

Policy Guidelines for NSW Home Library Services

A. Introduction

This information is provided as a set of guidelines for the provision of Home Library Services and to constitute a standard for the service in NSW.

The Home Library Service (HLS) exists as an alternative service for those unable to access their local library due to special circumstances. All members of the community are entitled to equal access to library information, resources and a quality standard of service. This should be provided to the customer free of charge as per the Library Act 1939

“No charge is to be made for the delivery to a member of the library of any library material or information that the member is entitled to borrow free of charge if the member for reasons of ill-health or disability cannot reasonably be expected to attend the library in person.”
(Section 10, Paragraph [d], Library Act 1939)

The position of the HLS Coordinator is generally a position for a staff member with library qualifications because of the responsibilities, judgements and duties involved.

B. Home Library Service Eligibility

1. The Home Library Service provides:
 - A personalised service to individuals who are unable to access the library because of illness or disability.
 - Bulk loans to residential facilities; such as hostels, nursing homes and hospitals.
 - Service to residents who provide full-time care.
 - A temporary service for residents convalescing.
2. No age restrictions apply.
3. New clients should provide a doctor's certificate confirming his or her eligibility for the service. (Referrals from appropriate community organisations also provide the necessary confirmation of client eligibility).

C. The Interview and Member Profile

1. When a prospective client has been referred to the service and their eligibility confirmed they should be interviewed to obtain personal details and individual requirements.
2. During the initial interview information to be collated should include:
 - The type of resources required.
 - The quantity of items needed.
 - Preferred genres, subjects and authors.
 - Access for delivery.
 - Relevant medical conditions.
 - Contact person in an emergency.
3. At this point the staff member should assign the new patron with a regular delivery day, determined by their geographic location.
4. Member information should be recorded and utilised for patron profiles and selection criteria.
5. Regular revision of this information and feedback from the clients should be encouraged.
6. All client information is strictly confidential as per the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

D. Delivery

1. The aim of the Home Library Service is to meet the informational, recreational, cultural and educational needs of the housebound. The service itself may be organised in different ways and incorporate different delivery methods which may include:
 - Visits to individuals, with items selected by staff prior to delivery.
 - Visits to individuals, where the individual chooses from a larger selection of items.
 - Visits to clients in residential establishments.
 - Delivery of bulk loans to residential and daycare establishments (the Occupational Therapist or a suitably nominated person takes responsibility for the delivery on behalf of the establishment).
2. Loan periods, item restrictions and frequency of delivery should be determined by the individual library.

E. Resources

1. All resources held by the library including the same reservation and interlibrary loan systems should be made available to Home Library Service Clients
2. A vehicle suitably modified according to Occupational Health and Safety guidelines should be provided. (See “Risk Management Guidelines for NSW Home Library Services” for further information)
3. Resources required by a Home Library Service should include:
 - Access to specialised collections such as Large Print and Talking Books.
 - Dedicated PC and workstation.
 - Shelving area for designated collections and storage of material prepared for delivery.
 - Delivery containers (ie baskets, bags, boxes etc).
 - Trolleys.
 - A phone.
 - Mobile telephone/s.
 - Protective clothing.
 - Photo ID to identify staff and/or volunteers when delivering.(See “Risk Management Guidelines for NSW Home Library Services” for further information)

F. Staffing

1. Home Library Service staff are responsible for:
 - registering new clients
 - maintaining their records and selection profiles
 - the selection and delivery of materials
 - outreach work relating to the service and general library duties
 - If specialised collections such as large print or talking books are held the HLS staff may be responsible for their maintenance and development.
2. The HLS Coordinator may be responsible for his or her own budget.
3. Organisation and administration of the service requires trained staff. Appropriately trained staff should be available to replace the regular staff during leave or absence. If used, volunteers or contractors should be screened and then trained by the HLS staff adhering to the relevant policies.
4. The following ongoing training and education for Home Library Service staff should include but not be limited to:
 - Manual handling
 - Interpersonal skills
 - First aid
 - Communication with aged/disabled

- Advanced driving skills
 - Personal safety
 - Multicultural awareness training
 - Disability awareness training
5. Home Library Service work is physically demanding and labour intensive. Adequate time each week should be kept free from deliveries and shifts for in-house maintenance. Staffing levels can be determined by the number of patrons, the frequency of visits, the needs of the clients and the geographic layout of the area.
 6. Time spent with each individual client should be determined by the needs of the client. It should be noted that this is an isolated group within the community that have impaired access to community information and resources. HLS staff should have knowledge of community organisations and can liaise with them to promote the service.

G. Security

To avoid potentially threatening situations when HLS staff are away from library premises, the following precautions should be undertaken:

- Mobile phones or two-way radios should be available, and turned on at all times.
- Staff should wear a photo identification tag.
- Staff should receive training in managing dangerous situations.
- A clause should be included on the membership form for HLS members to give permission to a duly authorised library representative to enter their premises. (See “Risk Management Guidelines for NSW Home Library Services” for further information)

H. Marketing

1. Staff should maintain awareness of changing demographics, future potential client base and any relevant emerging issues.
2. Council directories, websites, newspapers and library/council publications should be utilised in publicising the service.
3. Home Library Service Staff should contact community groups/organisations and residential establishments in their area to raise awareness of the service.
4. Talks by staff detailing the Home Library Service can be conducted throughout the community.
5. A promotional leaflet detailing the service should be created and this can be distributed regularly to the appropriate community groups.