success. One of these is promotion. A couple of the PLAs use their outreach activities as promotion for mainstream services, such as A, which uses its deposit collections "just to promote the services", and F, which uses its visits to an asylum seekers club to promote the central library. Other of the PLAs though advocate promoting their outreach through relevant organisations and partners: "I would promote through partnerships", "you do reach the right target audience through other people" (E), "we can't gift direct to a lot of those groups that we identified, but we would give them to the agencies", "we find out what each other's doing, we tell each other what we're doing" (B), "they will have the contacts", one can use "their cliental [...] their marketing and publicity [...] helping with things like distributing information" (D) and F - "we've got a contact there. We can send information directly to them" so "promoting each other's services". F especially advises promotion through partnership as "we're notoriously poor at promoting ourselves [...] you need money" to do so.

The last consensus on the benefits of partnership is that the expertise of partners can be useful: you can "have a better idea of what people's needs are" (E), "you can sound people out about new ideas" as "we discuss it with the partners and say, do you think this is a good idea" (B), and you gain "their experience [...]"

another viewpoint on things" (D). This enables that the outreach can be adjusted to be most successful for homeless people.

The interviewees did of course mention the negative side to partnerships, but these were all fairly minor such as convoluted logistics (B) or potential problems with communication (D); moreover, each interviewee had a different opinion on what the negatives were – suggesting that they might be context and organisation dependant. The overwhelming view can be summed up by B: "the positives definitely outweigh the negatives".

A couple of the interviewees mentioned the benefits of trialling projects. E, for instance, stated that they usually trialled activities: "if we identify a need, we investigate how, and do some pilots somewhere" with the benefit that they can "learn lessons from it and roll it out in other areas". B, as well: "we trial it, see if it works". This was not a majority suggestion however, perhaps as it is more applicable for larger scale projects.

Due to the small scale of some of the outreach, several of the PLAs did not really mention evaluating their projects. C, for instance, which runs a book deposit scheme, did not have formal methods of investigation, "sadly!" (C). Similarly, D, which also runs a book deposit, described their evaluation as "not particularly, I mean it's stuff like staff feedback". Larger projects such as Studio 12, in E, used two forms of evaluation: "[the leader is] always writing up case studies" and "we collect numbers as well". The interviewee expressed the opinion that "it's a lot better to actually find that kind of qualitative evaluation" but admitted that it is "more difficult is collecting the qualitative data, 'cos quite often something you do now perhaps doesn't have an effect for five years". In general though, statistics of usage etc seemed to be the main type of evaluation (see above). Because of the mixed responses, no proper conclusion can be drawn from this part of the data. It was nonetheless mentioned because evaluation is an integral part of outreach.

4.2.7 Conclusions

Despite the perceptions of four of the interviewees, all of the PLAs that participated are running outreach aimed at homeless people, of varying scales. Those who perceived their PLAs as not running schemes had positive attitudes towards increasing their outreach, and suggested that it was a lack of awareness which had prevented them from doing so already. None of the PLAs had a significant awareness of relevant outreach schemes being run around Yorkshire, and so the first recommendation resulting from this data set is:

1. To share success stories of homelessness outreach, and ideas for good practice, through professional literature and regional networks.

The barriers that were identified that prevented outreach being run, or reduced the success of the outreach, were multiple:

1. A lack of participation by homeless people due to negative perceptions of libraries - amplified by ID requirements for joining libraries - or due to the complicated circumstances of their lives,
2. Limited resources leading to reduced staff and limited time, resulting in the potential relegation of homelessness outreach for several reasons:
 - the need to achieve high numbers of new registrations, etc, for national statistics,
 - the relatively low numbers of homeless people in relation to this, often exacerbated by the invisibility of homeless people in statistics,
 - the PLAs' support of council priorities which often do not explicitly relate to social inclusion for homeless people,
 - the structure of some PLAs, which can benefit some particular groups, or can reduce the importance of outreach altogether,
3. The risk of losing stock,
4. The heterogeneity of homelessness, with different homeless groups having different needs, which can lead to some groups being more neglected.

The interviews also produced some recommendations for dealing with some of these problems:

1. Going into partnership can help several of the problems:
 - through sharing or receiving resources,
 - as homelessness organisations may be more trusted, and so can recommend the library, and give advice to the PLAs,
 - and through receiving expert training,
2. By reducing ID barriers either:
 - by removing them completely,
 - by providing limited temporary membership,
 - by permitted letters from hostels in replace of ID,
 - or by giving full membership to limited members who remember to return stock,
3. To deal with the heterogeneity of homelessness, PLAs should adapt their services to different homeless groups so as to fulfil their different needs.

And, lastly, the interviews provided some recommendations for successful outreach:

1. To utilise partners by promoting outreach to and through them,
2. To use partners' knowledge and expertise in homelessness to adjust the outreach for homeless people,
3. For larger projects, to trial, in order to modify for greatest success.

Potential partners that were mentioned included council education departments, hostels, refuge and refugee centres, organisations involved in Bookstart, homelessness charities, and Health visitors.

4.3 A comparison

4.3.1 Introduction

This section of the results will compare the findings from the case studies with the findings from the interviews, in order to discover agreements and disagreements between the data. This will potentially elicit areas of consensus. By comparing and contrasting the results of the two strands of research, this section of the dissertation will hopefully fulfil objective five of the research: to create a set of recommendations for best practice in running outreach projects for homeless people.

4.3.2 Similarities

A comparison of the results reveals that several of the same barriers were identified from the two data sets. Limited funding, negative perceptions of libraries from homeless people, and membership requirements of identification, emerged in both sets of results. This confirms that these truly are common problems for organising outreach aimed at homeless people.

Moreover, there is a great deal of overlap in the solutions suggested to combat these barriers. To deal with the barrier of ID, both sets of results suggest removing identification requirements, though more detailed options were elicited from the interviews. The need to build up trust through regular visits, or a regular presence, is also suggested in both results, which can help deal with some homeless people's perceptions of libraries. To combat limited resources, the case studies suggested a need for cheap and sustainable outreach: some of the PLAs demonstrate that this is possible, with book deposits and mobiles. Though it should be explained that whilst mobiles themselves are expensive, libraries are already usually committed to their use, and so an extra stop, for instance at a hostel, would not cost too much. The interviews go further however, in recommending building partnerships to share funds and receive resources. Lastly, both sets of results mention staff training; the case studies recommend this in order to deal with negative staff attitudes. This issue did not explicitly arise from the interviews, but as awareness training emerged as a

solution to improving homeless perceptions, there an implication that staff might provide a better service if they are aware of homelessness issues.

As regards recommendations for successful practice, three appear in both sets of results. Both recommend participating in partnerships, for training and also in order to utilise expert knowledge and so customise services for homeless people. They do not overlap on any of the other reasons that partnerships can be beneficial, but as all are sensible reasons, they will all be included in the final recommendations. One of the case studies' suggestions is to evaluate outreach in order to improve it; this heavily overlaps with the interview recommendation of trialling in order to refine the outreach, and shows that the testing and improvement of services is a valid recommendation. The last issue also relates to evaluation. Though the interviews did not reach a consensus on evaluation, the most detailed response, from PLA E, accords with the recommendation from the case studies, that a mix of quantitative and qualitative measurements is useful. This agreement suggests that the suggestion has a certain validity, and on this ground it will be included in the final recommendations.

4.3.3 Differences

There are also many differences between the two results. This is unsurprising as in the interview questions did not mirror the themes of the case studies, and so many of the issues, especially as regards planning homelessness outreach, were not covered in the interviews, whereas conversely, other topics emerged naturally in the interviews which were not discussed in the case studies, and in more detail as follow-up questions could be asked. As the data which emerged from the interviews was more extensive and reflected a consensus between the PLAs, the researcher will still include recommendations which the case studies did not mention, in the final recommendations (see 5.1.3). However, the reverse will not generally be true because the recommendations from the case studies were tentative.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 The aim and objectives

This section of the conclusions will discuss to what extent the aims and objectives of the research been met. Objective one was to 'collate relevant projects from the library and information sector's literature, and highlight the common themes from these projects (identifying what works and what does not, as evaluated by the projects)'. This objective was met through the analysis of the case studies.

Objective two was to 'identify any existing projects currently being run in South and West Yorkshire'. This was partly fulfilled through the interviews, as relevant outreach activity was identified in six of the PLAs; however as the three remaining PLAs in the area did not wish to participate, it was impossible to discover if they were running relevant outreach. These PLAs did not wish to participate for different reasons: the contact at one PLA did not feel that their library authority was doing any relevant work, the contact at another did not feel that they had the spare time in which to participate, and the last contact was on extended leave and the researcher was unable to discover another suitable contact at that PLA.

Objective three was: 'in areas where projects are not being run, to identify barriers to providing such projects and to identify perceptions of projects aimed at homeless people'. It is somewhat difficult to assess the extent to which this objective was met because though some interviewees believed their authorities to fit this category, it was found that they were in fact running some relevant outreach activity. Nonetheless, several barriers were identified, suggesting that the first part of the objective was fulfilled. The attitudes of these interviewees to homelessness outreach have been discussed in the results, and though this did not quite cover 'perceptions of

projects aimed at homeless people' to the extent that the researcher had hoped, the second part of objective three was at least partly met.

Objective four was: 'in the case of projects being run, to identify problems and barriers to beginning and running projects, to identify if and how problems and barriers have been overcome and solved, and to identify the perceived successes of the projects'. The first two parts of this objective have both been met, with both barriers and potential solutions being identified. The third part of the objective was perhaps only partially met as, though some successful elements of the outreach projects were discussed, these were relatively few in number, and not as conclusive as would have been hoped.

Objective five was to 'create a set of recommendations for best practice in running projects for homeless people'. These recommendations have been made (see below, final recommendations), so this objective has been fulfilled.

The overall aim of the research was to 'discover good practice for providing public library outreach projects for homeless people'. This aim was met to an extent, as a set of recommendations for good practice have been constructed; however, the amount of detail that the researcher had envisioned has not been discovered, possibly because good practice can differ depending on the particular context of a public library. It is also likely that the aim could have been met more fully if there had been a longer amount of time over which to conduct the research. This would possibly have allowed more interviews to be carried out, so gaining more data. Also, a longer time period would have ensured that the interview schedule was refined, to elicit more specific and detailed data.

5.1.2 Issues raised

The outcomes of the research have been generally quite positive, with a number of outreach activities aimed at homeless people being run in all of the participating PLAs, even if these are often of small scale; as well as several case studies being available in the literature. Furthermore, the attitudes of the interviewees were positive, with those interviewees who viewed their PLAs as not currently

running relevant outreach reacting enthusiastically to the idea of running such a scheme.

Nonetheless numerous barriers to running outreach to homeless people emerged from the data, including some which appear insurmountable. The barriers identified were: firstly, a potential lack of participation by homeless people in outreach, due some negative perceptions of libraries (which are amplified by ID requirements for joining libraries), or a lack of participation due to the often uncertain circumstances of their lives. The second barrier is the limited resources available to public libraries, especially in terms of funding, which can lead to too few staff and so a limited amount of time available for the remaining staff to spend on outreach projects. This barrier can result in the neglect of homelessness outreach, for several reasons: public libraries need to achieve high numbers of new registrations etc for the national statistics, and this is not ideal for homeless groups as they are often not visible in official statistics; also, PLAs' tend to support their council's priorities, which often do not relate to social inclusion for homeless people; and lastly, the structure of some PLAs can benefit some particular groups over others, or even can reduce the importance of outreach altogether. The third barrier is the risk of losing stock during homelessness outreach. The fourth barrier is due to the heterogeneity of homelessness: there are several different homeless groups, such as refugees or rough sleepers, and they have different wants and needs: there is the potential that certain homeless groups could be neglected, as others take prominence. Lastly, there is a suggestion that a lack of staff training could be contributing towards a library culture which is unwelcoming to homeless people. This last barrier was more prominent in the case studies, but was also implied in the interview results. The solutions to some of these problems combine with the suggestions for successful outreach, and take the form of the following final recommendations.

5.1.3 Final recommendations

The final recommendations which have emerged from the two sets of results and the comparison are eight in number, and are as follows:

1. Develop partnerships with relevant organisations (hostels, homelessness charities, appropriate council departments, etc) in order to reduce several barriers and to achieve the most effective outreach. Partnerships can be valuable in numerous ways:
 - For sharing resources or receiving funding,
 - For promoting the outreach (both to the partner itself, and through them, to - the target audience),
 - For gaining expert, specialist knowledge and advice,
 - For training opportunities,
 - For potential venues for outreach activities,
 - For improving participation in the outreach due to increased accessibility of the partners' cliental, and their greater trust in the partner,
 - And for gaining new, useful contacts.
2. Remove ID requirements for joining the library. This has been done in several PLAs without adverse effects. However, if this recommendation does not appear possible, reduce the ID barrier by permitting letters from hostels and refuges, etc, in place of ID, and by allowing limited temporary membership for people without ID: full membership can then be granted to those limited members who regularly return borrowed stock.
3. Share reports of one's own successful outreach and ideas for good practice through professional literature and regional networks, in order to increase others' awareness of outreach possibilities.

4. Develop cheaper and sustainable outreach through simple outreach such as book deposits and mobile library stops, as well as running larger scale projects with shared resources through partnership.
5. Train staff in awareness and skills (possibly through partners, see recommendation one) in order to ensure staff have a knowledge of relevant issues.
6. Build up trust among that target audience by developing a dependable relationship through regular visits and a regular presence.
7. Ensure that the outreach is adapted to meet the particular needs of different homeless groups and different situations by trialling, evaluating and then refining projects.
8. Combine different evaluative techniques, for instance both quantitative and qualitative data, to fully represent the outcomes of the outreach.

5.2 Recommendations for further research

The following suggestions are possible topics for research which could further investigate good practice for outreach aimed at homeless people, and go beyond this research's limitations.

1. An investigation into the discrepancies between the results of the case studies and the interviews could be interesting; part of the reason for the discrepancies was merely the questions asked in the interviews. Research which looked into the planning of the outreach, covering objectives and consultation, which the case studies covered, but which the interviewees were not asked about, could potentially lead to some useful recommendations.
2. Due to the realisation in this research that there are very different kinds of homeless groups with different needs, future research could investigate in

more detail these differences, and so provide clearer suggestions for how to adapt outreach to these different homeless groups.

3. This research was unable, for ethical considerations, to approach homeless people. However, a useful piece of potential research could be to seek the views and perceptions of different homeless groups, and their reactions to the recommendations made in this research.
4. It may be useful to gain a wider perspective than just a single region, as this was one of this research's limitations. A survey of British public libraries, to see what outreach activities are being run, could give a better overview of the national situation.

Bibliography

Ayers, S. (2006). "The poor and homeless: an opportunity for libraries to serve". *The Southeastern Librarian*, 54 (1), 66-74.

Blaikie, N. (2010). *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bullard, S. W. (2002). "Gypsies, tramps and rage: coping with difficult patrons". *The Reference Librarian*, 75/76, 245-252.

CILIP. (2009). *What Makes a Good Library Service?* [Online]. London: CILIP. <http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/advocacy/public-libraries/Pages/goodlibraries.aspx> [Accessed 28 June 2010].

Cohen, J. (1998). "10 reasons why...". In: Venturella, K. M. (ed.). *Poor People and Library Services*, pp. 118-122. North Carolina: McFarland & Company.

Communities and Local Government. (2010). *Statutory Homelessness: 1st Quarter (January to March) 2010 England* [Online]. London: Communities and Local Government. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1611050.pdf> [Accessed 28 June 2010].

Communities and Local Government. (2010). *Supplementary Tables: Local Authority Breakdown: Statutory Homelessness: 1st Quarter (January to March) 2010, England* [Online]. London: Communities and Local Government. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/homelessnessq12010> [Accessed 28 June 2010].

Communities and Local Government. (2010). *Tackling and Preventing Homelessness* [Online]. London: Communities and Local Government. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/tacklingpreventing/> [Accessed 04 August 2010].

Crisis. (2002). *Critical Condition: Homeless People's Access to GPs* [Online]. London: Crisis. http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/GP_policybrief%5B1%5D.pdf [Accessed 28 June 2010].

Crisis. (2010). *About Homelessness* [Online]. London: Crisis. <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/-about-homelessness-61900.html> [Accessed 28 June 2010].

Crisis and the New Policy Institute. (2003). *How Many and How Much: Single Homelessness and the Question Of Numbers and Cost* [Online]. London: Crisis. http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/policy_research/howmanyhowmuch_full.pdf [Accessed 13 May 2010].

- Daly, G. (1996). *Homeless: Policies, Strategies, and Lives on the Streets*. London: Routledge.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide: For Small Scale Social Research Projects*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Department for Communities and Local Government. (2006). *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* [Online]. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/152056.pdf> [Accessed 28 June 2010].
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport. (1999). *Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries* [Online]. London: DCMS.
http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/Social_Inclusion_PLibraries.pdf [Accessed 13 May 2010].
- Dolan, J. (2007). *A Blueprint for Excellence: Public Libraries 2008-2011* [Online]. Birmingham: The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.
http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/publications/~media/Files/pdf/2007/blueprint_v2.ashx [Accessed 14 May 2010].
- Flagg, G. (2000). "Hooking up the homeless". *American Libraries*, 31 (5), 38-40.
- FLIF. (2010). "Quiet in the library". *Future Librarians for Intellectual Freedom* [Online]. Edmonton: FLIF.
<http://flifblog.blogspot.com/2010/05/quiet-in-library.html> [Accessed 28 June 2010].
- Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide for Management, Business and Market Researchers*. London: Sage Publications.
- Harris, N. & Simon, A. (2009). "Still barriers to overcome". *Public Library Journal*, 24 (4): 25-27.
- Heffernan, F. (2009). "Outside Story: welcoming the homeless". *Public Library Journal*, 24 (3), 6-7.
- Hersberger, J. (2005). "The homeless and information needs and services". *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 44 (3), 199-202.
- Kambo, H. (2004). *Basic Barriers Prevent Homeless People from Accessing Job Opportunities* [Online]. London: OSW (Off the Streets and into Work).
www.osw.org.uk/info/libraryrecord.asp?qrsID=258 [Accessed 14 May 2010].
- Kelle, U. (2007). "The development of categories: different approaches in Grounded Theory". In: Charmaz, K. & Bryant, A. (ed.). *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*, pp. 191-213. London: Sage Publications.

- Knight, H. (2010). "Library adds social worker to assist homeless". *San Francisco Chronicle* [Online]. New York: Hearst Communications. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2010/01/11/BAIT1BF6E3.DTL#ixzz0ccFWkM8W> [Accessed 21 June 2010].
- Lampman, S. (1998). "Ways to make a difference". In: Venturella, K. M. (ed.). *Poor People and Library Services*, pp. 118-122. North Carolina: McFarland & Company.
- Middleton, S. (2003). "Friends at Christmas?". *Public Library Journal*, 18 (1), 5-6.
- Molyneux, W. (2004). "Your choice books". *Library and Information Research News*, 28 (90), 15-23.
- Muddiman, D. et al. (2000). *Open to All? The Public Library and Social Inclusion: Vol. 1, Overview and Conclusions*. London: Resource.
- Murphy, J. (1999). "Where the rights of the many outweigh the rights of the few: the 'legitimate' versus the homeless patron in the public library" *Current Studies in Librarianship*, 23, 50-60.
- Noerager Stern, P. (2007). "On solid ground: essential properties for growing Grounded Theory". In: Charmaz, K. & Bryant, A. (ed.). *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*, pp. 114-126. London: Sage Publications.
- Outside Story project. (2009). *Outside Story* [Online]. London: Outside Story project. <http://www.outsidestory.org.uk> [Accessed 07 July 2010].
- Pateman, J. (2005). *Tackling Exclusion in Libraries: Keynote Address at the Vancouver Public Library Staff Conference, May 12 2005* [Online]. <http://www.librarianactivist.org/socexclusion.pdf> [Accessed 03 May 2010].
- Richards, L. (2005). *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage Publications.
- Shelter. (2010). *Homelessness* [Online]. London: Shelter. http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/homelessness [Accessed 02 July 2010].
- St Mungo's. (2005). *SOS: Sick of Suffering Briefing* [Online]. London: St Mungo's. http://www.mungos.org/campaigns/sos_-_sick_suffering [Accessed 02 July 2010].
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. (2006). *Getting Closer to Homeless Families Through the Play And Learning Project: Case Study* [Online]. Tameside: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/beacon/community/casestudies/homeless> [Accessed 21 June 2010].
- Venturella, K. M. (1998). "Libraries and poverty". In: Venturella, K. M. (ed.). *Poor People and Library Services*, pp. 29-35. North Carolina: McFarland & Company.

Vincent, J. (2005). "So, who are the "proper" library users then?". *Public Library Journal*, 20 (3), 10.

Warnica, R. (2010). "Quiet in the library: an urban dilemma". *Edmonton Journal* [Online]. Toronto: Canwest Publishing.
<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/Quiet+library+urban+dilemma/3088935/story.html> [Accessed 28 June 2010].

Working Together Project. (2008). *Community-led Libraries Tool-kit* [Online]. Vancouver: Working Together Project.
http://www.librariesincommunities.ca/resources/Community-Led_Libraries_Toolkit.pdf [Accessed 21 June 2010].

Appendices

Appendix one: Information sheet

"An investigation into Yorkshire public library outreach schemes aimed at homeless people"

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, and please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the project's purpose?

This project aims to identify good practice for public library authorities, in providing outreach services for homeless people. The research hopes to identify successes in this area as well as identifying barriers to providing outreach schemes.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this research because of your job role, and because this research is focusing on public library authorities in Yorkshire.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to participate in a one-off interview, lasting from 30 minutes to 1 hour . The interview will consist largely of open-ended questions. These interviews can occur in your place of work or via telephone – whichever is most convenient for you.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Other than taking up to an hour of your time in order to conduct the interview, there should be no disadvantage to participants.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute towards improving library services for homeless people.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. The recording from the interview will be kept for the duration of the study, and then destroyed. Any transcription made from the recording will be made anonymous.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The research will be published as a Masters dissertation. A copy of the dissertation will be available at the University of Sheffield's library. If you are interested in the results of the research, I will be happy to provide you with a copy.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study you can contact either me or my academic supervisor, Peter Willett. All contact details can be found at the bottom of this Information Sheet.

If you wish to make a serious complaint you can contact the University Registrar (The University of Sheffield, Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TN).

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being carried out by a postgraduate student studying Librarianship at the University of Sheffield. The research is self-funded.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the Department of Information Studies, Sheffield University.

Contact details

Rebecca Broadley
Lip09rfb@shef.ac.uk
07957645041

Professor Peter Willett
p.willett@sheffield.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this project.

