

# **Mystery Shopping – Wave 17 Report**

## **Library Services**

### **Introduction**

In January 2018 the libraries service returned to being council run following outsourcing to external contractors Carillion. In March a decision was made to carry out a mystery shopping exercise of the libraries service to identify any gaps in service provision and flag up any possible training needs for staff. Once agreed, the project manager for libraries met with the senior resident involvement officer to discuss the objectives of the exercise and agree the scenarios. The main aim was to monitor the performance of library staff and to see whether librarians were proactive and helpful to customers, knowledgeable in their service area and whether they would give out correct information to general queries.

### **Summary of findings**

Overall the responses to the shops were very positive, with a few consistent negative comments for several of the libraries. In 79% of visits, librarians greeted shoppers with “hello/good morning/good afternoon” or said “how may I help you?” Both greetings were used in 68% of shops. However, in 9% of shops, neither greeting was used to the shopper (Thornton Heath and Central libraries). There were positive results from shoppers regarding how they felt librarians dealt with their queries, with no reports of staff rudeness. In the majority of instances librarians were polite and courteous, dealing with enquiries quickly, efficiently and in a professional manner. Another positive was that none of the officers used jargon or language that was difficult to understand during their conversations. On the occasions where printed material was handed out (33 responses), it was reportedly clear, easy to understand and up to date. 94% of shoppers understood what was said to them during the conversation, and 98% of mystery shoppers felt confident that they would visit the libraries again based on their experiences. On the downside, there appeared to be a lapse in customer service at both the Central and Thornton Heath libraries where shoppers reported staff as being ‘disinterested and not quite knowledgeable’ and ‘not helpful’. There were additional reports that staff did not acknowledge or greet them when they approached and/or stood at the reception desk.

### **Management’s comments/action**

**We were impressed by the number of “shops” carried out and thank our 19 mystery shoppers for this valuable feedback. We appreciate time has passed since the report was submitted, but the service has just been restructured and the time is now right to use the report to guide us in shaping the service going forward.**

**The restructured management team has been in place since November 2018 and have just appointed a new set of managers. We found it invaluable to have the insight from this report to share with them as a basis for managing their libraries and training their staff going forward.**

**We were very concerned about the failings outlined in this report, mainly at Thornton Heath and Central Libraries, and we have new Senior Supervisors aware of these failings at both libraries now. At Thornton Heath we have taken away the large reception desk, as part of a larger refurbishment, and to change the culture there have moved the staff to other sites as part of the restructure.**

**We will also praise the staff at Coulsdon and New Addington and other branches for providing exceptional service. We have developed an awards scheme for staff which should go live from April 2019. In fact, we will be highlighting the findings of this report with all staff at our next annual staff conference in April 2019.**

**We would welcome a return visit from the mystery shoppers at the same time (August – October) in 2019, if they would be willing, to see if there have been significant improvements to the service after our restructure, refurbishments and staff training.**

## **Methodology**

Scenarios and model answers for the mystery shopping exercise were developed with the libraries project manager and several of the libraries service managers. The resident involvement team have an existing pool of resident mystery shoppers who they call upon at various times to execute the exercises. This group was contacted in May 2018, advised of the pending exercise and invited in to Bernard Weatherill House for a briefing session. In total 19 residents expressed an initial interest in being involved in the current exercise. The briefing session was held on 18 July 2018 to which only 4 mystery shoppers attended. Other mystery shoppers who were unable to attend the briefing session were later briefed and given all of the necessary information. 6 officers from the resident involvement team also carried out mystery shops of their local libraries in order to supplement the exercise.

At the briefing session mystery shoppers were given an introduction to the library service by one of its managers and a full explanation of how to conduct the exercise. They also had an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on any unclear aspects. They were each given a pack containing all of the relevant forms and the 6 scenarios, as well as instructions on how to complete the forms. It was agreed that mystery shoppers would start to conduct their shops at the beginning of August, as it was felt that libraries would be at their peak activity levels during the summer holidays.

Mystery shoppers were asked to record their findings on the service they received from the librarians – whether they were courteous or rude, did officers use language or jargon that they did not understand, whether they were given additional information and signposted to other local services and how they felt they were treated as customers. Shoppers were also asked to take note of the general feel of the library, how easy it was to find from the outside, the displays and information, etc. Participants were given model answers to each scenario and the mystery shoppers were asked to check how the officer responded against these answers. They were advised that the forms were not to be completed in the presence of the librarians. Mystery shoppers were asked to complete as many shops as they felt able to, and to visit the libraries at different times of the day.

In total, 53 shops were carried out between 1 August and 10 October 2018. All thirteen Croydon libraries were shopped and the visits were carried out at various times of the day between 9.35am and 5.30pm (see appendix). The six scenarios were tested at different library locations as follows:

Table 1.

<b>Scenario number</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scenario topic</b>	<b>Grand-children activities</b>	<b>Summer activities children 7-10</b>	<b>Driving theory</b>	<b>Dinosaur book</b>	<b>IT facilities</b>	<b>PC user - no password</b>	
Ashburton		1	1	1			3
Bradmore Green	1		1	1		1	4
Broad Green	1		1		1		3
Central Croydon	2		2		2	1	7
Coulsdon	1	2	1	1		1	6
New Addington		1	1		1		3
Norbury			2	1		1	4
Purley	1	1	1				3
Sanderstead	2		1	1			4
Selsdon	1	1		1	1		4
Shirley	1		1			2	4
South Norwood	1		1			1	3
Thornton Heath	1	1		2		1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>53</b>

## The Details

**Scenario 1 – Older resident enquires about activities for visiting grandchildren aged 2 and 4. She/he would like to find appropriate activities available in the library where they are mystery shopping, but also want details of times and dates for similar activities in another branch.**

Model answers:

Does the member of staff ask about the preferences (reading, activities, services etc) of the children, or more about your circumstances, to ensure they can advise correctly?	42%
Does the staff member advise correctly regarding age of children?	75%
Does the staff member know where to find out about details for the other branches quickly or do they have to refer to another member of staff?	83%
Do they take the opportunity to promote library membership and other services?	50%
What do they do to provide the events information?	Below
Do they provide information or advise customer to look online or phone?	42%
Do they provide an Under 5s leaflet or What's On Guide?	67%
Do they double check details of events for other branches online? (leaflet might be out of date for other branch)	25%
Website information searched and provided?	42%
Phone number and/or address (for other branches) provided?	58%
Do they speak positively about the services available?	75%
Are they welcoming and engaging?	83%
Do they recommend other relevant activities in the area?	50%
After speaking with library staff do you feel inspired to take part?	67%
<p><b>Any other comments?</b></p> <p><b>Broad Green:</b> Given What's on. One staff member mentioned the What's On Guide and looked for it, the other knew exactly where to find it. Also given events and activities Sept 2018.</p> <p><b>Sanderstead:</b> Given What's on. Asked ages and how long they would be staying. I was shown around the library and told what I needed/ ID to bring to join. Also, that children could have a card under my card details. Told about PCs and that I could give permission for kids to have internet access.</p> <p><b>Sanderstead:</b> Given booklet</p> <p><b>Shirley:</b> Given in house advert provided</p> <p><b>Selsdon:</b> Given leaflets</p> <p><b>South Norwood:</b> Showed me board with activities coming up - black history month and Halloween. Showed me a made up skeleton. Gave me a leaflet</p>	

<p><b>Coulsdon:</b> Staff member very helpful and knowledgeable. Gave me lots of literature and info on activities in the area e.g. CR5, ABC Families, info on Black History Month. Information also given about joining the library and use of PCs.</p> <p><b>Bradmore Green:</b> Given What's on. Library small but busy as next door to school. Lots of displays about activities etc. Did not ask age of kids. First librarian spoke to me and second gave me leaflets</p> <p><b>Purley:</b> Advised to check back as updating all the time, also to visit other branches. Recommended Selsdon as being good for children's activities.</p> <p><b>Thornton Heath:</b> Given regular events flyer. They said there was a 3 month programme but they didn't have written copy. Both librarians were sitting together chatting &amp; just gave me a piece of paper with info on it. Didn't seem that bothered not really selling the service. Are they volunteers?</p> <p><b>Central:</b> Given What's On U5's activity flyer. Took over to shelves/area where activities were going on. Library busy with book signing. Did not ask preference. Librarian v helpful. Said kids would be there on my ticket.</p> <p><b>Central:</b> Leaflets given. Didn't ask ages of g/children, just offered booklets - felt like impersonal generic response. Welcoming but not truly engaged. Pleasant, but little effort to do anything above the minimum. Spoke positively about activities generally, but nothing specific</p>	
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## Responses

There were 12 shops of this scenario. Librarians were welcoming, engaging and generally knowledgeable about activities at theirs and other branches (83%), speaking positively about the service and activities available at libraries across the borough.

Only 42% of librarians asked the ages of the children, however, 75% gave general information regarding activities for children. Librarians at Sanderstead asked the ages of the children and how long they would be staying. 50% took the opportunity to promote library membership and other services available and/or recommend other activities in the area. The majority of mystery shoppers (67%) were given the under 5's and What's On leaflets.

Librarians at Coulsdon were identified as being very helpful and knowledgeable, giving lots of information and literature on general activities in the area. They also gave information on joining and use of PC's. Selsdon library was identified as being good for children's activities by librarians at Purley.

On a more negative note librarians at Central and Thornton Heath libraries were highlighted by mystery shoppers as being disinterested and not engaging and doing little to sell the services or give specific information.

A low percentage (25%) actually double checked details of events for other branches online and only 42% searched and provided information from the website.

**Management’s comments/action**

**Managers are very concerned about the welcome provided by Thornton Heath and Central Library, in particular the comment “Both librarians were sitting together chatting & just gave me a piece of paper with info on it. Didn't seem that bothered not really selling the service.”**

**This is completely unacceptable and we highlighted this with Supervisors. As previously mentioned we have made radical changes to Thornton Heath and have been rolling out staff training as part of the restructure. In Central library we are working with staff and volunteers to smooth the way for new customers navigating that large library space.**

**We were pleased with the feedback from Coulsdon and will ensure our staff are recognised at the next awards day.**

**Scenario 2 – A resident enquires about activities for children aged 7 – 10 during the summer. She/he would like to take part in appropriate activities in the branch where they are mystery shopping (and also enquire about activities in another branch).**

Model answers:

Do staff ask about the reading preferences of the children; about what they enjoy doing?	43%
Does the staff member advise correctly regarding age of children? We would expect them to mention the Summer Reading Challenge as well as regular craft and storytelling events.	71%
Does the staff member know where to find out about details for the other branches quickly or do they have to refer to another member of staff?	71%
Do they take the opportunity to promote library membership and other services? What do they do to provide the information?	43%
Do they provide information or advise customer to look online or phone?	29%
Provide What’s on Guide and Summer Reading Challenge leaflet (when available)	71%
Website information searched and provided? Phone number and/or other contact details provided?	14%
Do they recommend other relevant activities in the area?	43%
After speaking with library staff do you feel inspired to take part?	50%

### Any other comments?

**New Addington:** Very helpful, explained end of summer holiday. Explained in details what they had on offer and giving me leaflets etc.

**Selsdon:** Lovely manner, but could have provided more comprehensive information.

**Ashburton:** In- house flyer provided

**Purley:** A number of events have finished as it was the end of the summer holidays - staff member was new and had to ask a colleague for help.

**Thornton Heath:** Staff were not very helpful. Signposted me downstairs to children's section, even though summer programme display next to reception. Did not come across as very welcoming.

**Coulsdon:** Did not give me What's On as being updated. Provided lots of other printed info on local activities that were age appropriate. Was very knowledgeable on activities in the area. Also mentioned use of computers in the children's library.

**Coulsdon:** Explained that what's on guide is being updated- autumn version coming out at the end of the month, and to check back.

### Responses

There were 7 shops of this scenario. Librarians only asked the reading preferences of the children, promoted library membership and services and recommended other relevant activities in the area in 43% of shops. However, in the majority of cases (71%) they advised correctly regarding the age of the children and mentioned the Summer Reading Challenge and other library craft and storytelling events. Limited information was provided regarding making phone enquiries or searching online for services and activities and very few librarians (14%) searched the website for additional information to provide to shoppers or gave out phone numbers and additional contact information. Half of those who completed this scenario did not feel inspired to take part in the activities based on how their query was handled.

As some of the shops were carried out at the end of the summer, librarians were adept in advising that some of the activities were no longer available and that the What's On guide was currently being updated. Staff were generally reported to be welcoming and helpful and quick to give out printed materials. In particular, librarians at Coulsdon were cited as being knowledgeable, giving out a range of printed material regarding age appropriate activities in their local area that were not library based. There was also mention of using computers in the children's library.

Again, Thornton Heath library flagged up as one where staff were reported as being not welcoming and unhelpful, signposting the mystery shopper downstairs to the

children's section of the library despite the summer programme display located right next to the reception desk.

**Management's comments/action**

**Pleased to hear about Coulsdon and New Addington staff. Again concerned to hear about reception at Thornton Heath Library. Also concerned about only 43% promoting new memberships and only 50% inspired to take part in library activities. This information is fuelling our training programme.**

**Scenario 3 – Customer enquires about borrowing a copy of the latest Driving Theory Test.**

Model answers:

*They are unlikely to find a copy on the shelf but, whether there is or not, does the member of staff:*

Signpost the customer to the online version (on Croydon Libraries' website)	69%
Explain that this is the current version authorised by the Driving Standards Agency, where they can take practice tests, use the highway code and hazard perception tests?	23%
Explain that it is free to sign up to if they have a library card?	62%
Join the customer if they do not have a library card?	
Encourage the customer to explore the other free online resources available via the library website – giving them a copy of the What's On Guide (where they are all listed at the back)	38%
Offer to show the customer where they can be found on the website; and offer to either book them onto a public computer, or how the customer can use their own device via the wi-fi?	31%
<p><b>Any other comments?</b></p> <p><b>Broad Green:</b> Librarian took me to the shelf and showed me both the book and DVD versions. Also mentioned that once I joined I could use library computers to go online and do practice theory tests for free.</p> <p><b>Sanderstead:</b> Librarian showed me the various copies of the theory test - DVD, book and also highway code. Advised that I could go online and access. Checked to see whether there was a charge to borrow DVD revision.</p>	



**New Addington:** Very helpful, went over and beyond to assist

**Norbury:** Looked for copy online, not available so signposted to online

**Norbury:** Small library, book was missing and had been ordered but I could use the online version.

**Shirley:** Taken to shelf - old version. Asked her about online and she didn't know but found out. Provided a handwritten note on how to access. Saw a notice stuck of the shelf behind books.

**Ashburton:** Offered to check other libraries to find newer version. When asked, provided online info about theory test pro and a password. Provided a What's On booklet and info about additional online resources such as Ancestry online. Left the library enthused to return.

**Coulsdon:** Offered to join me up but I said I didn't have time. Could do practice theory tests for free – Theory Test Pro card given. Told me that book versions were outdated. Also advised that I could get a DVD version from shops such as The Works.<sup>1</sup>

**Purley:** Directed me to the online version but not via the Croydon website - advised to type in driving theory.

**Central:** The librarian told me that theory tests are on the second floor the Transportation section. Did not offer to take me or tell me the general location. No visible staff on second floor so had to find it myself. Only older versions on the shelf, plus a card about online access.

**Central:** Informed that the latest copy is 2015 version, can be reserved from another library but can take 5-6 weeks to arrive. Asked if she was sure latest was 2015. She replied yes. No mention of online version.

## Responses

This was the most shopped scenario across all but two of the libraries in Croydon. Staff were generally aware that the current version held, if available, was outdated, and readily signposted shoppers to the online version of the test. 62% of shoppers were advised that they could sign up for theory tests for free if they were members of one of the libraries across the borough. Only 23% of shoppers were told about the availability of online practice tests and hazard perception tests. 38% of shoppers were encouraged to explore free online resources via the library website. One shopper (Purley library) was advised to use a commercial search engine to find out about online driving theory resources rather than using the libraries website. Nearly a

third of the shoppers of this scenario (31%) were directed to the website, offered the opportunity to be booked to use one of the computers in the library or told that they can access the site using their own device and wi-fi connections.

Ashburton librarians offered to check availability at other branches, provided the shopper with information about the theory test pro and issued a password. They also took the opportunity to promote other online resources such as Ancestry online.

**Management's comments/actions**

**We are pleased with this report and will make sure training is up-to-date at Purley. We are not pleased with the feedback from Central and will follow-up.**

**Scenario 4 – An adult customer asks for a book about dinosaurs (it is for a 10 year old child but they do not say this at this point; and any book on the subject will do).**

Model answers:

Does the member of staff: -

Ask if the book is for them or for a child (and also ask how old the child is)	63%
Ask if it is a specific book or if any book about dinosaurs will do	63%
Take the customer to the relevant section of the library and look with them on the shelf to see what is available	75%
If there are some books there, do they leave the customer to look through them but also ask if there is anything else they can help with	63%
OR If there is nothing currently on the shelf, do they offer to check the catalogue to see if anything is available at other libraries and/or reserve an appropriate book for the customer 4 responses	50%
<b>Any other comments?</b>  <b>Ashburton:</b> Told me the category J567.9 and wrote it down	

**Coulsdon:** Very helpful. I felt like a valued customer.

**Sanderstead:** Mentioned that specific or more books can be brought in from other libraries. Told me that there is a specific category for dinosaurs

**Norbury:** Very helpful. Did ask if the book was for a child or adult as they had some in both sections.

**Selsdon:** Assumed the book was for me until advised. Said they had none but could order. Appeared to have a large children's area but not taken to it. Asked for a book on large cats. Also asked for books on other subjects and was just directed to area.

**Bradmore Green:** First librarian did not find dinosaur books and second one came over to help find them. Did not mention that there was a specific section.

**Thornton Heath:** Told me to go downstairs - did not ask age range, assumed book was for children.

## Responses

There were 8 shops of this scenario. 75% of shoppers were taken to the relevant section by librarians. In 63% of shops, librarians asked whether the book was for the adult asking or for a child and the age of the child; whether they wanted a specific book or just any book and, after taking the customer to the area where the books were located, left them to browse through the section. Only 4 of the 8 shoppers reported that librarians offered to check the catalogue or other branches if what they were looking for was not on the shelves.

## Management's comments/action

**Pleased about most of the branches – Thornton Heath customer service is becoming a constant. If 25% of staff are not helping the customer find the book then we must have a training issue. Again, this report helps us prioritise our staff training,**

**Scenario 5 – An adult customer asks to join the library, is new to the area and enquires about the IT facilities at the library.**

*Model answers:*

Does the staff member explain that:

On joining the customer will be given IT access immediately with an activated online account and given a password.	100%
That WiFi is available in all Croydon libraries.	80%
That library computers can be used to access the internet as well as the Microsoft Office 2013 software suite.	60%
That the customer can both scan and print; and does the staff member inform the customer what the printing costs are.	40%
Does the staff member then show the customer where the booking kiosk is and:	40%
Demonstrate how to use the booking kiosk	40%
Explain that library computers are free to use for up to 2 hours a day at all Croydon libraries.	60%
Explain that the customer must start using the computer within 10 minutes of the start of the booking, or the booking will be cancelled.	20%
That when 5 minutes is left of the booking a warning message will display.	20%
That when the session finishes, the PC will log out automatically, ready for the next person to take their turn.	20%
That if the customer wants to use a computer for longer than two hours extra time can be purchased subject to availability; and explain the costs	60%
<p><b>Any comments?</b></p> <p><b>New Addington:</b> Really amazing customer service - what an asset to Croydon libraries</p> <p><b>Selsdon:</b> Just provided me with a small piece of paper with a computer generated access code and said that I can change this when I log on.</p> <p><b>Central:</b> Given the barest minimum of information. Nothing about Office 2013. Costs not explained if over 2 hours.</p>	

**Responses**

There were 5 shops of this scenario in 4 libraries. All shoppers were told that on joining the library their accounts would be activated straight away allowing immediate access to library computers using the password that was issued. 80% of shoppers were given information about the availability of wi-fi in all Croydon libraries. Only 3 of the 5

shoppers (60%) were told that they could use library computers to access the internet or Microsoft Office suite 2013 and that if a customer wants to use one of the computers for longer than 2 hours, additional time could be purchased subject to availability for a fee. 40% of shoppers were advised of scanning and printing facilities and the costs involved. The same number were shown the booking kiosks and given a demonstration of how to use it. In only 20% of shops were shoppers told that they must start using the computer within 10 minutes of the start of the booking to avoid cancellation; that a warning message would be displayed when there was 5 minutes left in the session, after which the session would automatically time out and reset, ready for the next customer.

### Management's comments/action

**Very pleased to hear about New Addington customer service. Less so Central, which is by far the busiest library, where services are on other floors. We will review the information and customer support we provide at both Central and Thornton Heath. We need all library staff to demonstrate the kiosk and booking terminals, and have volunteers to help us at Central where it can be much busier.**

**Scenario 6 – An adult member of the library approaches staff and tells them that they are a library member and need to urgently use a PC as their PC at home is not working. They have their library card with them, but unfortunately they can't remember their password.**

*Model answers:*

Does the member of staff do the following:

Ask them for their library card?	88%
Keys in the card number into their staff PC	50%
Asks the customer whether they could just ask them a few security questions as they need to be sure he/she is the owner of the card	25%
Then asks the customer 2 security questions, such as their name, date of birth and/or postal code; and then checks answers against the details on their record	37%
Looks up their password and writes it down for the customer	63%
If the library has a booking kiosk, the member of staff takes the customer to the kiosk if there is no booking kiosk, they book the customer on a PC themselves	50%
Informs the customer that they can print; and what the printing costs are.	25%
Do staff next do the following:	
Demonstrate how to use the booking kiosk (if a booking kiosk in that library)	25%
Explain that library computers are free to use for up to 2 hours a day at all Croydon libraries.	63%
Explain that the customer must start using the computer within 10 minutes of the start of the booking, or the booking will be cancelled.	12%

That when 5 minutes is left of the booking a warning message will display.	12%
That when the session finishes, the PC will log out automatically, ready for the next person to take their turn.	50%
That if the customer wants to use a computer for longer than two hours extra time can be purchased subject to availability; and explain the cost	12%
Staff then say to the customer that they are available for any questions if any arise	50%
<b>Any comments?</b>	
<b>Coulsdon:</b> Changed password and was very helpful	
<b>Shirley:</b> Looked up p/word and told them aloud. Provided info about paying for extra time only when asked.	
<b>Central:</b> I noticed that the staff member was the only person visible to help. Offering to demonstrate how to use the PC booking system wouldn't have gone amiss.	
<b>South Norwood:</b> Scans card. Given leaflet and told about free scanning and scanner attached to PC 5 bookable only through library staff. Can bring in USB and use on printer too. Takes me to pc, asks me to take a seat and shows me what to do. Tells me where located. Some in children's section. Explained how children need parental consent to use.	

## Responses

There were 6 shops of this scenario. 88% of shoppers were asked for their library cards but only 50% of shoppers had their card details keyed into the PC by librarians. Only 25% of shoppers were asked additional questions to verify that they were the cardholder and 37% were asked 2 personal security questions in order to verify their identity against details held on the system. In 63% of cases, librarians looked up the shoppers' password and wrote it down for them. However, where this was not done, further analysis of the results shows that librarians either showed the shopper their password on the screen, or says it out loud without offering to write it down. One shopper's password was changed for them. 50% of shoppers of this scenario were taken to the booking kiosk or booked onto a PC by the librarian. However, only 25% of shoppers were actually given a demonstration of how to use the booking kiosk. Only two of the eight shoppers were told about the availability of printing services and the costs. Five of the shoppers (63%) were told that the computers in the library were free to use for up to 2 hours a day at all libraries across Croydon.

Only 12% of shoppers were told that they needed to start using the computers within 10 minutes of logging on to avoid cancellation; that there would be a warning message 5 minutes before the session ended and that extra time on the computers could be purchased for an additional fee, subject to availability. Only half of the 8 shoppers were advised that the PC would automatically log out at the end of the session. Librarians only told 50% of shoppers that they were available for any questions that may arise.

### Management comments/action

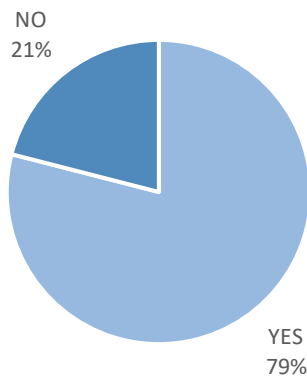
Pleased to hear about Coulsdon and S Norwood. Again concerned about security implication at Shirley. Again, will review support at Central Library.

Will review messages to customers about PC service in general because a very small percentage of important service information was imparted.

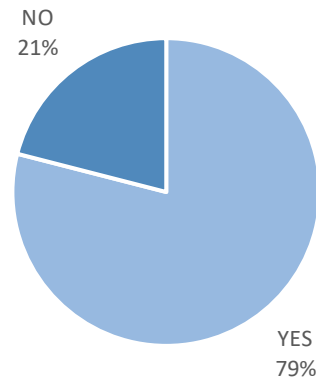
### CUSTOMER SERVICE GRAPHS

#### HOW WERE YOU GREETED BY MEMBER OF STAFF?

"Hello/good morning/good afternoon"

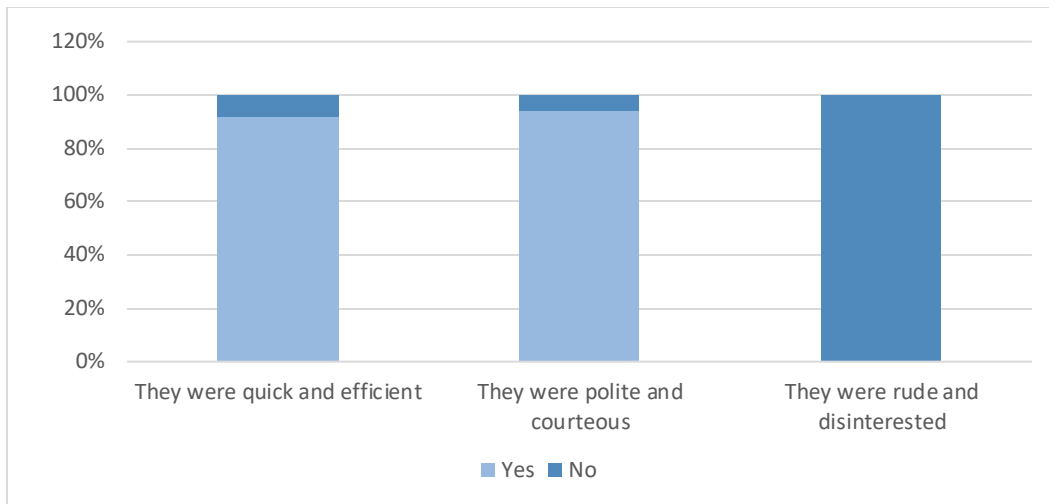


"How can I help you?"



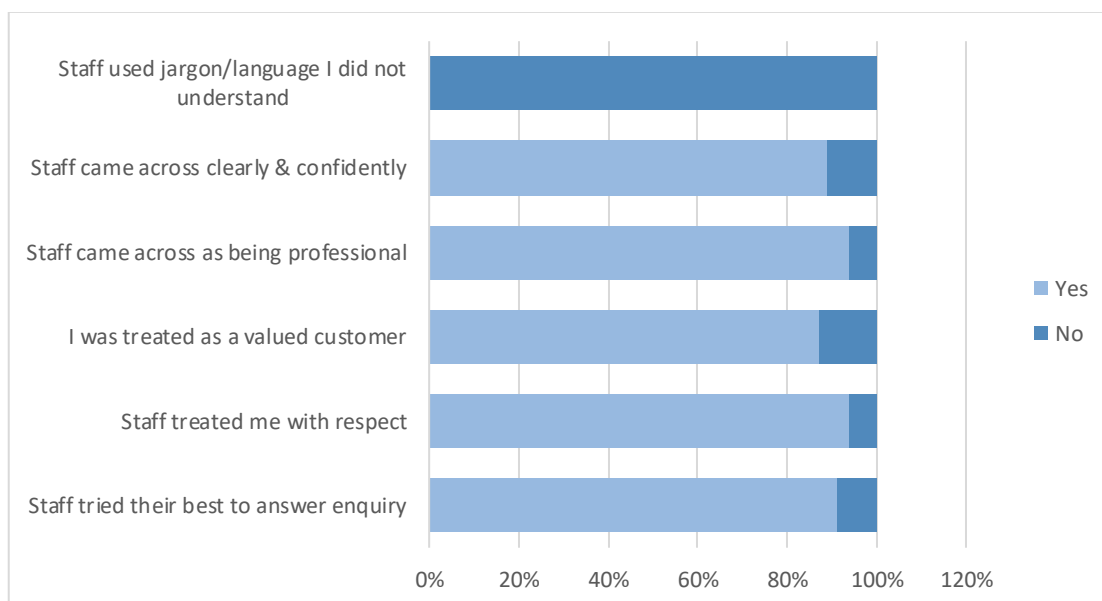
#### HOW DO YOU FEEL THE MEMBER OF STAFF HANDLED YOUR QUERY?

Answer choices	Yes	No
They were quick and efficient	92%	8%
They were polite and courteous	94%	6%
They were rude and disinterested	0%	100%



## STAFF ASSESSMENT

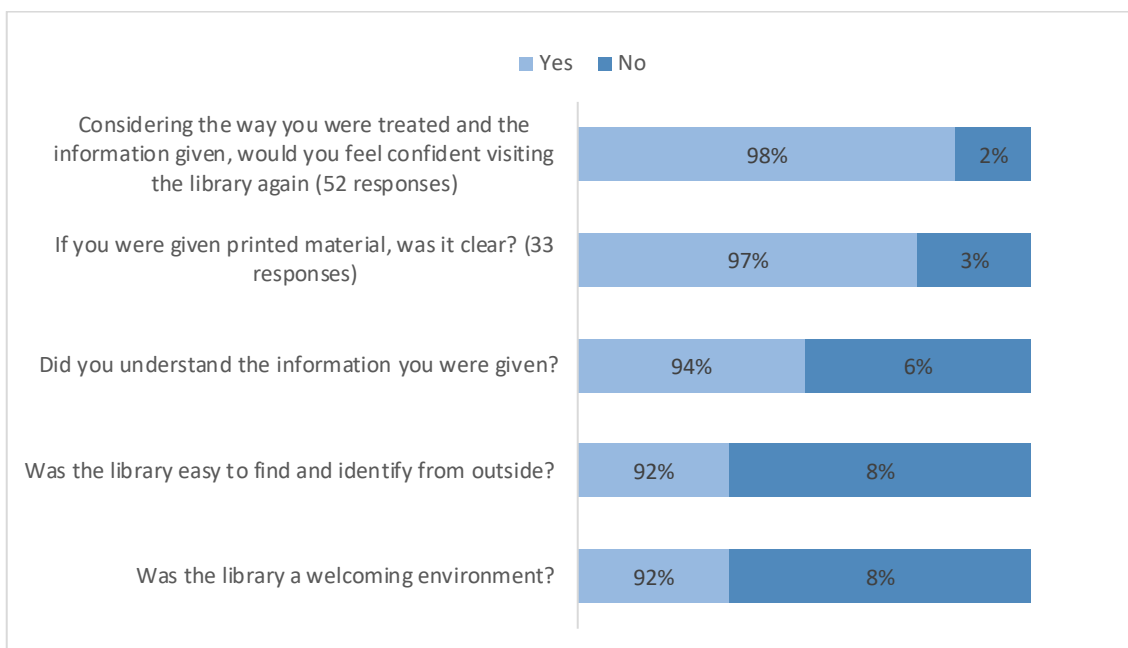
Select Yes or No for each option	Yes	No
Staff tried their best to answer enquiry	91%	9%
Staff treated me with respect	94%	6%
I was treated as a valued customer	87%	13%
Staff came across as being professional	94%	6%
Staff came across clearly & confidently	89%	11%
Staff used jargon/language I did not understand	0%	100%





## LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

Select Yes or No for each option	Yes	No
Was the library a welcoming environment?	92%	8%
Was the library easy to find and identify from outside?	92%	8%
Did you understand the information you were given?	94%	6%
If you were given printed material, was it clear? (33 responses)	97%	3%
Considering the way you were treated and the information given, would you feel confident visiting the library again (52 responses)	98%	2%



### Customer service – Headline results

#### Positives

- Staff never used jargon or language that the shopper did not understand in any of the libraries
- None of the shoppers reported that staff came across as rude or disinterested
- 97% of shoppers reported that where printed material was given (33 responses), it was clear.
- 98% of shoppers felt confident visiting the library again based on the way they had been treated.
- In 94% of shops, staff came across as being professional
- 94% of shoppers felt they were treated with respect

- 94% of librarians were polite and courteous
- 92% of queries were handled quickly and efficiently
- 92% of shoppers found the library to be a welcoming environment
- 91% of shoppers felt that staff tried their best to answer their query
- 92% reported that the library was easy to find and identify from the outside
- 89% of shoppers felt that staff came across clearly and confidently
- 87% felt that they were treated as a valued customer

### **Less positive**

- 21% of shoppers were not greeted with “Hello/good morning/afternoon” or “How can I help?” by librarians.
- 13% of shoppers did not feel that they were treated as a valued customer

### **Other comments:**

#### **Bradmore Green**

- Small, lots of displays and printed information. Well signed from outside
- Used Google maps because unfamiliar with the area
- Very busy – right next to a primary school at 3.15pm

#### **Broad Green**

- Clearly signed outside, clean and tidy
- Quiet, clean and tidy. Good displays and leaflets

#### **Central**

- Although polite, I'd say disinterested and not quite knowledgeable. Attempted to answer question, but that's just about it
- Given password on a piece of paper
- It was busy and business-like, but friendly
- Only one visible staff member on hand to help
- Greeted with 'Alright there?'
- Returned book from another library. Librarian just told me to take the book over to the kiosk with no further explanation. Managed to figure it out on my own.
- On entry all I could see was a long empty counter but no staff. Customer services sign not clearly visible. Staff member came out from behind the counter without a smile or acknowledging presence. Colleague was pleasant and polite but didn't show any interest in my query. Not the way to make me feel like a valued customer.

- Seating looked cluttered. I already knew where it was, but a sign on the building would help as it is in a dip slightly hidden by the clocktower café and pub
- The library looks tired and messy
- Very tidy and orderly. Given Borrowbox leaflet.

### **Coulsdon**

- Clean and tidy
- Lots of information provided
- Very helpful. Nothing was too much better and there were a number of people needing assistance
- Mentioned use of the computers in the children's library
- Staff professional and confident
- Felt like a valued customer

### **New Addington**

- Really amazing customer service. What an asset to Croydon libraries!
- Very helpful. Explained what was on offer and gave leaflets
- Lovely vibrant atmosphere with children obviously having fun and a volunteer listening to children reading 1 to 1. Building was more obviously a community centre/CALAT/council facilities than a library. Staff member truly excellent – friendly, enthusiastic, engaged.
- Went over and beyond to assist me.

### **Norbury**

- Easy to find from Beatrice avenue but not from London Road
- Not easy to find if you don't know the area – entrance on a side street
- Small library. Book missing but was on order and librarian directed me to the online version.

### **Purley**

- On a red route with no stopping, so difficult getting there by car.

### **Sanderstead**

- Looked a bit old and dated, stained carpets
- Old building, stains on carpets
- Very friendly & polite. Old building signposted from main road and at side entrance.

- Good information provided regarding dinosaur books for adults and children
- Knowledgeable and helpful

### **Selsdon**

- Had to ask all the questions
- Library part of Sainsbury's complex, it can be a little unclear from outside.

### **Shirley**

- Very good customer service, came across as friendly and welcoming
- Looked dated and small

### **South Norwood**

- Garbage bag was open at front, possibly by foxes
- Librarian smoking by entrance – didn't look professional

### **Thornton Heath**

- Two members of staff on reception, head down, no acknowledgement. Not given any information, told to go downstairs to children's section even though there was a summer programme display next to reception
- Was not given any printed information. Told to go downstairs to children's section (hadn't specified age). First impressions – were not helpful
- Staff not very welcoming
- Very helpful, asked if the book for child or adult as there were books in both sections

### **Summary of Individual Library Results**

Overall the results were positive across all the libraries throughout the borough with shoppers feeling that librarians did their best to answer their enquiries in a professional and efficient manner. However, Central library in particular and Thornton Heath library both flagged up with as ones where librarians failed to welcome, acknowledge and greet shoppers and where it was felt that staff did not make a great effort to answer their queries in a quick and efficient manner (see appendix). Over 40% of shoppers to Central and Thornton Heath and 50% at Selsdon libraries did not feel valued as a customer based on how they were treated by staff.

Across the six scenarios, librarians usually did not go online or search the website to check or promote activities and events at other libraries, neither did they encourage shoppers to search the website themselves. The majority of shoppers were given the What's On guide or the under 5's leaflet in lieu of verbal explanations. Few shoppers

were give comprehensive information regarding printing, the use of PCs and wi-fi or shown how to use the booking kiosks.

#### **Management comments:**

**All these comments were reviewed by managers and shared with Supervisors and staff. Digital support is one of the Universal Offers in UK libraries, and it is clear from the feedback that more information is needed to explain the service to new and existing users.**

**Some feedback we had from supervisors was that libraries offer so many services that the joining process comprises too much information. That suggests we need written guidance, or a follow-up email with information about the use of the internet services, to be referred to on return visits; this, as well as staff being conscious of supporting customers who are using internet services for the first time.**

#### **Conclusion**

**Thank you Mystery shoppers!! It is invaluable to have these feedback snapshots for all our branches, and a powerful tool for identifying training priorities, and for making us aware of serious issues arising in our two busiest libraries.**

**We are currently in the final stages of our all-staff restructure, with new Supervisors at most libraries, including both Thornton Heath and Central Libraries. The Mystery Shopping report has been shared with the new Supervisors who will take on the good and bad at their new libraries, and make improvements. We are currently providing training for frontline staff in all branches to improve the library welcome, reviewing the look and feel and thinking about what the customer needs. The detailed report you have provided helps us to prioritise staff training needs in particular libraries, and to monitor progress.**

**We have plans in place to refurbish all our libraries and will be rolling out new IT over the next year as part of the Council's upgrade process. As already mentioned, we are refurbishing Thornton Heath, where we have removed the main reception desk which was acting as a barrier. Thornton Heath Library is being refurbished to become part of the Gateway North hub project, hosting Council services for the local residents in addition to providing library services and activities. The large reception desk has been removed and will be replaced with service pods and comfortable seating for customers. Staff will be trained to be more welcoming and supportive to customers at first contact, and will be trained to promote services to customers more effectively.**

**Digital support is one of the priorities of libraries, and it is clear from the feedback that more information is needed to explain the service to new and existing users.**

**Getting the basic customer service and service information right is a priority, and this evidence supports the management team with prioritising our approach.**

**We would welcome a follow-up mystery shopping exercise in our libraries next August to see whether we have been effective in making those recommended improvements, and to see if we have improved our customer welcome!**

**Joan Redding, Libraries Service Manager**

## APPENDIX

Table 2

	Said Hello?		Said How can I help?		Quick/ efficient?		Polite/courteous?	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Ashburton		3		3		3		3
Bradmore Green		4		4		4		4
Broad Green		3		3		3		3
Central	5	2	4	3	2	5	1	6
Coulsdon	1	5		6		6		6
New Addington	1	2		3		3		3
Norbury	1	3	1	3		4		4
Purley	1	2		3		3		3
Sanderstead		4		4		4		4
Selsdon		4	3	1		4		4
Shirley		4	1	3		4		4
South Norwood		3		3		3		3
Thornton Heath	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>

Table 3

	Rude/disinterested?		Tried their best?		Treated with respect?		Valued customer?	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Ashburton	3			3		3		3
Bradmore Green	4			4		4		4
Broad Green	3			3		3		3
Central	7		3	4	1	6	3	4
Coulsdon	6			6		6		6
New Addington	3			3		3		3
Norbury	4			4		4		4
Purley	3			3		3		3
Sanderstead	4			4		4		4
Selsdon	4			4		4	2	2
Shirley	4			4		4		4
South Norwood	3			3		3		3
Thornton Heath	5		2	3	2	3	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>46</b>

Table 4

	Professional?		Clear / confident?		Jargon used?		Welcoming?	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Ashburton		3		3	3			3
Bradmore Green		4		4	4			4
Broad Green		3		3	3			3
Central	1	6	1	6	7		3	4
Coulsdon		6		6	6			6
New Addington		3		3	3			3
Norbury		4		4	4			4
Purley		3		3	3			3
Sanderstead		4		4	4			4
Selsdon		4	2	2	4			4
Shirley		4	1	3	4			4
South Norwood		3		3	3			3
Thornton Heath	2	3	2	3	5		1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>49</b>

Table 5

	Easy to find?		Understand info given?		Printed material clear? (33 responses)		Visit again (51 responses)	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Ashburton		3		3		3		3
Bradmore Green		4		4		4		4
Broad Green		3		3		1		3
Central		7	1	6		5		6
Coulsdon		6		6		4		6
New Addington	1	2		3		2		3
Norbury	2	2		4				4
Purley		3		3		3		3
Sanderstead		4		4		3		4
Selsdon	1	3		4		1		4
Shirley		4		4		3		4
South Norwood		3		3		2		3
Thornton Heath		5	2	3	1	1	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>51</b>

## Dates and times of library visits

Ashburton		Coulsdon		Selsdon
<b>06/09/2018</b>		<b>23/08/2018</b>		<b>11/08/2018</b>
9.35am		3.15 pm		10.30am
<b>13/09/2018</b>		3.15pm		<b>07/09/2018</b>
11.25am		<b>21/09/2018</b>		2.00pm
		3.50pm		<b>18/09/2018</b>
<b>Bradmore Green</b>		3.55pm		10.00am
<b>21/09/2018</b>		4pm		
3.15pm				<b>Shirley</b>
3.20pm		<b>New Addington</b>		<b>28/08/2018</b>
		<b>10/08/2018</b>		1.30 pm
<b>Broad Green</b>		5.00pm		<b>06/09/2018</b>
<b>04/09/2018</b>		<b>22/08/2018</b>		9.45am
11.55am		3.30pm		<b>13/09/2018</b>
<b>14/09/2018</b>		3.45pm		10.20am
1.30pm				
1.35pm		<b>Norbury</b>		<b>South Norwood</b>
		<b>21/08/2018</b>		<b>05/09/2018</b>
<b>Central</b>		3.30pm		9.45am
<b>01/08/2018</b>		<b>23/08/2018</b>		<b>22/09/2018</b>
11.40am		5.05pm		4pm
<b>01/09/2018</b>		5.10 pm		
11.30am		<b>04/09/2018</b>		<b>Thornton Heath</b>
4pm		12.10pm		<b>21/08/2018</b>
<b>18/09/2018</b>				2.45pm



1.45pm		<b>Purley</b>		<b>22/08/2018</b>
<b>01/10/2018</b>		<b>23/08/2018</b>		5.00pm
5.30pm		3.50pm		5pm
<b>10/10/2018</b>		<b>21/09/2018</b>		<b>04/09/2018</b>
2.25pm		4.35pm		11.35pm
				<b>18/09/2018</b>
		<b>Sanderstead</b>		3pm
		<b>14/09/2018</b>		
		1.30pm		
		2.10pm		
		2.20pm		
		<b>21/09/2018</b>		
		5pm		