Public library provision of resources for dyslexic individuals

This item was submitted to Loughborough University's Institutional Repository by the/an author.

Additional Information:

- A Doctoral Thesis. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University.

Metadata Record: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/7373

Publisher: © Hazel Rutledge

Please cite the published version.
This item is held in Loughborough University’s Institutional Repository (https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/) and was harvested from the British Library’s EThOS service (http://www.ethos.bl.uk/). It is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

For the full text of this licence, please go to: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/
PUBLIC LIBRARY PROVISION
OF RESOURCES FOR DYSLEXIC INDIVIDUALS

HAZEL RUTLEDGE

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY
30th September 2000

© by Hazel Rutledge 2000
ABSTRACT

PUBLIC LIBRARY PROVISION OF RESOURCES FOR DYSLEXIC INDIVIDUALS

"Dyslexia is best described as a specific difficulty in learning, in one or more of reading, spelling and written language which may be accompanied by difficulty in number work, short term memory, sequencing auditory and/or visual perception, and motor skills." (British Dyslexia Association)

This thesis aims to investigate the extent to which public libraries attempt to meet the needs of the dyslexic community. Libraries are key resource centres for reading and accessing the written language and should aim to meet the needs of their various user communities. Libraries should, therefore, be in the forefront in assisting users in overcoming this disability. Although much is written on the subject of dyslexia and most libraries have descriptive material on the subject, public libraries do not appear particularly proactive in providing material for use by dyslexic individuals. There is a tendency for dyslexia to be seen primarily as an educational issue. However, if libraries are to continue to have a role in self improvement, literacy and life long learning, they should be addressing areas such as dyslexia.

A survey of the literature revealed that little has been written in the professional literature about public library resource provision for dyslexic users. A questionnaire was sent 152 Public Library authorities in the United Kingdom (excluding Scotland) to ascertain the range of services and initiatives offered to people with dyslexia. The results indicate that a modest number of authorities have dedicated collections for people with dyslexia as well as material on the subject aimed towards parents, teachers and carers. The findings suggest that although interest in the potential role of libraries in serving the needs of the dyslexic community is high, relatively little is being done to address the issue in a structured way.

Library authorities with dedicated collections for people with dyslexia have been investigated as comparative case studies covering themes such as composition and funding of collections, involvement with other agencies, methods of communication, location and lessons learned. Other case studies explore user needs and actions undertaken by a specialist resource centre. Supporting studies include a survey of resources available from specialist publishers.

The thesis concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations for public libraries on the way ahead in terms of best practice to meet the needs of dyslexic individuals.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following organisations and individuals who took part in the various case studies. Without their enthusiasm and interest this research project would not have been possible.

Carol Hudson

Desmond Spiers (REACH: National Resource Centre for Children with Reading Difficulties)

Jean Hutchins (BDA Computer Committee)

Kent County Council - Education & Libraries

London Borough of Ealing - Library and Information Service

London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames - Library and Information Services

Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service

I wish to extend my thanks to Dr Graham Matthews and Dr Anne Goulding who were both very supportive to me as my supervisors.

I would like to acknowledge also the many years of support my partner Paul Rutledge has given to me in my capacity of the 'lifelong' learner.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Definitions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The Role of the Public Library</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Public Libraries and Dyslexia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Thesis Structure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Aims and Objectives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Literature Review</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Bibliographical Tools Consulted</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1.1 Indexes and Serial Holding Lists</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1.2 On-line Searches</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1.3 Directories</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Other Written Sources Consulted</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Internet Searches</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Organisations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Library Users' Views</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Family Case Study</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 E-Mail Chat Forum</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Public Library Questionnaire</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Design of the Questionnaire</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Piloting the Questionnaire</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3 Results of the Pilot Questionnaire</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Public Library Case Studies</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 REACH Case Study</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Survey of Publishers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Dyslexia Background</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 The History of Dyslexia</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Modern Definitions of Dyslexia</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Debates Surrounding Dyslexia</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Users of Information About Dyslexia</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Resource Needs of Dyslexic Individuals</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Role and Culture of Public Libraries</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1 Public Library Services to the Disadvantaged</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2 Community Librarianship</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3 The Challenge for Public Libraries</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7 Role of Public Libraries in Dyslexia Resource Provision...................................60
3.8 Implications for Dyslexic Resource Provision by Public Libraries.....................70
3.9 Dyslexia and Information Technology in Libraries.........................................75
3.10 Summary of Findings from the Literature Survey.............................................78
3.10.1 Background..............................................................................................78
3.10.2 Users of information about dyslexia......................................................79
3.10.3 Needs of the Individuals.................................................................80
3.10.4 Role and Culture of Public Libraries.....................................................80
3.10.5 Role of Public Libraries in Dyslexia Resource Provision.........................83
3.10.6 Implications for Dyslexic Resource Provision by Public Libraries.............86

CHAPTER FOUR: NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS.............................................. 87
4.1 Case Study of Parent with two Dyslexic Children.............................................87
4.1.1 Simon's Story............................................................................................87
4.1.2 Heather's Story..........................................................................................90
4.1.3 Statemeenting Process..............................................................................92
4.1.4 Sources of Information about Dyslexia..................................................94
4.1.5 Informal Communication Networks.......................................................98
4.1.6 Library Resources used by Carol, Simon and Heather.............................99
4.1.7 Findings and Conclusions.....................................................................100
4.2 Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities.......................104
4.2.1 General Perceptions..............................................................................104
4.2.2 Staff Awareness, Attitudes, and Training Needs....................................105
4.2.3 Useful Resources and Formats..............................................................107
4.2.4 Publishers Addressing the Needs of Dyslexic Individuals.....................110
4.2.5 Information Technology......................................................................110
4.2.6 Layout, Ambience, and Signage in Libraries........................................111
4.2.7 Dyslexia Identity.................................................................................112
4.2.8 Summary and Conclusion.................................................................112

CHAPTER FIVE: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS........................................... 114
5.1 Response Rate.............................................................................................114
5.2 Public Libraries with Policies on Provision of Resources for 'Special Needs'...115
5.2.1 Content of 'Special Needs' Policies.........................................................116
5.2.1.1 Equal Opportunities and Access.......................................................117
5.2.1.2 Terminology & Naming of the Collection........................................118
5.2.1.3 Resources......................................................................................119
5.2.1.4 Stock Selection.............................................................................120
5.2.1.5 Co-operation with other agencies....................................................123
5.2.1.6 Additional Comments on Special Needs Policies............................124
5.2.1.7 Policy Statements Summary.........................................................125
5.3 Written Policies that Include Consideration of Dyslexia................................126
5.3.1 Labelling...............................................................................................127
5.3.2 Naming Special Needs Collections.......................................................128
5.3.3 Contents of the Collection..................................................................128
5.3.4 Stock Selection Criteria & Methods.....................................................130
5.3.5 Access to Resources...........................................................................133
5.3.6 Staffing...............................................................................................133
5.3.7 Promotion............................................................................................134
5.3.8 Additional Comments on Dyslexia Policies..........................................134
# CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Introduction</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Existence of Dyslexia and Obstacles Faced by Dyslexic Individuals</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Responsibilities of Public Libraries in Resource Provision</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Provision of Resources for Dyslexic Individuals in England and Wales</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Activities in the Centres of Good Practice</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Role of the Library Profession, Academics and Key Dyslexia Organisations</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7 Issues Raised in Course of the Research</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.1 Visibility versus Discretion</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.2 Concentrated versus Dispersed Collections</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.3 Children Focus or Adult Focus</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.4 Role of Information Technology in Addressing Special Needs</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.5 The Challenging Library Environment</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.6 Monitoring Dyslexics' Library Use</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.7 Narrow Views of Experts</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.8 Successful Specialist Collections Require Proactive Librarianship</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.9 Public Library Culture</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7.10 Public Library Services to the Disadvantaged</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 The Way Ahead</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.1 Policy and Leadership</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.2 Stock Selection</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.3 Networking and Outreach</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.4 Improving the Library Environment</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.5 Staff attitudes and Training</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.6 Importance of Promotion and Publicity</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.7 Making Full Use of the Main Collection</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.8 Benefits of a Concentrated Collection</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.9 Expansion of Choice via Virtual Collections</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8.10 The Role of the Librarian</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Personal Web Page                                           | 278  |
- Appendix 2 CAROL/Questions/Case study 1                                 | 279  |
- Appendix 3 Questionnaire and Letters                                    | 280  |
- Appendix 4 Interview/Survey Questions                                   | 286  |
- Appendix 5 Publishers Telephone Questionnaire                           | 287  |

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- RELEVANT INTERNET WEBSITES                                             | 288  |


TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1 Percentage of Authorities Replying to the Questionnaire................................................................114
Figure 5.2 Percentage of Authorities with Written Policies for Special Needs.............................................115
Figure 5.3 Percentage of Authorities with Written Policies that include Dyslexia.......................................126
Figure 5.4 Librarians Responsible for Dyslexia Resource Provision..........................................................140
Figure 5.5 Percentage of Authorities Providing Resources for Dyslexics....................................................141
Figure 5.6 Percentage of Authorities that Target Dyslexia Resources by Age.............................................143
Figure 5.7 Authorities Targeting Dyslexia Resources to Various Age Groups..............................................143
Figure 5.8 Authorities Targeting Dyslexia Resources by Age Group (excluding All & None)......................144
Figure 5.9 Percentage of Authorities Targeting Dyslexia Resources by Age (All, None & Other)............144
Figure 5.10 Percentage of Authorities with Concentrated or Dispersed Collections..................................145
Figure 5.11 Percentages of Authorities with Various Resources for Dyslexics..........................................147
Figure 5.12 Pattern of Use of Dyslexia Resources by Authorities..............................................................150
Figure 5.13 Percentage of Authorities with Specific Budgets for Dyslexia Resources................................152
Figure 5.15 Percentage of Authorities Holding Dyslexia Contact............................................................155
Figure 5.16 Authorities Holding Directory of British Associations..........................................................157
Figure 5.17 Authorities Holding Local Information Useful for Dyslexics..................................................157
Figure 5.18 Authorities Holding Books for Loan on Dyslexia.................................................................158

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Publishers of Dyslexic Resources Mentioned by Library Authorities........................................151
Table 5.2 Budget Figures for Dyslexia Collections......................................................................................153
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definitions

The British Dyslexia Association in their booklet *Dyslexia: Your First Questions Answered* defines the meaning of the term and the problems associated with dyslexia in the following way:

The word "dyslexia" comes from Greek and means "difficulty with words". It is a difference in the part of the brain which processes language, and it affects skills that are needed for learning one or more of reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. This does not mean that dyslexic people cannot become fully literate. With suitable help they can succeed, and dyslexic people often have different and valuable problem-solving abilities (B.D.A. 1996, p.2).

Dyslexia is a condition that is characterised by, amongst other things, difficulties with the written word. It is also worth noting that it is a condition that can be improved through formal tuition and/or self help, making use of the individual skills and abilities of people with dyslexia. The core aspects of the disability, as well as the consequences of its symptoms, can be directly addressed. With help, many dyslexics can function well in most aspects of modern life. This is an opportunity and a challenge.

1.2 The Role of the Public Library

Public libraries are key resource centres for reading and accessing the written language and they should aim to meet the needs of their various user communities. Self help, more recently characterised as lifelong learning (Shepherd, 1998) has always been a cornerstone of the library ethos, as has a commitment to meeting the needs of the entire community. These aspects of the service have been enshrined in law as well as in practice and tradition.

The terms of the *Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964* made it a duty, not just a recommendation, that the local authorities provide "a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof" (H.M.S.O, 1995, pp 1198-
This puts the onus on the authorities to provide a wide range of materials and services. It also makes clear that the service must be for all members of the community, regardless of necessary degree of literacy.

There are many demands on the modern library service and on librarians and their staff. Society is not static but dynamic, and public libraries are expected to keep abreast of the changing environment in which they operate. Amongst the more obvious challenges is the move to greater use of information technology, whilst still maintaining a strong base of traditional materials, for example, books and other forms of printed material that will help individuals enhance their learning skills and quality of life.

Within the programme outlined by the Department for Education and Employment in *The Learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain* a very positive role for public libraries is envisaged. It is intended that people should get the most out of libraries and the other creative industries:

> The public library service holds an enormous range of educational material and has the potential to deliver information and learning to people of all ages and backgrounds, right across the country. The Learning Age will be supported by the development of new information technology within libraries (DfEE, 1998, p.53).

Thus, the service provision undertaken by public libraries is multi-faceted. On the one hand, the public library ethos remains constant to the mid-nineteenth century legacy (based on the works of Samuel Smiles) of encouraging 'self help' and self improvement whilst on the other hand, attempting to provide the resources and environment that will offer positive recreational opportunities (Kinnell & Sturges, 1996).

With these varying objectives, it is worth considering whether librarians have sufficient opportunity to exercise traditional professional skills to ensure that creative solutions are made available for their users.
1.3 Public Libraries and Dyslexia

Given that dyslexia is a condition that affects people's ability to effectively deal with written language, and that public libraries have a remit to be a repository for the written word for the benefit of the whole community, it would be logical that libraries should be in the forefront in assisting their users overcome the effects of this disability.

A letter written to the London Borough of Merton by a parent in 1994, implied that libraries were failing to meet the needs of dyslexic individuals by not providing suitable and appropriate resources to help them overcome their problems with reading. The question raised in the letter to the library authority was explicit:

Do you do anything for dyslexic children? For example, a club with an expert in charge - or a wider range of talking books covering essential reading for different age groups.

It seems so sad and wrong that the whole library world is literally a closed book to such children. I feel that the library service could make a really valuable contribution to opening up the world of books to youngsters who are so seriously deprived. [1]

This research project, Public Library Provision of Resources for Dyslexic Individuals, arose from a growing awareness from the author's perspective as a branch librarian and later as a customer services librarian that there was a great deal of interest in the subject of dyslexia. Information regarding the problems associated with dyslexia was often sought, in particular from parents who either had dyslexic children or suspected that their children were dyslexic.

As a branch librarian it was not too difficult to locate descriptive books on the subject of dyslexia that the parent or carer could borrow to gain some insight into the symptoms associated with the condition. It became apparent from questions asked by parents of children and young people with dyslexia about resources that would be helpful for the dyslexic individuals that information about dyslexia as a condition was only part of what libraries could and should provide.
As the title of this thesis suggests, the main thrust of the investigation is primary research on what public libraries are doing to ensure effective resource provision for dyslexic people. The thesis is not primarily about how libraries are providing information on the subject of dyslexia, although this is also a valid public library service. As the review of the literature reveals, there is a great deal written about the subject of dyslexia and almost all public libraries carry reasonable stocks of material about the subject. Individuals with dyslexia are actual or potential library users. Although they need information about their condition, this is only a small part of their library and information needs. Their general needs are not greatly different from other library users. They need access to information about a wide variety of subjects in their daily lives. They also would wish to access the accumulated wisdom to be found in libraries, as well as works of fiction for personal pleasure. Dyslexics, however, have obstacles to overcome both in terms of finding suitable material and dealing with the complex library environment.

At a basic level, there is an assumption that helping potential users overcome obstacles to effective use of libraries is a valid task of the public library service. This assumption needs to be confirmed before moving on to the fundamental question of whether public libraries are providing resources for dyslexic individuals in a way that helps to overcome the obstacles. The main aim of the research was to ascertain to what extent public library authorities are meeting the resource needs of the dyslexic community. Core to the questions to be addressed by this thesis are the points expressed by the mother given above who complained that the public library authority was not providing appropriate resources for use by her dyslexic children.

This thesis aims to determine to what extent the complaint of lack of positive action by public libraries is true on a national level. A methodology needed to be created to gather quantitative and qualitative information from library authorities across England and Wales. It is useful to study in greater detail what is being done in the recognised centres of excellence. Also, since libraries operate as part of a profession with established training and standards, it is appropriate to determine the extent to which the library profession is providing leadership in this area.
A number of core assumptions and questions arise from this thesis and will be investigated. These include:

- Dyslexia is a recognised medical condition and dyslexic individuals have additional obstacles beyond those faced by other library users.

- Helping potential users to overcome obstacles to effective use of libraries is a valid task of the public library service.

- In general, public libraries are not providing resources for dyslexic individuals in a way that helps them to overcome the obstacles.

- Some library authorities are doing more than others, and it is useful to study in greater detail what is being done in the recognised centres of good practice.

- The library profession and major bodies dealing with dyslexia are not providing proactive leadership in the area of resource provision for people with dyslexia.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter Two of the thesis outlines in detail the Research Methodology followed in order to establish what public library authorities are doing to provide resources for dyslexic individuals. The majority of the research investigation and exploration was based on primary fieldwork, i.e. case studies and questionnaire rather than document and literature based research. There were several reasons for choosing primary investigative methodologies. The findings from the review of the literature (Chapter 3) showed that very little had been written by the library profession on meeting the needs of resource provision for use by dyslexic people. This finding, therefore, indicated that the author was not duplicating an area of study that had previously been undertaken. Moreover, there appeared to be a gap in service provision for the dyslexic user community. This information helped the author to decide which research methodologies to pursue. Moreover, over the years the author had developed various inter-personal communicative skills as a library and information professional. The primary research which involved, for example, visiting libraries in different authorities and interviewing the librarians about their resource provision for dyslexic individuals
gave the author the opportunity of using these skills to gain information about the various collections targeted for the dyslexic community.

The *Review of Relevant Literature* in Chapter Three will focus on literature covering a number of concepts, which underpin this thesis. These concepts can be divided into five main subject areas. The first area is some necessary background on dyslexia, including its history and modern attempts to provide a definition of the condition. The second area focuses on the sometimes contentious public debate surrounding the existence of dyslexia. The third section discusses the various users of information about dyslexia whilst the fourth area considers the resource needs of dyslexic individuals themselves. The final sections consider various aspects of the public library, including its culture, its role in dyslexia resource provision and implications for information and resource providers when dealing with the needs of dyslexic individuals. A key area of research is the extent to which resource provision for dyslexic individuals is covered by the professional literature of the library profession in the United Kingdom. The issue is also approached from opposite direction, i.e. the extent to which dyslexia specialists acknowledge the role of public libraries in provision of resources for dyslexic individuals.

Chapter Four of the thesis is made up of two sections. The first section is a case study of a mother with two dyslexic children undertaken at the beginning of the research project. The purpose of this case study was to add a personal human dimension to the difficulties that dyslexics and their families face when attempting to get assistance. In this instance, the initial requirement was information about educational help in order to address the problems associated with this condition. The case study traces the mother's growing awareness that her children were dyslexic and her attempts to get help for them. This included accessing information about the subject of dyslexia in her local public library and details how the information gained helped the mother make important links to a wider dyslexic community. The case study also identifies the need for the public library service to provide material suitable for use by the dyslexic children. The case study provided an early opportunity of identifying that there is a need for public libraries to provide suitable materials for dyslexic individuals.
The second section of Chapter Four is titled *Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities*. This collection of personal views gleaned from an Internet based chat group, provides many insightful comments of how dyslexics, in particular adults with dyslexia, perceive the service they receive in public libraries. This section, like the case study earlier in the same chapter, brings in the human aspects of library user needs. This subject could be a thesis in itself but is included here to provide a context for the core material of the thesis, which addresses what public libraries are actually providing in the way of materials for use by dyslexic individuals.

Core to the thesis is Chapter Five, which is titled *Questionnaire Analysis*. The purpose of the questionnaire, which was sent to 152 public library authorities in England and Wales, was to ascertain the range of service provision and initiatives offered to people with dyslexia. Chapter Five contains an in-depth account and analysis of the findings made from the 114 responses to the questionnaire.

Chapter Six is called *Public Library Case Studies*. Like the previous chapter, this section is core to the thesis because it focuses directly on what some public libraries are actually doing to help the dyslexic communities by providing dedicated 'dyslexia' collections. The case studies undertaken were in the London borough of Ealing (Ealing Central Library); Richmond-upon-Thames (Richmond and East Sheen Libraries); Northamptonshire (Weston Favell and Kettering Libraries) and Kent County Council (Sevenoaks Library). The majority of these libraries target their 'special' collections for use by dyslexic individuals themselves. The library authorities have been investigated and presented in the chapter as comparative case studies covering themes such as origins of the collection, budget, outreach to other organisations and selection of resources for the collection.

Chapter Seven is made up of two parts. The first section is a case study undertaken at REACH (formerly known as the National Library for the Handicapped Child). REACH: National Resource Centre for Children with Reading Difficulties is a resource centre specifically embracing the needs of children and young people with a disability, for example, physical, emotional or intellectual or who, for whatever reason, have difficulty with reading. REACH is a registered charity and depends entirely on
voluntary funding in order to maintain the services it provides to teachers, parents, carers, librarians and anyone who wants help for children who have a problem with reading. Currently in the United Kingdom there is not a "truly national government-funded network" (Marshall, 1991, p.39) for disabled people. The services offered by REACH are unique as it is the only centre of its kind in the United Kingdom that has a collection of resources specially selected to help children and young people who have difficulty accessing the written word. The purpose of the case study was to gain information about the work of REACH and view the library. An interview with the information officer was carried out in order to ascertain how the centre would respond to an enquiry asking for assistance and guidance in providing suitable material for a dyslexic individual.

The second part of Chapter Seven is titled Survey of Publishers and Resource Providers. Authors such as Petersen (1979, p.470) and Marshall (1991, p.18) commented that publishers appear to be doing very little to provide appropriate material for use by people with 'special needs' due to a particular "handicap". Both authors identify that there is a market niche for publishers to enter because there is vast population of people who are "handicapped" for many different reasons. Petersen, however, particularly mentions the condition of dyslexia in his paper and the need for public libraries to "provide printed material that is adapted to the needs of people with a reading handicap - materials that are tailored to their needs" (1979, p.469). Petersen wrote his paper The Handicapped in Reading and the Public Libraries, which was read at the IFLA Congress in Copenhagen in 1979. Marshall's book Managing Library Provision for Handicapped Children was published twelve years later in 1991. In order to establish if publishers had identified the need to provide 'specialist' material for use by people with dyslexia a number of publishers, both 'specialist' and 'mainstream' were contacted in the latter part of 1998.

The final chapter summarises the key points of the thesis against the main points for investigation listed above and comes to conclusions about the questions raised. Issues arising from the research are considered as are the lessons learned. Based on the findings, especially the instances of good practice, some suggestions are made as to the way ahead for public library provision of resources for dyslexic individuals.
1.5 Aims and Objectives

To summarise, the aim of this research was to ascertain the extent to which public libraries meet the resource needs of dyslexic individuals. Research questions to be investigated include:

- What is dyslexia and how does the condition impact on people who wish to use public libraries?
- What are the public library resource needs of dyslexic individuals?
- What types of resources do dyslexic individuals seek from public libraries?
- To what extent do public libraries make provision to assist people with special needs?
- How well does the library profession deal with special needs provision, including for people with dyslexia?
- Do public libraries have policies governing services for people with dyslexia?
- How are public library resources for dyslexic individuals organised and targeted to match user needs?
- What types of resources do public libraries provide for dyslexic individuals?
- Do public libraries have specific budgets for resources for dyslexic individuals?
- Do public libraries have collections specifically for people with dyslexia?
- What examples can be found of good practice in public library provision of resources for dyslexic individuals?

Notes

[1] Letter to London Borough of Merton from parent with a dyslexic child April 1994
CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

A variety of methods of research were employed in this thesis. The main thrust of the thesis was primary research through a series of case studies and a questionnaire sent to all public library authorities in England and Wales. Secondary research was carried out via a review of existing literature covering the topic of dyslexia and the recorded response of the library profession to the condition.

2.2 Literature Review

In order to ascertain the information available concerning dyslexia, a literature review was undertaken. A concentrated period of time from December 1992 to May 1993 was given over to the initial literature review. It quickly became evident that a vast amount has been written about dyslexia. The time taken for the review reflected the fact that material about dyslexia was spread amongst a number of disciplines (in the Social Sciences under psychology and education and in the Sciences, medicine). As new material about dyslexia continued to be produced, the literature review continued along side other areas of the project that were being researched.

After two years of research focused on access to and exploitation of information about dyslexia, it became clear that there was a great deal written about the subject targeting the various user groups within the dyslexic communities, for example, academics, practitioners, parents and policy makers. There appeared to be very little written, however, about the role that libraries play, or should play, in providing suitable reading material in libraries for dyslexics of all ages. The survey of the literature identified this information gap as needing further exploration and primary research. From the end of 1995, therefore, the survey of the literature was directed more specifically towards identifying what public libraries in the United Kingdom were doing to provide resource material for use of by dyslexic individuals.
A wide range of bibliographical tools was consulted in academic, specialist and public libraries. The following libraries and professional organisations were the main foci for this aspect of the research:

- British Library
- Library Association
- London Borough of Merton Libraries
- National Children's Bureau Library
- Pilkington Library (Loughborough University)
- Turner Library (Whitefield School & Centre, London E17)

The early stages of the literature survey concentrated on information that has been written about dyslexia in the United Kingdom. However, it was not easy to limit the survey within these parameters because many journal articles written on this subject are from contributors from other countries (in particular the USA).

2.2.1 Bibliographical Tools Consulted

2.2.1.1 Indexes and Serial Holding Lists:

- British Library Document Supply Centre - Index of Conference Proceedings
- British Education Index
- British Humanities Index
- Clover Index
- Current Index to Journals in Education
- Dissertation Abstracts
- Government Reports Announcements and Index
- Index to Theses (Aslib)
- Library Bulletin Index
- Library and Information Science Abstracts
- Masters Abstracts
- Psychological Abstracts
- Resources in Education
- Social Sciences Citation Index

October 1987 was 'Dyslexia month', which was organised by the British Dyslexia Association to raise public awareness of dyslexia. As a result of this increased focus there were a greater number of articles written about this subject in 1987 and 1988 than in previous periods. The literature review, therefore, was concentrated more particularly on citations that were listed in the bibliographical sources mentioned above, from 1987 to the present time.
2.2.1.2 On-line Searches

On-line searches were conducted on the following databases to identify articles written on the subject of dyslexia. These searches revealed that there were many citations relating to various disciplines such as education, psychology and medicine.

- Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
- Exceptional Child Educational Resource (ECER)
- Whitefield Library Special Needs Database
- Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

Starting in 1995, on-line searches were concentrated more specifically on public library provision for dyslexics. The descriptors used for these on-line search strategy were confined to dyslexia/dyslexic AND libraries. It was felt that descriptors such as 'special needs', 'special learning difficulties' and 'learning disabilities' would be too broad and would cover other educational learning problems encompassed within these terms, for example, hearing and sight loss.

2.2.1.3 Directories

The following directories (available in most public reference libraries) were consulted in order to find out what 'dyslexic' organisations are available for the dyslexic communities to seek out information and guidance:

- London Borough of Merton Local Clubs and Societies File
- FRILLS (Free Information leaflet suppliers) Camden Leisure Services Dept.,

Most of the organisations listed in the directories above were contacted in order to find out what information and literature they had available on the subject of dyslexia.
2.2.2 Other Written Sources Consulted

During the course of the research, information was obtained from the following media:

- Monograph material
- Professional journals
- Magazines (including 'womens' magazines)
- Newspapers (broad sheet and tabloids)

General information was also obtained from television and radio.

2.2.3 Internet Searches

During the latter stages of the research project, access to the Internet became more commonly available to both the academic community and to the public at large. The Internet has vast potential for information retrieval, but also many challenges in terms of its use. It is not unlike a series of vast reference libraries, but lacking the unified catalogue structure. Interestingly from a library perspective, the basic tools for exploring the collections are called 'browsers' (for example, Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer), since they allow the user to move about sampling what there is on the virtual shelves.

More structured search capabilities are provided by so called search engines. These devices do key word searches that provide the user with a list of sites on the web where the key word can be found. A specific word such as 'dyslexia' produces a very extensive list of reference sites to browse. As with traditional on-line searches, it is possible to use the syntax of the search engine to narrow the scope of the search by adding an additional variable, such as DYSLEXIA and LIBRARIES.

Different search engines provide different linkages as well as different syntax styles. Although the core references tend to be very similar, it is worthwhile to approach the subject from different directions. Search engines used for this thesis included Webcrawler, AltaVista, Excite, Yahoo, and searchUK. From the first level searches, identification of reference sites that provide links to related sites was particularly useful. These sites could be 'bookmarked' in the browser software so that they could be
revisited and used as starting points for new searches. An example of a reference site was 'Dyslexia on the Web'. The British Dyslexia Association has a well designed site with useful material, contact points, and electronic links to other related organisations. These bookmarked reference sites, sometimes referred to as 'portals', would be useful for electronic librarianship in the near future.

The Internet is useful for obtaining basic descriptive information about a subject, although it can be rather difficult to assess its accuracy or the credentials of the providers. More complex searches are difficult given the vast amount of material and the limitations of the search mechanisms. There is also an increasingly commercial aspect to the Internet. Many of the sites were for companies selling software, hardware, training or formal education. The sites of publishers identified in other parts of the research were checked to observe what those publishers were highlighting in their publicity material.

A personal web page was designed and published on the web, describing the research being undertaken and inviting contact via e-mail (appendix 1). This site was registered on a number of search engines. Whilst there was little direct response to the site, it was useful as a reference point when opening contact with groups such as the British Dyslexia Association, which in turn led to some useful contacts regarding *Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities* (see Chapter Four). This series of contacts was another productive aspect of Internet use, in that it provided a forum for discussion as well as a source of reference material.

2.2.4 Organisations

Contacts were made to some of the organisations listed in the directories and information files mentioned above to obtain further information sources. These included:

- British Dyslexia Association
- Dyslexia Institute
- Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre
- Merton Dyslexia Association (SW Region)
- Sutton Dyslexia Association
Contacts with the various Dyslexia Associations were made by 'informal' means, typically by telephone. The various organisations were asked what resources and information they had for the dyslexic communities and whether they had a library for public access. None of the organisations listed above had a 'public access' library, although all the organisations were willing to send information packs, book lists, information on teacher training programmes and information about their organisations. Most of the information packs were free (apart from postage and packing costs).

During the initial outreach to the various organisations, enquiries were made as to whether they were aware of any current research being undertaken similar to this research project. Although a wide range of information was sought by individuals, the organisations were not aware of any current research being undertaken to ascertain what information and resources are available in public libraries for the dyslexic communities, and in particular for use by dyslexic people themselves.

2.3 Library Users' Views

Throughout the duration of the research project commencing in December 1992, membership of the Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association was maintained. The benefits of this membership included regular copies of Dyslexia Contact: The Official Magazine of the British Dyslexia Association and the opportunity to interact with other members of the association, notably parents of dyslexic children. Contact with the parent at the heart of the initial case study (see below) was established at meetings of the association. In more general terms, the meetings, special events and the local newsletter were all helpful in making further contacts for research and as opportunities for observation and collection of background information.
2.3.1 Family Case Study

The first part of Chapter Four is a case study of a parent with two dyslexic children, undertaken to explore at a practical level the problems faced by an individual seeking information about dyslexia and the processes necessary to get assistance for her children to overcome the effects of the condition. Particular attention was paid to the availability and dissemination of information on the subject of dyslexia gained through both formal and informal methods. Permission was granted by the family to include their experiences related to the problems of dyslexia in the research project. In order to preserve anonymity, their surname has not been used.

The methodology was based on some elements of the ‘life history’ interview technique. “A ‘life history’ or ‘life-story’ is the autobiography of a person which has been obtained through interview and guided conversation” (McNeill, 1990, p.85). The ‘life history’ approach is similar to other types of ethnography whereby it “places importance on the person’s own interpretations and explanations of their behaviour” (McNeill, 1990, p.86).

Moreover, the ‘life history’ approach:

reminds us that we are always talking, in the end, about people, and this makes it a favoured research tool of the ethnographic researcher, though it may also be used as an initial guide for ‘opening up’ almost any area of research (McNeill, 1990, p.86).

Atkinson in *The Life Story Interview: Qualitative Research Methods Series 44* states that the ‘life story’ or ‘life history’ is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person’s entire life. It begins as a recorded interview, is transcribed, and ends up as a flowing narrative, completely in the words of the person telling the story (Atkinson, 1998, p.3).

The ‘life history’ interview technique allows the researcher to gain an overall view of a person’s experience over time and particularly how that person has managed important aspects of their life (Atkinson, 1998, p.8). However, the ‘life history’ interview
technique can be used in a more limited way to research a specific research need or topic (Atkinson, 1998, p.16).

Atkinson suggests various mechanisms that will assist the researcher in a ‘life history’ project. He stresses the importance of taking time to prepare for the interview process by undertaking research beforehand about the topic or issue. Atkinson also suggests that questions relevant to the person who is being interviewed are prepared in advance. He recommends that the interview process should be as open-ended as possible “to allow the person to hold the floor without interruption for as long as he or she can or wants to on a given topic or period in his or her life” (Atkinson, 1998, p.31).

The interviewer must be prepared to “listen well” which takes patience and concentration. The interviewer should act as a guide throughout the interview process. To keep the dialogue and memory recollections alive, the interviewer should look out for signals that may require them to prompt the interviewee with an appropriate comment or follow-up question (Atkinson, 1998, p.33).

During June 1994 two interviews with Carol, the children’s mother, were undertaken in her home. Some insight into the problems faced by parents with dyslexic children had been gained previously through the initial survey of the literature relating specifically to ‘statementing’ and educational provision for children with dyslexia. A series of open-ended questions were prepared and used to keep the interview flowing (see appendix 2).

The interview responses were tape recorded with the respondent’s permission. A full written transcript was made from the recorded interviews. Atkinson points out that one of the more demanding aspects of the ‘life history’ approach is the transcribing of the recorded interview because it is very time consuming (Atkinson, 1998, p.54). Carol was highly articulate and wide ranging in her comments. It was a considerable task to transcribe faithfully her oral history and then to structure the text into logical themes, using a third person presentation. This approach departs from the classic ‘life history’ presentation, which often uses the interviewee’s own words, but this change was necessary in this instance to manage the data within the overall context of the thesis.
This case study was included to give the subject of dyslexia a human dimension and to introduce succinctly some key themes, that were developed further during the core research activities (e.g. the questionnaire sent to public library authorities).

Observation of Carol was also made on three separate occasions when participating in 'Parents in Partnership' meetings (part of the Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association). These meetings provided opportunities for parents with dyslexic children to come together to disseminate information about how they have managed to receive help, in particular educational assistance, for their dyslexic child/children.

2.3.2 E-Mail Chat Forum

The research for the second section of Chapter Four titled *Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities* was carried out during 1997 but more particularly during the latter part of 1998.

During 1997, the British Dyslexia Association and the Dyslexia Institute were contacted by telephone to ask what facilities and resources they felt public libraries could provide to help people with dyslexia. A letter was also written to the Director of the British Dyslexia Association, but the response came from the 'Helpline Department'. Although the reply provided one or two useful insights as to how libraries should, for example, have helpful assistants on duty who are aware of the problems associated with dyslexia, very little information was offered in terms of what resource provision would be helpful to dyslexic individuals.

The conventional approach to the British Dyslexia Association by telephone and letter had only moderate success, however, the BDA website included e-mail links to their Helpdesk. An e-mail was sent via this mechanism explaining the nature of the research being undertaken and asking for help in reaching the dyslexic community for input on how that community views public libraries and the resources provided. Information about problems arising when using libraries and helpful facilities that libraries could
provide to dyslexic users was also requested. It was also proposed that a hypertext link be made to the thesis website from the BDA site.

Although the website link was not agreed, a dialogue began as the e-mail was passed to various contacts within the British Dyslexia Association. A member of the BDA Computer Committee passed along the request for information about public libraries and dyslexia to various Dyslexia Associations and a number of useful replies were received. Eventually a link was made to the dyslexia chat forum, which in turn generated a good deal of useful personal input from dyslexic library users. This material provided the raw material for the second section in Chapter Four.

2.4 Public Library Questionnaire

The review of relevant literature indicated that very little has been written about the provision of resource materials by public library authorities for dyslexic individuals. Two case studies (discussed in Chapter Six) were carried out with authorities identified during the survey of the literature. It was decided, however, that a more proactive approach was needed to ascertain on a national scale what public library authorities were doing to provide both information about the subject of dyslexia and, most importantly, resources for use by dyslexic individuals themselves.

It was decided, therefore, that the best way to determine what public library authorities in England and Wales were doing to facilitate their respective dyslexic communities was to send them a questionnaire. According to Moore "Questionnaires are cheap, relatively flexible and can be used to reach a very large number of people. They can be designed to provide a degree of anonymity or to enable the researcher to follow up certain points at another time" (Moore, 1987, pp 19-20).

Another purpose of the questionnaire was to identify further opportunities for interview/surveys and/or case studies. For example, the findings from the questionnaire revealed that the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames had created an additional 'Wordwise' collection at East Sheen Library and that Northamptonshire also
had a collection at Kettering Library as well as the original one at Weston Favell. Interviews were arranged at both of these libraries.

2.4.1 Design of the Questionnaire

A copy of the questionnaire and the covering letter explaining the nature of the research project sent to public library authorities in England and Wales can be found in appendix 3.

The covering letter sent to all the targeted library authorities conveyed that a separate questionnaire was also going to be sent to all the school library services operated by public library authorities. However, the nature of how school library services are run has changed during the past few years, and fewer services are run by public library authorities (Huckle, 1997, p.362). It was realised, therefore, that this investigation would be a separate, major project unto itself. Although a great deal of time had been spent compiling a questionnaire for school library services run by public library authorities, it was decided in August 1997 to abandon the idea of piloting it and to give full attention to the core study of public library provision for dyslexic individuals.

The questionnaire design was compiled in 'open' and 'closed' question format, with closed questions (i.e. where the respondent is offered a choice of boxes to tick) given prominence in the questionnaire presentation. As suggested by Moore, it was important that the questionnaire appears simple, jargon free, expedient and straightforward to answer (Moore, 1987). Too many 'open' questions, that invite the respondents to write down an answer, can often be off putting because these can take time and effort. However, a balance has to be reached because answers to 'open' questions can often reveal insights that might be lost through the confines of 'closed questioning' techniques.

A further rather important design consideration of the questionnaire was not to have too many questions. Originally it was intended to keep the questionnaire to a maximum of eight questions. Compiling a questionnaire is surprisingly time consuming and,
contrary to Moore's (1987, pp 19-20) comment about them "being cheap", the cost mounts up with printing, postage and the stamped address envelope for reply. In order to make the questionnaire worthwhile, i.e. to learn as much about public library provision as possible, as well as justifying the expense of sending it, the questions were expanded to ten categories (sixteen questions in total.)

An area of improvement that could have made with the layout of the questionnaire was to have the questions printed on both sides of the page. Instead the questions were on one side of the page only, making the questionnaire appear to be four pages long instead of two. This could have had an adverse psychological effect on the potential respondent to the questionnaire, but due to the interest in this subject by the respondents this did not seem to have been a significant problem in practice.

The main thrust of the questions asked in the questionnaire 'Dyslexia: Information needs and provision in public libraries' was to ascertain what resource material public libraries are actually providing for dyslexic individuals themselves and how the material is organised and managed.

The list of resources used in questions 5 and 6 was developed through the survey of the literature that led to the identification of public library authorities which were known to be making some organised provision for dyslexic individuals (Chapter Six). Findings from the REACH case study (Chapter Seven: Section one) were also used.

The questionnaire also posed several questions concerning the availability of material to meet the information needs of individuals who want to find out more about the subject of dyslexia.
2.4.2 Piloting the Questionnaire

The questionnaire 'Dyslexia: Information Needs and Provision in Public Libraries' was piloted in March 1997. The source used to identify the various library authorities in the United Kingdom (excluding Scotland) was Libraries in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland 1997 Directory published by the Library Association.

The objective was to pilot the questionnaire with approximately a dozen public library authorities with a reasonable geographic spread. To achieve this goal named heads of library services outlined in Libraries in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland 1997 Directory were telephoned and asked for their co-operation with the pilot questionnaire. It was agreed with the authorities willing to take part in the pilot at the time that if there were no significant changes made to the questionnaire that the authority would not be asked to repeat the exercise. A total of 14 library authorities agreed to take part in the pilot questionnaire.

2.4.3 Results of the Pilot Questionnaire

Of the 14 pilot questionnaires sent, there were 11 replies. This was an encouraging response and suggested that the questionnaire was fairly straightforward and not too difficult to complete. The pilot was helpful in identifying any areas or questions that needed to be either modified or amended in order to make the questionnaire easier to respond to. Moreover, it was also a useful mechanism to identify various minor errors that had been made.

Two authorities queried question 5. This was amended slightly in the main mailing questionnaire. In the pilot questionnaire the wording of question 5 read "Which of the dyslexic resources are available in your library?". This was changed in the main mailing questionnaire in order to make it a little clearer to "Which of the following resources for dyslexics are available in your library service?".
Question 8, relating to budget allocated for dyslexic resources, asked in the pilot sampling: "Please give the figure for purchase of resources for the last financial year?". This question was changed in the main mailing to "Please give the figures for the purchase of resources for the last 3 financial years". The reason for this was to chart whether the authorities that have a separate budget for resource provision for dyslexics sustain it in order to augment their collections annually.

One authority conveyed that in the pilot questionnaire 'British' had been left out of 'Directory of British Associations' in question 10a. This error was corrected in the main questionnaire.

Since several authorities of their own volition made some insightful and revealing comments on their questionnaire, it was decided, therefore, to include an additional sheet for further comments or as an opportunity for them to raise any specific issues relating to the topic. This additional sheet was included with the main mailing questionnaire. No further amendments were made to the text on the questionnaire. The main questionnaire, however, was printed on green paper so that it was instantly noticeable and looked more inviting to answer.

As very few changes were made to the questionnaire used for the main mailing the data obtained from the pilot could be easily amalgamated to the overall findings. Also there was no need to repeat the mailing for the 11 authorities who responded to the pilot.

The main mailing questionnaire was despatched to library authorities at the end of April and the beginning of May 1997. 'Chaser' letters (see appendix 3) were sent out at the beginning of June 1997 to the authorities that had not responded by the cut-off date stipulated on the questionnaire.

2.4.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire had been designed so that some of the questions could be analysed on a largely quantitative basis whilst others would be more qualitative. Both
approaches have their value, but neither would be sufficient alone to address the complex area of dyslexia provision by public libraries. There were some challenges in constructing and later analysing a fairly long questionnaire with both open and closed ended questions. Respondents were also encouraged to make additional comments, on a question by question basis and on a "free expression" basis. It was felt that the questionnaire was potentially the prime tool of the research associated with this thesis and that the opportunity should be taken to get the maximum benefit from it.

The response to the questionnaire exceeded expectations in terms of authorities willing to participate, the thoroughness and high quality of the responses and notably the volume and depth of the comments and other information provided.

The quantitative answers were the easiest to deal with. Grids with the names of all the authorities in alphabetical order were prepared with the questions and the possible choices of answers for each on the other axis. Tick marks were entered as appropriate and the columns were totalled. The summary data was entered on Excel spreadsheets and the graph making capability was used to produce pie charts or bar graphs depending on the complexity of the data. The program also could indicate percentages of the responses falling into the various categories. This visual approach was a useful way to present the data, leading to observations and analysis.

The qualitative data was more difficult and time consuming to deal with, but was very valuable for gaining an understanding of the current (at that time) role of public libraries in provision of material for dyslexic individuals. All comments were recorded, either in association with specific questions or as "free expression". Once entered in MS Works (word processing) files, it was possible to cut and paste the entries in order to analyse the material by themes. In all cases, it was considered good practice to preserve the base material unchanged in their original files to create new working files that could be manipulated as necessary without destroying the original record of what was provided by the respondents.

Although associated with the questionnaire, the policy statements and other material provided by the authorities were analysed separately. The questionnaire guidance
invited the respondents to provide such material and it proved a rich source of information on the policy concerns and emphases of the various authorities. Leaflets produced that directly described the collections and served as invitations for dyslexic library users, although rare, were of particular interest.

2.5 Public Library Case Studies

Two case studies of public libraries having 'special' collections targeting the specific needs of dyslexic individuals were identified through the survey of the literature. The first case study undertaken in June 1993 at Ealing Central Library was initiated after seeing in the April 1993 edition of the Library Association Record a captioned photograph of the children's librarian at Ealing Central Library arranging "books in the new WORDWISE section for children suffering from dyslexia and other reading difficulties. Ealing Council is one of the first in the country to introduce a special section devoted to children with dyslexia. Ealing Dyslexia Association, which contributed £1,000 towards the £2,500 project, suggested the section. More than 300 books and 500 cassettes are available"(Library Association, 1993, p.256). This captioned photograph was a focal point for undertaking some proactive research into local authorities that had established specialist dyslexia collections.

The second case study to arise from the survey of the literature was identified after seeing information published in the December 1994 edition of Dyslexia Contact: The Official Magazine of the British Dyslexia Association. The information provided in this core source material for dyslexic communities was relating to a 'special needs' section at Weston Favell Library. The Dyslexia Contact contains 'Local Association News' and the Northampton Association indicated in this section that they "have had a hand in choosing books for the special needs section of Weston Favell's Library" (Dyslexia Contact, 1994, p.29).

The interviews at Ealing and Weston Favell (see Appendix 4) were useful both in terms of their content and for piloting the questionnaire based interview and the physical surveys of the collections.
An interview/survey was carried out at Richmond Library in July 1993 shortly after the interview with the children's librarian at Ealing Library. During the course of the interview at Ealing, the children's librarian mentioned it was learnt that Ealing Library was not the first library to have a 'Wordwise' collection targeting children with dyslexia. Richmond library had started a 'Wordwise' collection a few years previously.

The remaining case studies were undertaken in October, 1997 at Kettering Library (Northamptonshire) and East Sheen Library (Richmond-upon-Thames). The case study at Sevenoaks Library (Kent County Council) was carried out in August 1998. These three case studies resulted from the replies made to the questionnaire that was sent to the 152 library authorities in the United Kingdom (excluding Scotland).

A second visit was made to Richmond Library in November 1997 to speak to the Senior Young Peoples librarian who had more knowledge of how the collections in the London borough of Richmond-upon-Thames had been started.

2.5.1 Interviews

The purpose of the interview surveys was to investigate how the various collections had been originally set up, and to establish what type of the library is providing resources for dyslexic individuals. The initial means of contact to the librarians in the respective libraries was made by telephone. Each librarian agreed to take part in a structured interview relating to resource provision for dyslexic individuals and discuss the nature of the 'special' collections held in their library.

The basis of the interviews carried out in each of the libraries was to ask the librarian to answer a set of questions prepared in advance of the interview (see appendix 4). Very similar approaches were used in the subsequent interview/surveys. A clear distinction arose, however, between the mixed collections, which contained both material about dyslexia as a condition and materials identified as useful or interesting for dyslexic library users themselves, and those more limited collections that contained only material about the subject.
The pre-prepared set of questions were used more to prompt the respondent rather than to strictly adhere to a rigid set of questions. All the respondents who took part in the interviews were free flowing speakers so, therefore, it was not always possible to follow the structure of the questions. All the librarians taking part in the interviews granted permission to tape the interviews. A written transcript was made of all the tape recorded interviews. The transcripts were used as the basis to undertake a thematic comparative analysis of the different case studies. Permission was granted in writing from all the library authorities concerned to name all the libraries taking part in the case studies and to be able to write the findings in the thesis. All library authorities that participated in the case studies were phoned on several occasions after the respective interview/surveys had taken place for updates and to ascertain how the collection in the library was progressing.

2.6 REACH Case Study

The purpose of the visit to REACH was predominantly to see which types of resources were available at the Centre (in particular for children with dyslexia) and to carry out an interview with the information officer to learn as much about the library as possible and to understand how REACH deals with queries on special needs such as dyslexia.

A taped interview with the information officer lasted for approximately two hours. Permission was granted from the interviewee to tape the interview. The interview technique was not rigidly structured by a set of prepared questions. This led to a full and free-flowing dialogue from the information officer. A transcript was made of the taped interview that formed the basis of the REACH case study. Permission was granted from the information officer to include the case study in the thesis.
2.7 Survey of Publishers

In October and November 1998 (shortly after the commencement of the National Year of Reading) ten publishers were contacted by telephone in order to ascertain if they targeted any of their resource provision specifically for use by people with dyslexia. The criteria for the choice of publishers were identified via various sources - for example, through the questionnaire replies and the names of publishers that had been mentioned several times in the case studies.

A set of questions had been prepared in advance of the telephone interview (appendix 5). The typical opening of the telephone interview with the representative of the publishing house was to mention the nature of the research project and also to ask if the publishing company was undertaking any special activities for the National Year of Reading. This led on to questions about materials that the company provided, especially those that might be of use for dyslexic individuals. Where positive answers were received to these general questions, more information was sought concerning contacts with dyslexia related organisations and plans for the future.

2.8 Summary

In summary, a variety of research methods were used to investigate the resource needs of dyslexic individuals and the provision of resources for use by dyslexic individuals in public libraries. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed through out the course of the research. The quantitative data were used to objectively assess the extent of resource provision by public libraries on a nation wide basis. The qualitative data were used to confirm and explain aspects of the quantitative research, to give a fuller perspective to the activities of librarians attempting to address resource provision, and to share the human experiences of dyslexic individuals and the people who support them.
CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will review relevant literature covering a number of concepts which underpin this thesis. These concepts can be broken down into five main subject areas. The first area is some necessary background on dyslexia, including its history and modern attempts to provide a definition of the condition. The second area focuses on the sometimes contentious public debate surrounding dyslexia. The third section discusses the various users of information about dyslexia whilst the fourth section considers the resource needs of dyslexic individuals themselves.

The final section concerns the implications for the information and resource providers in the public library sector when dealing with the needs of dyslexic individuals. This includes some discussion of the impact of information technology on libraries.

3.2 Dyslexia Background

Before considering the role of public libraries in provision of resources for dyslexic individuals, it is necessary to have a general understanding of the condition. The following section begins by putting dyslexia into its historic context, touching on early theories on the subject and showing how understanding of the condition has grown over the past century. The second section within this area of study gives examples of more modern attempts to provide a working definition of dyslexia.

3.2.1 The History of Dyslexia

'Dyslexia' is a term that has been, and continues to be, the subject of a great deal of debate. The word literally means "defective language", but is more often interpreted wrongly as "defective reading" (Augur, 1986, p.220).
This has led to the belief that any child who had difficulty in reading should be termed 'dyslexic'. Some educational psychologists point out, however, that 'dyslexia' is a far more complex concept than simply being unable to read properly. Other symptoms can include difficulty in writing properly, erratic spelling, poor memory recall and difficulty in differentiating between right and left. Moreover, individuals may suffer from any one or several of these symptoms.

Dyslexia, compared to many other forms of disabilities, for example, blindness and deafness, is far more complex because it is not readily apparent (Osmond, 1993, p.7). Even with visual impairment and hearing loss, there are degrees of affliction and it may be difficult to recognise the degree of the problem in very young children. The same is true of dyslexia, although the condition cannot be readily measured before the child reaches an age when use of the written word becomes significant. Furthermore, children learn at different rates and unless specialist expertise is available the condition can go undiagnosed for a considerable period (Osmond, 1993, p.1).

The symptoms described above, but in particular the difficulty in reading, was first recognised over a century ago by the medical profession as 'word-blindness'. The term was coined by Kussmaul in 1877 who stated that word-blindness represents the "pathological condition of a special faculty" and that "a complete text blindness may exist although the power of sight, intellect, and the powers of speech are intact" (qtd in Richardson, 1992, p.41). Dr W. Pringle Morgan later used the term 'congenital word blindness'. In the November 7th, 1896 edition of the British Medical Journal an article written by Morgan entitled 'A Case of Congenital Word Blindness' was published. This article was based on a case study concerning a 14 year old boy who was:

...a well grown lad, aged 14 - is the eldest son of intelligent parents, the second child of a family of seven. He has always been a bright and intelligent boy, quick at games, and in no way inferior to others of his age.

His great difficulty has been - and is now - his inability to learn to read. This inability is so remarkable, and so pronounced, that I have no doubt it is due to some congenital defect (Morgan, 1896, p.1378, article reprinted in Dyslexia: November 1996, p.146).
The 14 year old boy was bright and of average intelligence. Although he had few problems with arithmetic he had great difficulty with reading and straightforward spelling. He was unable to spell words that he had seen on numerous occasions including his own name. Morgan wrote:

He (the boy) seems to have no power of preserving and storing up the visual impression produced by words - hence the words, though seen, have no significance for him. His visual memory for words is defective or absent; which is equivalent to saying that he is what Kussmaul has termed "word blind".

Cases of word blindness are always interesting, and this case is, I think particularly so. It is unique, so far as I know, in that it follows upon no injury or illness, but is evidently congenital, and due most probably to defective development of that region of the brain, disease of which in adults produces - practically the same symptoms - that is, the left angular gyrus (Morgan, 1896, p.1378, article reprinted in *Dyslexia*: November 1996, p.146).

The article written by Morgan and published over a hundred years ago in the *British Medical Journal* expresses very succinctly and recognisably some of the symptoms associated with the condition that is known in contemporary society as dyslexia.

'Congenital word-blindness' was also used by James Hinchelwood a Scottish ophthalmologist in the early 1900's when he referred to Morgan's case study. He stated that "this first recorded case is thus a typical example of congenital word-blindness possessing the two essential characteristics of genuine cases, viz., gravity of the defect and purity of the symptoms" (qtd in Richardson, 1992, p.41). The medical sciences continued to dominate research in the areas of word-blindness and in particular the American neuropathologist, Samuel T. Orton. Orton, however, preferred to use the term 'developmental word-blindness'. In an article written by Orton entitled "Word-blindness' in School Children" which appeared in *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* in 1925, Orton, like Hinchelwood recognised through research that:

....the reading disability forms a graded series in severity, that it is not generically related to general mental retardation; that it is explainable as a variant in the establishment of the physiologic lead in the hemispheres rather than as a pathological condition and, as a corollary of the latter view, that proper methods of retraining, if started early enough, may be expected to overcome the difficulty (qtd in Richardson, 1992, p.42).
Orton, in collaboration with Bessie Stillman and Anna Gillingham, "devised a teaching programme for dyslexic children which was based on a systematic examination of their needs" (Miles, 1993, p.57). Out of this developed a "multi-sensory" approach of teaching dyslexic individuals. This has come to be known as the "Orton-Gillingham method" (Ott, 1997, p.63). This method of teaching people who are dyslexic "utilises a multisensory, sequential, systematic approach, with frequent drill, identification of sounds and application of generalizations regarding spelling and reading the English language" (Bliss, 1986, p.295).

Karnes writes that "the greatest contribution Dr Orton made, as a physician and teacher, to the field of dyslexia, which is the term used today, was the recognition that expressive and receptive written language involve spelling and handwriting as well as reading: all three are absolutely interdependent" (Karnes: 1996, p.149).

The term 'dyslexia', however, was introduced in 1887 by a German ophthalmologist named Berlin, to describe a group of patients who had severe difficulty in reading due to cerebral disease. In essence, dyslexia was originally used by Berlin to describe an acquired condition, and he saw dyslexia as being related to the general family of aphasias. (Richardson, 1992, p.41). The term dyslexia was not used widely until much later, however.

It was not until fairly recently that dyslexia ceased to be regarded purely as a medical problem. Disciplines within the social sciences such as psychology, educational psychology and education have now taken a greater interest in this area. The most commonly used terms by academics are 'congenital dyslexia', 'specific developmental dyslexia', and 'acquired dyslexia'.

32
3.2.2 Modern Definitions of Dyslexia

The Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre in their booklet *Making Words Make Sense* states that:

Dyslexia means difficulty with words. At least four children in 100, or one in every classroom, will have a particular difficulty with reading or writing which has no apparent explanation, because the basis for the problem was built-in before the child was born. This difficulty is specific to the ability to learn written language and is independent of other abilities and of intelligence and social class. Although poor memory for words is the primary symptom there may be difficulty in remembering the order of things and problems with orientation in space and time (Arkell, 1996, p.3).

This definition highlights problems with the written word as being the heart of dyslexia, but also puts it into the context of arising with no obvious explanation such as impaired vision or mental retardation. It also touches on the other difficulties, beyond problems with written language that are associated with dyslexia.

In the booklet titled *Dyslexia: Early Help, Better Future* written by Jean Augur for the British Dyslexia Association, dyslexia is defined as:

...a specific difficulty in learning, in one or more of reading, spelling and written language which may be accompanied by difficulty in number work, short-term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, and motor skills. It is particularly related to mastering and using written language - alphabetic, numeric and musical notation. In addition, oral language is often affected to some degree.

Dyslexia occurs despite normal teaching and is independent of socio-economic background or intelligence. It is, however, more easily detected in those with average or above average intelligence (Augur, 1992, p.1).

This definition expands on the variety of problems that can accompany difficulties in reading and writing and notes that the condition is most easily observed in people with average or above average intelligence, that is, where these particular skills lag behind other indicators of intelligence.
One section in Christine Ostler's book *Dyslexia: A Parents' Survival Guide* is titled 'What is dyslexia?'. She suggests:

Dyslexia is (1) an organizing difficulty
(2) a memory difficulty
(3) a word-finding difficulty

Difficulties in these areas play havoc with the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, and are at the heart of what can make living with a dyslexic so frustrating (Ostler, 1991, p.17).

This definition broadly agrees with those provided by Arkell and Auger, but gives more emphasis to organising and memory difficulties.

The World Federation of Neurology defined dyslexia as a "disorder in children, who despite conventional classroom experience fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities" (qtd. in Hicks and Murgatroyd, 1985, p.11). Hicks and Murgatroyd give a broader interpretation to what dyslexia is: They say:

As a syndrome, dyslexia is usually characterised by the child displaying some or all of the following: a discrepancy between intellectual level and literacy performance, bizarre spelling, confusion of letter orientation and order, left/right confusion, short term memory dysfunctions, sequencing difficulties, graphomotor problems, sinistrality or ambidexterity and poor ideational fluency (Hicks and Murgatroyd, 1985, p.11).

This definition gives more emphasis to physical manifestations and to problems of putting ideas across in a succinct and fluent manner.

Quin states that dyslexia has two meanings and two main instances when it might arise:

a. the strictly scientific one, that of impairment of reading ability.
b. the common usage one that my child is not learning to read as well as he should.

Acquired Dyslexia is the failure of reading ability in a competent adult as the result of disease. There are several patterns. Developmental Dyslexia is the failure of a child to acquire reading normally due to disease or trauma. Specific Developmental Dyslexia, sometimes shortened to Dyslexia, is the failure of a child to acquire reading normally for no recognizable cause (Quin, 1991, p.192).
John Osmond’s book *The Reality of Dyslexia* which was produced in association with Channel Four’s programme *Dyslexia* also answers the question ‘what is dyslexia?’ embracing many of the elements of the previous statements. Osmond writes:

The word dyslexia comes from the Greek language and its literal translation is *dys* - difficulty, *lexis* - words: hence, difficulty with words, difficulty with reading, spelling, written prose and sometimes arithmetic. It is estimated that 60 per cent of dyslexics have difficulty with numeracy.

Dyslexia occurs in spite of normal teaching and is independent of socio-cultural background or intelligence. In fact, far from being a ‘middle-class disease’ dyslexia occurs in people across the same class and intelligence range as the rest of the population.

A dyslexic person may also have difficulties with orientation (for example, distinguishing between left and right), time, short term memory (auditory or visual), sequencing, auditory or visual perception and motor skills. Many specialists speak of a ‘pattern of difficulties’. (Osmond, 1993, p.7).

Osmond’s writings were based on a number of experiences of dyslexic individuals both adults, young people, children and their families. He points out that "there are strong indications that dyslexic characteristics are genetically linked, so run in families" (Osmond, 1993, p.6). He also gained insight and discussion on the condition and problems associated with dyslexia from a range of professional experts in the field.

These included professionals such as Professor Tim Miles who contributed to the forward to Osmond’s book. It is interesting to note that Miles in his editorial comment to the first published edition of *Dyslexia: An International Journal of Research and Practice: The Journal of the British Dyslexia Association* writes:

It is central to our philosophy that dyslexia is an interdisciplinary subject and that many different approaches are to be encouraged. For this reason we do not insist that contributors should adhere to any one definition of dyslexia or that submissions should adopt any one methodology. If a paper is good of its kind that is sufficient reason for publishing it (Miles, 1995, p.1).
Miles continues to stress the importance of not limiting the conditions associated with dyslexia too narrowly and he states:

Those who submit papers may like to bear in mind the difficulties of equating 'dyslexia' simply with 'poor reading'. It is now well established both that manifestations of dyslexia can occur before reading has started and that many older people who show other signs of dyslexia can read without too much difficulty. (Miles, 1995, p.1).

There is no absolute consensus of what dyslexia is, although it is widely accepted that it often includes difficulty with the written word, for example, reading, writing, and spelling. It also can involve broader problems such as short term memory, difficulty in differentiating between left and right, weak organisational skills and poor physical co-ordination. These latter problems would have bearing on how the individual deals with a variety of complex institutions and life experiences (for example, use of public libraries), not just directly related to reading.

On the other hand, other causes can be identified for problems with the written word that do not relate to dyslexia, for example, poor eye sight, hearing loss, and low intelligence. Given this lack of clear cut definitions and acceptance of the exact parameters of the condition, it is not surprising that there is considerable political and academic debate about dyslexia, its causes and appropriate public and/or professional response.

3.3 Debates Surrounding Dyslexia

There appears to be no unanimity amongst psychologists and educationalists as to what causes 'dyslexia' or even if there is any such specific condition as 'dyslexia'.
Moreover, to complicate the issue further, even some of the psychologists and educational 'experts' who do recognise such symptoms as difficulty in reading, writing and spelling, poor memory recall, and bad co-ordination, do not accept the term 'dyslexia' for these symptoms:

Calling children Down's Syndrome, cerebral palsied or dyslexic tells us nothing about what they can or cannot do. Sometimes this kind of labelling leads to inappropriate, fuzzy assumptions about a child's ability, or the sorts of teaching techniques that might be used to help (Portsmouth, 1988, p.12).

The neurologists, educational psychologists and educational experts who do accept that the term 'dyslexia' is a meaningful one often find themselves under attack from other members of their own profession who do not believe in either the concept or the terminology of 'dyslexia'.

Augur argues that a problem must have a name if there is to be any chance of understanding and dealing with it. Giving it a three word name such as 'Specific Learning Difficulties' as used by Warnock, is better than failing to name it at all, but is really no advance on using the word 'dyslexia' which, despite being resisted by so-called 'experts', is now becoming accepted and understood by the general public. (Augur, 1986, p.228-229).

Pumfrey concurs with Augur and states that:

The adoption of the concept of special educational needs in the Education Act, 1981, did not abolish types of handicap. It provided an umbrella category. At a given point in time, either you have or do not have special educational needs. If in the former category, you are likely to be eligible for additional resources. The fuzziness of the concept 'special educational need' is awe inspiring. Inevitably, trying to agree its boundaries has proved impossible (Pumfrey, 1991, p.223).

However, Pumfrey like Quin (section 3.2.2 above) stresses the importance of distinguishing the two separate meanings of dyslexia:

Definitions serve an invaluable scientific function. They encourage users to be explicit and to examine the validity of the concepts involved.

For example, it is important to distinguish between 'acquired dyslexia' and 'specific developmental dyslexia'. (Pumfrey, 1991, p.224).
Even when 'dyslexia' is recognised and the term acknowledged as being a valid concept, academics and practitioners still debate as to how the condition or syndrome should be labelled and presented.

The terminology used to describe the symptoms associated with dyslexia appear to have become less clearly defined since disciplines in the social sciences such as education and psychology have taken a more active role in this condition. To many, the disciplines that fall within the category of the social sciences consists of theorising and constant debate without coming to any agreement. The social sciences are often accused of being "immature, riddled with unnecessary jargon and biased by extreme political persuasions" (Abercrombie, 1984, p.7). Moreover, "information providers complain that they cannot supply suitable services because of social scientists continued use of vague or woolly terminology" (Adam, 1982, p.396).

The rising use of information communication technology, for example, on-line retrieval database systems, and particularly, in the late 1990s the Internet, may bring about a more definite movement for conceptual and terminology analysis in the social sciences.

There are still some educational authorities throughout the United Kingdom which choose not to use the term 'dyslexia' but use the blanket term 'specific learning difficulties' or 'special educational needs'. This resistance to the use of the word itself may reflect the current economic climate in education in that it is costly to have a 'specialist' teacher of the dyslexic as part of the school staff.

Although dyslexia is becoming more commonly recognised, it is often very difficult for parents to get their child statemented in order to receive the specialist teaching that is required to improve their reading, writing and spelling needs. Furthermore, there is a great deal of debate both at academic and practitioner level as to which teaching method best suits the needs of dyslexic children.

Various remedial methods are employed when children are not developing reading skills in line with their age group. The essence of the approach is that concentrated
delivery of conventional teaching practice can improve the performance of children who do not do as well in a large class environment. The Bullock report (1975) stated that "there is no one method, medium, approach, device or philosophy that hold the key to the process of learning to read" (qtd. in Ott, 1997, p.63).

Successful teachers of reading tend to develop their own methods over a period of time. There is a natural tendency to come to believe that their core methodology is the one that should be followed to the exclusion of others. This single minded approach can bear fruit in some cases but not for all. Certain methods become firmly established, especially if they are taught in teaching training colleges. This can be true for the general teaching of reading as well as special needs training. The inference is that if the teaching were not successful for an individual child, there is a tendency to reject other methods beyond the ones with which the teacher was comfortable.

It is becoming more apparent that many 'specialist' teachers use the 'multi-sensory learning' approach, based on the Orton-Gillingham philosophy, to help dyslexic children learn to read, write and spell. According to Augur, multi-sensory learning is "by the simultaneous use of the eyes, ears, speech organs, fingers and muscles. The aim is for the learner to learn the names, sounds and shapes of all phonograms so he has permanent and automatic response" (qtd. in Ott, 1997, p.64).

Hickey, a specialist teacher of dyslexic individuals, used the multi-sensory learning approach in order to help children learn to read. She suggests that:

the value of multi-sensory learning is that it enables the individuals to use their own approach to the tasks through utilizing their strong areas and at the same time exercising their faulty ones. They use their visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic and oral-kinaesthetic perceptual systems to make learning secure (qtd. in Ott, 1997, p.65).

Teachers of the dyslexic are specially trained to help people overcome their problem. They have undergone specialist training with such organisations as the British Dyslexia Association; the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre; The Dyslexia Institute; or the Hornsby International Dyslexia Centre. Teachers of dyslexic individuals typically are trained to
use a variety of teaching methods, for example, phonetic/linguistic therapy (for spelling aid), special handwriting techniques and flashcards to teach letter/sound associations.

There is a legal requirement laid down in Part III of the 1993 Education Act and Regulations (an extension of the principles and practices that were first stated in the 1981 Education Act) that "maintained schools must use their best endeavours to make provision for pupils with special educational needs" (Department for Education, 1994, p.i). In 1994 the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational needs was issued by the Secretary of State as a result of the 1993 Education Act. This Code is an advisory document rather than mandatory. Its main purpose is to offer "guidance to LEAs as to the circumstances in which assessments and statements might be made. It does not - and could not - tell them what to do in each individual case" (DFE, 1994, p.i).

There may be a reluctance by certain educational authorities to declare border line cases to be 'dyslexic' due to economic cut-backs in local authority spending leading to shortage of resources such as 'specialist' teachers. The 1993 Warnock Report estimated that one in five children, about one million in total, were not getting necessary educational support because their local education authorities were not properly assessing their learning problems. (Osmond, 1993, p.121).

Osmond notes that even when a Statement of Special Needs is made, there can be a very long delay between the application and the Statement. According to a 1992 Audit Commission report the average period was about a year but in some cases it could be up three years (Osmond, 1993, p.121).

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (1994: p.46) specifies that the period from the receipt of a request for a statutory assessment until the issue of the final copy of the statement should normally be no more than 26 weeks. Even when a child is statemented, which appears to be relatively rare for children who are dyslexic, there is no guarantee that they will receive teaching from a practitioner who has specialised in the needs of the dyslexic. As a result of this official reluctance to acknowledge the needs of the dyslexic community,
many parents must seek and pay for private assistance for their children which is often very costly and, in many cases, beyond their financial capabilities.

Underlying the debate about dyslexia has been the belief, or at least suspicion, in some quarters that dyslexia does not really exist as a clearly defined medical condition. It was not unusual to have it dismissed as "a middle class" condition that was taken up by worried parents when their children did not live up to their academic expectations. It was also convenient for authorities charged with taking action to deal with Special Educational Needs, to let the debate continue on the basis of observation and theory rather than on medical grounds (Osmond, 1993).

The medical aspects of dyslexia, however, have come to the fore in recent studies, notably in the work by the husband and wife team of Doctors Sally and Bennett Shaywitz at the Yale Center for Learning and Attention. The researchers used functional brain imaging which measures blood flow as an indicator of brain activity. Marked differences were observed in the brains of dyslexic and non dyslexic individuals undertaking the same set of tasks. The magnetic resonance imaging showed evidence that "poor reading skills can be characterised by a distinctive neurobiological signature". It is claimed that this work "provides a genuine physical basis for dyslexia, the existence of which has been disputed" (Ahuja, 1998, p.17).

Dyslexia, according to the dyslexic specialist Dr. Beve Hornsby is not an uncommon problem in that it affects around "one child in ten". Moreover, "many adults who have difficulty with reading, writing or spelling may be unaware that dyslexia may be the cause" (Hornsby, 1984, p.1.) Children who have this problem may find it difficult to learn at school and, therefore, be labelled 'low achievers'.

There is great pressure on young people today to perform well in G.C.S.E exams which may be very difficult for the dyslexic individual. Moreover, later in life it may be very difficult for these individuals to gain employment in a climate where the job market is highly competitive and often good G.C.S.E (or A level) results are a requirement of job descriptions.
The London Borough of Hillingdon was found guilty of a breach of its duty of care by not diagnosing dyslexia in the case of Pamela Phelps until two years before the end of her formal schooling. She was awarded a payment of £45,000. The claim by the local authority that it was not reasonable to expect them to respond to such a condition when they had to teach such a large number of students of differing levels of ability was not accepted by the trial judge, nor was the claim that this decision would "open the floodgates". The case was given additional prominence since Ms Phelps' barrister was Cherie Booth, the wife of the Prime Minister (McMillan, 1997, p.6). However, the decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal in November 1998. Given the landmark nature of the case, a petition to the House of Lords is to be considered (Morgan, 1998, p.19).

A recent survey by the Professional Teachers Association and the British Dyslexia Association confirmed that many children are not being diagnosed or given the attention needed to overcome dyslexia. Fewer than half of the teachers surveyed felt that they had the skills to recognise the condition. If anything, the situation was worse in the past and, therefore, "There are thought to be thousands of children now in their twenties and thirties who were never spotted at school and will consequently find it difficult if not impossible to become fully literate" (Revill, 1997, p.6).

The social implications of the problems associated with dyslexia cannot, therefore, be ignored. Dyslexia affects a large proportion of society from different socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, there are a wide variety of people in society who either have a need or could make use of information about dyslexia. If the education system is continuing to fail to address this major issue for a large number of people, then other institutions must also be enlisted to address the problem either as an adjunct to a child's education or by providing the means for self-help or lifelong learning.

3.4 Users of Information About Dyslexia

Margaret Marshall in Managing Library Provision for Handicapped Children, produces a long list of people, other than the handicapped person, who need
information about the various conditions and impairments. These include parents and families, teachers (both special and mainstream education), social and community workers, occupational and other therapists, government department staff, educational advisers, personnel in voluntary organisation concerned with the specific handicap, students undertaking related college courses and academic and library staff at those colleges. To this list she adds a "range of librarians in hierarchical and subject status" and mentions that some publishers of children's books would also have need of library materials and the opportunity to liaise with knowledgeable librarians (Marshall, 1991, pp.19-20).

*Dyslexia Contact: The Official Magazine of the British Dyslexia Association*, which contains articles written by parents, teachers, educationalists and dyslexic individuals themselves, and *Dyslexia: An International Journal of Research and Practice: The Journal of the British Association*, which targets academics, were used as the basis of formulating a list of users of information that make up the dyslexia communities.

One end of the spectrum are the general public (those not necessarily focused on the subject of dyslexia). The general public would wish to keep abreast of things that are happening in the society and the culture in which they live. To do this they require a wide variety of information. A plethora of information can be gained by accessing a vast range of media which includes television, radio, newspapers, books, journals, magazines, and the Internet.

Members of the public may wish to become more informed about the subject of dyslexia if they suspect that dyslexia may be affecting a member of their family. They might then wish to progress to a higher level of user group. These parents would wish to have information about what the signs or symptoms of dyslexia are. If they recognise the symptoms in their children they would also wish to know what could be done about it, for example, to whom do they go in order to have their child assessed.

Another group of information seekers is the people who actually know that their children are dyslexic. These people would want to have access to information about what can be done to help the children from the parental point of view. From a public
library perspective, information about dyslexia can be found in books specifically written about the subject. National and local information concerning dyslexia organisations can be obtained by use of information handling tools such as *Directory of British Associations*. Public library authorities provide information on their Local Societies/Associations either in paper copy or by public computer terminal access (for example, Merlin), and via the Internet.

Another category would be where the dyslexic sufferers themselves would be in need of this information. This could present a problem for an adult who is severely dyslexic and has difficulty managing written information. The information need can be greatly helped by the use of modern technology and multi-media resources, for example, educational videos and cassette tapes.

An extension to the above user group would be the information and resource needs for individuals of all ages (i.e. children, young people and adults) required to help them overcome their problems. These could include resources that will facilitate learning to read or help overcome numeracy problems. These needs may vary from individual to individual because of the range of difficulties that they experience.

Similar to the parental requirement for information about dyslexia (before one has established that the child is dyslexic) would be the generalist (non remedial) teacher who is in the ideal position to be a screening agent for young people with dyslexia. The logic here is that every teacher, particularly those in nursery, primary and middle school levels should be taught to recognise the symptoms of dyslexia (and other 'special educational needs') as part of their own qualification criteria. They should also be kept informed of new developments through newspapers, (for example, the *Times Educational Supplement*), educational journals, books and through developments through workshop activities. The teachers should also be informed of what action to take when they have detected symptoms of dyslexia in a young or child.

A slightly different category from the generalist teacher is the specialist remedial teacher who would obviously wish to study the practical side of what is to be done about dyslexia. They would want to learn about the 'dos' and 'don'ts' about dyslexia.
They would want to know about certain techniques that have been used and proved successful. This user group would probably be less likely to be experimenting through structured research than an academic, but would wish to use good practice as it has been established elsewhere. This group may, however, wish to progress to a more academic, experimental level, especially if they wish to devise new teaching methods of their own.

Another group of information seekers that may not be part of the practitioner category (i.e. the specialist teacher) but is still involved in educational matters, is that of policy makers. Although they may not need as much detailed information as a generalist teacher and in particular the specialist teacher, they have to be aware that dyslexia exists. They may rely on the experts to tell them about the problems connected with dyslexia. Policy makers can either be in the local council which makes provision for special education, or administrators in the schools who arrange the school curriculum. The policy makers both at national and local level need to know about the problems that dyslexics have, for example, with exams and this would have to be considered when the young dyslexic students sit their GCSEs and 'A' level examinations.

Another user category could be the writers of books and textbooks for the dyslexic. They would have to have a wide knowledge, including all of those user needs mentioned above. They would also want to be aware of what the academics are doing and what theories they are attempting to draw up with regards to what, for example, causes dyslexia and what can be done in order to help individuals that are dyslexic.

Academic researchers (in the medical, psychological and optical professions) can be seen to be another user category. This category would be trying to develop theories about either what causes dyslexia or what can be done about it in a medical or psychological way. The academic would wish to have access to the 'learned papers', for example, specialist scientific journals and dissertation papers.
3.5 Resource Needs of Dyslexic Individuals

People with dyslexia, like all members of the general public, are individuals with individual learning resource needs. The degree to which their dyslexia affects them in their daily lives will differ with the severity of the condition and the formal help and support that they received when they were younger. These factors have a bearing on the types of resources that the individuals will find helpful. Although mindful of the range of personal requirements, it is useful to attempt to segment and categorise the significant resource needs of dyslexic individuals.

At the most basic level is information about the condition itself. The dyslexic individual, or very often his/her parents, will want to have at least a general understanding of what the condition is, its symptoms and what may be done to overcome its more significant effects.

It can be observed empirically that public libraries are well stocked with books about dyslexia as a condition, both for loan and for reference. In the course of researching this project a substantial amount of public library material about dyslexia was consulted. This availability of resources is reflected in the various references and quotations in section 3.2.2 titled 'Modern Definitions of Dyslexia' and to a fair degree in section 3.3 'Debates Surrounding Dyslexia', although recent developments on this latter question tended to be covered more in periodicals i.e. journal and newspaper articles.

Most of the books on the subject of dyslexia that were consulted in public libraries in conjunction with the survey of the literature provided information at the back of the book which would be useful for the various users within the dyslexic communities including parents, carers, teachers, policy makers, academics and, in some cases for the dyslexic individuals themselves. There were, for example, listings of the addresses of the various key dyslexia organisations at national and local level and in some instances organisations in other countries.
In some of the books there was listings of further reading about the subject of dyslexia as well as books and other media that are "useful teaching materials". These included resources such as 'specialist' reading schemes, for example, *Alpha to Omega* which "teach reading and spelling together" (Selikowitz, 1993, p.54) as well as information on resources that help dyslexics with writing and maths. Other resources that were listed on many occasions were dictionaries that are useful teaching tools for practitioners and in particular dictionaries that are specially designed to assist dyslexics locate words they have difficulty spelling.

Many of the books seen were written by 'specialist' teachers of the dyslexic, parents, and, in some cases, by the dyslexic individuals themselves. It became apparent when undertaking the literature survey relating to the subject of dyslexia that there are many committed people who care very deeply for the range of individuals, from children to adults, who suffer from dyslexia. Jean Augur in her book *This book doesn't make sense* writes:

> This is not intended to be a book for academics. It is a simple but I hope informative account, of my own family - a family who live with dyslexia. Perhaps it will answer some of the many questions which are asked of me day after day by parents and teachers.

> I decided to write this book because I talk to so many parents of dyslexic children and to dyslexic adults during the course of my work. Often they are worried and sometimes unhappy people who have had a history of failure. The histories are so similar, histories of difficulty in learning how to read, being called lazy, stupid, careless (Augur, 1990, p.1).

On the inside cover of Augur's book it points out that "the list of Local associations was accurate at the time of printing. Secretaries change, however, and new Associations are always being formed. Up-to-date information is available from The British Dyslexia, at the address below" (Augur, 1990).

It is clear that authors who write and/or edit self help books on dyslexia make it a point to include whatever useful information that they can find to help their readers. It is notable, however, that amongst the myriad of information about materials and useful
organisational contacts, there is typically next to nothing about libraries or the role of librarians in helping dyslexics with their reading problems. One of the most comprehensive books of this type is *How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia: A Reference and Resource Manual* by Philomena Ott.

Ott is a dyslexia specialist and educational consultant who has taught students with dyslexia for over twenty-years. Furthermore, "for many years she was an Executive Board Member of the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and later became Chairman of its Local Associations' Committee" (Ott, 1997, p.iii). This book is very well researched and contains a wealth of insight and practical advice as to how teachers and parents can help individuals who are dyslexic. Of the books consulted on the subject of dyslexia this is by far the most comprehensive and informative.

Ott includes extensive 'References' arranged by chapters; a full glossary; useful names and addresses such as key dyslexia Associations; Teaching and Assessment Centres; and Support for adults with dyslexia. Her book cites types of books that are helpful for dyslexics. These include teaching manuals; teaching aids including spelling and phonic resource material; reading books for children; high interest/low reading age books for teenagers and adults; reference books; handwriting materials; maths resources; dictionaries; and talking books on cassette; computer software and literature; web sites and e-mail addresses.

Ott's book is a rich source of information concerning a wide variety of resources for teachers, carers and dyslexic individuals themselves. It is notable, however, that the words "library" and "librarian" are barely mentioned at all. In the extensive index to the book, there is only one reference to the role of "the librarian" and it is in a vaguely critical context as follows:

> Librarians need to be more tolerant of dyslexic students and should be prepared to find the book on the shelf for the student who, because of the sequencing difficulties, may misread the Dewey Classification System numbers or, because of his poor alphabetical skills, may be very slow at finding references himself (Ott, 1997, p.223).

The words 'library' or 'libraries' do not even appear in the index.
Ott sees the problems associated with dyslexia as being the province primarily of the educationalists. Librarians (in the academic, school or public sector) are not consciously recognised by Ott as being part of the solution for helping dyslexics, despite the fact that simple logic would indicate that many of the multi-media resources that Ott lists can be found in public libraries. There is no suggestion that the librarian might direct the dyslexic user towards useful material, on the contrary, Ott's view of librarians appears to be as potentially intolerant functionaries lacking in the sensitivity to assist library users.

*How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia: A Reference and Resource Manual*, however, is an invaluable tool in providing in-depth information as to the various problems associated with being dyslexic and offers ways of helping to overcome the problems with, for example, reading, writing and spelling difficulties. This book appeared to be one of the few that gives some insight in a comprehensible and pragmatic way as to the types of books and the typographical arrangement that help dyslexic individuals to read. For example, Ott when describing the factors that make a book easily readable suggests that "It should have large print, good line spacing and a suitable typeface (for example, Times Roman)".

Ott supports the importance of books' presentation by quoting Punifrey and Reason (1991) "it follows that considerable care is needed in the selection of books in relation to their typefaces and other presentational attributes". Ott also cites research work done by Simpson, Lorsback and Whitehouse (1983) which showed that "poor readers were affected more by degradation (difficult-to-read-texts) than good readers'.

Ott goes on to make 'Suggestions for choosing suitable books for children'. For example, discussing the appearance of children's books she states:

> The book must look attractive. It is not only young children who like good illustrations. Initially it may be the cover of the book which attracts the child. The modern child expects well-illustrated books, with good, clear, colour pictures. A well-bound book with print that is large enough to read is a more inviting proposition (Ott, 1997, p.75).
The dyslexic child should have a particular interest in the subject of the book possibly something that relates to a favourite hobby. Ott stresses that books for dyslexic children should have "carefully controlled vocabulary". These types of books, she suggests, are not easy to locate.

Finding these is one of the greatest challenges in teaching people with reading difficulties". According to Cooke (1993) if sentences are long and complex and vocabulary difficult, the immediate task of reading the words requires disproportionate amount of concentration (qtd. in Ott, 1997, p.70).

Books, for dyslexic children and, by inference, dyslexic young people and adults must be presented in short and non convoluted sentences. Too many words in one sentence will be off-putting to the dyslexic reader. This is especially important as one of the symptoms associated with dyslexic individuals who have difficulty with reading is that they have short term memories. As Ott suggests "The long term damage caused by attempting to read books that are too difficult haunts many people" (Ott, 1997, p.70).

Ott writes from an educational perspective. As a teaching practitioner of people of all ages, but particularly children with dyslexia, she has gained much first-hand experience as to what type of reading material is suitable for dyslexic children. She also names authors of books that she is aware that dyslexic children enjoy, "Pupils should aim to read one book per week. The evidence of the researchers underline the fact that the more the reader reads the better reader he/she becomes. Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Enid Blyton and Roald Dahl are all popular" (Ott, 1997, p.70). Most children's librarians whether in the school or public library sector would recognise these authors.

3.6 Role and Culture of Public Libraries

Public libraries, like many significant institutions, have developed their role in society over time and also have established a recognisable professional culture. The following sections consider the nature of the public library culture, especially how that culture responds to the needs of individuals and groups who are not traditional, mainstream library users. Various alternative visions of how public library culture might develop in the future are also considered.
3.6.1 Public Library Services to the Disadvantaged

During the 1970s and 1980s the traditional role of the public library service was challenged by a number of radical and socialistic library practitioners who strongly believed that in order to serve the whole community public librarians must actively reach out to 'disadvantaged' individuals in society.

William J. Martin, editor of the book entitled Library Services to the disadvantaged, attempted to grab the library profession by a statement reflecting his views of what he saw as a middle class and socially divisive public library service that was failing to meet the diverse needs of society (Martin, 1975). This publication contained a variety of contributions from library professionals in countries such as USA, Europe, Australia and the U.K. The prime concern of the writers was to stress the need to provide 'specially' targeted services for 'disadvantaged' groups and to give practical examples and insight how these aims could be achieved. Martin was aware, however, that the use of the term 'disadvantaged' is not a straightforward concept. He says that:

......the concept of disadvantage can be seen to comprise several elements:- An unfavourable position in society; a position of relative deprivation; minority group status consequent upon the relatively low regard in which the group is held; an inability to redress the situation without the co-operation of members of the majority; a lack of opportunity to maximise individual potential and to gain entry into the socio-economic mainstream (Martin, 1975, p.12).

Martin's concern was that librarians needed to re-capture their traditional social involvement and apply "their expertise to the struggle against those social evils which beset society, the evils of poverty, discrimination, inequality and crime" (Martin, 1975, p.10).

In the same year of Martin's publication a working party was set up by the Library Advisory Council of England to survey public libraries services to the disadvantaged. This research project produced a report in 1978 called The Libraries' Choice. The report was broadly based and took a wide interpretation of 'disadvantage' to include any significant group who had problems in accessing and using traditional library resources. The 'disadvantaged groups' focused on by the working party primarily fell
into the categories of hospital patients; housebound and handicapped people; prisoners; ethnic minorities; adult literacy and deprived areas. Examples of some of the findings outlined in the report included:

- Few authorities provide services to the disadvantaged in a comprehensive way.
- Most developments needed a national initiative.
- Local impetus from outside the library happened rarely.
- No common pattern to identify areas of need.
- Little direct contact with users and potential users.
- Lack of material for non-English speaking ethnic minorities & adult new literates.
- Need for much more publicity.
- Respondents involved in the survey wanted to do more (Department of Education and Science, 1978, pp.8-11).

The report concluded that "A significant number of authorities are not providing for certain disadvantaged groups. When they are providing a service they are not likely to be reaching more than a fraction in need" (Department of Education and Science, 1978, p.44). The report explicitly criticised the public library profession for not being "comprehensive and efficient" in order to meet the needs of the less articulate.

The report produced a number of useful ideas especially in terms of 'outreach' to meet the needs of the various 'disadvantaged' groups. Although more radical writers such as Hennessey (1979) and Martin (1989) recognised that *The Libraries' Choice* helped raise the level of awareness of the need to address services to the 'disadvantaged', both felt that the report had set limits to the scope of its recommendations that left traditional library structures largely unchallenged.

Patricia Coleman (1981) also felt that *The Libraries' Choice* had not gone far enough and in her publication *Whose Problem? The Public Library and the Disadvantaged* she openly criticises the report because "disadvantage is seen purely in library terms, that is, the disadvantaged are those who are barred from the normal use of library services, physically or psychologically..."(Coleman, 1981, p.9). Coleman felt that one of the weaknesses of *The Libraries' Choice* was that the "writers state that they feel the only legitimate way of assessing the role of the library service in relation to the disadvantaged is from the stand-point of the existing structure of library services" (Coleman, 1981, p.10).
Coleman is highly critical of the way that the majority of librarians carry out their professional role. She characterises them as predominantly middle class or at least happier to be dealing with middle class users. This outlook can lead to the exclusion of some groups from the benefits of library service. Coleman observes a tendency for librarians to passively wait for middle class users to come and take advantage of their services rather than making the effort to go out into the community to ascertain what people with different backgrounds, interests and cultures need from libraries. Coleman feels that traditional librarians are more interested in the delivery of materials to people rather than understanding and helping people as human beings. Libraries tend to be static with regard to the services that they provide and there is a general failure to develop services for new groups of potential users. Library authorities who provide additional services and resources to the disadvantaged are rare:

If it is possible to point to twenty library authorities in the country who are providing a high level of service to the disadvantaged, this inevitably obscures the fact that there are seven times as many authorities again, who are doing either nothing or very little. The efforts of a few serve only to camouflage the inadequacies of the majority (Coleman, 1981, p.57).

Coleman also claims that librarians are confused about the basic purpose of public libraries. She observes that this confusion is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Librarians tend to lack imagination and critical judgement.
- Librarians tend to dabble by delivering one of solutions without considering the longer term implications for the service.
- Librarians attend many conferences and seminars where problems are discussed, but action plans are rarely created or executed.
- Librarians define their role narrowly and are not happy about crossing professional boundaries such as education and social work.

Moreover, Coleman believes that the public are confused about the role of libraries and librarians whom they see as local authority bureaucrats who organise the lending of books. She feels that the public have low expectations of the library service which are more or less satisfied (Coleman, 1981, p58-60).
Coleman advocated that if public library services were to survive the structure and direction of service provision should be all inclusive.

The creation of a library service which serves the whole community will not be achieved by adding onto the existing system half-hearted and under financed projects aimed at alleviating disadvantage. The whole pattern of library services must change and the objective of serving the whole community must be reflected throughout the system. No librarian is absolved of the requirement to examine the needs of the particular community which he/she is serving to attempt to satisfy those needs (Coleman, 1981, p.70).

Coleman declines the opportunity of making very specific recommendations since she felt that that could detract from the overall message that she wanted to put across. She wants librarians themselves to analyse the services that they provide and to find solutions to the problems that they encounter. She does, however, provide some general points that she asks librarians to consider:

- The service should respond to society as a whole and not just a section of that society.
- Factors such as unemployment and technological change will affect provision of services.
- The main emphasis should be on people’s needs rather than on organisation of materials.
- Accurate knowledge of communities and their needs is needed to develop library services.
- Since people and communities change, it follows that a library service that is responsive to community needs must change as well.
- Use of imagination is important for librarians, who should aim to provide an expanded range of materials and services.
- Librarians must develop links with other agencies, departments and individuals to avoid being isolated.
- Library education, including in service training, should aim to equip people working in the profession with the awareness and skills to undertake a wider role in the community.
- Library services need to be promoted through active efforts to all sections of society (Coleman, 1981, p.71).

For Black and Muddiman the publication of Whose Problem? The Public Library and the Disadvantaged was important because “for the first time, it presented a reasonably complete alternative vision of the public library as part of an active and interventionist welfare state. This vision utilised the concept of ‘community’ as a metaphor for social inclusion” (Black & Muddiman, 1997, p.54-55).
3.6.2 Community Librarianship

According to Margaret Redfern (1989, p.1) the term community librarianship was first labelled in this county in 1980 by David Liddle. However, it can be seen from the writings of Martin (1975) and Coleman (1981) that they share many of the same concerns and propose solutions, to a greater or lesser degree, along similar lines to later theorists who more specifically address community librarianship. Even The Libraries' Choice, which was criticised particularly by Coleman for being too traditional in its outlook, opened up the debate about the lack of action to address the needs of various, disparate communities.

Although Liddle’s name is often associated with community librarianship, he finds that the term “is an unsatisfactory term because its use tends to confirm preconceptions rather than to define or to educate”. By this he refers to the two extremes of the interpretation of the term. On one hand, “working with the community” is hard to argue with, even for the most traditional of librarians. In practice, this could simply mean doing a bit of outreach by supplying speakers for a few community groups, displaying posters highlighting certain resources in the library that might be of interest to a specific group. On the other hand, community librarians who propose more radical solutions are seen as “anarchists trying to change society and subverting the public library service to achieve their ends” (Liddle, 1981, p.197).

Liddle’s perception of community librarianship is that it “is about exploring the relationship between the library and the people it serves” (Liddle, 1981, p.197) and to “concentrate our activities where they will confer the most benefit” (qtd in McKee, 1987, p.52). Liddle discusses the actions taken by the Gateshead Inner Area Programme (IAP) which aimed to address some of the issues of social deprivation, including poor take up of services compared with more affluent areas. He feels that the emphasis should be on action rather than planning or evaluation. He also argues that librarians should be less interested in issue figures or explaining library policy to non users and more towards helping to create a sense of community where formal organisations or societies may not exist.
Liddle cites Senior Citizen presentations on benefits and Toddlers Groups as making use of the library building asset. He sees the potential benefit of the social commitment of at least some of the library staff, notably in deprived areas, and special position of the public library as separate from the government bureaucracy, thus able to act as a bridge between people and the statutory agencies.

Liddle gives special emphasis to recruitment and selection of staff since the personality of team members was seen to be very important. The recommended action was to seek the widest possible response to recruitment advertising and to include group work and attitude testing in the selection process. The Gateshead library promotion team aimed to change the core product as well as to widen the market for the traditional services. To achieve this, the service had to be ready to respond to the demands of the community, even if those demands were not yet clear (Liddle, 1981, p.199).

For McKee community librarianship as expressed by the Gateshead “community bus” project “is access to resources in order to facilitate community development through self help....The concept of self help, central to the ethos of community development, has important implications to the structure of service delivery” (McKee, 1987, p.53). The ethos of community development, therefore, is not just about making the traditional library services accessible but also encouraging a high degree of participation by the local community and even handing over a degree of control of resources to the community. Linked to community development is the concept of de-institutionalization which entails moving the services out from the library buildings and spreading them throughout a community. In order to achieve this it is suggested that the hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of public libraries need to be broken down as well as the tendency towards professional separation from other agencies and departments (McKee, 1987, p.53).

Muddiman and Black, writing about community librarianship in 1993, noted that it went some way towards widening the role of the public library service but did not fulfil its full potential. They suggest that community librarianship’s left wing political stance was not accepted by a majority of librarians. It was felt to be an attack on traditional
building based services in favour of groups who were unlikely to make use of the service. Muddiman and Black noted that community librarianship was in decline from the mid 1980s onwards with only four local authorities amongst those responding to their sample were strongly committed to this philosophy of service provision (Muddiman and Black, 1993, p.12-14).

3.6.3 The Challenge for Public Libraries

Bob Usherwood in his 1996 book, *Rediscovering Public Library Management*, discussed the special challenges facing public sector managers, such as librarians, at the end of the Thatcherite era. He considered the conflict between the traditions of public service and the Conservative’s drive to expose all aspects of local government expenditure to market forces. Usherwood’s overall view was that the public service was under sustained attack for the previous 16 years by the New Right which did not recognise that such a concept as "society" really existed. He also noted that a climate of fear was created in the library profession. The Right attacked the professions (such as librarians) who clung to ideas of public service and resisted handing all decisions on the service to "the market". He also noted that the Left had little time for the professions, which some of them saw as part of a conspiracy against the people. The library profession is caught between the Right's belief in "the market" and the Left's "rather simplistic faith in the community" (Usherwood, 1996, p.11-12).

Usherwood sees public librarianship as a complex profession and suggests that it is possibly more difficult than running a comparable private business, such as a supermarket. (Usherwood, 1996, p.3). Aside from the tight financial controls which are a fact of public sector life, a public librarian needs to deal with rather intangible goals such as the interests of the local community and the needs of society. Usherwood believed that public service must respond to needs as opposed to simply wants or demands. Needs can be difficult to define because that person concerned may not be fully aware of the need or may not consciously want to have it delivered. The librarian's tasks is further complicated by the complex nature of public accountability, which includes local politicians, national government, pressure groups as well as
individual rate payers and library users. Decisions about provision of materials and services to individuals and groups are political in nature and based on a collective choice regarding the needs of the community (Usherwood, 1996, p.16-18).

Usherwood did not totally reject all aspects of a market approach to delivering services more efficiently, but stressed that the service needs to be managed "with a distinctive public service ethos". This entails being responsive to community needs and to maintaining a set of core values (Usherwood, 1996, p.139). Pride needs to be restored to the library profession, that Usherwood felt was dissipated during the Thatcher years, but: "it will not be easy: the destruction wrought to libraries and other cultural, civilizing and caring institutions has been so great that it may take a generation to rebuild, not just the fabric but the confidence of those that they employ" (Usherwood 1996, p 140).

Confidence in librarianship as a fully fledged profession (i.e. in the same sense as medicine or law) can be viewed as somewhat tenuous. Michael Winter, in the preface to his book *The Culture and Control of Expertise* (sub titled *Toward a Sociological Understanding of Librarianship*), explains that his decision to write the book arose in part from a "disquiet about librarians’ and library educators’ own understanding of librarianship” and the feeling that a good deal of space in the literature was devoted to the question of whether or not librarianship is truly a profession. Winter gives consideration to the contention by William Goode that librarianship is not a profession in the full sense due to library science not being a well defined area of scholastic research, with its practitioners not particularly inclined towards adding greatly to its knowledge base. Goode also noted that librarians do not have any special rights over use of their knowledge (unlike doctors) or the actions of their clients. Winter rejects some of Goode’s analysis as too simplistic and structural (Winter, 1988, p.98-100). Winter identifies certain “traits” that help to define a profession, including formal training, certification, professional associations and codes of ethics. In most of these areas, librarianship can meet the criteria, but Winter notes that it still has a lower level of social recognition and status than other more established professions (Winter, 1988, p.21-36). Winter agrees with Goode that the drive towards being viewed as a professional is very competitive and even elitist process in that it excludes others who
do not meet the prescribed standards (Winter, 1988, p.15). The inference is that if librarians wish to maintain their status as being professionals, as opposed to just having an occupation, there is a tendency to adhere closely to their traditions and codes of practice, and to resist significant changes to these established professional “traits”. Furthermore, professions that are doubtful or concerned over their status (e.g. teaching or social work as well as librarians) would be jealous of their prerogatives and would resist “encroachments” by other professional groups (Winter, 1988, p.22).

Since New Labour’s election in 1997 one of the main ideological thrusts of the Blair government was to tackle the issue of social exclusion. In December 1997 the Social Exclusion Unit was set up with the prime purpose of combating social exclusion. Public libraries are an integral part of New Labour’s plan to respond to the challenge to help overcome social exclusion (Dutch, 1999, p.16-17). Martin Dutch wrote that:

> social inclusion gives the public library the opportunity to more strategically develop a social policy centred on supporting those most in need and often least provided for by present strategies. There is no doubt that community librarianship has been in long decline and was at best only developed partially. Now there is the opportunity to harness the present technological futures for public libraries with clear social strategies (Dutch, 1999, p.17).

In the latter part of 1998 the British Library and the Library and Information Commission funded a research project to explore the role of the UK public library in “overcoming specific aspects of contemporary social exclusion” (Dutch, 1999, p.17). The research project is exploring a range of ‘social exclusion’ issues including disabilities, literacy and class. This research reflects an intention within the library profession to re-open the debate about libraries taking a more active role in providing services to the disadvantaged.

Rebecca Linley circulated a draft working paper in December 1999 on Public libraries, social exclusion and disabled people. The paper is useful in that it puts the issue of disability on the social exclusion agenda. Dyslexia is mentioned a few times, notably quoting Pottage about the “hidden disability” and the likelihood that people with these sorts of difficulties are perhaps less likely to be assisted than those with more visible handicaps. Although Linley acknowledges conditions such as dyslexia,
she rather undermines a commitment to address them by suggesting that such action might be at the expense of established services such as those to visually impaired people (Linley, 1999, p.18).

3.7 Role of Public Libraries in Dyslexia Resource Provision

The availability of literature addressing the role of public libraries and the provision of dyslexia resources appears to be very limited. On-line searches and study of abstracts for the past twenty years yielded very little that linked "public library" and "dyslexia" as descriptors (see Chapter Two – Research Methodology).

There appeared to be only one notable article written in the United Kingdom library professional literature closely relating to the subject of dyslexia. The title of the article was 'Books that make sense of a throwaway society' which appeared as a feature in the August 1995 edition of the Library Association Record (p.430-431). The article focuses predominantly on Theresa Breslin a community librarian in Glasgow who was the winner of the 1995 Library Association's Carnegie Award for her book Whispers in the Graveyard. The hero of the story is a boy called Solomon who, as the story emerges, is dyslexic. Breslin said of Whispers in the Graveyard:

Through my work I have become aware of the painful gap between how some children think, and what they can express on paper. I went to a meeting about dyslexia, and was appalled by the frustration and anger of people trying to battle the system. I have never been at a gathering where there was so much pain.

I wanted to help children understand what it's like to have this problem, but knew there was no point wittering on about dyslexia without a strong story. Teen horror books were flooding the market, and I decided to write something really scary, but which also meant something (qtd. from Library Association Record, 1995, p.430).
It is very evident that Breslin cares deeply about children who suffer from dyslexia and she makes a plea for greater understanding of the difficulties faced by children who have problems learning in the traditional manner. I hope that when the book is read by a person of any age that it will give the reader some insight into the mind and emotions of someone struggling to understand a world full of incomprehensible signs and symbols (qtd. from Library Association Record, 1995, p.430).

Breslin, as a writer attempts admirably to raise the awareness of the readers of *Whispers in the Graveyard* to the problems of being dyslexic. Although the article also concentrates on Breslin being a "community librarian", the article does not take the opportunity of raising the question of suggesting how the library profession itself can help individuals who are dyslexic.

The additional statement by Breslin when she makes a "Dyslexia appeal" is perhaps, unwittingly revealing:-

I have had a tremendous response from people who have read *Whispers* - teachers, children, parents, special needs tutors. And dyslexic people, in particular the one to whom the book is dedicated....". (qtd. from Library Association Record, 1995, p.430).

There is no direct mention of librarians or the library profession, which could indicate either a lack of response from librarians, or perhaps Breslin considers that dealing with the difficulties associated with dyslexia is primarily the province of the educationalists, parents and dyslexic individuals. There is, perhaps, the assumption that because the article appeared in the *Library Association Record* that this will raise the library profession's awareness of the problems of dyslexia.

Margaret Marshall in *Managing Library Provision for Handicapped Children*, gives considerable attention to the identification of client groups. She lists and analyses a number of the conditions that librarians should be prepared to address. Amongst the types of handicap discussed is mental handicap, which can be subdivided further into such conditions as Down's syndrome, autism, and brain damage. Marshall also considers various physical handicaps such as hearing impairment, visual handicap, motor impairment and speech and language disorders such as aphasia. She goes on to
mention a variety of other conditions such as severe personality disorders and maladjustment. It is notable that Marshall does not find space to mention dyslexia in such an exhaustive list. (Marshall, 1991, pp 12-19)

Although dyslexia is not specifically mentioned, Marshall clearly endorses a programme of proactive librarianship to address the various handicaps and conditions. Stock choice of suitable materials is important since:

The child with a handicap is likely to need extra assistance from the books themselves not only as a compensation for the impaired sense but also as a constructive building tool. Hence there is a necessity for creating materials which assist the child to develop within what is 'normal' for the handicapping condition and for the age and ability of the child, towards what is deemed 'normal' for the general age/ stage of the non-handicapped child (Marshall, 1991, p.18).

Marshall goes on to argue for a multimedia and holistic approach to cater for library users with special needs, which, although not specifically mentioned, also could be relevant for dyslexics. Factors to be included are:

More time for homework, for projects and for library use
More use of the fastest methods of book and library use, requiring technical aid or personal guidance
More help from the catalogue, subject index, shelf guides
More books with visual content
More help with learning and library skills
More space, more light, less noise
More material in an appropriate format
More of the librarians time
(Marshall, 1991, pp.18-19)

The most relevant material found on the Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) on-line search was contained in one article written in the United States of America and several articles written in European and Scandinavian countries. 'The Handicapped in Reading and the Public Libraries' (an English translation from Danish) by Jes Petersen was a paper read at the International Federation of Library
Associations (IFLA) congress, Copenhagen in 1979. The paper is based on a "large-scale survey on the use of libraries" in Denmark. Petersen used the findings of the survey to argue that:

...in every country, there is an even bigger section of the population that is not prevented from visiting the libraries in person, but that nevertheless does not go there: people with a reading handicap, who for this reason are unable to profit fully from a visit to the library or who think that a visit would not profit them because they connect the word library with reading" (Petersen, 1979, p.468).

Petersen goes on to say that "I would equate people with a reading handicap in the broadest sense of the word, with what is usually called non-users". Petersen suggests it is not because people who have a reading difficulty do not want to make use of a public library but:

Quite simply, people stay away from the libraries because the libraries have nothing for them or because they think this is the case, with the sad result that they are completely unable to acquire the information, knowledge and artistic experience available to the part of the population that does not suffer from reading handicaps through books and other printed materials (Petersen, 1979, p.468).

Petersen lists groups of people with "reading handicaps", for example, people who are deaf or blind. He also makes a particular reference to dyslexia and the various problems associated with this condition:

In many cases, this reading handicap stems neither from a mental nor from a physical handicap/disablement, and it is very often unrelated to intelligence. Retarded readers - dyslectics, dysphasia's - are also often described, at any rate in Denmark, as 'slow readers'. The main characteristic of the group is that its members find it difficult and in some cases, impossible, to establish a functional reading and/or spelling ability (Petersen, 1979, p.469).

The purpose of Petersen's paper was to stress the importance of public libraries making available to people with a "reading handicap" a variety of resources that would be helpful to their particular needs. In order to help people who find reading difficult because of a particular "handicap", Petersen suggests that libraries should provide adapted printed materials "that are tailored to their needs". Moreover, a comprehensive list of other media is included ranging from audio-visual resources to tactile material that can be used by people who have a "reading handicap". Petersen illustrates "some
of the variations in which the content of a book can be made available to a number of user groups". Concerning the user group "retarded readers" and "slow readers" that embraces "dyslectics", Petersen suggests the following resources:

A specially adapted book, made easy to read.
User group: retarded readers, slow readers and people whose reading handicap originates in deafness. For these and other user groups, the demands as regards language and appearance are very individual and there is a need for various versions. This does not, however, mean that the book should not look like a book, and many of the special measures that should be taken for the above-mentioned groups would also be appreciated by the general reader.

A Talking book.
User group which included "retarded" readers who want to absorb the content of a book unimpeded by their handicap.

Book & tape. In this case it is a condition that the book or other printed text is of such a nature that it is suitable for this media, i.e. it must be written with special reference to the user group or it must be a text which has been specially adapted in line with the author's intention and the book/text (Petersen:1979, p.470).

Petersen also stresses the importance of close co-operation of all the various components and skills that are required when producing books for "retarded readers" - for example, 'dyslectics'. "...editors, illustrators, everyone involved in the editorial process, including the technical staff, printers, compositors, etc.". He suggests that:

The process and the demands to be fulfilled concern, for instance, the cover of the book, the language and vocabulary, the names of the characters, the illustrations and layout, and its colour, the length of the lines, the line spacing as well as the distance between the single characters, the types employed and the colour of the print, use of marks, etc. (Petersen:1979, p.470).

Petersen notes that it is difficult to obtain a good supply of some of the materials that he lists. Publishers are only producing a small proportion of what is needed for libraries to achieve what Petersen sees as the ultimate goal "which is to present the individual user with the version or rendering most suitable for him/her". (Petersen, 1979, p.470).

Petersen makes it clear that public libraries should take the needs of people with reading handicaps (including dyslexia) very seriously and should be active rather than
passive in meeting their needs. He calls upon the library profession to publicise the needs for action in this area, with decision makers, the general public, authors and publishers. He notes that since dyslexia and related conditions affect such a large percentage of the population, there is potentially a profitable market for publishers if they could address it (Petersen:1979, p.470).

The paper ends on a resounding note and a plea to the library profession to help "handicapped readers" in their own country. Petersen says:

All this must be done because the library authorities and we librarians are among those responsible for helping a large part of the population of our countries to function better both culturally and socially and thus to achieve a stronger sense of personal fulfilment (Petersen, 1979, p.470).

Petersen's plea was made directly to librarians, both at national and international level, to help dyslexic individuals by providing suitable resource material for their needs.

Barbara A. Bliss wrote an article in the Fall 1986 edition of *Library Trends* called 'Dyslexics as Library Users'. Bliss worked with dyslexic adults as a counsellor and tutor. She taught dyslexic individuals using the 'Orton-Gillingham' method and, therefore, tends to see the role of libraries as supporting this multisensory learning approach. When assessing how libraries attempt to reach the special population of people with learning problems, she proposes a list of questions for libraries as a means of evaluating what is currently being done.

- How much information does the library have on dyslexia? The Orton Dyslexia Society? The Orton-Gillingham approach?

- What materials are available for teachers, tutors, or parents to use in helping dyslexics learn to spell or read? Are these materials primarily visually orientated? If so, they may cause the dyslexic yet another failure. The dyslexic can learn with a multisensory, sequential approach, individualized for his or her special needs.

- Is there a list available of tutors and teachers in the area trained in the Orton Gillingham approach?

- Does the library publicize workshops for teachers interested in helping dyslexics learn to read? There are many potential library users among handicapped readers.
Are taped articles about dyslexia available for adults to read and listen to? Imagine what it must be like to be diagnosed as "dyslexic" and not to know what this means, what can be done (if anything), and where to go for help (Bliss:1986, p.295).

The questions raised by Bliss above are very insightful and show that she had great awareness concerning some of the information needs of the dyslexic communities. The list embraces resources that are needed for generalist as well as 'specialist' dyslexia teachers; parents and for dyslexic individuals to gain knowledge about their condition.

The second part of the list addresses the needs of resource provision for the dyslexic individuals themselves in order to help them with their reading difficulties. She asks:

Does the library collect large-print books for dyslexics as well as for the sight impaired? It makes reading less arduous.

Are there some exciting books taped and packaged with a print copy? (Bliss:1986, p.295).

It is interesting to note that Bliss was an educationalist. Her article, however, in Library Trends which is a journal for professional librarians shows a great deal of knowledge and insight as to how libraries, from all sectors (i.e. public, academic, school) can help the dyslexic communities with their information and resource needs. In her article she has shared her own professional experience as a tutor of the dyslexic and outlines in her paper the lessons learned by 'specialist' teachers. When speaking of "The Adult Dyslexic" Bliss asks the question "What has the instructor learned from listening to the dyslexic members of his/her classes that might interest librarians?". Among the points she lists are:

Dyslexics are eager to learn but are afraid to try because of repeated failure experiences.

They can operate AV equipment with ease unless given written instructions.

A card catalogue is very confusing to dyslexics, but they are very appreciative when librarians understand their plight and take time to assist them.

Many dyslexics have learned to use the word processor and it has freed them from embarrassment of depending on others to write letters for them to check
their spelling. However, owning a computer and printer is beyond the financial capability of many who are underemployed due to their dyslexia. Reading the instruction manuals seems next to impossible, but they are capable of learning through active participation. Word processors should be made available and demonstrations provided (preferably by another dyslexic).

Dyslexia is an invisible handicap. One cannot tell a dyslexic from a good reader by sight and many are too embarrassed to admit to their problem because people still equate being unable to read, spell and write with mental retardation.

Dyslexics want to learn to read and spell adequately. They hate to be handicapped and excluded from what others are able to do.

One common reason why dyslexics seek help with reading and spelling is because they cannot read to their small children or help them with their homework (Bliss, 1986, p. 297).

Bliss sees libraries as a potential source of multisensory resources which may be under-used by dyslexics due to their embarrassment concerning their condition. This differs from the views of Petersen who suggests that dyslexics may not believe that libraries have much in the way of useful resources that are accessible by people with reading and spelling difficulties. Bliss like Petersen, however, stresses the importance of making the library profession aware of the problems that dyslexic individuals encounter. This Bliss suggests can be done by increasing "the library staff awareness of the literacy problem and of their role in providing assistance to persons of special need. Bliss also sees the need "to provide general awareness of public libraries . . . as providers of literacy resources" (Bliss, 1986, p. 299).

Birgitta Ahlen, Library Advisor for Uppsala County Library in Sweden, like Petersen and Bliss sees the public library as playing a very important role in helping dyslexic children and adults learn to read. Referring to dyslexic children she sees that "Both school and public lending libraries are invaluable sources of good and not too difficult books with exciting contents that can stimulate children to further reading". Ahlen goes on to say "They should read more exciting, good books, hopefully available on loan from the library, put in their hands by a teacher or librarian. The story should be meaningful, so that the struggle to read it will seem worthwhile" (Ahlen, 1989, p. 19).
Ahlen like Petersen and Bliss also sees "talking books" as being helpful to children and adults who are dyslexic and have reading difficulties. Ten years previously Petersen had also pointed out in his paper that books with identical tapes with the "text recorded at a slower pace and put to use by means of a specific technique" are helpful for people who are handicapped in reading (Petersen, 1979, p.469). Bliss in 1986 also stressed the need "To make literacy materials available through collections of print and audio cassette materials as well as through interlibrary loan from the literacy centres" (Bliss, 1986, p.299). Ahlen states that "Dyslexic children and adults are well justified in using talking books for reading practice. Used in conjunction with ordinary printed versions, the same book is in principle read two or three times at different speeds, the third reading being taken very slowly" (Ahlen, 1989, p.19).

At the time of writing, however, Ahlen indicates that:

Talking books for reading practice, special recordings (slowly read versions, clearly enunciated with much more expression, often with musical illustrations, sounds, word explanations or descriptions of pictures) and Easy Readers (specially written, for adults and young people) are still mainly to be found only in large public libraries. Their growing importance for dyslexics of all ages can be seen from the experimental project we are undertaking at Uppsala County Library and which extends over the whole country. Entitled "More readers for more talking books" the project is aimed at both dyslexic children and adults (Ahlen, 1989, p.20).

The idea of reading the texts of books very slowly and clearly onto tape was discussed by Helen Delany when she presented her paper *Making Print Talk to People with Reading Difficulties - Information and Pleasure* at the 'Paper Clips to Silicon Chips' conference, Hobart in November, 1990. Delany outlines in her paper how the idea to tape books at slow speeds became apparent when working in a workshop context with adults with reading difficulties which included dyslexia.

Delany suggested to the person with the "reading difficulty" that they choose a book that was of interest to them and then offered to tape the books at a speed that they could follow so that they could listen to it whilst matching the spoken word to the written text:
Eventually, after a few more nights of practice, in reading slowly I was rewarded by the unmistakable look of achievement on the face of one of the women, and even before she spoke I knew she had 'done it'. As far as she was concerned she had 'read', she had matched the spoken word to the written symbol (Delany: 1991, p.6).

These undertakings led to the setting-up in 1986 of the Taped Book Project which was funded by the Federal Department of Community Services and Health.

The on-line surveys of the professional literature suggest that the public library sector in other countries is far more proactive than the United Kingdom in attempting to provide resource materials for dyslexic individuals to help them overcome their difficulties. Library and Information providers and in particular Petersen, Ahlen and Bliss recognise the importance of exploiting some of the resource provision that public libraries have to offer in order to assist dyslexic users.

It is clear that the talking books used in conjunction with ordinary books are excellent reading aids for dyslexic children and adults. Public and other libraries need to acquire much greater quantities of this kind of material for the large and ever more visible groups with this handicap. (Ahlen,1989, p.20).

Ahlen also stresses that "Libraries also need to train all their staff to recognise dyslexic and other handicaps, how to deal with their borrowing requirements, and the kind of material available to them" (Ahlen:1989, p.20).

In the April, 1993 Library Association Record on the Calendar page (p.256) there appeared a captioned photograph of Ealing Central Library's children's librarian in front of:

...the new WORDWISE section for children suffering from dyslexia and other reading difficulties. Ealing Council is one of the first in the country to introduce a special section devoted to children with dyslexia.

The section was suggested by Ealing Dyslexia Association who contributed £1,000 towards the £2,500 project. More than 300 books and 500 cassettes are available.

The above source of information led to a case study in June, 1993 (and appears in Chapter Six).
Dyslexia Contact: The Official Magazine of the British Dyslexia Association which is a core source of information about dyslexia aimed for the dyslexic communities, for example, parents, teachers, carers and dyslexic people themselves also led to a further case study undertaken in May, 1995. In the 'Local Association News' page of the December 1994 edition Dyslexia Contact announced that the Northampton Dyslexia Association "...had a hand in choosing books for the special needs section at Weston Favell's library" (and appears in Chapter Six).

3.8 Implications for Dyslexic Resource Provision by Public Libraries

Along with the recent developments in multi-media resources, public libraries remain the repository of the written word for the benefit of the whole community. It would appear logical that public libraries should be involved in a serious way in the provision of resources (both the written word and other types of media) for the dyslexic community.

In the Preface to Hewitt's revised 1975 edition of 'Public Library Law' he points out that all library authorities in the United Kingdom now possess:

similar powers to those enjoyed in England since the passing of the public libraries and Museums Act in 1964, itself effecting extensive changes in the law applicable to England and Wales and which has been amended.

The 'adoption' of Acts in both Scotland and Northern Ireland has been swept away and all library authorities throughout the Kingdom now have a duty to provide a comprehensive library service (Hewitt, 1975, p.3).

The 'General duty of library authorities' in part are:

(a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it (H.M.S.O, 1965, 1198-1199).

At first glance these statements of requirements appear obvious and non contentious, but looking past the rather out dated list of resources, there are challenging goals that are imposed on the library service by law. When in paragraph (a) above, it states that libraries must provide materials "to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children" this must be seen as a very demanding task, especially in the area of "special requirements".

Furthermore, libraries should go beyond securing adequate general and specific materials, to actively encourage all users (children and adults) to "make full use of the library service". The inference is that libraries must attempt to overcome barriers to the use of their services through advice, bibliographic tools and other appropriate means. This implies a commitment to positive action by library staff to encourage library use by the whole community, as well as a professional response when called upon.

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act may have some implications for public library provision of resources for people with severe dyslexia. This point does not appear to be addressed explicitly, but the spirit of the act is clear in that as much as is reasonable, providers of services are obliged "to provide a service of equivalent standard and on equivalent terms to that offered to people without a disability" (Library Association Information sheet- 1997- on the Disability Act 1995).

How libraries respond to their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act is further suggested in the series of booklets published by the Library Association called Can Everybody Reach You? These publications offer guidelines on how libraries can provide help and resource materials to people with disabilities and special needs requirements. The titles of these series include Improving library services for blind and partially sighted people; Library services for people with disabilities; Library services for young people with disabilities and special needs; and Library services for
people with learning difficulties.

The publication *Library services for people with learning difficulties* is particularly relevant to meeting the needs of people who are dyslexic. This publication states:

There is a growing recognition that people with learning difficulties may not find libraries welcoming and are not able to make maximum use of library services for leisure, educational or information needs. Library staff are committed to helping all users and this leaflet aims to provide information that will enable them to help people with learning difficulties and disabilities gain access to the widest range of library services (Library Association, 1994, p.1).

The publication *Library services for people with learning difficulties* as well as the other titles makes it clear that the role of libraries in helping and facilitating people with, for example, physical disabilities or learning difficulties to gain access to the wealth of resources held in libraries is very important. The Library Association defines what is meant by 'learning difficulties' in the following way:

The term **Learning difficulty** is used to describe people who have greater difficulty in learning, understanding and retaining ideas and skills than the majority of people. It can include people with a very wide range of abilities, including those who will always need considerable help with the most basic living skills as well as those who are living entirely independently in the community but may require occasional help in some way (Library Association, 1994, p.1).

*Library services for people with learning difficulties* gives further insight to the problems encountered by people with 'learning difficulties' and in particular to those who suffer from dyslexia:

At some point during their education 30% of young people receive some sort of special education because of a learning difficulty or other disability and a very large proportion of those have some form of learning difficulty, often connected with literacy and/or numeracy skills. Among this group are some who have 'specific learning difficulties' or 'dyslexia' which means they have a problem, which is not consistent with the rest of their abilities in using or interpreting the written word (Library Association, 1994, p.1).

The Library Association recognises that the social implications of the problems associated with 'learning difficulties' including dyslexia cannot be ignored. In order to help people with learning and/or reading difficulties the Library Association
recommends that staff awareness is raised and their skills developed in order to have insight to the needs of the various user groups. The Library Association suggests:

For public library staff, videos and visits to or from schools, colleges and other groups provide a good starting point. Discussions with lecturers, teachers and other professionals can also be very helpful once staff have a good idea who it is they are trying to help. There are also a number of books that provide specific information, including some that provide staff development activities (Library Association, 1994, p.2).

The role and attitude of all library staff in creating an environment that does not appear overwhelming and intimidating to users who have a 'learning difficulty' is a vital component in helping them overcome their fear of using a library. "Staff can make sure that the users feel welcome and that those who cannot use facilities independently are helped in an appropriate way". The Library Association also suggests that:

All staff will need to have a broad understanding of how to serve people with learning difficulties, though it may be helpful to have one member of staff who takes a particular lead in developing services and acting as an adviser to others (Library Association, 1994, p.2).

The implication in the latter suggestion is significant. The inference made by the suggestion is that a dedicated member of staff should take the responsibility of undertaking and "developing" a 'specialist' service that embraces the needs of people with 'learning difficulties' (including dyslexia). This dedicated member of staff would serve as the champion of this service and would ensure that the focus is not lost amidst all the other demands on staff time. In order to undertake a service of this kind the person responsible would need to ascertain the various user communities within the parameters of 'learning difficulties'. Outreach to the various communities would be needed to establish the information and resource needs of users and non-user groups.

The publication includes a list of the names and addresses of relevant organisations (including The Dyslexia Institute and The British Dyslexia Association) as well as training tools for library staff, for example a training pack-video, audio cassette, booklet by S. Fowler titled Library for everyone.
The two dyslexia organisations mentioned in the booklet pertaining to 'learning difficulties' i.e. Dyslexia Institute and the British Dyslexia Association were contacted (and Internet consulted) in order to find out what resource material they would suggest that public libraries should provide for dyslexic individuals themselves. The outcome is discussed in Chapter Three - Methodology).

The Library Association recognises, however, that "the major barriers to using library services are likely to be attitudes and literacy". This may be particularly so with people who have difficulty with the "written word" as is often the case with individuals who are dyslexic. The Library Association continues to say "Since libraries have traditionally been places that have concentrated on books, people with less than fluent literacy skills are not so likely to use them without help". The booklet *Library services for people with learning difficulties* emphasises that "there is a wide range of materials in accessible formats".

The resources that are mentioned are "tape, video and CD as well as written materials that are simple but attractive and age appropriate". Unlike authors such as Petersen, Ahlen and Bliss, the Library Association does not go into any great depth about how the various resources can be exploited more fully so that people with reading and/or learning difficulties can gain the most benefit. For example, it might have been helpful to mention that media such as cassettes with matching books can be helpful for individuals with learning and/or reading difficulties. This is particularly so if the tape can be played at a speed so that the learner and/or reader can follow the written word at a pace that he or she can understand. It was also surprising to note that large print books were not suggested as a useful reading format in the booklet *Library services for people with learning difficulties*. It was noted, however, that the booklet titled *Library services for young people with disabilities and special needs* suggested large print books, as well as other media, for people with 'learning problems'. It says

The majority of stock in the children's and young people's section of a public library is suitable for use by children with learning problems. However, it is essential to look at the following areas; print size and density of text; clarity of illustrations and photographs; background colour of pages; level of text with regard to language complexity; sophistication of storyline. A book is not necessarily print on paper bound inside a cover. It can also be sound tape,
video or braille. Some non-traditional material is easy to obtain for example, large print books (Library Association:1994, p.3).

The booklet *Library services for young people with disabilities and special needs* was also aided by the National Library for the Handicapped Child which changed its name to the REACH Resource Centre. This organisation which is a registered charity provide advice and assistance on the selection of resources that will facilitate children who, for what ever reason, have a difficulty with reading.

A case study on the REACH Resource Centre (Chapter Seven) revealed that books in large print format which were originally intended to be accessed by partially sighted people are often very helpful to children and adults who are dyslexic. Moreover, the description of the material listed in *Library services for young people with disabilities and special needs* concurs with the recommendations made by Ott and Petersen when considering resource material that will help dyslexic individuals overcome their reading difficulties.

These booklets produced by the Library Association, however, are concise and clearly written. The points are made simply but with sufficient detail and lists of references to make it possible for librarians to take some effective action on providing services for people with 'learning difficulties' including dyslexia.

### 3.9 Dyslexia and Information Technology in Libraries

Ted Pottage, the first Webmaster of the British Dyslexia Association in his article ‘Dyslexia, IT and related support in libraries” (Vine, 1997 pp11-17) writes about the problems faced by dyslexic library users and then makes some suggestions about how the problems might be addressed, in some cases using information technology (IT).

Pottage suggests the scale of the issue by quoting a figure of 25 million dyslexics in the EU and notes that perhaps half the adult dyslexic population in the UK is unaware that they are affected or even that such a condition exists. He also refers to dyslexia as a "hidden disability" without obvious indicators such as hearing aids or white sticks.
Pottage suggests that one should first consider what is hindering access to information for a particular user, followed by a consideration of changes to improve that access. Only at a later stage does consideration of specific hardware or software come into play. He also sees it as a subject for continuous improvement through feedback from the users. Another key point is the need to make potential users aware of the equipment.

Do make sure potential users know what extra help is available. I have heard of costly equipment languishing in a secure cupboard because only library staff knew it was there (Pottage, 1997, p.11).

Amongst the problems facing dyslexic library users are reading issues such as comprehension and analysis, writing and note taking and general organisation of information. In the particular area of library use, Pottage mentions search systems that demand precise spelling, the need to retain many bits of information such as index references and cross references, and find the location of material using an alphabetical system (Pottage, 1997, p.12).

Pottage is critical of many electronic library catalogues that he sees as "little more than card indexes put on a simple computer database". The lack of a "spell checker" facility on typical Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) systems is a severe limitation for dyslexic users who may make small spelling mistakes in their searches. It would also help if the system would record previous "wrong attempts" so that the user does not repeat them (Pottage, 1997, pp13-14).

Ordering material not currently available in the library is a challenge for dyslexic individuals. Pottage suggests that the problem could be reduced by information technology systems that could prepare the reservation form with the book details, thereby limiting the data required to be entered by the borrower (Pottage, 1997, p.15).

Once an item has been located there is then the issue of making use of it effectively. Book and tape packs are well tried approach, but the selection is relatively limited. Information technology devices which convert text to speech are becoming more
common. Pottage cites new developments such as a "reading pen" which is used to scan individual words or phrases. Text can also be converted to speech via the Internet. He does point out that there are some copyright implications if someone other than the user does the conversion.

Pottage also comments on the adaptability of dyslexic people who often have good visual-spatial skills, artistic ability and long practice in lateral thinking. He suggests that reference material on CD-ROM is often very suitable for dyslexic individuals because of the visual presentation, sometimes including animation, and considerable cross-referencing. He cites a series published by Dorling-Kindersley as being particularly good (Pottage, 1997, p.12).

Although Pottage's main thrust is about how to use information technology effectively to aid dyslexics, he counsels that libraries should not overlook simple low technology solutions. He suggests better signage including simple maps showing the locations of different types of material and "You are here" reference points. He also notes that some dyslexics find numbers easier to remember than letters. The Dewey Decimal system can be used effectively if there is good cross-referencing. Library staff could offer to write down instructions for locating material, perhaps on coloured paper of "Post It" notes, which are easier to read and less likely to be mislaid amongst other papers. Another suggestion is to make available for loan cheap dictation machines (Pottage, 1997, pp16-17).

Pottage's overall view is that "The non judgmental support offered by IT is especially useful for anyone who feels unable to keep up with their peer group in reading activities" (Pottage, 1997, p.15).
3.10 Summary of Findings from the Literature Survey

3.10.1 Background

Dyslexia as a term and particularly as a condition has been recognised for over a century. Kussmaul noted the existence of ‘word blindness’ as far back as 1877 and there was a landmark article in the *British Medical Journal* in 1896 on the subject. The term dyslexia was used by Berlin in 1887, but was not widely used until much more recent times. The early focus on dyslexia was from the medical science perspective. More recently the perspective has broadened to include inputs from psychology and educationalists. Orton and Gillingham in the 1920s recognised the potential benefits of a multi-sensory approach, where the dyslexic individual is exposed to as wide a variety of materials as possible.

Many attempts to define the term dyslexia have been documented. There is no absolute consensus of what dyslexia is but it is widely accepted that the condition goes beyond the classic concept of word blindness. Aside from difficulty with the written word (reading, writing, and spelling) it also can involve broader problems such as short term memory, difficulty in differentiating between left and right, weak organisational skills and poor physical co-ordination. These latter problems would have bearing on how the individual deals with a variety of complex institutions and life experiences, which includes the use of public libraries.

The terminology used to describe the symptoms associated with dyslexia appears to have become less well defined since disciplines in the social sciences have taken a more active role in the study of this condition. Some experts resist giving the condition a specific name at all, whilst others (for example, Augur) are strong in their conviction that without a widely accepted name, there is little chance of dealing with the issue at a level of public policy.
There are still some educational authorities throughout the United Kingdom, which choose not to use the term 'dyslexia' but use the blanket term 'specific learning difficulties'. This resistance to the use of the term may not just reflect an academic point of view but perhaps also relates to the requirement that statemented pupils must have special tuition. It would be very costly to provide 'specialist' teachers for up to 10 per cent of the school population. A recent survey by the Professional Teachers Association and the British Dyslexia Association confirmed that many children are not being diagnosed or given the attention needed to overcome dyslexia. If the education system fails to address this major issue for a large number of people, then other institutions must also be enlisted to address the problem either as an adjunct to a child's education or by providing the means for self help or lifelong learning.

The symptoms of dyslexia have long been recognised and although attempts to define the condition have varied there is a strong weight of medical evidence to confirm the existence of dyslexia. Along the line, clarity has been lost due to the invisible nature of the condition and the attitude of social scientists reluctant to label individuals by their limitations. It can also be argued that society has been unwilling to address the scale of the problems related to dyslexia, perhaps due to the costs involved.

3.10.2 Users of information about dyslexia

Potential users of information about the subject of dyslexia include parents who either suspect or know that their children are dyslexic, practitioners such as specialist and/or generalist teachers, and of course dyslexic individuals themselves. Another group of potential information seekers, not strictly part of the practitioner category, but still involved in educational matters, are policy makers. Another user category could be the writers of books and textbooks for the dyslexic. They would have to have a wide knowledge, including all of those user needs mentioned above. Academic researchers can be seen to be another user category. Another professional group, who need more information on dyslexia would be librarians themselves, since their profession is so closely associated with the written word and its exploitation by the community at large.

79
3.10.3 Needs of the Individuals

The dyslexic individual, or very often his/her parents, will want to have at least a
general understanding of what the condition is, its symptoms and what may be done to
overcome its more significant effects. Public libraries are well stocked with books
about dyslexia as a condition, both for loan and for reference. In the course of
researching this project a substantial amount of public library material about dyslexia
was consulted. This availability of resources is reflected in the various references and
quotations in section 3.2.2 titled 'Modern Definitions of Dyslexia' and to a fair degree
in section 3.3 'Debates Surrounding Dyslexia', although recent developments on this
latter question tended to be covered more in periodicals i.e. journal and newspaper
articles.

Authors who write and/or edit self help books on dyslexia make it a point to include
whatever useful information that they can find to help their readers. Amongst the
myriad of information about materials and useful organisational contacts, there is
typically next to nothing about libraries or the role of librarians in helping dyslexics
with their reading problems. One of the most comprehensive books of this type is How
to Detect and Manage Dyslexia: A Reference and Resource Manual by Philomena
Ott. This is an excellent source of information concerning a wide variety of resources
but the words "library" and "librarian" are barely mentioned at all. In the extensive
index to the book, there is only one reference to the role of "the librarian" and that is in
a critical context.

3.10.4 Role and Culture of Public Libraries

During the 1970s and 1980s the traditional role of the public library service was
challenged by radical library practitioners who strongly believed that to serve the
whole community, public librarians must actively reach out to 'disadvantaged'
individuals in society. One of their significant concepts was that of community
librarianship.
William J. Martin in 1975 observed a largely middle class and socially divisive public library service, failing to meet the diverse needs of society. Martin believed that librarians needed to re-capture their traditional social involvement by providing targeted services for 'disadvantaged' groups. The term 'disadvantaged' could include relative deprivation, minority group status, inability to redress problems without the co-operation of the majority and lack of opportunity to maximise individual potential and to gain entry into the socio-economic mainstream.

In 1978 the Library Advisory Council of England's report, *The Libraries' Choice*, interpreted 'disadvantage' to include any significant group (e.g. hospital patients, housebound or handicapped people, prisoners, ethnic minorities, people with literacy problems) who had problems in accessing and using traditional library resources. The report criticised the public library profession for not meeting the needs of the less articulate by observing:

- Few authorities provide services to the disadvantaged in a comprehensive way.
- Most developments needed a national initiative.
- Little direct contact existed with users and potential users.
- Lack of material for non-English speaking ethnic minorities & adult new literates.
- Need for much more publicity.

Patricia Coleman felt that *The Libraries' Choice* had not gone far enough and criticised the report for seeing the problem in purely library terms. Coleman argued that if public library services were to survive, the structure and direction of service provision should be all inclusive. She was highly critical of the way that the majority of librarians carry out their professional role and noted a general failure to develop services for new groups of potential users because:

- Librarians tend to lack imagination and critical judgement.
- Librarians tend to dabble and serious action plans are rarely created or executed.
- Librarians define their role narrowly and are not happy about crossing professional boundaries

David Liddle's name is often associated with community librarianship, which arose in part as a response to the policies of the Thatcher government that aimed to make public services accountable to market forces. Liddle's perception of community librarianship involved exploring the relationship between the library and the people it
should serve, including addressing issues of social deprivation and poor take up of services. He argued that librarians should be helping to create a sense of community where formal organisations may not exist. A key objective was to change the core library service product as well as to widen the market for the traditional services. Liddle gives special emphasis to recruitment and selection of staff since the personality of team members was seen to be very important. The library service had to be ready to respond to the demands of the community, even if those demands were not yet clear.

For Bob McKee community librarianship should facilitate community development through self help. The ethos is not just about making the traditional library services accessible but also encouraging a high degree of community participation and even handing over control of resources to the community. McKee suggested that the hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of public libraries needed to be broken down (de-institutionalization), as well as the tendency towards professional separation from other agencies and departments.

Bob Usherwood, writing in 1996 at the end of the Thatcher/Major years, outlined problems facing the library profession, which was under attack from both right and left. The New Right had attacked the public service ethos of libraries and wished to replace it with "market forces". Usherwood felt that this approach had caused great damage to the profession and to the confidence of its members that would take a long time to redress. He also remarked on the very complex and challenging nature of public librarianship, including the special problems of public accountability and the important but somewhat intangible goals of meeting the interests of the local community and the needs of society. Usherwood saw a return to a distinctly public service ethos as the way ahead.

Michael Winter explored aspects of librarianship as a profession and considers various "traits" of the professional that apply to librarianship. He concludes that it is indeed a profession, despite the contentions to the contrary put forward by Goode. However, throughout Winter’s book there are indications of a lack of confidence within the library profession which might tend to make librarians take a conservative, traditional view of how they should operate in order to preserve their status. Winter also touches
on the fear of encroachments between professions, especially those with lower recognition levels, such as librarians and teachers.

In December 1997 the Social Exclusion Unit was set up with the prime purpose of combating social exclusion and public libraries were included in New Labour’s planning. Martin Dutch looked to libraries to develop social policies to help people with the greatest need and often with the least current involvement with the library service. Although noting the decline of community librarianship, Dutch advised libraries to reclaim those ideals by creating strategies and by using new technology to combat social exclusion. The British Library and the Library and Information Commission in 1998 funded a research project to explore the role of the UK public library in overcoming social exclusion arising from disabilities, literacy or class by providing additional services to the disadvantaged.

Rebecca Linley in her draft working paper on Public libraries, social exclusion and disabled people puts the issue of disability on the social exclusion agenda, quoting Pottage about the “hidden disability”. Although Linley acknowledges that dyslexics may get less attention than people with more visible conditions, disappointingly she suggests that improvements might be at the expense of established services such as those for visually impaired people.

3.10.5 Role of Public Libraries in Dyslexia Resource Provision

The availability of literature addressing the role of public libraries related to provision of resources for dyslexic individuals appears to be very limited indeed. On-line searches and study of abstracts for the past twenty years yielded very little that linked "public library" and "dyslexia" as descriptors (see Chapter Three - Methodology).

There appeared to be only one notable article written in the United Kingdom library professional literature closely relating to the subject of dyslexia. The article focuses on Theresa Breslin a community librarian in Glasgow Award winning author of Whispers in the Graveyard (Library Association, 1995). Although the article also concentrates
on Breslin being a "community librarian", it does not take the opportunity of raising the question or suggesting how the library profession itself can help individuals who are dyslexic.

Margaret Marshall covers the wider topic of library provision for handicapped children. Inevitably, much of what she writes concerns physical handicaps, but reading difficulties are mentioned notably as symptoms of other disabilities. Given the long list of conditions that Marshall lists, it is disappointing that she does not include dyslexia. However, her book is very useful in that many of the strategies that she suggests are applicable to a range of conditions including dyslexia. Marshall sees libraries as supporting an holistic and multimedia approach to reading problems. She also highlights how librarians must work to make libraries and their resources more accessible for people with handicaps. This includes attention to catalogues and most especially the responsiveness of library staff (Marshall, 1991).

The most relevant material found on the LISA on-line search was contained in one article written in the USA and a few articles written in European and Scandinavian countries.

Petersen, who based his article on a "large-scale survey on the use of libraries" in Denmark, equates people with a reading handicap with non-users of libraries. Petersen suggests it is not that people with a reading difficulty do not want to make use of a public library. They stay away because the libraries have nothing for them or because they think this is the case.

Petersen's paper stresses the importance of public libraries making available to people with a reading handicap a variety of resources to meet their particular needs, notably adapted printed materials as well as talking books and book and tape packs. Petersen calls upon the library profession to publicise the needs for action in this area, with decision makers, the general public, authors and publishers. He notes that since dyslexia and related conditions affect such a large percentage of the population, there is potentially a profitable market for publishers if they could address it. Petersen believes that library authorities and librarians are among those responsible for helping a
large part of the population to function better both culturally and socially with a stronger sense of personal fulfilment (Petersen, 1979).

Barbara Bliss' 1986 article for Library Trends suggests a list of questions for libraries as a means of evaluating what is currently being done to reach people with learning problems. The inference is that by answering the questions libraries will realise that there are significant gaps in their provision and approach. Bliss sees libraries largely as a potential source of multisensory resources that may be under-used by dyslexics due to their embarrassment concerning their condition (Bliss, 1986). This differs from the views of Petersen who suggests that dyslexics may not believe that libraries have much in the way of useful accessible resources. Bliss like Petersen, however, stresses the importance of making the library profession aware of the problems of dyslexic individuals.

Birgitta Ahlen, like Petersen and Bliss, sees the public library as playing a very important role in helping dyslexic children and adults learn to read. Ahlen's area of special attention concerns "talking books" as being helpful to children and adults who are dyslexic and have reading difficulties (Ahlen, 1989). She develops this concept and defends the use of audio material as device to ease reluctant readers into the enjoyment of books.

Although each of these articles gives helpful insights into the role of libraries in providing resources for dyslexic individuals, the articles seem to reflect mostly common sense observations, as well as a call upon librarians to be more proactive in dealing with the needs of their users and non users. What is significant is how difficult it was to locate even these modest attempts to address these issues and that even these few articles had to be found from beyond the realms of British professional literature. It should also be noted that Petersen's well argued article is now twenty years old and it appears that relatively little else has been written on the subject in that time.
3.10.6 Implications for Dyslexic Resource Provision by Public Libraries

Public libraries remain the repository of the written word, as well as more diverse media, for the benefit of the whole community. Logically, public libraries should be involved in a serious way in the provision of resources for the dyslexic community. There are also legal obligations such as the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964* which places a duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive library service which also meets the special requirements of its users and potential users. Furthermore, authorities are supposed to encourage full use of the service. These legal points are reinforced by the guidelines of the Library Association, as expressed in their various leaflets, to meet their obligations through increasing the awareness of their staff.

For a service to be considered full and comprehensive as well as meeting the special needs of its users, it cannot be limited to users without handicaps, either physical or mental. The *Disability Discrimination Act of 1995* makes this obligation clear. Taking all these points together, libraries clearly do have an obligation to serve dyslexic members of the community although there is a notable lack of detailed information to support this obligation in the professional literature.

Looking beyond the legal requirements and traditional professional obligations, the increasing availability and use of information technology presents both challenges and opportunities for the library profession to address the special needs of its communities. From the library authority point of view, there are a number of cost and organisational implications related to this move to widespread use of information technology, which can facilitate the creation and use of new types of media that meet the multi-sensory needs of dyslexic users and allow them to work in a non-judgmental environment at their own pace. The other potentially positive implication of the use of information technology is in helping dyslexic individuals to overcome the historic limitations of how libraries are organised, notably in the area of catalogues and information retrieval (Pottage, 1997).
CHAPTER FOUR: NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS

4.1 Case Study of Parent with two Dyslexic Children

This case study has been undertaken to explore at a practical level the problems faced by an individual seeking to obtain information about dyslexia and the processes necessary to get assistance to overcome the effects of the condition. Particular attention was paid to the availability and dissemination of the information through both 'formal' and 'informal' methods. The parent is Carol and the children are Simon and Heather. To provide anonymity the surname has been omitted in the case study.

Carol could not remember how she first came to hear the term 'dyslexia' but had been aware of its existence for about thirty years. Her father was a medical practitioner and it was probable that dyslexia had been mentioned in a medical context during discussion in the home sphere. Carol's early understanding of 'dyslexia' was that it was linked to 'word-blindness'. She was also aware that dyslexia was often associated with people (especially younger children) who tended to reverse their letters when they were writing, and who also had great difficulty with reading. It was not until Carol had children of her own, Simon and Heather who are both dyslexic, the latter child being severely dyslexic, that she realised the fuller implications of the meaning of dyslexia.

4.1.1 Simon's Story

Simon started nursery school at age three. He was a verbally bright child, having spoken at the age of six months and conversing in full sentences by sixteen months. At the nursery school that Simon attended, teaching the children how to write their names began very early on, by getting them to trace their names over dotted lines. Most of the children were able to write their names unaided by the end of the first year. Simon, however, had difficulty tracing his name using the dotted lines. Carol was not concerned because she considered that Simon was still very young to be able to start writing.
Carol's first awareness of Simon's 'learning difficulties' started when he commenced preparatory school at the age of four. By the end of the second year it became apparent that his reading was not progressing at the same rate as his peer group. Children in his class were moving through level one, two and three books, whereas Simon's reading books appeared to remain at the same level. The class teacher expressed little concern that Simon had not reached the same reading ability as his contemporaries. The situation changed the next year when the new class teacher told Carol that Simon was having learning difficulties and that half of the lessons appeared to "go over his head". The teacher also informed Carol that she was unable to spend the extra time needed going over the classroom work with Simon.

Carol challenged this response and the teacher reacted positively by setting work to assist with Simon's reading. At the beginning of the new term the teacher told Carol that Simon was a verbally very bright boy, but his written and reading work was not coming up to the expected standard. At this point, the teacher suggested the possibility that Simon could be dyslexic, but she also mentioned that she had been worried about broaching this subject because she was not sure how Carol would react. Carol's reaction was positive in that it was a relief to have some indication of what Simon's problems could be.

Carol's initial contact with a professional organisation to seek advice about Simon's learning difficulties was with the Hornsby Centre located in Wandsworth, which offers advice, counselling and teaching courses related to dyslexia. Carol's recollection was that it was Simon's class teacher who recommended her to contact the Hornsby Centre. Prior to her discussion with the teacher, Carol was unaware of the organisation's existence and that Dr Beve Hornsby had been in charge of the Dyslexic Clinic at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London during the 1970s. It was also suggested at this time that Carol get in touch with the British Dyslexia Association.

At the Hornsby Centre Carol paid privately for Simon to be assessed by an educational child psychologist. The assessment session lasted for one hour and the findings of the educational psychologist was that Simon did not appear to be dyslexic, although it was suggested that he would be in need of some "specialist" remedial teaching.
Carol still felt that she knew very little about dyslexia. She began informal networking with friends asking them if they had heard of dyslexia and, if so, could they give her any information on the subject. She was also surprised to find that many of the people she talked to had little or no knowledge concerning dyslexia. Carol also visited the libraries in the London Borough of Merton. Although she borrowed a book (she is unable to remember the title), she commented that at that time (1988) there did not seem to be many books specific to dyslexia in the libraries. This is an interesting observation because October 1987 was the British Dyslexia Association month and publicity had been sent to libraries nation wide to increase awareness of dyslexia.

Carol had contacted The British Dyslexia Association by this time. The information pack that she received from them was especially helpful because it contained a checklist of learning difficulties often associated with dyslexia. The British Dyslexia Association gave Carol the contact name and address of the local Merton and South London Dyslexia Association. She immediately got in touch with this association. A member of the group gave her the name of a private tutor who specialised in teaching children with dyslexic problems. The tutor had been trained by the 'Hornsby' method, but her assessment that Simon was indeed dyslexic disagreed with the prior assessment done at the Hornsby Centre. Carol considered the private tutor to be very helpful in providing information about dyslexia, particularly with regard to private schools that had remedial 'specialists' as part of the teaching staff.

Simon had private tuition on a one to one basis with the specialist dyslexia teacher on Saturday mornings. The sessions were tailored to meet Simon's dyslexia problems. The dyslexia teacher used a multi-sensory approach, i.e. a combination of teaching methods, including the Hickey method, using phonetic/linguistic therapy to aid spelling, special handwriting techniques and flashcards to teach letter/sound association. This tuition lasted for approximately two years.

After two years of private tuition with the dyslexia teacher Simon got tired of giving up the freedom of his Saturday mornings and wanted to stop going for extra tuition. Carol felt that because his reading and writing had improved greatly, his progress
could be maintained with the help of specialist remedial teaching at his new school. Simon, however, did not receive specialist remedial help for next two years because the standard of his work was higher than some of the other pupils who had more severe problems. During the two years without specialist remedial teaching, Simon failed to progress and it became evident to Carol, and to Simon himself, that his progress could not be maintained without specialist teaching support. Simon's reading was very hesitant and his spelling was erratic. The standard of his verbal reasoning was still very high, and Simon was able to conceal the extent of his dyslexia from his teachers.

Simon himself asked the English teacher for extra lessons. The teacher responded and Simon received extra one to one help sessions after school. The specialist remedial teacher was also involved in helping Simon overcome some of his perceptual problems, and various methods were used to assist him with organisational skills. This additional help was very beneficial and Simon's reading and handwriting skills improved. Carol regrets letting Simon discontinue working with his specialist dyslexia teacher. She feels that continuity with a specially trained 'dyslexia' teacher is vital, if progress with reading and writing is to be maintained.

Simon started a new independent school in September 1994 to undertake his two year G.C.S.E. programme. Carol was resigned to the probability of seeking additional private tuition for 'core' curriculum subjects such as Maths to help Simon who has great difficulty with this subject.

4.1.2 Heather's Story

Heather's 'learning difficulties', compared to her brother Simon's, were far more severe. She was very ill at birth and deaf until the age of two and a half. Due to illness, she did not start school until the age of five. Carol chose to send Heather to a Montessori Nursery school. Heather at that time was not reading or writing, whereas many of her peer group had begun to do so. Heather was still unable to read or write when she left the Montessori school. Heather started at an independent school when she was six
years and very early in her school life concern was expressed about her 'learning difficulties'. Her teacher suggested that Heather should have her eyes and hearing tested, but Heather's vision and hearing were found to be normal.

At the beginning of the second year at this school it was evident that Heather had made very little progress, although like her brother Simon, she was a verbally bright child. She was unable to read, and her writing was very poor. Carol expressed her concern to the teacher that Heather, like her brother, was dyslexic. Simon had given up his Saturday morning sessions with his dyslexia teacher and Heather asked Carol whether she could go in Simon's place. The dyslexia teacher confirmed that Heather was far more severely dyslexic than her brother.

Carol told Heather's form teacher that she had commenced one hour sessions with a specialist teacher of the dyslexic who was attempting to teach Heather to read and write using multi-sensory methods such as the Alpha to Omega techniques (alphabet sequences) and the Hickey method, which uses phonics and flash-cards. Carol asked the form teacher if she would contact the dyslexia specialist teacher in order for them to work together to find the best method of helping Heather overcome her serious problems with reading and writing. The form teacher did not contact the specialist teacher. In next school year Heather was assigned to a new form teacher and Heather's learning difficulties were taken far more seriously. The new form teacher spoke to the head teacher and suggested that a "test report" be made. Carol told the teacher that she had not taken Heather to be tested by an educational psychologist because she knew from the symptoms that Heather was manifesting that she was dyslexic.

Heather was assessed by an educational psychologist because Carol believed no educational assistance would be provided without dyslexia being confirmed and documented in an official report. Unlike Simon's first assessment, the Hornsby Centre had no doubt that Heather was severely dyslexic. The various educational psychology tests revealed that Heather had great difficulty with: visual discrimination, visual short term memory, auditory short term memory, auditory discrimination, perceptual problems and difficulties with organisational skills. The assessment also revealed that, although Heather's overall IQ was below average, her verbal reasoning IQ was high.
At first, Carol did not show the assessment report to the head teacher or class teacher because she felt that if they saw the extent of Heather's dyslexic problems, they might not be prepared to keep her on at the school. However, she did have a meeting with the Head teacher and told her of the assessment results. The Head Teacher was aware of the learning difficulties associated with dyslexia because she had two dyslexic daughters herself. Although Carol was still also paying for the Saturday morning sessions for Heather, the head teacher suggested that a teacher of the dyslexic came to the school to give specialist tuition to Heather and two other girls who were also dyslexic. The parents concerned agreed to this arrangement and a teacher was brought in from the Helen Arkell Centre. For this arrangement the parents had to pay a further eighteen pounds a week. Although Carol appreciated the head teacher's efforts, she felt that she should have been involved with the selection process, especially as she was paying for the additional help. Unfortunately, Heather did not get on well with the teacher and Carol felt the time spent did not yield as positive an outcome as it could have done if they had got on better together as personalities.

During the time spent at this school Heather has seen many 'specialists' and a great deal of time and expense has been involved in seeking out and going to special educational teachers. Aside from the dyslexic one to one teaching, Heather had private consultation and teaching with a perceptual therapist and a language therapist. It had been suggested that Heather attend a boarding school especially for dyslexic children. However, networking with friends and following up advertisements in newspapers concerning schools specifically for dyslexic children (for example, The Observer) revealed that these schools were too expensive for Carol to contemplate.

4.1.3 Statementing Process

Carol considers the 'statementing' process to obtain 'special education' provision for her daughter to have been very difficult indeed. She had been told in advance that to get a child 'statemented' is a "nightmare" and that was indeed her experience of the 'statementing' process. Because she chose to have her daughter educated in the
independent sector, Carol felt that this worked against her when she has attempted to get her daughter 'statemented' in order to get support teaching for her. Carol felt that Local Education Authorities believe that because this particular educational route has been selected for a child, the parents can absorb the cost of providing the 'specialist' teaching required to bring the child up to a reasonable standard.

Under the Education Act 1981 a teacher or parent can request a formal educational assessment of a child who is felt to have 'learning difficulties' and may require 'special educational needs' provision. The are three main definitions under the 1981 Education Act outlining the criteria of 'special educational needs' and 'a learning difficulty'. They are as follows:-

1) Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.

2) A learning difficulty is said to exist when a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age and/or has a disability which prevents or hinders him/her from making effective use of educational facilities which are generally available. It also classifies children under the age of 5 who are likely to fall into any of the above categories on reaching their fifth birthday.

3) Special educational provision for a child over 2 years means provision that is additional to, or different from, the educational provision generally available for children of the same age in schools maintained by the Local Authority. For children under 2 years it covers educational provision of any kind. (Contact a Family: 1991, p.2)

The next stage required to get an assessment under the 1981 Education Act leading to a statement of special educational needs is for the parent or teacher to submit their views as to why they consider a child needs a formal assessment. This can be done in several ways: in letter form, or by attending an interview or by telephone. The local authority will reply within a period of 29 days advising the proposer whether they have been successful or not with their request for formal educational assessment.
Carol indicated that knowing what to say to the local authority is absolutely crucial if the request for an assessment is to be granted. Prior knowledge about how to proceed is of vital importance in order to get a positive response. Although Carol was in touch with the Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association, she did not actively seek assistance from them at the time she wrote the initial letter to the local education authority proposing formal assessment for her daughter. With the benefit of hindsight she wishes that she had asked her local Dyslexia Association to help guide her through the various, lengthy stages of 'statementing'.

Heather was finally granted a 'statement' two years after the start of the process. The outcome that Carol had hoped to achieve was for Heather to attend a 'specialist' school on a full-time basis. Instead, Heather attends a state school and is receiving remedial help from a 'specialist' teacher on a one to one basis six hours a week.

Ideally, Carol would have liked the London Borough of Merton to have 'special needs' units attached to the state schools in order for the children to join in certain school activities, but with all their curriculum work undertaken with specially trained teachers. Although a child may be 'statemented' they may not necessarily be taught by a 'specialist' teacher (i.e. a specially trained teacher of the dyslexic). Instead, a remedial teacher or even a parent might come into the school to help them to read. The type of 'specialist' teaching provision depends very much on the local authority concerned and this can vary enormously from borough to borough.

4.1.4 Sources of Information about Dyslexia

After years of concern for Simon and Heather, Carol had gained a great deal of information about dyslexia from reading books borrowed from libraries and friends, but particularly from journals and magazines. During this time Carol built up a considerable portfolio of information relating to such things as helpful organisations, schools, and other support groups. Carol had also attended several courses run by the Merton and South London Dyslexia Association.
One of the key organisations to get in touch with, Carol suggests, is the British Dyslexia Association. The British Dyslexia Association, will on request, send the enquirer an information package called 'Awareness Information', targeted for parents, teachers, and for the individual. If requested, the British Dyslexia Association will include further information for other user groups, for example, 'dyslexic people in further and higher education'. In their information package they also include details of the enquirer's local dyslexia organisation and the name of the person they should contact if they wish to join that group.

Carol joined her local dyslexia organisation, which is the Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association. Carol felt that the membership fee (£8) was very small compared to the high degree of support she gained from this group over the past several years. One of the major benefits of joining the local dyslexia association is that it is linked to the British Dyslexia Association. Through this linkage, a considerable amount of useful information sources are made available. This includes the British Dyslexia Association's official magazine called Dyslexia Contact.

Dyslexia Contact appeared to be the only core journal published in the United Kingdom that is aimed solely for the dyslexic communities. It is valuable, therefore, for many reasons. The journal informs its readers what is happening (and what progress is being made) with regard to the current debates surrounding dyslexia within the various disciplines, for example education, psychology, science and education. The articles and essays (often by a dyslexic person) are written for a wide audience, i.e. for parents, practitioners, academics, and the dyslexic individual. The typographical arrangement of the journal is particularly helpful for a dyslexic person because many articles are short, set aside in colour framed boxes and written in an easy and straightforward fashion. 'Dyslexia Contact' is an important source of information because it 'networks' on a national basis.

The sources that have proved to be the most helpful to Carol in obtaining information and practical advice concerning dyslexia are as follows. These information sources,
however, are not necessarily in the order of importance because Carol feels that all these sources (organisations/groups) have ultimately been beneficial to her cause.

The British Dyslexia Association is a voluntary association that houses the Federation of Autonomous Local Dyslexia Associations. Their subject coverage is dyslexia; education and training; medical and psychological information. The British Dyslexia Association publications are numerous and consist of such things as the medical aspects of dyslexia; reading lists for the teacher and parent user groups; books that will be helpful to the dyslexic individual. Lists of the various types of publications are supplied on request. The British Dyslexia Association also publishes, as mentioned above, *Dyslexia Contact*.

Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association circulates to its members the British Dyslexia Associations journal *Dyslexia Contact*. Meetings are organised on a monthly basis at two venues in the London Borough of Merton. Well known speakers and experts are invited to attend these meetings to speak on the various aspects of dyslexia (including talks concerning adult dyslexic individuals). The Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association also has additional parent support groups (e.g. 'Parents in Partnership') that meet to discuss the problems that parents and children are encountering educationally and emotionally. Carol considers the local dyslexia association to be of vital importance in guiding parents (and teachers) through the 'statementing' process.

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) is a registered charity that offers an independent national education advice centre for parents. ACE is run under the direction of a council although it is financed by funds raised by grants, charitable donations and through sales of their numerous ACE publications. These publications deal with many educational issues (and targeted for most user groups – e.g. parents; practitioners; administrators; school governors). A high proportion of their enquiries, come from parents who need advice and help concerning formal procedures, for example, the 'statementing' process.
ACE published a very helpful publication at the time that Carol was going through the 'statementing' process, called *Thames Help! programme*. This publication outlines in clear language a detailed step by step guide as to how to get the best for a child who is in need of 'special educational provision'. Moreover, the *Thames Help! programme* also contains information on further sources of help and advice, for example legal advice centres, parent's groups and government departments relevant to 'special' educational needs.

Carol reads national newspapers, in particular *The Observer*, and *The Times* with particular interest in the education sections. At the time of Heather's 'statementing' *The Observer* (Sunday, 18th October 1992) dedicated their 'Schools Report' section to the 'Special Needs Issue'. Carol found this to be helpful because it dealt in great length with such matters as the requirement to 'reform special needs assessment', and 'how to get your child assessed'.

Carol indicated that she found articles concerning dyslexia in highly academic journals (for example, *Journal of Learning Disabilities; Educational Psychology in Practice*) too difficult for her to understand. Because highly academic journals tend to be targeted directly for the academic community only, Carol did not find them helpful in gaining information about dyslexia.

Carol also listens to Radio 4 and takes an active interest in their Book Review programmes especially if they include books that would be helpful to children with reading difficulties. She would, however, like to see more programmes related to book provision aimed for children, young people and adults who have reading and learning difficulties.

Carol found that almost all of the information was useful eventually even if its usefulness was not evident initially. This point highlights the benefits of a very good filing system such as the one that Carol developed.
4.1.5 Informal Communication Networks

Carol considers informal networks of communications, talking to friends, teachers and attending meetings organised by the Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association, to be one of the most important methods of information gathering on the subject of dyslexia. Carol spent quite a few years researching for herself the problems associated with having children who are dyslexic with the hope of being able to find the right sort of assistance. Many parents seeking the right sort of help for their children have become active researchers. The findings of their research are discussed and shared at informal meetings, such as 'Parents in Partnership' of which Carol is a member (also part of the Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association).

Carol regretted very much not obtaining direct help from groups such as the local Dyslexia Association and 'Parents in Partnership' when setting the 'statementing' process into motion. She felt based on her educational background, that she could manage it herself. With the benefit of hindsight, she stresses the importance of talking to other parents and teachers who attend these groups' meetings, many of whom have a great deal of information as to how best to proceed when attempting to get a 'statement' for a child who is dyslexic. Moreover, specialist teachers attend these meetings and act as 'befrienders' to the parents.

These experts can play an important role in advising the best way to phrase the 'statementing' application and also how to interpret the 'draft statement' to ensure that it matches the educational needs of the dyslexic person. Moreover, these specialist teachers inform the parents of changes to education legislation related to 'children with special needs'. For example, 'Parents in Partnership' have been meeting regularly to discuss the implications of Part III of the '1993 Education Act and Regulations' (an extension of the principles and practices that were first stated in the 1981 Act) and the 'Code of Practice: on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs' which came into force in September 1994.

Carol has been approached by 'Parents in Partnership' to become a 'befriender' to the group. As a member of the group who has, through her own lengthy and determined
efforts, managed to gain a reasonably successful 'statement' for her daughter, she would be a valuable asset for 'Parents in Partnership'. Since the role of the 'befriender' is such a crucial one, Carol would receive special training if she were willing to undertake this commitment.

4.1.6 Library Resources used by Carol, Simon and Heather

Carol borrowed several books on the subject of dyslexia when she suspected that her children were having difficulty in reading, spelling and writing. She found the Reference library in Morden and Wimbledon to be particularly helpful in that they have a local community directory that lists the local dyslexia association and other directories on organisations and associations (for example, *Directory of British Associations*; *Aslib Directory*). Carol also spent a day in Wimbledon Reference Library looking in directories relating to charitable organisations that offer financial help for 'special needs' educational support.

Simon and Heather are members of the Merton Library Service and use the children's libraries in Morden and Wimbledon. There is not a specialist collection of books dedicated to children with 'special learning difficulties' held in the borough. Initially Carol borrowed books from the library for Simon and Heather herself. She concentrated on obtaining books that were aimed at a lower age group because of the problems that both children were having with reading. These books tended to be simplistic counting books, or books with pictures and a rhyming text. Carol feels that books with rhyming words are extremely helpful to dyslexic children because the rhythm helps them to remember the words and how they are spelt.

Other resources from the children's library that Carol felt was helpful to Simon and Heather when they were younger were children's large print format books, which are usually for children who are visually impaired. Children's book and cassette packs (such as Ladybird Books) were also very beneficial to both of the children because they could follow the words of the text whilst listening to the story. Carol noted that most of the books that were helpful to Simon and Heather she had discovered by "trial
and error" or through recommendation from other parents of dyslexic children, rather than via help from library staff.

Now that the Simon and Heather are older Carol has actively encouraged the children to borrow books for themselves. If they have a particular interest in a title or a subject, they are much more likely to attempt to read for interest and for pleasure. Books that are particularly helpful to Simon and Heather are those which contain numerous illustrations and a straightforward text in fairly large print that can be read easily. Carol mentioned that books that Simon and Heather choose, in particular, are Usborne books and Dorling-Kindersley Eye Witness books.

4.1.7 Findings and Conclusions

It is clear from the case study that the problems associated with having two children who are dyslexic are very great. Carol's first hand account highlights the difficulties that she had over the years striving to obtain the right sort of 'special educational needs' support for them. Carol's difficulty in obtaining the right sort of 'specialist' support for her children is not unique. Listening to personal accounts of parents who have dyslexic children, it became apparent that it is very hard to get specialist teaching support unless one is prepared to pay privately. Carol is a highly articulate and well informed on the subject of dyslexia. However, she found the process of 'statementing' and other aspects of attempting to get specialist help for her children to be very difficult. This highlights the general problem faced by all parents, especially those with fewer advantages.

Teachers clearly have an important role in the initial diagnosis of dyslexia and related conditions. In many respects they are well placed for this role since they are able to make comparisons amongst a wide number of pupils and to develop an awareness of cases that differ from the norm. As educational professionals, they should be aware of important trends in their field and the sources of expert information. Carol's experience indicates that teacher awareness of conditions such as dyslexia varies considerably. One finding, therefore, is that parents cannot rely on all teachers being fully aware of these conditions and prepared to assist in the search for specialist help.
Amongst the other general findings from this case study were:

♦ Lack of time for non-specialist classroom teachers makes it very difficult for them to give one to one extra remedial help to children who are having difficulty with reading, writing and spelling.

♦ There is some reluctance by classroom teachers to broach the possibility to the parent that a child might be dyslexic. This could reflect the fact that some teachers are not sufficiently trained or confident in recognising the symptoms associated with dyslexia. Furthermore, they see the problem of dyslexia as being a condition that is difficult to manage.

♦ One of Simon's classroom teachers mentioned the possibility that he might be dyslexic. This was helpful to Carol because until this time she did not know what might be causing Simon's reading and writing problems.

♦ The term 'dyslexia' enabled Carol to commence her research on the subject to identify whether the problems that Simon was manifesting were due to this condition.

♦ Carol found the information pack sent to her by the British Dyslexia Association in response to her enquiry to be extremely helpful. The information pack contained a check list of learning difficulties often associated with this condition.

♦ Informal networking with friends and parent support groups (such as 'Parents in Partnership' and the local Dyslexia Association) is a vital source of information. Observation of several of these meetings revealed that most parents are dedicated information seekers on the subject of dyslexia and it is at these meetings that information knowledge is shared and disseminated.
Given the complexity of the 'statementing' process, it is almost impossible for a parent working in isolation to prepare a well documented application. Active consultation with other parents and experts (befrienders) is strongly recommended prior to submitting other formal applications.

Academic journals aimed at the academic user group are often difficult to comprehend by parents researching the subject of dyslexia. The literature survey revealed that proportionally more articles concerning this topic are written in academic journals rather than journals aimed at either the practitioner or parent.

With regards to public library provision of information and resources, the following points were noted:

Part of the initial information gathering on the subject of dyslexia was via the public libraries in the London Borough of Merton. Some of the most important information sources were local community information directories (for the address of the local dyslexia association) and directories that listed national associations and organisations (including the British Dyslexia Association).

In 1988 there were very few books on the subject of dyslexia in the Lending libraries in Merton. This is surprising because October 1987 was 'Dyslexia Month' and the British Dyslexia Association had circulated publicity to libraries nationwide to increase awareness about dyslexia. This could indicate, perhaps, that the British Dyslexia Association's awareness campaign was not very effective and/or that Merton Library Service was slow to provide lending material on the subject.

It was only by "trail and error" that Carol was able to find books in the children’s library that were suitable to the reading needs of her dyslexic children.

There were no specialist collections of material in the children’s lending libraries in the Borough of Merton that parents of the dyslexic or the children concerned can access to facilitate their learning needs.
There is a great deal of information available concerning the subject of dyslexia. One of the most important starting points for gaining access to information concerning the subject of dyslexia is the public library, both the Lending and Reference Sections. Carol initially found the most useful starting point for obtaining information on this topic to be the Reference Libraries by making use of their bibliographical information. One of the most useful sources was the Local Community Information Directory that listed the local Merton and South West London Dyslexia Association.

Although the British Dyslexia Association was very helpful in providing printed material which gives insights to the various symptoms related to this condition, it has been the local level (i.e. the Merton and South West London Association; and 'Parents in Partnership') that has been the most beneficial to Carol. Informal networking (i.e. talking to parents of other children who attend these meetings) is a very important method of the dissemination of information that has been gathered from personal experience or from information acquired through personal research.

Academic journals are not more comprehensible for parents in Carol's situation. Information that is understood by parents and teachers is an enabler for obtaining help for the dyslexic individual concerned. A method of overcoming this problem would be if academics circulated to other journals (i.e. those targeted for practitioners and parents) short articles with a simplified bullet point presentation of their findings.

One of the major findings of the case study was that although there is a great deal of information about dyslexia to found by accessing the public library system, relatively little is being done to provide reading material for children who are dyslexic or have reading difficulties. Libraries should be by addressing the practical information needs of dyslexic individuals (and typically their parents) as well as organising a well selected collection of reading material suitable for people with this condition.
4.2 Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities

The main thrust of this thesis is provision of library services to people with dyslexia and therefore the focus in the questionnaire and the case studies is on the service provided. Detailed study of the user needs of dyslexic individuals is beyond the scope of this research, but some consideration of perceptions of dyslexic users of the library service, even at an anecdotal level, can help to give a human dimension and perspective. It can also give an insight into collection management issues such as selection.

Quotes below are as written, often by dyslexic individuals. Sometimes there are spelling errors, perhaps as a result of using e-mail facilities with no spell checks. Many of the comments come from a dyslexia chat forum where the rule is that nobody criticises spelling or punctuation. Therefore, in keeping with the spirit of the forum, the quotations below are as they appeared on the forum or in E-mails.

4.2.1 General Perceptions

Observations regarding how dyslexic individuals perceive libraries were mixed. By and large, the comments made about general perceptions of libraries from a dyslexic perspective and in particular by adults (both personal experience as well as anecdotal insights) tended towards negative rather than positive images of the library.

One respondent, "a chartered librarian and a parent of a dyslexic" who works for the British Dyslexia Association as their Development Director said

One of the last places most adults will go is a library. Chiefly because they have had it with literacy schemes and the like and if they haven't learnt to read then they will perceive a library as not for them.
Another reply was made directly from the perspective of a dyslexic adult who had strong views about the public library service that she was currently using:

I have found a poor selection of books, poor loan times, prohibitive fines and their non-fiction classification system weird!

I was taught how to find something in the Dewey decimal system in school which I was told was universal and after learning over the years what numbers relate to the topics I'm interested in - it was horrid going into a library and being lost again.

A further comment made by a dyslexic adult who enjoys reading and books in general said that, in spite of this:

I still don't find going to the library a particularly good experience. I find that all the rows look the same, especially at the uni library and you get disoriented easily so you end up going in the wrong direction to find the books. I also find it very tedious and difficult to locate the book(s) I am after i.e. you have to get the number right then find the title.

Libraries, however, appear to be perceived more favourably by parents who have dyslexic children. For example, a respondent said:

The pre-school and school age kiddies groups and activities (in libraries) - wonderful, NYCC encourage babies to join - it worked with the author's dyslexic daughter who is now a young good reader. You librarians do wonderful things without realising it in many cases.

4.2.2 Staff Awareness, Attitudes, and Training Needs

A number of respondents indicated that library staff awareness to the problems that people with dyslexia may encounter in a library environment is of crucial importance. Library staff helpfulness and a willingness to take individuals with dyslexia to the actual shelves required rather than being told or vaguely pointed in the right direction was mentioned on several occasions as being vital for the effective use of libraries. One respondent said:

Actually taking someone to the shelf really helps, and the saints who stay and find the book/s or know of something else - jewels to your profession. The time
and confusion saved is immense as is the creation of good-will and positiveness about using library facilities”.

The respondent went on to give further insights and suggestions as to how staff can help people with dyslexia use the library without them feeling intimidated and overwhelmed by the various procedures a library sometimes entails. The following comment was made regarding staff attitudes:

re form filling for joining, for ordering - and knowing where to order from other than internal sources i.e. advice, is a crucial part of the process of using libraries for all clients but particularly for dyslexics with their self-confidence problems - re any residual or chronic literacy difficulties. Actually helping filling-in the forms would be great - many counter staff do it for the elderly and the physically handicapped quite routinely, the relief to have that help would encourage many dyslexics to use the facilities.

Several adults with dyslexia have found library staff to be approachable and helpful when they have encountered difficulty finding resources for themselves. One adult with dyslexia makes his condition known to the library staff in order to obtain the assistance he requires. He wrote:

At the local community library I find that it is easiest to go to the librarian and smile and say I am dysleic and I have no idea how to spell this word and could (s) he tell me were I could find it and ask for expliste directions. This has worked well and I haven't come across a grumpy one yet.

It is clear, however, that individuals with dyslexia may receive different levels of service (i.e. good or poor practice) depending on the member of staff who they encounter at the enquiry desk. Another dyslexic adult found that the helpfulness that he received varied according to the individual on duty in a particular section of the library.

In our library still the library assistants usually do the looking up, but in the music library they prefer you to do it. When I was in last in the music one I was shown what to do and told next time I would have to do it myself. I said clearly that as a dyslexic I found using catalogues very difficult. I don't think she heard what I said but next time I'm in I will demand they help.
Another comment made by an adult with dyslexia indicated that his impression of "librarians" was that they appeared indifferent and not helpful in a proactive way:

I thing I hate the most is when you get librarians who have very good number/word recognition skills and treat you like an idiot because you can't find the book and it was "obviously" in the right place!

A welcoming and facilitating environment was emphasised as being a very important component in attracting dyslexic individuals into a public library. One reply said:

Awareness and the smile of welcome...its there, please encourage everyone. The very fact of a research project asking us in the local Dyslexia Associations about library use means that a serious and hopefully widely disseminated study will consolidate this in the areas of good practice for all libraries.

Staff training and awareness of the difficulties experienced by people with dyslexia was cited as being an important element in helping library staff learn how to assist dyslexic individuals. A spokesperson for the committee members of a local dyslexia association said that many local Dyslexia Associations would be happy to talk to libraries to help them become more aware of dyslexia and how being dyslexic may make it difficult for some people to use a library.

4.2.3 Useful Resources and Formats

Another area of discussion concerned the types of materials and their characteristics that dyslexic individuals find useful some of which are already being provided by public libraries. A respondent who is the parent of the two dyslexic boys indicated that she felt that there is a shortage of suitable books for children with dyslexia and in particular high interest - low reading age books. She felt, however, that "some books could be easily rewritten in large print which would make them more accessible" for children. She indicated that books written by Roald Dahl "tend to be laid out in a suitable format". This respondent also said that it would be helpful to have "suitable books in a display together". Regarding audio/visual material, the respondent said that it would be very helpful to have specialist information on the subject of dyslexia on video.
Audio tapes were cited by a number of respondents as being a useful learning tool for people with dyslexia. One respondent suggested that libraries could help:

with tape cassette works for GCSE and A level, not only English but Classics, Theology, History, as well. Many students study these, but struggle to cope with all the reading required for a good background.

Another respondent remarked that special audio tape collections are provided free of charge for blind people but not for people with dyslexia. A further reply, however, noted that "we have arranged for free loan of audio tapes and free extended loan of tapes and books in our library".

Audio tapes and/or audio tapes with books for children were cited by several respondents as being particularly helpful for children with dyslexia. The parent of two dyslexic boys indicated that the audio tapes give her sons the confidence to attempt to read the written text because if they are unable to fully understand the text they have the support of the tapes to listen to. This particular parent outlined a number of resources that have helped her sons, many of which can be obtained in public libraries:

- Information books about a particular topic that had plenty of pictures. However, the text in the book should be well spaced. It was advised that the text should not appear over the pictures because sometimes children with dyslexia can find this confusing.
- Books that look "normal" from the outside cover, but inside are laid out in the format suggested above.
- Large print books or books with well spaced paragraphs.
- Books with short stories.

Large print books were also mentioned by several other respondents as being helpful to people with dyslexia. One respondent said "these are excellent for many with visual acuity difficulties".
One reply indicated that many dyslexic people "read stories for pleasure" and that from talking with adult males with dyslexia the reading preference often appears to favour science fiction.

Another comment concerning useful formats and learning aids for dyslexic students suggested that they are helped by book material that is presented and set-out in the following way:

- books with clear chapter summaries
- good heading
- good indexes
- short paragraphs tackling one topic at a time.

The respondent also suggested that the format is better with:

- good spacing
- larger font
- bullet point facts
- annotated drawings
- use of colour.

A point mentioned in another reply, concerning the format of printed material, indicated that many people with dyslexia find it more difficult to read books that had "white paper and black print". The respondent suggested that "some like old books with the slightly yellowed paper" whilst other dyslexic individuals are helped by using coloured plastic overlays that can be placed over the printed page.

Coloured acetates were mention several times as being a very useful tool in helping dyslexic individuals to read. One respondent suggested that some acetates in pale colours, for example, pale blue, green, pink and turquoise be available on request for use or for sale in libraries.

Dyslexic people are also aware of special tools such as Kurzweil machines that are capable of "reading" written text, typically for blind people. This facility was noted as being useful for dyslexics but like the audio tapes the Kurzweil machines, in the relatively few libraries that have them, are provided specifically free of charge for the
blind. One respondent observed that there is a charge for dyslexic people to use this facility.

4.2.4 Publishers Addressing the Needs of Dyslexic Individuals

Two publishing companies were mentioned as providing resources that are particularly helpful to children and young people with dyslexia. Two respondents named a publishing company called Barrington Stokes which was started in 1998 by Patience Thomson who was a 'specialist' teacher of dyslexic individuals. She was formerly the Head of Farley House School, which teaches children and young people who are dyslexic. Barrington Stokes has produced a series of short stories written by popular authors aimed at dyslexic young people (British Dyslexia Association, 1998, p.4).

Another respondent mentioned a publishing company called Cutting Edge, which provides Shakespeare material for dyslexic students.

4.2.5 Information Technology

Not surprisingly, a high proportion of the participants in the Internet chat forum or who sent e-mails in response to the question of library use by people with dyslexia, mentioned the potentially important role of information technology in libraries. A common observation made was that libraries could use information technology in a much more considered and structured way to assist the needs of people with dyslexia. One respondent suggested the following ways in which information technology could be made more accessible by dyslexic individuals:

My suggestions would include consideration of the catalogue system, preferably computerised; unobtrusive help with the use of it. Equipment for scanning text into a computer, so that the user could display the text in whatever font style and size he wants; and text reading software to hear it.

Another person with dyslexia found their experience of information technology in libraries frustrating because the library systems demand correctly spelt words and in
general do not provide a spell check facility such as that commonly found in word processing software.

A positive reply was made by a dyslexic adult who has found that information technology has helped make their experience of visiting their local library less daunting. The on-line public access catalogue system has helped this respondent to use the library more independently.

I can go on line to my local library and check what I have borrowed, renew books, check my fines if I forget, and of course look at the catalogue and reserve anything I fancy. All I need is my Library Card and the PIN (which I can self-select).

One respondent said that Internet access in public libraries should be encouraged and that it would be helpful to have print-outs on colour-tinted paper as well as white because coloured paper is very helpful for people with dyslexia.

4.2.6 Layout, Ambience, and Signage in Libraries

Several respondents suggested that signage in public libraries could be improved to assist people with dyslexia to find the various resources held in the library. One reply suggested that dyslexic individuals would find "a handout map of the building and the shelving system done in a diagram form would help many find their way around" the library. Another respondent said that "bigger and clearer labelling of shelves" would assist people with dyslexia locate material that they want to access in the library.

A number of replies mentioned that a sign or a poster advising of help on offer by library staff, for example, a sign saying "if you have reading difficulty ask here" would help many people with dyslexia make full use of the library services.
Another suggestion was to label shelves indicating the suitability of the material for various types of learning, for example, audio tapes for people who learn by hearing, video tapes for people who learn by seeing, and CD-ROM for multi-sensory learning. If staff are made aware of the benefits of the multi-sensory approach for people with dyslexia, they can point out these resources.

4.2.7 Dyslexia Identity

Several adults with dyslexia who use libraries regularly stressed the need to let library staff know that they are dyslexic. One respondent who is aware of the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, and forcefully advised people with dyslexia to use the DDA to the full.

The Disability Discrimination Act should be used to encourage the library staff to be helpful and not obstructive toward any one with an impairment. If problems are encountered then get in touch with those in charge - local authority or educational bosses and insist on being helped in the way that suits you. Use this tool (DDA) or allow it to be flouted. Push for your rights.

4.2.8 Summary and Conclusion

The overall sense of the comments is that visiting a library is not an especially rewarding experience for many people with dyslexia. It is a telling comment that people with problems with the written word find that libraries are "one of the last places to go".

Dyslexic adults know that there is useful and pleasurable material to be found there, but a number of factors work against them including:

♦ Poor layout and signage
♦ Intolerant library systems
♦ Difficult bureaucracy (reservation system)
♦ Indifferent or unhelpful staff
Taken as a whole, the comments suggest that libraries are designed for the literate users. Looking at the issues more positively, attention to small details can have a big impact. Creative signage describing the types of material (for example, learn by hearing) in large print on coloured background and simple "you are here" maps could be helpful as could large signs inviting users to ask staff for help.

Staff are the key resource for determining the quality of the library experience. They should be willing to "show" as well as "tell" users where to find materials. They can also help to overcome the weaknesses of intolerant systems and the demands of form filling etc. The perceived greater staff willingness to help children is an interesting observation that links to traditional extra effort made by staff to make children welcome in libraries, show them how material is organised and to respond to their questions. The social dynamics of interacting with adult users is quite different and this presents staff with the problem of giving help without appearing patronising or intrusive. Sensitivity to the needs of all users, regardless of age or level of literacy is vital, as is the need to provide a helpful welcome to what can be for many people a challenging environment.

Various suggestions are also given concerning useful materials (for example, high/low books, tape/book packs, and large print books with many pictures). The idea that material should "look normal" backs up the lack of interest in traditional remedial or adult literacy books. Information technology is seen as having high potential for improving access to information either on line (largely avoiding the traditional library experience) or by helping to overcome limitations of today's intolerant library systems (for example, catalogues which operate with spell check type capability by offering alternatives to the word typed). The comments about the need for a greater assertiveness by dyslexic library users in the context of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 are perhaps indicative of a determination to change the perception of dyslexia as the "invisible disability". 
CHAPTER FIVE: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

5.1 Response Rate

Figure 5.1 Percentage of Authorities Replying to the Questionnaire

A total of 152 questionnaires (including the pilot) were mailed to library authorities in the United Kingdom (excluding Scotland) between March and May 1997. (see appendix 3) There was a total of 114 replies to the questionnaire. 35 library authorities did not reply and there were 3 nil returns. This represents a high rate of return to the questionnaire of 75 per cent, which was a much higher response than originally envisaged. This positive response could be the result of several factors. Firstly, the questionnaire was not too long and was reasonably straightforward to answer. Secondly, and very importantly, the high response to the questionnaire indicates a strong interest in the subject of dyslexia. It was very encouraging that professionals in the public library sector were willing to spend the time to fill in the questionnaire. This suggests that, in spite of heavy workloads, there was a readiness to participate in this investigation.
5.2 Public Libraries with Policies on Provision of Resources for 'Special Needs'

The questionnaire asked whether the public library authority had a policy specifically covering 'special needs'.

![Figure 5.2 Percentage of Authorities with Written Policies for Special Needs](image)

19 authorities (16.7 per cent) indicated that they had a written policy for 'special needs'. 76 (66.7 per cent) replied that they did not have a written policy; and 19 (16.7 per cent) said that they had a policy in preparation. Two thirds of library authorities who responded to the questionnaire did not have a written policy for 'special needs'. This is a disappointingly high proportion considering that library authorities should be striving for equal opportunities for the users of their libraries, in light of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act which began its implementation in December 1996 means that disabled people have new rights to employment and when accessing goods, facilities and services provided to the public although the provision of education and transport vehicles are exempt from the Act. Apart from these exemptions, the Disability Discrimination Act applies to both the private and public sectors. Equality of opportunity and access to service provision for disabled people, therefore, will have implications for public library services. Historically, there have been various programmes in public libraries with a focus on special needs, for example, 'talking books' (i.e. cassette recordings of fiction and non-fiction) and large print books.
are provided for individuals who are blind or partially sighted. Ramps are provided by many libraries for people who are physically disabled and wish to gain access to the library in wheelchairs (Kerslake and Kinnell, 1997, p.5).

Library authorities will need to consider the full range of needs of disabled people who are defined in the Act as individuals who have a "physical, sensory or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities" (qtd. in VINE, 1997, p.48). This would include people with a physical disability, hearing or sight loss, and learning difficulties. It is surprising, therefore, to find that very few library authorities have committed themselves to these programmes for people with 'special needs' by means of a published written policy statement or other expression of their goals and ideals. Formal written policies regarding 'special needs' may be a recent consideration for public libraries.

There appears to be some positive movement towards written policy statements. This is indicated by the 16.7 per cent of authorities that responded that they had a policy "in preparation". There is no indication, however, that dyslexia is going to be included in the policies or, if it is, the nature of its coverage.

5.2.1 Content of 'Special Needs' Policies

The questionnaire asked the authorities who replied that they did have a written policy for provision of resources for 'special needs', to send a copy with the completed questionnaire. 10 authorities enclosed a copy of their 'special needs' policy with the questionnaire. 3 authorities indicated that their 'special needs' policy covered dyslexia. These are considered in section 5.3. Examples of the key themes from the 7 policies that did not claim to specifically cover dyslexia are noted in the sections below. In general, these statements covered certain common areas such as equal opportunities and then, depending on local priorities, went on to consider other topics such as resources, selection of material, terminology and definitions, access and co-operation with other agencies.
5.2.1.1 Equal Opportunities and Access

Most of the authorities in this group made statements that covered some aspects of equal opportunities. However, there was a considerable range of interpretations of what constituted this concept. In several instances, the focus was on providing equal access in either the physical sense or through a creative use of different media to overcome limitations arising from disability.

A copy of a 'Policy Statement on Equal Opportunities' and a leaflet titled 'Equal Opportunities Statement' was sent by one authority. The former document was mostly about employment opportunities and prejudice in the workplace. There was no mention of 'special needs' in this paper. The 'Equal Opportunities Statement' leaflet also included equal opportunities in employment and information about staff training awareness of the needs of disabled users and 'Deaf Awareness Training'.

Under the heading 'Services to Customers' a general overview was given as to the intention of the library service that stated:

Our commitment to quality services on a customer basis is now well established by the Charter Mark and quality management process. Standards are being drawn up covering a wide range of services and those will include Equal Opportunities.

The publishing date of the 'Equal Opportunities Statement' was 1993 so it is assumed that the "Standards" have been completed. However, as these were not included with the authority's completed questionnaire it is not possible to learn which areas these 'Standards' included and if in fact they covered areas such as 'learning difficulties' or specifically information and resource needs of people with dyslexia.

It is clear that this authority has a positive commitment to 'Equal Opportunities' and that the statement is not just a list of intentions only but a philosophy that should be acted upon. The leaflet listed the 'Initiatives already in Operation' which although predominantly for the physically disabled, indicates that the question of how people with disabilities access the library building and the contents within, have been considered very seriously and acted upon.
Another authority's policy statement entitled 'Disabled People' emphasised that it "is committed to equality of access for disabled people to its service and their delivery and to ensuring a fair allocation of resources". The authority contends that "Disability is not caused by the individual disabled person's impairments, but the way in which society fails to meet their needs". This somewhat contentious statement can be taken as a very strong statement of intention to address the needs of all disabled people to make use of the services provided by the authority.

5.2.1.2 Terminology & Naming of the Collection

One authority in particular stressed the need to "counteract the effects of disabilism (i.e. the discrimination faced by disabled people) through the language and images it uses". This policy briefly outlined resources, for example, large print, Braille, videos and audiotape that it considered "important" for disabled people. Although there was a heading "Selection criteria", five of the six points listed were predominantly concerned with issues concerned with what could be called 'political correctness', for example: "Material should promote a positive image of disability and should avoid stereotypical images".

This authority also realises the importance of not using terminology that evokes a negative and insensitive image of individuals who are physically disabled and stresses the need to: "Ensure that the terminology is appropriate for material being considered, especially ensuring that forms of words such as the 'handicapped' or 'crippled' are not used".

There is no doubt that this authority is making a strong commitment to doing all they can for people with disabilities. There is virtually no guidance, however, for staff or for the public as to which specific actions will be undertaken on their behalf. Furthermore, the policy only indicates that, "Material should be selected in the appropriate format" with no attempt to suggest what that might be or how staff will determine what resource provision is suitable for the user groups they are targeting.
Another area of terminology that arises in several authorities is that of deciding on an appropriate name for their special needs collection. One particular county presents a very positive image of how they promote and target their 'Adult Learners' collections. It calls their collections "Return to Learn". This terminology avoids the word 'basic' in the title of the collection which could have a negative connotation implying that the person using the collection had virtually no skills at all. Moreover, the title of the collection embraces the ethos of lifelong learning in that many people who left school without formal qualifications, for whatever reason, may find the various 'Adult Learners' collection helpful to them.

5.2.1.3 Resources

Part of a policy document entitled 'Special Client Groups' was attached to the completed questionnaire. There were four 'Special Client Groups' listed and these related to 'Housebound Services'; 'Adult Learners'; Hospital Services', and 'Prison Services'. Of these four 'Special Client Groups' it was the 'Adult Learners' category that would have relevance to adults with dyslexia. The introduction to this section describes the aims of the service in the following way:

A comprehensive range of materials will be available for those people who have difficulties with literacy and numeracy, or who generally want to improve their level of basic skills including study and job related skills.

The resources that were listed under the heading 'Range of Materials' were indeed comprehensive and many of the formats would be very useful to dyslexic adults and young people. Under the heading 'Bookstock' the items below were listed:

- Spelling Tutors
- Dictionaries
- Tutor's Texts
- Practical Maths
- Student Writings
- Simplified Texts
- Basic Readers
- Life and Social Skills
Study Skills
English Speakers of Other Languages

It is clear that this authority realises the importance of a multi-media and even a multi-
sensory approach to facilitate adult learners. It lists the following materials under the
heading 'Other Formats':

- Spoken Word Cassettes
- Abridged and Simplified Texts
- Read-along Tapes
- Tutor Tapes
- Multi-media Packs

Regarding the 'Selection of Materials' the authority says that decisions on purchasing
specialist material will be undertaken in partnership and co-operation with 'specialist'
tutors or other relevant external agencies.

This authority also indicates that: "Material will be purchased from small specialist
suppliers and may often include non-traditional formats such as multi-media packs,
spiral and loose leaf binding". It was a shame that this authority, which had included so
much detail in their 'Range of Materials' sections, had not thought to include names of
the "small specialist suppliers" from which their resources were obtained.

5.2.1.4 Stock Selection

Some policy statements concerned high level principles rather than practical guidance
to staff on how to carry out their duties in line with the policies. Others, notably in the
area of stock selection were done in greater detail and could be used readily on an
operational basis.

'Special Services Selection Guidelines' was the focus of one authority's policy
document. This policy encompassed a great deal of detail about the selection criteria
for the "client groups....it serves". The example of the various client groups included
"those with limited skills in literacy, numeracy or English, the mentally handicapped,
the physically handicapped.....".

120
The 'Special Services Selection Guidelines' set out the aims and objectives of 'Special Services'. These objectives were listed in full and included:

Recognise that, while we are catering for the fullest range of adult interests and abilities, there will be a particular need to help adults to develop literacy, numeracy, ESL, social and life skills by the provision of a wide range of relevant materials for students and tutors, whether in formal tuition or not.

This statement can be seen to embrace the needs of dyslexic adults who may have left school without formal qualifications. Moreover, the guidelines state that the service should "provide materials in the widest range of appropriate forms, including books, records and cassettes, periodicals, learning games, kits, flashcards, workpacks and worksheets. These types of media, particularly "books"; "cassettes"; "learning games"; "flashcards"; "workpacks and worksheets" are very much part of the 'multi-sensory' approach used to help overcome learning difficulties for adults with dyslexia.

Although the term dyslexia was not specifically mentioned in the 'Special Selection Guidelines' there was a wide ranging discussion of aspects of stock selection that would be applicable to conditions such as dyslexia. The guidelines demonstrate professional skills in their preparation that were noteworthy when compared to other attempts along similar lines. The 'Stock Selection Criteria' covered areas such as 'Fiction'; 'Non Fiction'; 'Format'; 'Text: reading age' and 'Text: style'. In the section relating to the 'Format' of materials suitable for adult individuals who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, the guidelines set out a list of questions that need to be considered when selection appropriate material for this 'client groups':

- Is the layout suitable for an adult or is it childish?
- Is the print-style clear and attractive?
- Is there a variety of type-faces to provide practice in letter and word recognition?
- Is lower case, which will aid letter and word recognition, used sufficiently?
- Is the type-size large enough?
- Is there accurate line-breaking to aid reading and comprehension?
- Do the illustrations complement the text usefully; do they relate to specific words or phrases unambiguously?
- Does the type of paper aid the clarity of presentation?
- Is there a useful glossary and/or guide to pronunciation?
- Are there useful comprehension exercises?
- Is there a useful index?
• Are there useful practice exercises?
• Will the material provide the basis for the creation of other materials or could it be used effectively with materials already in stock?

The above set of questions indicates that this authority considers very seriously the needs of adults who want to improve their reading, writing and learning skills. This policy, however, does acknowledge that it is difficult to determine the "reading age" for adults. It says:

   At best, only an approximate and relative indication will be given of the difficulty of material and often, given the variety of personalities, interests, experience and skills possessed by adults, the assessment of the suitability of material will be greatly distorted.

The 'Guidelines' offer some insight to the 'Text: style (vocabulary difficulty, sentence and paragraph structure, literary style) by asking the following questions:

• Is the vocabulary, syntax and sentence structure controlled effectively?
• Is the material part of a graded series and is the increase in difficulty between parts relatively even?
• Is the relationship between each part of the series clearly indicated?
• Is the vocabulary realistic and relevant to the experience of expected users or are there irrelevant or inaccurate idioms and/or is the language stilted or too literary?

It is clear that this authority has taken care in its 'Guidelines' to disseminate a great deal of information relating to stock acquisition for adults with literacy and numeracy problems. It was noteworthy that in the list of resources that were listed above "records" were mentioned as part of the material that should be provided for the "client group". This format (in the 1990s) is becoming less and less used and has, to a large extent, been replaced by cassettes and compact disc material. Closer examination of the policy indicated that the 'Guidelines' were issued in May 1982. However, additional comments on the questionnaire indicated that they did not have videos or CD-ROM materials. This could suggest that the 'Guidelines' had not been revised and updated because these formats were not yet part of the stock held in the libraries.
5.2.1.5 Co-operation with other agencies

A number of authorities acknowledge that libraries can not operate independently of the communities that they serve and that they need to seek areas of co-operation and partnership with other agencies.

A policy statement entitled 'Development Strategy' outlines the "key elements of adopting a development approach - targeting, marketing, equal opportunities, network and partnerships." The section dedicated to 'Targeting' highlights the requirement to address "the needs of particular groups with common characteristics", for example people with "similar disabilities" and although not clearly stated in the document, this could apply to people who are dyslexic.

The policy states that "Only through segmenting our users and potential users can we either consult, raise awareness, promote or develop services". This section indicated that segmentation and targeting are basic tools of marketing that should be employed by local library authorities to ensure that they are addressing the local needs of their users (and non users). Once the segments are identified, appropriate outreach can be organised.

The 'Equality' section "recognises that all residents should have equality of access to appropriate services. It is also acknowledged that special effort is required to ensure equality of access to appropriate services". The 'Development Strategy' stresses the need for active outreach to the various communities that are not current users of the library or who, for what ever reason, do not perceive the public library as a place that has resources that would be helpful to them in order to enhance their quality of life or to improve their life chances. The 'Development Strategy' states that "It is only through a process of consultation and feedback that steps can be taken to ensure problems of
access are being addressed". In order to achieve this the policy statement suggests that:

a more proactive approach to networking and joint ventures will be taken. It is envisaged that such a strategy will enable us to better identify and meet community needs and to develop services through non-traditional channels.

For example, information technology is cited as being a service provision area that individuals with "a physical or sensory disability" would find enabling especially if these "services are provided in a format which suits both the organisation and the end user".

This policy statement, as indicated by its title, is indeed a 'Strategy' which outlined key areas that needed to be developed in order for the library service to become more than a passive repository of resources that are held in the public library buildings. In essence, the document outlines the first stages of what is required to exploit more fully what the library service has to offer to the disparate communities that it serves. Moreover, it recognises that a library service should undertake community outreach initiatives working in partnership with external agencies such as 'The Voluntary Sector'; 'The Private Sector'; 'The Health Authority'; 'The Leisure Services Division'; 'Library and Information Networks; and other 'Council Divisions' in order to break down stereotypical images of public libraries. This aspect is implicitly implied by the statement, "It will also take into account the need to alter people's perception of the library as a place only for 'educated, middle-class professionals' or for those who are literate. Awareness training for staff would help to eliminate many potential barriers relating to cultural differences or disability issues".

5.2.1.6 Additional Comments on Special Needs Policies

Eight authorities that stated that they had a policy for Special Needs went on to add comments concerning where the policy was stated and/or towards which group of users. The most common observation (3 cases) was that the policy was linked to stock selection. Another mentioned the Service Development Plan as the home for this policy whilst another simply stated that it was covered by the general Council policy on dealing with people with disabilities.
One authority noted that their focus was on stock selection for adults. Another wrote that children's services were the focus. A third referred to "all members of society". A fourth wrote: "The policy on special needs relates to adults; the children's policy has a section on special needs".

Four authorities which indicated that policy statements on special needs were in preparation also provided additional comments. These reflected an increased awareness of the issues and indicated a more pro-active approach to the issue than was noted elsewhere. These comments tended to be more specific about the process behind the development of the policies. One mentioned the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 as the driver for this change. Another stated that the work followed on from "a recent audit of special needs". A third authority noted that the policy was being prepared in conjunction with the Adult Basic Skills Unit.

One authority appeared to question the need for a written policy on Special Needs as follows "Policy - No. Equality and access, yes". The inference is that this authority, or at least the person answering the questionnaire, felt that the general Council policy on equal access to Council resources was sufficient to cover users with special needs.

5.2.1.7 Policy Statements Summary

The policy statements sent in association with the questionnaire responses provide a useful additional source of information about how library authorities define their responsibilities in the area of resource provision for special needs. There was wide variation between the statements reflecting the differing priorities of the authorities that responded. Some were simply statements of high level principle with little in the way of specific lines of action. These could be seen as useful in making a public commitment to provision of special needs facilities. Others (e.g. stock selection and resources) were very detailed and seemed to be aimed more towards providing guidance to library staff for carrying out the policies. A number of statements seemed at first glance to be more concerned with politically correct terminology rather than with the details of actions to be taken or resources provided. However, this
preoccupation could be seen to have practical operational value in terms of the naming of collections to avoid negative connotations associated with remedial material.

5.3 Written Policies that Include Consideration of Dyslexia

Of the authorities replying, 7 authorities (6 per cent) had a written policy that included dyslexia. 89 (78 per cent) did not; and 18 (16 per cent) answered that they had a 'special needs' policy in preparation. The responses to this question expand the information obtained from the previous question concerning written policy about 'special needs' in general. It can be observed here that just over a third of the authorities that had a written policy about 'special needs' go on to specifically mention dyslexia.

16 per cent of authorities are noted as having their written policy on dyslexia "in preparation", a similar proportion as had their written policy on special needs "in preparation". It cannot be inferred from this that all the authorities that are currently preparing their 'special needs' policy would have included the area of dyslexia. Unless the person replying to the questionnaire was actively involved in the drafting of the written policy, it could not be assumed that they know in detail the proposed contents of the written policy. One can suggest that authorities taking a fresh look at their written policies are likely to include important issues such as 'special needs' provision, but it is probably unrealistic to assume that all of these authorities will do so.
Three authorities indicated that their 'special needs' policy included dyslexia. Key themes from these statements included consideration of identification of special needs groups, contents of the collections, selection criteria and methods, co-operation with other agencies, promotion of collections, access and staffing considerations. Examples of statements covering these themes are noted and discussed below.

5.3.1 Labelling

Terminology continues to be a contentious issue for library authorities as reflected by the following excerpts from policy statements. Apart from the usual debate about dyslexia as a condition, the wider area of 'special needs' definition is also considered. In the first case below, there are somewhat contrasting comments starting with the an attempt to define various conditions and situations followed by a statement warning against "labelling" individuals on the basis of those criteria.

'Services to Children with Special Needs' was the emphasis of another policy statement. The respondent had replied that the policy does include dyslexia "although not specifically mentioned". This in itself is an example of an interpretation of terms, since this authority believes that their policy covers dyslexia without actually mentioning it. The policy outlines a 'Definition of children in need' in their authority if they:

- need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, or
- need local authority services to prevent significant or further impairment of health or development, or are disabled.

The policy goes on to say "broadness of the definition and the transience of many of the situations emphasises the need to reject any labelling of children but to consider all children as individuals, each with a range of needs". Treating everyone as an individual is a positive objective, but unless user needs are segmented and understood, it is unlikely that a responsive service can be provided to meet them. The connotation of the word labelling here is rather negative but using the terms customer or user
segmentation could be seen as progressive, especially if it is linked to positive action on behalf of those users.

5.3.2 Naming Special Needs Collections

Within the broad area of terminology, the naming of the special needs collection is a recurring theme. The authority quoted below seems to follow the traditional practice of using "Basic Skills" in the name of their collection but perhaps inadvertently goes on to provide indications that this is not the best approach. 'Basic Skills Collections' were the prime emphasis of this authority's 'Draft Standards'. This draft policy followed "a survey of the existing Basic Skills Collections" and identified the need to replace one collection, set-up a new collection in another library and have "small collections ...placed on Mobiles in areas where there is known to be a demand". This document contained various headings, such as 'Position within the Library and Guiding' which stated that "All collections should be identified as 'Basic Skills' and labelled as such".

Interestingly this policy statement goes on to note in another section that "issues from reading books have been very low, particularly with titles written specifically for basic skills e.g. 'Fastback Series', 'Writers Voices' and the abbreviated biographies". This draft policy indicated that "the most popular books are abridged and simplified versions of books by standard authors, e.g. Ian Fleming, Dick Francis". The point about low issue figures for "basic skills" material rather runs against the use of this term as the name for the overall collection and gives some support to the views of other authorities which chose a more positive name for their collections.

5.3.3 Contents of the Collection

The following authority indicated that their written policy included dyslexia "but only briefly in their "Stock Check List". This follows the pattern of a minimal reference to dyslexia, even amongst the authorities that claim that their policy covers the condition. This is a notable example of an authority using their policy statement as a detailed set of guidelines, with the focus in this instance on the contents of their collection. Three
documents were sent with the completed questionnaire. One related to 'Special Client Groups' and the other two documents were separate extracts from the 'Total Collection Management Manual'. These were titled 'Community Services Stock Check List' and 'Community Services Dewey Checklist'. In the latter extract, dyslexia was listed as being 618.928 denoting the class relating to health. Other than the listing of dyslexia in the 'Dewey Checklist,' dyslexia as a term did not appear to be specifically mentioned.

In the 'Community Services Stock Check List', adult picture books were recommended for various client groups, including "adults with learning disabilities". Relating to adult picture books the policy suggests that "A selection of books with a high pictorial content should be available on a range of subjects. These should have sharp illustrations and, where possible, a reasonable print size". A comprehensive list of subjects that tend to have illustrations in the books were suggested, for example, transport; animals and birds; cooking and sport. Furthermore, a list of "Some relevant publishers, series, authors for consideration" was provided. Publishers and authors included were:

- Dorling Kindersley
- Hamlyn
- Octopus Books
- Pavilion Books
- Salamander Books
- Alan Sutton
- Thames and Hudson
- Tiger Books
- Opic, Robert

The policy also suggested that "Judicious use of carefully selected children's material may also be useful for some client groups". A list of the various series from Franklin Watts, for example 'Changing Times'; 'My sport' and 'People and Places' were recommended. The section that related to 'Essential Adult Learning' also included comprehensive and detailed insights to resources and publishers that provide specialist materials for adults with "learning disabilities". Suggestions were also made about factual subjects to be covered at either a basic level or based on a self help approach. These included texts covering spelling, handwriting, basic maths, photo dictionaries,
basic reference and life skills. The authority goes on to list useful series and or publishers which provide relevant material. These included:

- Basic Skills Agency (formerly Albsu) - New material and Real life Series
- Collins - Skyways
- Gatehouse
- Hodder & Stoughton - Chillers
- Learning Development Aids - High stakes adventures; Five minute thrillers;
- Flashbacks/Double flashbacks
- Oxford - Bookworm

The policy suggested that the above publishers and series are very useful for adults with learning difficulties. Moreover, the following sources were listed as being particularly helpful for adults with learning difficulties because the books are specifically written for people with learning difficulties: St. Georges Mental Health Library - Sovereign Series and Silent Books - West Meadow Series

5.3.4 Stock Selection Criteria & Methods

The following excerpts from policy statements offer suggestions of good practice in the area of stock selection. Rather like the guidance on contents of collections above, these policy statements are probably aimed more towards internal guidance rather than towards a public statement of intentions. The general issue of how materials are selected for library use is discussed. This arises in part through the trend towards ordering materials remotely (e.g. via publisher provided CD-ROM) rather than via "hands on" selection sessions. This is a relevant area for special needs where format of material is an important consideration.

A policy statement on 'Basic Skills Collections', containing a section titled 'Selection of Material', stated that "because of the specialist nature of this material new stock should not be bought from catalogues but by personal selection at a specialist supplier e.g. Avanti". The authority also stated that "Material should be selected from a range of media e.g. books, audio visual, multi media". A recommendation was also made that "where possible advice should be sought from local Basic Skills tutors". This policy reflects good practice in that it seeks to work in partnership with educational
'specialists' so that the most suitable resources are provided for the target user groups. Moreover, this authority recognises the need for staff training "in helping Basic Skills learners and for the assessment of material".

The 'Drafts Standards' also included a comprehensive list of resources that made up the 'Contents of the Basic Skills Collection'. This included material relating to 'Numeracy and Basic Maths'; 'Reading and Writing Skills' and 'Life Skills'. Many young people and adults who may have encountered learning difficulties, for whatever reason, at secondary school level, would find the contents of the 'Basic Skills Collection' enabling. Many of the resources would help individuals to equip themselves with career related skills and to offer practical guidance on how, for example, to apply for job positions. Several authorities that provided additional comments to their responses suggested Basic Skills Collections would be useful to adults with dyslexia.

This authority also attached a copy of their 'Stock Policy' that included a section relating to the selection of materials for special needs. The categories of criteria listed for the selection of special needs were:

- Accessibility of information
- Format
- Portrayal of images and attitudes

This section of the policy did not attempt to define the range of disabilities that fall within the blanket term 'special needs'. It is difficult to say, therefore, whether dyslexia is included in this category although the response to the questionnaire stated that this was the case.

The methods used to select material for special needs included: "Visits will be made to the showrooms of library suppliers to buy newly published material and standard stock". This is appropriate advice for selecting material where the presentation is vital, but does not indicate whether "the visits to the showrooms" were 'specialist' in nature or whether they were visits to mainstream library suppliers. No names of suppliers that focus particularly on resource provision for 'special needs' were given in the 'Stock Policy' document. This begs the question as to whether this is specific advice for
dealing with special needs or merely re-stating a general method used for stock selection.

The policy document goes on to state that "pre-publication ordering of some adult fiction and non-fiction books will be undertaken, using publishers' advance information". This weakens further the sense of this policy being specific advice for meeting special needs requirements. It may be realistic to acknowledge that some selection will be done from publishers' information, but logic would suggest that a "hands on" approach for special needs selection, either for visual impairment or dyslexia, would be preferable to simply ordering off the page of a catalogue or CD-ROM entry.

Another authority takes a holistic and thorough approach to providing stock selection guidance for their client groups, notably for adults with "learning difficulties". The policy included other considerations and suggestions to providing resources for people with learning disabilities. These included, location and the promotion of the material relating to 'Essential Adult Learning' stock and, importantly, points to consider when choosing stock for this client group. Of the latter, the policy suggests the following points to consider:

- Attractive and appropriate for adults
- Subject matter clear and appropriate
- Jargon free and simple sentence structure
- In short sections and avoids long descriptive passages
- Print large, clear, black and well spaced
- Illustrations - adult and appropriate to text
- If fiction - story interesting and progresses rapidly
- If non fiction - clear explanations
- If self help material - instructions written at suitable level, with contents list and index

The extracts from this authority's 'Total Collection Management Manual' are a very good example of a high standard of practice. Although the policy does not mention dyslexia specifically, the criteria outlined in detail for selecting resource provision for adults with learning disabilities, could apply to some of their needs.
5.3.5 Access to Resources

When discussing access to library materials, several authorities focus literally on access for people with physical disabilities. The following excerpt considers another aspect of access through consideration of the creation of directories of resources. This was one of the authorities that resists the use of labels, but at the same time proposes creating directories of resources to address categories of special needs.

It is essential that relevant books can be located quickly and easily in response to readers' enquiries. A directory of resources will be maintained and made available..., giving advice on special needs material.

There is no doubt that an easily accessible "directory of resources" outlining the resource material held in the libraries that are useful to children with "special needs" is a positive information tool for library staff (the policy did not state whether this was accessible for library users). On the other hand, if the various groups are not "labelled" (i.e. segmented) as to their "special needs", it will prove very difficult to provide them with material appropriate to their needs.

This authority correctly notes that suitable material to meet special needs can be found in their general collection and that their use should be explored in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit. Establishing criteria for this exploration requires knowledge of the specific issues associated with differing special needs and the types of material that have proved useful for them. Whilst it might be correct to avoid the stigma of certain aspects of "labelling", understanding user needs requires some elements of it.

5.3.6 Staffing

Staffing issues are mentioned in passing in various policy statements. A typical, rather general comment was that the policy identifies the need to train the "children's services staff so that this information can be cascaded to other Matrices and staff". Another suggestion was that staff should be trained to serve as 'readers' advisors. Perhaps it was assumed that the policy statements themselves constituted guidance that could be
used as the basis of training, but the relative lack of specific commitment to staff training for addressing special needs is noteworthy.

5.3.7 Promotion

Promotion of the services provided for special needs is briefly mentioned in various policy statements. In most cases, these were relatively simple statements confirming that promotion of resources was important and that "any appropriate medium" including community networks and specialist agencies should be used. Use of leaflets and exhibitions were also suggested. Less space was given to promotional considerations than either to operational areas such as stock selection, or to statements of high level principle including debates on terminology and labelling.

5.3.8 Additional Comments on Dyslexia Policies

Four authorities suggested to some degree that dyslexia is already covered by inference since there is a policy that addresses special needs or learning difficulties. This may also relate to the traditional debate about use of the specific term "dyslexia" rather than the wider term "special needs", which many suggest is more appropriate.

One authority suggested that dyslexics would get special considerations for fines etc, but since this is not covered in a policy statement, it is not clear how this would be implemented in practice, especially given the noted reluctance of dyslexic individuals to identify themselves.

5.3.9 Summary

There were certain similarities between the topics covered by the authorities which claimed to include dyslexia in their policy statements and the authorities which claimed only to cover special needs. In fact, significant direct references to dyslexia were rare in any of the policy statements. It appears to be a matter of interpretation as to whether
the authority believes that its policy covers dyslexia rather than literally whether the
term in mentioned in any significant way.

Terminology is discussed at some length in both sets of policy statements. Debate over
the naming of the collections is seen in both, reasonably well divided between the
traditional choice along the lines of "Basic Skills" and the attempts to avoid the
negative connotation of a remedial approach to literacy through use of more positive
terminology, e.g. "Return to Learn". Another variation on the debate surrounding
terminology was shown by the resistance by one authority to the "labelling" of
individuals into segments or categories, whilst later suggesting the creation of
appropriate directories of resources that address the needs of different special needs
groups.

The authorities that claim to cover dyslexia in their policy statements tended to go into
somewhat greater operational detail in areas such as Contents of the Collection and
Stock Selection. There is a certain logic to this in that this greater detail is more apt to
cover more elements of special learning difficulties and to reflect a more specific
commitment to the analysis of user needs.

References to staff training and the promotion of the availability of special needs
resources were scattered and not given much weight in the majority of policy
statements. These are significant gaps within the policy area. If these issues are not
well managed, it is difficult to imagine a successful programme to meet the needs of
individuals with dyslexia.

5.3.10 Specific Information on Dyslexia Provision

Six authorities attached specific material concerning their awareness of the concerns
about 'special needs' and dyslexia. These tended to be the most direct statements of
action and commitment by any of the library authorities. They were a significant source
of information and suggested areas of best practice arising from the questionnaire
exercise. The more significant aspects are analysed and discussed below.
The leaflet entitled 'Library Services for People with Dyslexia' targeted dyslexic users (and non-users) of the library service. This was only one of three authorities that explicitly concedes that dyslexia exists and that the library service (and by extension) the library and information profession should be attempting to address the needs of individuals with dyslexia in a library context. The leaflet began by establishing some of the problems experienced by people with dyslexia:

Dyslexia is a result of difficulty in processing information. Its effects are particularly noticeable in the development of reading, writing, spelling and sometimes numeracy.

The leaflet goes on to explain the extent and impact of the condition:

As a result, dyslexics are at a disadvantage as soon as they pick up a book. Children can find school a struggle, whilst for adults filling in a form, for example, can be a daunting prospect. In some cases dyslexia can even affect timekeeping and sense of direction. As approximately 10% of people are dyslexic it is a larger problem than many people think.

By creation of this leaflet, this authority explicitly accepts that part of their core ethos and philosophy should be to deliver library services to people with dyslexia. This was the only authority out of the 114 that returned the questionnaire that provided a direct invitation to people with dyslexia to make use of the library services by publishing a leaflet aimed directly at them.

Dyslexia is put into a positive context by this authority when it says that this condition "can be helped and does not have to be a barrier to success". Famous dyslexics including Albert Einstein, Tom Cruise and Susan Hampshire are mentioned as people, who in spite of their dyslexia, reached a high level of attainment in their chosen professions.
The leaflet 'Library Services for People with Dyslexia' indicates that there are special concessions for dyslexic individuals by stating that:

If you are dyslexic, you can obtain a ticket that allows you to borrow twelve items. These can be any combinations of books and talking tapes loaned for 3 weeks. Different loan periods apply to special collections and other material. Ask staff for further details.

The various resources that are recommended for use by people with dyslexia are described in the following way: "For those who experience difficulties with reading, talking tapes are a practical and enjoyable alternative to the printed word. For anybody with dyslexia they are free". Users are invited to "Ask staff for further details" as to how they can obtain this concession.

The authority recognises the importance of linking the talking tapes with the printed word. Talking tapes on their own are particularly useful to individuals who are severely dyslexic and have difficulty with reading. The combination of the talking tape with the matching story in its printed format is very useful if a person with dyslexia wants to improve their reading skills. The user of the talking tape can listen to the sounds of the words that make-up the narrative of the story whilst at the same time see how the words are spelt in their printed form.

In order to further encourage people with dyslexia to read either to improve their literacy skills or to read for pleasure the authority recommends the use of large print books. 'Library Services for People with Dyslexia' says:

Large Print books are sometimes helpful for people with dyslexia. They are available in all...libraries. Typeface and boldness of print are variable and it may be worthwhile spending some time looking for something with which you or your child feels comfortable.

The leaflet 'Library Services for People with Dyslexia' also states that there are books particularly aimed at parents and/or teachers of dyslexic children available in the libraries. Moreover, the addresses and telephone numbers of the British Dyslexia Association and the Dyslexia Institute are listed as being further sources of information.
Another authority sent an information sheet that was specific to the information and learning needs of people with dyslexia. The sheet was simply titled 'Dyslexia'. The respondent wrote that "the attached sheet was recently added to the staff newsletter to raise staff awareness of dyslexic customers". The sheet on 'Dyslexia' was well presented, easy to understand and informative. The opening paragraph of the sheet described the various symptoms of dyslexia. It also suggested that "about 4% of the population are severely dyslexic". Interestingly, the sheet pointed out that "Dyslexia is three times more common in boys than in girls".

The information sheet did not recommend resources available in public libraries, although it did suggest that "dyslexic children can be helped by playing games". The examples given were "I Spy, Simon Says, dominoes, snap, jigsaw puzzles and games and songs involving memory and sequencing". The sheet also mentioned that "using a computer can help dyslexic children, and it has been suggested that since they often have superior visualisation skills, they are good at solving problems in non-verbal ways".

The rest of the sheet listed various 'Organisations to contact'. These included the British Dyslexia Association. The address of the local Dyslexia Association was also provided with a further notation that this Association had a Resources Centre open at various times during school term-time. The address and telephone number of the Adult Dyslexia Organisation based in London was listed, as well as the web page details of the Dyslexia 2000 Network on the Internet. The sheet also cited the company called Dyslexia Educational Resources where a list of computer software can be obtained.

This authority demonstrates good professional practice when it states at the end of the sheet:

For more detailed information contact...at Client Services who has a file of newspaper articles from the Internet, and leaflets from the British Dyslexia Association.

This shows a commitment by this authority to the information needs of the dyslexic communities by updating information about dyslexia and keeping a current file on the
subject.

An information leaflet concerning 'Services for disabled people' was sent by another authority. 'Services for disabled people' outlined in the leaflet sets the standard of service that the authority wants its staff to deliver i.e. that the response made to individuals with a 'disability' is carried out in a professional and welcoming way. This authority was one of the few to mention the term dyslexia specifically in relationship to resources provided in public libraries for people who are dyslexic. Dyslexia was named in connection with 'Talking books':

A range of titles which can be requested and borrowed from any library free of charge by people who are blind or partially sighted, or whose physical condition makes it difficult to hold books, and by children under 16 who are dyslexic.

Another authority provided a comprehensive report on a 'Workshop on library services and children with learning difficulties'. This workshop was carried out with parents, teachers and carers in a Central Library in 1997. Although dyslexia was not specifically mentioned in the report, some of the issues considered during the workshop proceedings could apply to the needs of dyslexic children. The workshop considered many issues of interest and relevance to librarians, teachers, parents and carers including 'Labelling/Guiding/Signs'; 'Audio Tapes'; 'Ideas and services'; 'Storytimes' and 'Selection of Books'. There was a strong focus on resources for children with learning difficulties as well as suggested criteria for stock selection.

An Information Sheet on Computer Campus Touch Type and Read Facilities was provided. This is a multi-sensory, integrated learning system with Course material based on the textbook Alpha to Omega, would be very helpful to people with dyslexia. The Touch Type and Read facility is described as being "a computer aided learning course for students with spelling, reading or writing difficulties".

An authority produced an Information Sheet Library Services to Visually Impaired People which outlines in detail the facilities offered to visually impaired people in dedicated 'VIP Units' based in three libraries in the authority. The facilities include reading aids, information, advice and training. Some of these were viewed as being
potentially relevant for people with dyslexia. Reading aids include closed circuit TV sets which magnify text up to 24 times and talking teletext (provided by ITV and BBC television). Kurzweil Reading Edge machines scans text and converts it into clear synthetic speech.

5.4 Management and Development of Dyslexia Resources

The responses to the question of responsibility for dyslexic resources at first sight appeared to be quite varied. Many of the responses, however, indicate that there have been very limited attempts to assign this task to a specialist team or individual. The responsibility most often comes within the remit of the Children’s or Young People's librarian. The next most common category noted was the 'Special' or 'Specialist Services'. Even this designation is something less than exact in normal library terms.

There are several job titles mentioned that depart from the more traditional and familiar librarian roles (Lending, Reference, children’s etc). For example, 'Project Manager', 'Health and Welfare Librarian', and the 'Equal Opportunities Functional Team' are all listed. These titles reflect the various attempts to restructure the public library service to cater for various user needs. 'Project Manager' as a title implies that this is a person who creates new structures rather than manages them over time. Health and Welfare and Equal Opportunities are titles that carry with them the suggestion that non-
mainstream needs are being addressed, at least by nominating a person or team to champion special initiatives.

The variety of titles may reflect multiple attempts to restructure library services either to meet special requirements or they may suggest an attempt to follow particular national and/or local government defined objectives for the public service. Overall the impression is given that little special attention is given to this area of activity. 28 authorities state this directly whilst a similar number indicated that the responsibility falls to what could be described as a generalist librarian.

5.5 Public Library Resources for Dyslexics

PROVISION OF RESOURCES FOR DYSLEXICS

Figure 5.5 Percentage of Authorities Providing Resources for Dyslexics

82 authorities (72 per cent) answered that they do provide resources for dyslexic individuals. 32 (28 per cent) replies said that they do not provide resources for dyslexics.

The first impression is that a reasonably high percentage of library authorities provide resources for dyslexic individuals. The figures, however, could be misleading because, as discussed below, very few of these library authorities have 'special collections' or target their resources at specific age groups. This question could be interpreted to mean that within the broad range of resources in the library there is bound to be some things of use for dyslexics. This is not the same thing as saying that conscious effort has been made to meet this user requirement.
The library authorities that answered negatively possibly read the question literally to mean resources that are targeted for use only by the dyslexic communities. Many of the authorities who stated that they do not have any resources for dyslexic individuals also answered "non applicable" to questions 1b to 9b (questions that deal specifically with resource provision for dyslexics), but they did answer questions 10 and 10a which relate to information needs about the subject of dyslexia rather than for resource provision for the individual themselves.

5.5.1 Additional Comments on Resources for Dyslexics

Ten respondents indicated that although there are resources available and "suitable for dyslexic individuals" these are to be found in the "general stock" and are not "specifically targeted" for use by dyslexic individuals. Several of these comments referred to question 5 of the questionnaire which listed multi-media resources that can be helpful to people who are dyslexic.

Three authorities linked the requirement to provide resources for dyslexics with materials purchased for Adult Literacy. It may well be that provision for dyslexics was an afterthought, but it does suggest a possibly useful linkage in terms of the organisation of resources to meet a variety of special needs:

There are no questions about adult literacy resources - which given how many dyslexic people fall through the educational net - might well be a 'hidden' resource that libraries have but don't associate with dyslexia or special needs!
5.6 Resources Targeted at Particular Age Groups

62 authorities stated that they do not target their dyslexia resources by age group whilst 25 stated that they did. 27 authorities either did not reply to this question and/or indicated that it was not applicable.

Amongst the 25 authorities who stated that they target by age group, 9 stated that they target ALL age groups from 0 to 18+.
Respondents were asked to tick boxes that fell into age group categories – i.e. 0-5; 6-11; 12-18; 18+; Not targeted at any group.

25 out of 114 authorities responding (21.9 per cent) said that they target their resources for dyslexic users by age. 62 (54.4 per cent) indicated that they did not target their resources at any age group. The residual 27 authorities (23.7 per cent) did not respond, which would suggest that either they did not have any resources, or if they did, they did not target them for any particular age group.

Of the 25 authorities which claim to target by age group, 9 authorities indicate that they target "All" age groups. This could be interpreted either that they study all age groups to systematically target their needs, or that they really do not differentiate at all. Those that do differentiate by specific age groups are only 14 per cent of the total
respondents. It is rather difficult to draw many conclusions from this relatively small sample.

50 per cent of the authorities that differentiate by age (8 of 16) suggest that the provision stops at age 18, which would indicate that they do not include "adult" provision. This could suggest that the focus is on children/students and the responsibility within the service would be Children/Young People's librarians.

5.6.1 Additional Comments on Target Groups by Age

Comments written in the margin of the questionnaire included:

♦ Mainly parents with children with dyslexia - info packs.
♦ Varies according to individual libraries.
♦ 7-14 years old in one library, and 7-18+ in another library.
♦ Age range 0-5; 6-11; 12-15.

The comments, like the quantitative data, indicate a bias towards children and young people as the main focus for provision of material for dyslexics.

5.7 Organisation of Dyslexia Resources

![Pie chart showing percentage of authorities with concentrated or dispersed collections.]

Figure 5. 10 Percentage of Authorities with Concentrated or Dispersed Collections

10 authorities (8.8 per cent) answered that they provide resources for dyslexic individuals in concentrated 'special' collections. 5 authorities (4.4 per cent) stated that
they have both concentrated and dispersed collections. 70 (61.4 per cent) answered that their resources are dispersed amongst the mainstream collections. 29 authorities (25.4 per cent) did not answer this question at all, therefore, for statistical purposes this is registered as non-applicable.

The replies to this question indicate that very few authorities had a 'concentrated' collection of resources that are specifically targeted for use by dyslexic individuals. The 13.2 per cent of library authorities who answered replied that they have 'concentrated' (or both 'concentrated and dispersed') collections indicates a clear commitment to the users of their libraries who are dyslexic. These authorities are attempting to address the needs of user groups within the dyslexic communities. They are addressing the needs in a visible and tangible way. In contrast the 61.4 per cent of authorities who said they have 'dispersed' (mainstream) resources are not necessarily addressing the needs of dyslexic individuals in an accessible manner. The 25.4 per cent of authorities that did not answer this question at all suggests that little or no consideration has been given there to providing resources that are suitable for the needs of dyslexic individuals. There appears, from these statistics, to be a high awareness of dyslexia but only about 13 per cent of authorities were delivering service in a visible and tangible way.

Several library authorities also wrote comments alongside of their answers giving indications of how the collections are organised and where the resources are located within the library. For example:

Adult basic education and life skills materials are included in special 'feature collections' in most libraries. Other relevant materials (e.g. on dyslexia in children) are in the relevant sections of the Dewey classified sequence (e.g. Education; Psychology).

In general, although several acknowledged that their collections were usually dispersed, there was an awareness of the benefits of having at least a small concentrated collection, often associated with adult learning, Basic Skills or children’s collections. Several expressed the intention of creating at least a small central collection.
5.8 Size of Collections

Only 9 authorities provided answers to the question requesting information on the size of their collections. Furthermore, not all of them provided a numerical estimate. Those that did gave widely diverse figures, ranging from 12 to about 2000 items, probably reflecting differing interpretations of what was meant by the term ‘collection’.

Amongst the few responses that could be reasonably clearly linked to dedicated special needs’ collections, the numbers of items were in a range from approximately 70 to about 250 items. The highest figures (circa 2000) were related to broader collections such as the Health Information Service, of which the dyslexia collection would only form a small part. 54 library authorities did not know the size of the collections. This would indicate that these are not specifically defined collections.

5.9 Resources for Dyslexics Available in Public Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>RESOURCES FOR DYSLEXICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>BKCP STCS TLBK LPBK VIDE PCBK SPEL CDRM CGSW HILO OTHR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.11 Percentages of Authorities with Various Resources for Dyslexics

KEY TO THE ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BKCP</th>
<th>Book/cassette packs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STCS</td>
<td>Story cassette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLBK</td>
<td>Talking books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPBK</td>
<td>Large print books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIDE</td>
<td>Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCBK</td>
<td>Picture books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEL</td>
<td>Spelling aids (e.g. Dictionaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDRM</td>
<td>CD-ROMs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGSW</td>
<td>Computer games software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILO</td>
<td>Books with higher interest age than reading age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHR</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The multi-media items listed above were identified as being helpful to people with dyslexia, initially through the findings of the literature survey (Chapter 3); the family case study (Chapter 4); the Reach Resource Centre case study (Chapter 7) and the interview/surveys carried out at Ealing library and Richmond library, all of which were undertaken prior to the sending out of the questionnaire in 1997. Figure 5.11 shows the percentage of authorities that reported holding the various items.

It is not surprising to see that large print books are almost universally available, reflecting their long standing use for the visually impaired. The next most common items (story cassettes and talking books) also appear in over 90 per cent of the replies. These two items plus the book cassettes reflect the availability of audio alternatives to the written word. Of course in the case of the book cassette packs there is the additional advantage of having the text as well as the audio rendition as a self-learning tool. Videos also are commonly available (in over 80 per cent of the authorities replying) but with less clear linkage to provision for dyslexics. Some "educational videos" would no doubt be at least as useful as the purely audio media.

Of the more modern types of media (CD-ROM and computer games software), CD-ROM appears on over 60 per cent of the responses. This is reasonably high considering the cost of setting up the facilities for their use. Computer games software only appears in just over 10 per cent of the responses, perhaps indicating the positioning of this as a leisure item for income generation and the problem of compatibility (i.e. many different suppliers which provide software that only runs on one type of machine).

There was a high response rate (over 80 per cent) for books with a higher interest age than reading age. This is a positive finding which indicates an understanding of the importance of having more interesting and stimulating material expressed simply.

Over 80 per cent of respondents indicated that they have spelling aids, for example dictionaries. This does not necessarily mean, however, that these are specially designed
dictionaries that can be accessed by individuals with specific spelling difficulty.

This question also gave the respondent the opportunity of stating OTHER resources that are available in their library service: Answers included:

- Equipment such as Kurzweil reading machine and computers with speech (mentioned by three authorities)
- Specialist books on dealing with dyslexia for dyslexic people and professionals (mentioned by four authorities)
- Graded readers (mentioned twice)
- Internet (mentioned twice)
- Computer Campus reading system
- Graphic novels
- Contacts with relevant organisations
- Adult Literacy material
- Medical books in lay terms for carers and sufferers
- Links to Adult College of Higher Education
- Information from the (local) University on how to help dyslexic students
- Special dyslexic teaching packs
- Public information tapes
- Where possible these (boxes ticked denoting resources available) are available in English and Welsh
- Periodical articles/newspaper cuttings
- Puzzles/games

5.9.1 Additional Comments on Resources for Dyslexics

Some library authorities also wrote comments concerning resources for dyslexics alongside their answers. The comments suggest that, although various types of material were available, they tended to be few in number and usually part of the general collection and not specifically obtained for people with special needs such as people with dyslexia. A typical comment was: "These have not been selected and promoted specifically for dyslexics - part of mainstream service provision."
5.10 Use of Resources to Satisfy Dyslexics

The pattern of use shows that the audio resources (story cassettes, talking books, and book cassette packs) are often used to meet special needs such as dyslexia. Books with a higher interest age than reading age and picture books were also popular choices. Despite its apparent advantages (pictures, sound), it is interesting that only one authority indicated that CD-ROMs were often used to meet these special needs. This question also gave the respondent the opportunity of stating OTHER resources that are used regularly to satisfy special needs requirements of dyslexics. Resources mentioned included:

- Information books well used.
- CD-ROM of limited use if everything on screen is not read.
- Reading schemes - sometimes.
- Music
- Graded readers
- Packs
5.10.1 Additional Comments on Use of Resources

Most comments indicated the difficulties in giving an opinion on the usage of the material, due to lack of monitoring for this specific group. A telling comment was: "Library users very rarely mention dyslexia or identify themselves as dyslexic."

5.11 Acquisition of Dyslexic Resources

The following table lists the publishers and or resource providers used most frequently for the acquisition of dyslexic resources. Alongside the publisher’s or resource provider’s name is a number that indicates how many times their name was mentioned in the responses by the various public library authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLISHER</th>
<th>MENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avanti</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Dyslexia Association</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Agency</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Development Aids (LDA)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia Institute ; Heinemann – Graded Readers; Magna</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglia Young Books ; Ann Arbor ; Books for Students; Chivers ; Gate House;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISIS audio books; Longman classics ; Ulverscroft ; Winslow Press</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBSU; Askews ; BBC; Collins English Library Level 1;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Educational ; Disability Information Federation – DISSbase ;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doring Kindersley ; Helen Arkell ; Letterland Series;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lythway ; MacMillan ; Morley ; NEC ; New Wave ;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford; Penguin; Picture books from the major suppliers;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RONDO Records; Routledge; Talking books suppliers;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Games; Wayland ; Whurr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Publishers of Dyslexic Resources Mentioned by Library Authorities
5.11.1 Additional Comments on Acquisition of Resources

5 authorities commented that no resources are purchased specifically for this target group. 2 authorities replied they did not know the answer to this question. 1 authority answered that it was impossible to answer at present which publishers/resource providers are used for the acquisition of dyslexic material.

5.12 Budget For Dyslexia Resources

![Percentage of Authorities with Specific Budgets for Dyslexia Resources]

Figure 5.13 Percentage of Authorities with Specific Budgets for Dyslexia Resources

Only 7 (6 per cent) authorities had specific budgets for dyslexia resources whilst the remaining 107 (94 per cent) did not. None of the latter were considering a special budget. Findings indicate that very few library authorities consider providing resources directly targeted at the needs of dyslexic individuals. However, a key finding is that between 6 and 13 per cent are taking identifiable and constructive action to meet the needs of dyslexics through a specific budget to buy relevant material. There was a high correlation between authorities with budgets for dyslexia resources and those that had concentrated collections.

Some authorities, in response to this question, gave budget figures. Four authorities provided budgets specifically for their dyslexia collections. These varied between £300 and £2800 annually. Three other authorities provided budget figures for the purchase of relevant materials (e.g. talking books or for special needs in general) but not specifically provided for people with dyslexia. Another three authorities provided
budget figures for the whole library or even the authority itself, which was not useful for this analysis.

5.12.1 Budgets Specifically for Dyslexia Collection

Four authorities gave budget figures for their dyslexia collections over a three year period. These are shown in the table below. All budget figures were for dyslexia resources only. Authority D noted that the local dyslexia association had initially funded their collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORITY</th>
<th>YEAR1994/95</th>
<th>YEAR1995/96</th>
<th>YEAR1996/97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORITY A</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
<td>£2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORITY B</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORITY C</td>
<td>£1,300</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>£400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORITY D</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 Budget Figures for Dyslexia Collections

Certain patterns can be observed from these data. Authority C follows the expected pattern of a new collection, with a larger amount of money allocated in the first year, followed by lower amounts in the second and third years. Authorities B and D would appear to be established collections with budgets for a limited number of new purchases plus a small sum for replacement of lost or damaged items. The budget pattern for Authority A is somewhat unusual in that it is a reasonably large annual sum (in comparison with the other budget data) and is growing year on year rather than declining. This pattern would seem to indicate a greater commitment to this programme and/or expansion of collections to other libraries within the authority.

5.12.2 Additional Comments on Budgets

Some library authorities added comments to this question. In most cases these stated that they were not able to break down the budgets into the relevant categories. However, one authority gave an annual budget figure of £25000 for special needs
provision. Another mentioned expenditure of between £2000 and £2500 per year for talking Books.

5.13 Items Requested for Dyslexics but not Available

The requests made by and on behalf of people with dyslexia are wide and various. The reasons given by the respondents as to why the requests for specific items cannot be met paint a depressing picture of constraints due to lack of funds or budget reduction in public library spending. Difficulties in locating materials or specialist suppliers were also cited.

CD-ROM hardware and/or software were predominantly cited as being requested for individuals with dyslexia. Four authorities specifically indicated that they were unable to meet this particular need due to insufficient funds. This demand reflects an awareness of the potential benefits of use of CD-ROM as a self teaching tool for students who need to work at their own pace.

Another four authorities cited lack of funding as the reason why less expensive items such as talking books, book & cassette packs and even coloured overlays were not available in their libraries. These comments reflect both the general climate of budget restraint (e.g. no spending at all for resources in one extreme case) and the lack of specific budget for special needs materials.

The other main reason given for non provision of resources was difficulty in locating suppliers of these materials and/or the failure of the usual suppliers to recognise and meet these needs. The latter point may also indicate that stock librarians may not have looked beyond their usual sources of supply in a serious way.
5.13.1 Additional Comments on Requests for Resources

Some library authorities wrote comments to these questions rather than giving indication of any specific resources requested but not available in their libraries. Most reported that either they had not received any requests or had not recorded the few that might have been received. The usual problem of not being able to identify people with dyslexia was also noted. A typical comment was:

We have done very little in the way of knowing what demand there is for this particular topic. Where subject requests are received within the department we try and meet whatever is required. Individual items are probably available but not as a collection.

5.14 Information about Dyslexia

As indicated on the graph above, virtually all authorities (110 of 114 = 96.5 per cent) have material about dyslexia either for loan or for reference. 2 (1.8 per cent) were not certain that they did (D/K) and 2 (1.8 per cent) did not reply to this question (N/A).

On a general basis library authorities appear to be providing information about the subject. In this way libraries are attempting to meet their role as information providers. Availability of specific items is summarised in the sections below.
5.14.1 Dyslexia Contact (Official Magazine of the BDA)

Figure 5. 15 Percentage of Authorities Holding Dyslexia Contact

*Dyslexia Contact:* The Official Magazine of The British Dyslexia Association' is a key publication for parents, practitioners and, importantly, for dyslexic individuals of all ages. Furthermore, the articles that appear in the magazine are also written by the various groups that make up the dyslexic community, including dyslexic children, young people and adults. The magazine is written in a straightforward manner and is well illustrated with photographs and pictures. The typographical arrangement of the words on the page consider the reading needs of dyslexic individuals. The text is normally arranged into two columns on each page, the text is bigger than most magazines and there are well defined gaps between each paragraph. This publication is an important tool for gaining a wide breadth of information as to what is happening in this field.

Only 7 authorities (6.1 per cent) said that they have *Dyslexia Contact*, whilst 79 (69.3 per cent) said that they did not; 19 (16.7 per cent) were non applicable (as they did not tick this section), whilst 9 (7.9 per cent) indicated they did not know whether their authority had this magazine. It can probably be assumed that the great majority of the respondents who did not tick this section and the Don't Knows do not have *Dyslexia Contact*. 

156
5.14.2 Directory of British Associations

The *Directory of British Associations* (DBA) is a key information providing tool about Associations throughout the United Kingdom. Most of the main Associations and Institutions (e.g. British Dyslexia Association; Dyslexia Institute) are listed in this information source. The DBA also provides a useful summary of what the Association does and can provide. As expected there was a high percentage of library authorities who had the *Directory of British Associations*. 101 authorities (88.6 per cent) have this as an information reference tool for the users of their libraries. 4 authorities (3.5 per cent) did not, 3 (2.6 per cent) did not know and 6 (5.3 per cent) did not answer the question.

5.14.3 Local Information

The *Directory of British Associations* (DBA) is a key information providing tool about Associations throughout the United Kingdom. Most of the main Associations and Institutions (e.g. British Dyslexia Association; Dyslexia Institute) are listed in this information source. The DBA also provides a useful summary of what the Association does and can provide. As expected there was a high percentage of library authorities who had the *Directory of British Associations*. 101 authorities (88.6 per cent) have this as an information reference tool for the users of their libraries. 4 authorities (3.5 per cent) did not, 3 (2.6 per cent) did not know and 6 (5.3 per cent) did not answer the question.
Local information sources were listed on the questionnaire in order to ascertain if local societies or associations information is accessible in order to find out what information or facilities are available for dyslexic individuals within their own boroughs, metropolitan districts, or counties. Of the 114 authorities who replied to the questionnaire 105 (92.1 per cent) answered that they provide either Local Societies/Associations folder/database access for reference which includes local information about dyslexia for the users of their libraries. Of the remaining authorities, 6 (5.3 per cent) said they did not provide this facility, and 3 (2.6 per cent) were counted as N/A since they did not give a response to this question.

5.14.4 Books for Loan

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5. 18 Authorities Holding Books for Loan on Dyslexia**

There are a great number of books written on the subject of dyslexia. The expectation, therefore, was that the response to the question about providing books on the subject of dyslexia for loan would be high. This, in fact, was the case. 110 (96.5 per cent) authorities had books for loan on dyslexia, no authority stated that they did not have such books for loan and 4 (3.5 per cent) did not answer the question.
5.15 Qualitative Comments

The questionnaire undoubtedly raised issues that authorities had already been considering, or were aware that they should be tackling. There were many comments indicating that the questionnaire had alerted librarians to the fact they could or should do more to provide for the needs of dyslexics. The statements below provide the views of two authorities:

- Your questionnaire has focused my mind on this area of provision and I will investigate whether our current provision is in line with local needs.
- I have answered this questionnaire from a local perspective rather than countywide. Hope you had a good response. The act of completing the questionnaire has raised issues we need to address. Many thanks.

The number of requests for information and help with this area of service provision also suggests that library authorities are keen to develop their services to dyslexics, but do not know enough about the area or the available resources, for example:

- I realise that our provision is totally inadequate, but I am keen to improve matters, so I would be glad to hear from you again if you can make some suggestions about what we could do.
- I do know that some libraries provide facilities for local groups to meet, but to be honest I don't know what actual materials are provided - nor indeed what would be useful. I contacted a couple of national associations, but all they sent were a couple of very general leaflets and an application for membership!

A common problem was the identification of dyslexics, which made monitoring and targeted provision difficult. Some authorities felt that those considered as having 'special needs' may well be dyslexic but were not specifically identified as such. Others commented that dyslexics were reluctant to characterise themselves as dyslexic:

- Our experience has been that people rarely identify themselves as having dyslexia so targeting would be difficult.
extremely difficult to monitor use as customer group will not necessarily identify itself.

Authorities often commented that although they had resources appropriate for dyslexics they were not necessarily targeted specifically as a separate category as service provision for dyslexics:

We do not provide a specific service to people with dyslexia, but they would have access to materials within the library which they might find useful - e.g. large print, videos etc.

I am responsible for services to customers with special needs. Our motto is "all services for all people" and we believe that it is essential that services to special customer groups are regarded as main stream - not as extras. Regarding dyslexia - we have had no formal approaches from local Dyslexia interest groups and have had no requests for specialist materials from individuals. If we had we would have been happy to respond positively to these requests. We have a full range of resources, for adults and children, itemised in question 5 (of the questionnaire) and it is our experience that individuals, or parents of children with dyslexia make their choice from these.

Despite financial difficulties and local government reorganisation, some authorities were planning to improve their provision of resources in order to meet the needs of dyslexic people.

Meeting the needs of people with dyslexia has been put as a target on our Annual Action Plan for 1997/8 - so we are currently investigating ways of meeting these needs.

The City Council has a cross departmental steering group for Additional Learning Needs (which included dyslexia). This was set up at the end of 1996. Included in the groups action plan is a commitment to establish Dyslexia Information Centres - of which will be at the Central Library.

Several authorities commented that staff training would help raise awareness to the needs of people with dyslexia:

We feel that one of the main ways in which we can meet the needs of people with dyslexia is through staff training and this is one of the ways we hope to meet our Annual Action Plan."

Staff awareness could be raised by incorporating the subject of dyslexia into training courses, newsletter etc. I cannot recall anything ever being published in the *Library Association Record.*
Several authorities cite examples of local support and co-operation with groups outside the library service as an important aspect of their efforts to meet the needs of readers with special needs. These contacts include other departments within the local authority:

In response to the growing awareness of dyslexia, professional links have been developed with relevant staff in the Education Dept, especially the Head of Special Education and the two Special Needs Advisory teachers one of whom is a specialist in dyslexia.

Contacts were also made with groups outside of the local authority departments:

A support group for adults with dyslexia meet regularly in the library and donated some money for stock to be held in the library for wider public.

Several authorities, however, did have special collections of resources specifically targeting user categories within the dyslexic community, for example, parents, teachers, carers and in some instances, resources that are for use by the dyslexic individuals themselves. Some of these authorities also chose to make further comments about their collections on the separate comments page provided with the questionnaire. For example two authorities wrote:

Five years ago the Central children’s librarian was approached by the chair of the local Dyslexia Association with the idea that a separate collection of books and cassettes for dyslexic children would be very helpful. With the agreement of the then Borough librarian the association donated its own collection of Information books and £1,000 towards suitable reading materials and story cassettes, which the library authority matched, to provide £2,000 towards a start-up collection. We labelled the shelves/publicity leaflet as the ‘Wordwise’ collection. The collection has been added to year on year, particularly the cassettes and book/cassette packs. Unfortunately there seems to be little new/different material currently available.

At one of our Libraries we have a collection for dyslexics about dyslexia which has been established in co-operation with the local Dyslexia Group. The group has donated some stock (books and videos) and 2 Open Evenings have been held jointly between the Group and the library. During 1996/7 and 1997/8 money has been provided from central budget to all areas, to develop collections for people with basic needs, dyslexia and learning disabilities under the general banner heading of Wordwise and Numberwise.
Both of these authorities who made the comments above have dedicated 'dyslexia' collections and are two of the comparative case studies carried out in libraries that have special collections targeting the dyslexic communities.

Another authority shows a serious awareness of dyslexia and a commitment to exploit information about dyslexia in an organised and more accessible manner. They say:

The... Council has a cross departmental steering group for additional Learning Needs (which includes dyslexia). This was set up at the end of 1996. Included in the groups action plan is a commitment to establish Dyslexia Information Centres - one of which will be at the Central Library. These will bring together and highlight our scattered resources for this client group. People with dyslexia are exempt from our charges for borrowing talking books.

5.16 Summary Points from the Questionnaire

The questionnaire generated a large amount of data, both quantitative and qualitative. Although certain comments and linkages were made throughout this chapter, the following summary section brings the key points together.

5.16.1 Response Rate

Based on a high rate of return of the questionnaire (75 per cent) there is a great deal of interest in the subject of dyslexia amongst library professionals. None of the respondents who answered the questionnaire disputed that dyslexia exists or that they were unaware of the term.

5.16.2 Public Libraries with Resource Provision Policies for 'Special Needs'

A disappointingly small number of library authorities (19), about a sixth of the total, had a written policy concerning 'special needs' in general. Given the nature of dyslexia as a disability in dealing with the written word, it is remarkable that so few library authorities claim to have a written policy covering even the broader area of special needs. A similar number of authorities, however, stated that they were in the process
of preparing written policies covering 'special needs' and/or dyslexia. The devising of written policies by library authorities relating to 'special needs' may have been influenced by the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. One authority commented that they were preparing a 'special needs' policy in response to the Disability Discrimination Act. This indicates an awareness by the library profession of current legislation and the implications that it will have on providing equal access to service provision in public libraries for disabled people, including people with learning difficulties. Although this is encouraging, based on the indications from the questionnaire responses, it does not necessarily mean that these policies will include the specific needs of people with dyslexia.

5.16.3 Content of Special Needs Policies

None of the written policies regarding 'special needs', returned with the completed questionnaire, mentioned dyslexia specifically. This is indicative of either a lack of professional awareness of the condition or of the continuing terminological debate concerning the use of the specific term.

The majority of 'special needs' policies were primarily concerned with the needs of people with physical disabilities, for example, visual impairment, hearing loss, disabled access and the needs of the elderly. The focus of attention was on the needs of people with physical disabilities that are visible and tangible, rather than 'special needs' that are not readily apparent, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and literacy problems. These policies tend to confirm traditional practice to address physical disability through use of mobile libraries or the housebound service, rather to break new ground in possibly contentious areas such as dyslexia.

Although literacy was mentioned in several of the policies it was in the context of 'Basic Skills' material aimed predominantly for adult learners. Providing resource material for adults to improve their literacy and learning skills is a sign of good practice and embraces the ethos of public libraries as being instrumental in lifelong learning.
Not surprisingly, 'Basic Skills' focused much more on addressing the learning difficulties encountered by adults rather than young people and children.

The policy statements differed widely in style and content. Some were pitched at a high level and were primarily concerned with statements of principle or use of politically correct terminology. These were generally statements of public library commitment to special needs provision. Several authorities went on to include useful guidelines and criteria to be used by staff for selecting materials for people with 'special needs' and, although not specifically mentioned, these would be relevant when considering suitable resource provision for people with dyslexia.

5.16.4 Written Policies that Include a Consideration of Dyslexia

A very small number of library authorities (a total of 7) reported that their written policy for 'special needs' includes dyslexia. Furthermore, none of the policy statements provided by 3 of the authorities that stated that their 'special needs' policies included a consideration of dyslexia, actually mentioned the term specifically. The inference is that almost nothing directly addressing dyslexia is included in library authorities' policy statements. Several authorities suggested that dyslexia is covered by inference since they have a policy that addresses 'learning difficulties' and/or 'special needs'. Reluctance to use the term dyslexia or to propose specific approaches to the issue is almost universal.

According to several authorities people with dyslexia do not make their condition known in the library. This contributes to the problem of dyslexia being a largely invisible condition from the point of view of library staff. A number of issues are raised by this finding, including whether dyslexic individuals use libraries to any great extent or whether they struggle to use them without help from staff due to reluctance to admit to having the condition. Several authorities mentioned that dyslexics would get special considerations on fines if they made their condition known, but such a policy would be difficult to implement if people were not inclined to identify themselves as dyslexic.
5.16.5 Specific Information on Dyslexia Provision

One of the most fruitful sources for determining potential best practice were the specific pieces of material provided by a small number of library authorities that directly or indirectly addressed information on dyslexia provision. In contrast to the vast majority of the findings from the questionnaire, these demonstrated what can be done if an authority or individual librarian takes a proactive rather than a passive approach to special needs and/or dyslexia provision.

One authority published an information brochure targeting dyslexic library users (and potential users) advising of them of resources helpful to them. This leaflet operates on at least two levels: firstly as a source of information about potentially helpful resources in the library (talking books with matching text and large print books), and secondly to serve as an invitation to dyslexic individuals to approach staff who will have knowledge of dyslexia and who will respond sensitively and professionally.

A dyslexia information sheet compiled by one authority was circulated to all staff to raise awareness to the problems encountered by people with dyslexia. In general, but especially where there is no concentrated special needs collection, staff awareness of dyslexia and the resources available in the general library stock is absolutely crucial. This information sheet was an example of a cost effective approach to the issue, although training sessions would also be required.

One authority had carried out a day workshop in the Central Library for librarians, teachers, parents and carers of children who have 'special needs' to ascertain what their libraries should be providing for resource needs. This was an example of a well structured approach to outreach that was broadly based, well organised and led to a formal report of findings.

The Kersweil Reading Machine and PCs with text to speech capability were identified by one authority as being regularly used by a dyslexic person.
5.16.6 Management and Development of Dyslexia Resources

The responsibility for dyslexia resources usually falls to the team member who handles general stock acquisitions. This lack of specific responsibility for special needs resources is in line with the overall lack of specific focus on these requirements in policy statements. A number of authorities indicated that responsibility fell within the remit of the children’s librarian, which leads to a tendency towards a focus on younger age groups.

5.16.7 Public Library Resources for Dyslexics

Whether they have a written policy or not, when prompted, over 70 per cent of respondents claim that they do provide resources for dyslexic individuals, whilst 28 per cent indicate they do not consciously provide resources for dyslexics. Even amongst the 70 per cent who claim to provide resources, many indicated via their comments that the provision is rarely specifically structured for dyslexics. The positive response is somewhat based on the assumption that there must be some dyslexic people taking advantage of the library resources, rather than any firm indications that the needs of this group are being substantially met.

5.16.8 Resources Targeted at Particular Age Groups

Relatively few authorities (about a seventh of the total) target specific age groups for the provision of resources for dyslexics. About half of these indicate that the provision stops at or before age 18. This indicates a bias towards provision for children and young people as opposed to adults. This finding is supported by a number of additional comments associated with this question. Lack of targeting supports the overall view that little is being done at a conscious level to address resource needs for dyslexics.
5.16.9 Organisation and Size of Dyslexia Collections

Less than a seventh of the authorities reported that they have concentrated special collections. Over 60 per cent of authorities claimed they have dispersed collections. It is not clear whether these are really dyslexic collections or just appropriate materials found in the general collection. Comments would tend to indicate the latter. Very few authorities organise materials suitable for use by dyslexic individuals in a visible/identifiable and accessible way. Only one authority was identified as having a comprehensive brochure informing dyslexic users what media would be helpful to them in their libraries.

Dedicated collections appear to be small; on average between 12 and approximately 200 items. Comments suggest that the small collections are a result of limited funding and/or limited availability of appropriate material.

5.16.10 Resources for Dyslexics Available in Public Libraries

Despite the suggestion above that there is a lack of appropriate material for dyslexic individuals, when prompted by the questionnaire, high levels of availability were noted for the following materials which are widely accepted as part of 'special needs' provision:

- Large print books are almost universally available in libraries.
- Story cassette and talking books appeared in over 90 per cent of the replies.
- Nearly 80 per cent of authorities have book cassette packs.
- Over 80 per cent of replies had books with a higher interest age than reading age.

Large print books and talking books are well established as being beneficial to people with visual impairment, but along with book cassette packs, are also well accepted for people with reading difficulties. The high availability of books with higher interest age than reading age is perhaps the most encouraging finding, since it reflects more than the other materials a conscious attempt to address the needs of people with reading difficulties.
High levels of availability were also noted for the following materials, which may not have been chosen with 'special needs' in mind but which could easily be put to positive use:

- Over 90 per cent indicated that they had Picture Books
- 80 per cent of the authorities replied that videos are part of their resources.
- 80 per cent of respondents say they have spelling aids, for example dictionaries, but not necessarily specialist dictionaries.

Information technology is recognised as having potential benefit for people with special needs. CD-ROM appears on 60 per cent of the responses, which indicates authorities, in spite of the cost implications, are providing I.C.T. resource provision. On the other hand, only a minority of authorities holds computer games software.

5.16.11 Use of Resources to Satisfy Dyslexics

Eight authorities said that story cassettes and talking books were used often to satisfy the needs of dyslexic users. The following items were each mentioned 7 times as being often used: talking books, large print books, spelling aids/dictionaries, and books with higher interest age than reading age. Book cassette packs were mentioned by 5 respondents and 4 authorities mentioned that picture books were often used. There are no real surprises in this list which is based to an extent on traditional resources used for people with visual impairment, plus High/Low and picture books that are seen as useful for people with reading problems, but not necessarily just dyslexia.

Video material was only mentioned twice as being useful for dyslexics. CD-ROM was only mentioned once by a respondent as being often used to satisfy the needs of dyslexic users. The low finding for CD-ROM is somewhat surprising, but perhaps reflects the relatively recent introduction of this facility and/or the types of software currently in use in libraries.

Other media cited as often used (mentioned once each) were reading schemes, music, graded readers, and information books about the subject of dyslexia.
5.16.12 Acquisition of Dyslexic Resources

27 authorities said that they use mainstream library book suppliers the most frequently for the acquisition of dyslexic resources. Books about the subject can be obtained via mainstream book suppliers, whereas resources for use by dyslexic individuals utilising special print formats are less likely to be easily identified in the offerings of mainstream publishers.

Authorities mentioned a handful of 'specialist' publishers/suppliers who focus on 'special needs' (including dyslexia): Avanti; British Dyslexia Association; Basic Skills Agency; and Learning Development Aids.

5.16.13 Budgets for Dyslexia Resources

Very few authorities (6 per cent) reported that they had specific budgets for dyslexia resources. This matches the number of authorities with dedicated dyslexia collections.

Authorities suggested specific annual budgets for dyslexia resources between £300 and £2,800. For new collections a significant amount typically was allocated during the launch year (e.g. between £1,300 and £2,000) followed by lesser annual sums for maintenance and updating. The same budget amount is often repeated year on year (e.g. £300 per year) without taking into account the increasing cost of resources. In another case more substantial funds were allocated and then grown year on year indicating either considerable expansion of the existing collection or the creation of new collections at other libraries within the authority. Several authorities reported that it was difficult to break down budgets into relevant categories. This is not surprising given the high number of authorities that do not have concentrated specialist collections, which would be more likely to have separate budgets.
5.16.14 Items Requested but Not Provided

CD-ROM hardware and/or software were often cited as a requested unmet need for individuals with dyslexia. Lack of funds was cited as the reason for non provision of CD-ROM and other IT related resources. Lack of funding was also cited as the reason why less expensive items such as talking books, book & cassette packs and even coloured overlays were not available in their libraries. These comments reflect both the general climate of budget restraint (e.g. no spending at all for resources in one extreme case) and the lack of specific budget for special needs materials, as noted elsewhere.

Aside from budget constraints, the most common reason given for non provision of resources was difficulty in locating suppliers of these materials and/or the failure of the usual suppliers to recognise and meet these needs.

5.16.15 Information about Dyslexia

Nearly all of the respondents answered that they had material about dyslexia in their lending and/or reference libraries. Books for loan about the subject of dyslexia are almost universal in libraries. 88.6 per cent of the respondents said they have the Directory of British Associations in their libraries. Since this is a core information tool, an even higher figure was to be expected. The DBA lists the key dyslexia associations such as the B.D.A and Dyslexia Institute. 92.1 per cent of authorities had local information for reference about local associations and societies (including dyslexia institutions) in paper format or by database access. Taken together these findings confirm that libraries have the basic information both about the subject of dyslexia and the key national and local organisations that could give further information to parents or to individuals with dyslexia.
By contrast to the near universal provision of information about the subject and standard reference material, there was a very low report of availability of Dyslexia Contact, the official magazine publication of the British Dyslexia Association. Only 7 authorities have Dyslexia Contact in their libraries and most of these authorities are those who have dedicated dyslexia collections. This is the most telling finding in the resource section of the questionnaire in that it shows the low level of specific activity by public libraries to address dyslexia.

5.16.16 Qualitative Comments

Comments reveal that the act of filling out the questionnaire has raised awareness concerning the needs of the dyslexic communities and, particularly, the need to provide resources for dyslexic individuals themselves. Despite financial constraints and local re-organisations, several authorities expressed the strong intention to improve special needs provision. These statements of intention are positive, but also reflect an awareness by librarians that their current level of dyslexia provision is not adequate.

Raising staff awareness through information or local training was identified as a key task by a number of authorities, but they lacked sources of professional guidance. Several responses to the questionnaire were requests for further information or guidance on actions to take to meet the requirements of people with dyslexia. These comments indicate that not enough has been done either at local level or through library professional literature to provide concise guidance that would form the basis of regular staff training.

Liaison and co-operation with groups outside of the library service (Education Department, Local Dyslexia Associations) was recognised as important. Comments from two of the authorities with special collections highlighted the active role of the Local Dyslexia Associations in starting the collections through at least partial funding and advice on resource selection.
CHAPTER SIX: PUBLIC LIBRARY CASE STUDIES

6.1 Introduction

Between June, 1993 and December 1998 a series of case studies were undertaken in authorities that have dedicated resource collections specifically targeting dyslexic communities. The case studies were carried out in the London Borough of Ealing (Ealing Library), London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames (Richmond & East Sheen Libraries), Northamptonshire (Weston Favell & Kettering Libraries), and Kent County Council (Sevenoaks Library).

The purpose of the studies was to ascertain the range of service provision and initiatives being carried out by public libraries for the dyslexic community. How these collections were created and maintained was also explored. It would be impractical to publish in full the reports of all the interviews and physical surveys. Therefore, thematic comparisons covering all the library authorities are presented in this chapter.

A number of key themes were identified by the Ealing case study for thematic analysis. In the following sections, data from all the case studies are compared and contrasted. A number of key issues are identified, where the development of the collections has followed a particular path. In many of these cases, there were important choices to be made between various alternative courses of action. These key points of difference in the development of the various collections are highlighted.

6.2 Awareness of the Term Dyslexia

The interviews with the librarians responsible for the dyslexia collections revealed that there was a considerable range of awareness of the term “dyslexia”. The children’s librarian at Ealing was a trained teacher and had therefore been aware of the term dyslexia for many years. Moreover, the assistant with whom she works is dyslexic so she has personal experience of the conditions and the problems associated with it. Her
knowledge of the area was further extended during her research to start a collection of resources for dyslexic individuals, targeting in particular, children and young people.

Similarly, the children's librarian at Weston Favell Library had gained an awareness of dyslexia through personal study and through the media. Networking with parents and teachers had further broadened her knowledge. Working with somebody who had direct experience of dyslexia (in this case the library supervisor's son) had, as at Ealing, increased the children's librarian's awareness of the issues connected with dyslexia. In the case of Sevenoaks, the establishment of the collection had raised staff awareness of the term and condition of dyslexia. Again, the personal experiences of library staff, two of whom had dyslexic children in their families, had raised awareness and interest in the condition.

In contrast, the children's librarian at Richmond admitted that he did not really have a good idea of what the term 'dyslexia' meant. He gave the definition of "word blindness", but as he had never been on a training course dealing with dyslexia, he could claim little formal knowledge of the subject. Even with a modest appreciation of dyslexia, however, he felt that he could use his experience as a children's librarian to question parents and children carefully to get an appreciation of what they needed and could enjoy.

The results of the semi-structured interviews suggest that those responsible for collections for dyslexics did not always have extensive knowledge or expertise in the area. Levels of awareness seemed to depend heavily on personal experience rather than on formal training. Regular contact with people who had direct experience of dyslexia appeared to be particularly useful. The establishment of a collection naturally helped raise awareness and interest. It was noteworthy that so many cases of personal involvement with dyslexic individuals were mentioned in this small sample. This finding supports the scientific view that dyslexia is a widespread condition. It also appears that when a facility such as a dyslexia collection is created, it serves as a public confirmation of the condition, and people are willing to share their personal experiences in a positive way.
Where the formal knowledge was limited, the existence of the collection provided a sound starting point and professional experience as a children’s librarian could partially overcome lack of detailed awareness. In nearly all the case studies it appeared that the interest and enthusiasm of an individual member of staff was crucial to the success of the collection.

6.3 Recognition of Dyslexia by the Authority

It was reported via the local dyslexia association that Ealing did "seem" to recognise the term dyslexia. This degree of acceptance followed a strenuous campaign by the association to get the term recognised. Weston Favell (Northamptonshire) was reported to recognise the term and its symptoms, but the local education authority does not use the term itself. In other case studies, there was a degree of uncertainty about local recognition or perhaps a lack of willingness to comment on such a political matter. In no instance, was there an unequivocal acceptance of the term.

It is evident that, despite increased public awareness of dyslexia, there is still widespread reluctance by local authorities to go all the way to formal, well publicised acceptance of dyslexia as describing a well accepted condition. Northamptonshire local education authority's position of not using the term could be seen to highlight the long running issue of the legal requirement under the statementing process to provide special education for dyslexic children. The potential impact of a high number of students requiring these educational services is obvious in terms of resources and budgets. Caution in accepting dyslexia by the local education department would logically spill over into other local authority departments, including libraries which are sometimes in the same department as education.

It should be remembered that the instances that are noted above are from the authorities that had created special collections to address dyslexia and other similar learning difficulties. Creating the collections could be seen as a practical acceptance of the need to address at least the symptoms of dyslexia. It is therefore striking that the caution over formal acceptance of dyslexia is evident amongst even these authorities.
6.4 Origin of the Collections

The collections in Ealing, Richmond, East Sheen and Sevenoaks libraries were all initiated by the respective local dyslexia associations. In each case the libraries were approached by a representative from the local dyslexia association and asked whether they would start a 'special' dyslexia collection in the library to meet some of the needs of the local dyslexic community.

Despite having one of the better known collections, Ealing Library was not the first library to have a special dyslexia collection. Richmond Library's collection was set-up in the mid-1980s, followed by other collections in Richmond-upon-Thames at Twickenham and Teddington libraries. The most recent collection in East Sheen Library was started in April 1997. All four of the Richmond-upon-Thames collections were started with the enthusiasm and money donated by the local dyslexia associations. The collection in Sevenoaks Library was started in 1994 in response to the request to have material on the subject of dyslexia easily accessible to the users within the dyslexic communities and, in particular, by committee members of the West Kent Dyslexia Association.

Librarians based in Weston Favell and Kettering libraries in Northamptonshire took the initiative in creating their collections. In the case of Weston Favell Library it was the children's librarian who was proactive in starting the collection in October 1994. The community librarian in Kettering Library was responsible for starting the collection at this library in June 1996.

The collection at Weston Favell arose because of the need expressed by the local community and, in particular, by parents of children with dyslexia. The collection in Kettering Library was set-up to complement the collection primarily for children started at Weston Favell and included resources to address the needs of young people and adults with dyslexia. Prior to starting the collection at Kettering Library, the community librarian phoned the local schools in the area and asked them if their pupils,
both at primary and secondary level, would benefit from a 'special' dyslexia collection in the library. The librarian explained that the aim of a 'special' collection was to encourage dyslexic individuals, both children and adults, to access these resources in Kettering Library either with support from a parent or a carer or independently to improve their literacy and reading skills. The outreach to various educational institutions established that a 'special' collection for use by people with dyslexia would be welcomed.

The children's librarian and the community librarian successfully bidding for funding via the Northamptonshire 'challenge fund' made the collections at Weston Favell and Kettering Libraries possible.

There are at least three models of how collections have originated. Some collections were very strongly driven by the local dyslexia associations with the library authority providing a venue for material, but not providing significant funding nor being greatly involved in the choice of the material. These collections tended to focus on resources about the subject rather than resources for the use of dyslexic people.

At the other end of the spectrum, the library authority or the librarian (e.g. Kettering and Weston Favell) was the proactive initiating force that identified the need and sought the funding. Collections in this category are more likely to be mixed, that is containing both material for use by dyslexic individuals as well as books on the subject of dyslexia. Local dyslexia associations were usually involved but were less likely to prescribe the contents of the collection.

As might be expected, there was also a middle ground model, where a partnership was established between the library authority and the local dyslexia association, regardless of which party initiated the collection. Shared funding (as in the case of Ealing) and active development work by both parties could be observed.

In more than half the cases studied, it was the local dyslexia association which was the prime driver for establishing the collections. Instances where the local librarian drove the creation without significant input by outside agencies were rare and in this sample
confined to Northamptonshire. The local library authorities cited in these cases were responsive to the initiatives arising from local Dyslexia Associations or from their own professional staff. This support took the form of matching funds or at least the allocation of space and staff time. The Northamptonshire "Challenge Fund" was a good example of providing the means for librarians to exercise their professional judgement. However, none of the cases revealed an active initiative created by the local authority itself following on from formal planning or policy statements.

6.5 Budget to Establish and Maintain the Collection

The total budget for establishing the separate collection in Ealing Library was £2,000 (£1,000 from the Ealing Dyslexia Association and £1,000 from Ealing Library Service). The local Dyslexia Association also donated part of its own collection consisting mainly of information books related to the subject of dyslexia. Small sums (not defined) were to be contributed from time to time to maintain the collection.

The children's librarian at Weston Favell made a bid to the Northampton "Challenge Fund" and was allocated a budget of £1,300 to obtain suitable material for the 'special' collection. The collection was to be augmented from the children's librarian's allocated yearly budget. Like the children's librarian at Weston Favell Library, the community services librarian at Kettering submitted a bid for funding via the 'challenge fund' and secured £1,143 for make initial purchases as follows:

- CD-ROM £287
- Audio Books (from LDA) £504
- Ann Arbor Books £203
- Adult non fiction £149

The Richmond children's librarian did not know the initial budget figure for the 'special' collection. There was not a separate budget for maintaining or updating the 'Wordwise' collection. Additional resources for the collection are bought from the budget allocated to the children's services. Sheen Library's initial budget was £500 with additional sums to be provided from time to time.
In the case of Sevenoaks, £200 per year for two years was made available by the authority for the Wordwise collection. Some of this was also allocated to the "Basic Skills" collection as well as for books about the subject of dyslexia. There were also contributions of books from the local Dyslexia Association.

Amongst the authorities that provided financial details, there was a range of initial expenditure of between £400 and £2000 to set up the collections. In the case of Ealing, which had the largest initial budget of £2000, the costs were split evenly with the local Dyslexia Association which meant that the authority's spend of £1000 was nearer to the sums spent by Northamptonshire (£1300 and £1143) for its two collections. These amounts were for mixed collections (material about the subject and resources for individual users). The smaller sums (£400 & £500) tended to be for collections primarily about the subject of dyslexia, rather than for materials for the use by dyslexic individuals.

Looked at objectively, £400 or £500 for books about the subject appears adequate to provide a reasonable range of materials pitched at different users. Obtaining special materials for use by dyslexic individuals plus some reference material is more of a challenge at a budget of between £1000 and £1500. The Kettering spending profile shows an attempt to cover a range of resources: audio, multi-media, and specialist printed matter as well as some key texts about the subject. Given this range of resources to be covered with the funds available, each category would be limited in depth and choice of material.

Local Dyslexia Associations provided materials as well as some funding. Their focus was clearly on material about the subject of dyslexia. It appears that local Dyslexia Associations see libraries' role to be information providers much more than providers of resources for the use of dyslexic individuals themselves.

None of the case studies were clear on the ongoing commitment to funding of these collections. Most commonly, the indication was that additional resources would be purchased from time to time when new materials became available. Funding would come from the existing functional budgets of the librarians responsible for the
collections. The children's book fund was mentioned most often, although in some cases the costs would be shared with other functions.

6.6 Consultation with other Organisations

The children's librarian at Ealing contacted the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and the Helen Arkell Centre but she felt that neither of these bodies were particularly helpful or interested by the children's librarian's attempt to set up a 'special' collection for dyslexic children. The BDA stated that it was very important that the librarian realised that every dyslexic person was an individual with individual problems and it was very hard to deal with dyslexia under a group heading. Both organisations, in particular the BDA, sent extensive lists of books available concerning the subject of dyslexia, but nothing about resources for use by dyslexic individuals.

After several attempts, both by telephone and by fax, the children's librarian at Weston Favell was sent information on the British Dyslexia Association as an organisation and various lists of books that can be obtained through them on the subject of dyslexia. However, when she finally was able to speak to a representative of the British Dyslexia Association to discuss the kinds of material suitable for a collection targeting children with dyslexia, she was offered no advice by the respondent nor sent any information on suitable materials.

The librarian at Kettering also contacted the British Dyslexia Association to obtain advice concerning the selection of material for the dyslexia collection. She found that the British Dyslexia Association were keen to send her an application form to join their organisation rather than give advice about setting-up a dyslexic collection to include provision of resources for people with dyslexia to improve their reading and learning skills.

In the case of Sevenoaks, most contacts concerning the purchase of material for the collection were through the local West Kent Dyslexia Association. If the focus of the collection had been specifically for use by people with dyslexia, the librarian would
have contacted the British Dyslexia Association to find out what type of material would be suitable. It was decided not to branch out in this direction due to budgetary constraints.

The Richmond children's librarian had on several occasions asked the Richmond Dyslexia Association to come to the library to talk to him about the subject of dyslexia and have a look at the 'specialist' collection to advise him on how to update the collection. At the time of the interview this had not happened.

The British Dyslexia Association, local Dyslexia Associations and the Helen Arkell Centre were the outside organisations consulted by the various librarians. In the case of the BDA, the reported responses are fundamentally similar, although certain individual aspects were noted. The general feeling amongst the librarians was of disappointment with the response. It was not easy to reach the right person to ask questions about resources for use by dyslexic individuals and when contact was established, there was a perceived reluctance to answer that particular question. There was some doubt as to whether the BDA actually took the time to understand the question being asked before responding with an application form or list of books about the subject. This could indicate that the first point of contact might be a volunteer who is used to handling standard questions about the organisation rather than with the expertise to answer an unusual query.

In fact, the BDA expressed concerns about librarians attempting to put together a collection for the general use by dyslexics. The inference was that only dyslexia specialists could tailor a reading list for a individual with the condition. The assumption might be that a child with dyslexia would be under the guidance of a specialist teacher and that the librarian should not interfere in matters beyond their expertise. Accepting that there might be some validity to that point of view, it still would not address the needs of adult dyslexics who might wish to use libraries. It also reflects a prescriptive view of establishing an educational programme for a dyslexic child rather than making a range of interesting options available for the child or adult to sample.
As discussed elsewhere, local dyslexia associations tend to support purchases of material about the subject of dyslexia, rather than materials that the dyslexic individual might use for pleasure or self-improvement. The attitudes of the BDA would, therefore, seem to be reflected in the actions of the local associations. In both cases, they appear to see libraries as repositories of information about the subject, rather than having an active role in meeting the needs of dyslexic library users. This attitude might reflect the traditional specialist's distrust of the non-specialist or perhaps a general view of libraries as passive holders of material, primarily for the benefit of their traditional literate user base.

6.7 Contact with other Libraries and Librarians

Before setting up the special collection in Ealing Library the children’s librarian had learnt that Richmond Library had set up a collection in the mid 1980s. In order to ascertain the type of material available at Richmond Library she and a representative from the Ealing Dyslexia Association made a visit to the children’s Library to speak to the children’s librarian and view the collection. The Ealing children’s librarian also made liaison with her local colleague, the Schools' librarian. They went together to the book supplier 'Books for Students' to choose material that they felt would be beneficial to the target group.

In the case of Weston Favell Library the children’s librarian had seen a feature that had appeared in the April 1993 edition of the Library Association Record relating to the collection in Ealing Library. The children’s librarian contacted the children’s librarian in Ealing to discuss the type of material chosen and which publishers and resource providers had been used to set-up their collection.

Within the same authority, it was common good practice for expertise to be passed on when other branches set up their collections. Kettering Library built their collection based on the insights gained and data recorded at Weston Favell. Similarly, when East Sheen Library created their collection, a meeting was held with the Richmond children’s librarian and the Head of Young Person's services and other colleagues to
discuss plans for the new collection. It was decided that the Richmond children’s librarian would undertake the buying on the initial stock for the East Sheen collection.

Most of the case studies revealed that networking with other library professionals either from other authorities or with libraries in the same authority who had previously undertaken the responsibility of setting up the collection was a very important mechanism to gain insights about how to set up a collection. This was a logical approach in that it allowed lessons learned to be passed on to the new locations and teams. It can certainly save time and allow the collection to be launched without untoward delay. On the other hand, simply working from a list of materials available in another collection does not necessarily take into account the usage of the individual items. By separating the creation from the management of the collection, an opportunity for self-development through personal research by the librarian may be lost.

6.8 Naming the Collection

'Wordwise' was the name originally given to the special collection held at Richmond Library. The current librarian in charge of the collection did not know the steps leading to this choice. The other libraries controlled by Richmond upon Thames also use Wordwise to describe their collections.

Ealing adopted Wordwise as the name of their collection after consultation with Richmond. The librarian at Ealing felt that Wordwise was a good choice since it conveyed a positive image of wanting to learn to read the written word and it did not carry the stigma sometimes associated with Adult Literacy material.

All the Adult Literacy collections in Kent are called 'Wordwise/Numberwise' so that they would be the same where ever people went and would instantly be recognisable. 'Wordwise/Numberwise' was chosen because it was non-judgmental. Anything with 'basic' in the title was thought not to be very positive. The title 'Wordwise/Numberwise' was neutral and does not imply "daft people", as the librarian commented.
By contrast, Weston Favell's collection does not have a particular name. This is also the case for Kettering, which is also covered by Northamptonshire. Not using a specific name was a conscious decision, arrived at following discussion and consultation with professional colleagues in the library service. The decision was influenced by the desire to avoid any sense of stigma associated with remedial material and to ensure that nobody would feel excluded from using the collection, if their needs did not fit the exact specification.

The opposing views on collection names noted at Ealing and Weston Favell seem to arise from a similar concern. Both authorities wanted to avoid negative connotations that could arise from a name indicating remedial material. That is why a name such as Basic Skills would not have met the criteria for either authority.

The decision to name or not to name goes beyond simply the avoidance of stigmatisation. Having a name for a collection makes it easier to publicise, both in terms of signage within the library and also for external publicity. Libraries can be difficult places for the public to navigate, and it is that much more difficult for individuals who have problems with the written word to locate useful items. The choice of a descriptive, but non-prejudicial name would seem to be a useful strategy.

There is a core issue in Special Needs provision concerning visibility of special collections in all senses of the word. The fundamental decision to have a discrete collection leads almost inevitably towards giving it a label, either formally or informally.

6.9 Selection of Resources

Selection of resources was an important element in all of the case studies, and various related aspects also arose. These included how information was gathered for setting up and updating the core collections, use of mainstream material to supplement the
specialist collections, approaches employed to select material for individual dyslexic library users, and various issues that arose in the selection process.

6.9.1 Networking

As noted above, the case studies revealed that networking with other librarians who had knowledge of collections targeting dyslexic individuals played a very important part in gaining insights into the selection of resources. In the case of Ealing Library, the children's librarian visited Richmond Library to evaluate their collection and discuss suitable material for use by children with dyslexia with the children's librarian in post at the time. The discussion with the librarian at Richmond confirmed her own belief that there was a lot of material that would be suitable for use by dyslexic children that could be selected from main stream suppliers, for example, picture books, high interest - low reading ability books, and story cassettes. In addition, high level interest - low reading age books could be selected from more 'specialist' publishers such as LDA whose material is suitable for dyslexic individuals aged 9 to 16 years.

The children's librarian at Weston Favell had also discussed with the librarian at Ealing the criteria for their collection and which publishers and resources were used. Like Ealing, the librarian at Weston Favell felt that there were very few publishers who target their books and other resources for individuals with 'special needs'.

The Kettering community services librarian was able to build on the insights gained by Weston Favell Library, which had started their dyslexic collection 18 months previously. Moreover, since Weston Favell Library catalogues their dyslexic collection separately and obtains quarterly statistics of the different types of materials issued, she was in a good position to identify which types of resources were loaned most frequently. The findings at the time of the interview, indicated that book/cassette packs (i.e. book with matching cassette tape) were the most popular.
6.9.2 Information from Users

A certain amount of information about selection of resources was obtained from the public itself. The children's librarian at Weston Favell Library gained insight into the needs of children with dyslexia through discussion with parents and teachers who visited the library. Prior to creating the collection, the children's librarian recorded requests made by the dyslexic community. The recorded requests were a useful tool to support the need for a 'special' collection for children and young people with dyslexia, as a means of identifying what was needed for the collection. However, the children's librarian said that she did not record requests after the collection had been started. Parents of children with dyslexia had expressed the need for material such as story cassettes and book/cassette packs that had a high level of interest content but targeted at a lower reading age. The children's librarian at Weston Favell selected high interest/low reading age books from mainstream publishers (e.g. Heinemann) but the emphasis for this type of material was from 'specialist' publishers such as LDA. She also purchased high/low books from LDA with cassettes that matched the story. This material, however, could not be purchased as a combined package but were sold separately. The librarian had to package these items together in plastic bags before they went into the collection.

Following discussion with people who wished to improve their literacy skills, a collection that included resources suitable for adults with dyslexia was provided at Kettering Library. Despite knowledge gained from Northamptonshire Dyslexia Association and Weston Favell Library about suitable material, the librarian felt it was quite difficult to obtain 'specialist' materials suitable for dyslexic individuals of all ages. She felt that there were not enough "practical based skill books" suitable for loan from the library aimed at individuals who have reading and literacy difficulties. The librarian stated that it is was difficult to obtain CD-ROMs that address literacy problems for use in public libraries but she was able to make several choices from Ramesis (CD-ROM suppliers). The librarian at Kettering also chose some high level of interest but low reading age books from LDA. The format of the books was also thought to be
important. The actual book is very small but the typographical presentation of the words on the pages is large and there are few words on each line. Therefore, each word can be distinguished and linked to the next word clearly and easily. This format had been identified as being helpful to people with dyslexia.

6.9.3 Use of Mainstream Resources

The findings of the case studies revealed that all the authorities that target at least part of their dyslexia collection for dyslexic individuals themselves, found it difficult to know exactly what to select for their collection at the time of establishment. To compensate for this, another approach was to use resources from the mainstream collection, selected for the individual through traditional librarianship skills.

Richmond's 'Wordwise' collection was predominantly made up of children's large print books and story tapes. The children's librarian felt that although these resources were beneficial to children as reading and learning aids, the resources in the Wordwise collection were rather limited. He found that he was using resources from the mainstream collection "more and more" to offer a greater range of choice for parents of dyslexic children and for the children themselves.

Although the children's librarian at Richmond Library was not responsible for the initial stock selection for the Wordwise collection, he felt that he had learnt through "trial and error" and by using his professional probing skills, which sort of material is helpful to dyslexic children. Many parents asked what he could recommend for their dyslexic children. The first question that he asked the parent was the age of the child, regardless of whether the child was dyslexic or not. From experience he knew that at certain ages children and young people tend to have similar interests, even if their reading ability varies considerably. Young people are often interested in fantasy and ghost books. The Richmond children's librarian used this criteria both for children who are fully able to read and for dyslexic children as well, because the interest level was the key factor. It was also important that the individual is interested by the way the book is presented and can engage with the content of the story line. Comic strip
material such as *TINTIN* or graphic novels, material that has a popular culture appeal, will attract a child towards learning to read.

6.9.4 Resources about Dyslexia

The collections at East Sheen and Sevenoaks Libraries focus predominantly on the subject of dyslexia. This presented fewer problems of stock selections since booklists were available from the British Dyslexia Association covering books about the subject of dyslexia. In the case of East Sheen Library, the local Dyslexia Association who provided the budget, stipulated that they wanted a small collection set up this way. One of the reasons given for selecting material only about the subject of dyslexia rather than having a collection targeting dyslexic individuals themselves was the perceived lack of 'specialist' books available. Budget limitations were also cited. The children's librarian previously based at Richmond Library was asked to select the material for the East Sheen Library because he had knowledge of the 'Wordwise' collection there, including the authors of books that were particularly helpful to parents, teachers and carers of dyslexic children. In the case of Sevenoaks, when actually obtaining the books recommended by the West Kent Dyslexia Association for the collection, the librarian said that she found that there were some obstacles in obtaining some of the titles. She had some difficulty in tracking the books down but eventually managed to obtain most of the books requested. For future reference, a record was kept of the various titles of the dyslexia books bought for the collection and the publishers where they were obtained.

6.9.5 Bibliographical Tools

Aside from personal contacts with other libraries, organisations and dyslexic community, a few specific pieces of bibliographical material were identified in the course of the case studies. The Richmond Young People's librarian found book lists to be very helpful in identifying books that are aimed at children of all ages who find reading difficult for whatever reason. *Kick-start - A selection of titles with a High level of interest but a Low reading age*, compiled by librarians from Cornwall.
Education Library Services, is a comprehensive book list which gives full bibliographical details of a range of fiction titles for high-interest/low reading ability. This book list is a very useful tool in identifying mainstream publishers that produce books of this nature. Examples of some of the publishers included in *Kick-start* are titles from Heinemann; BBC Books; Macmillan; Viking Children's Books; Banana Books; and Young Puffin. The publisher Books for Students have also produced a recommended reading list for boys who are "reluctant or less able readers" called *BOYZ OWN*. The reading list contains a wide range of fiction and non-fiction titles.

The Kettering librarian indicated that she found *Dyslexia Contact* a very helpful guide for selecting and purchasing material about the subject of dyslexia. The reviews of the various resources often give full bibliographical information useful for ordering: title, author, publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price and the ISBN number. Based on a very positive evaluation in *Dyslexia Contact* of a multi-media resource called *Beat Dyslexia: Activity Pack* (comes with cassettes and a series of teaching books) the interviewee bought several of these teaching packs for the collection.

6.9.6 Selection Methods

The mechanics of selection were noted in some of the interviews. In Richmond most book selection for adult use is by CD-ROM replacing the previous 'hands-on' procedure of viewing and evaluating material from approval collections by library suppliers. The librarian felt this was a shame, and that books for children and teens must definitely be seen. The authority had just changed the supplier for children's material that year since it did not want to use CD-ROM in this area. The librarian at Sevenoaks also noted that she no longer has access to an approval collection for book selection. The Library Service has a Central Buying Consortium with Holt Jackson as the suppliers. However, as it was considered uneconomical to provide an actual book collection for librarians to view, a CD-ROM was provided instead. The librarian said that she personally felt that a CD-ROM was not a substitute, because it was not possible to handle the book and evaluate the quality of the publication.
6.9.7 Summary

Selection of material for special collections and/or to complement the collections from mainstream stock seems to have been more of an art than a science. None of the librarians interviewed mentioned professional literature as the source of specific guidance about selecting resources for a dyslexia collection.

Apart from the influence of the Local Dyslexia Associations, which tend to prescribe the contents of the collections about the subject, the most common source of information was outreach and networking between librarians. This outreach could be either in the same authority or from one of the limited number of authorities which were known to have a specialist collection. There is an interesting pattern of flow to the contacts. Ealing sought advice from Richmond, and Weston Favell drew information from Ealing, which was then passed on to Kettering. A small community of interest was established between these authorities which made the initial set up easier for the subsequent collections. There is potential for expanding the community and introducing more of a dialogue.

The only instance of recording requests from the public to determine at least part of the selection criteria was noted at Weston Favell. This practice seemed logical and useful in that it addressed user needs directly rather than through the filter of "expert opinion". The recording of requests was not continued after the collection had been established. This cessation of a piece of good practice was in line with the general tendency towards reduction in activities after the collections were established noted in other parts of the study such as low levels of budget for updating, minimal monitoring of usage and lack of ongoing promotion.

The findings from all the case studies (including libraries with collections only about the subject of dyslexia) revealed that every librarian interviewed felt that there appeared to be very little reading material specifically geared to the needs of dyslexic children, young people and adults. Once the well known sources of specialist material were exhausted, it was difficult to find additional material to meet user demands. The most productive approach seemed to have been to use material from the general
collection. There were variations in how this material was used. In some cases, duplicate material was obtained and located near the specialist collection. Where this was not feasible, some generalist stock could be rotated via the specialist collection.

The children's librarian at Richmond used traditional probing skills to make recommendations for dyslexic children based on their ages and special interests. This individual probing matched to some extent the view of the British Dyslexia Association, which favoured an individual approach to dyslexic individuals rather than trying to deal with them as a group. It was also similar to the method employed at REACH. However, REACH and the BDA might question the ability of even an experienced children's librarian to deal effectively with children with profound dyslexia. On the other hand, if a child can enjoy reading materials, chosen on the basis of interest and clear presentation, it is difficult to see why the experts should object.

The perception of lack of suitable material for dyslexic individuals could reflect the time and hard work needed to identify such resources. The case studies covered the exceptional authorities, which had supported the creation of special collections. Given the informal nature of much of the information gathering about resources, much depended on the enthusiasm of the librarian and the time allowed by the authority, especially after the collection was established. The book lists used by Richmond (Kickstart and BOYZ OWN) appear to deserve wider use as a source for fresh ideas. Kettering's use of Dyslexia Contact to identify new resources is another example of good proactive librarianship, based on actually using the specialist resources rather than just making them available to the public.

Staying with the subject of librarianship, the trend towards use of CD-ROM in place of hands on book selection does pose problems when dealing with material whose format and presentation is important. Whilst it is possible for CD-ROM to provide good insights in these areas by providing additional views of the actual pages, that does not seem to be the common practice at the present time. Until this becomes the norm, hands on selection of specialist material would seem to be the best practice.
6.10 Popular Material

All the libraries that targeted their collections particularly for use of by children and young people with dyslexia (i.e. Ealing, Richmond, and Weston Favell) said that it was the comic strip type material that was the most popular. The series of books that were mentioned specifically as being the most popular by all these authorities were Usborne (puzzle adventure books) *Tin Tin; Asterix;* and *the Where's Wally Now?* books.

The children’s librarian at Ealing, however, commented that she was very aware that the *Tin Tin* and *Asterix* books were very popular with children and in particular by boys and that is why she had purchased separate copies to put in the Wordwise collection. She was not sure whether it was only the children with reading difficulties who borrowed this material or whether these books were also borrowed by other children when the copies in the mainstream stock were all on loan. The children’s librarians at Richmond and Weston Favell libraries suggested that this material was very popular with children with dyslexia or reluctant readers because of the illustrations and the high interest content, which encourages them to want to read. Weston Favell also mentioned *Jet Books* as being popular.

Both the children’s librarians at Richmond Library felt that Graphic novels would be particularly appealing to teenagers with dyslexia and in particular for boys. It was suggested that this type of material could help stimulate a young person’s imagination and interest in wanting to read. Often the illustrations in Graphic novels are vivid and exciting. They have a limited but descriptive text, which is not too intimidating to someone who may have a problem with reading. It was noted, however, that the selection of Graphic novels has to be undertaken with care because some can be very violent.

Other types of books that were particularly mentioned by Ealing, Richmond, and Weston Favell libraries as being very useful to help children and young people, including teenagers with dyslexia, read a complete story were *high interest-low reading age* books. Several of the librarians, however, stressed the importance of selecting *high interest* but *low reading age* books that looked contemporary, colourful...
and exciting and, therefore, had an instant front-cover appeal. Several librarians commented that, although this type of material had been obtained from 'specialist' publishers such as LDA and Ann Arbor, it was the high interest - low reading age books produced by mainstream publishers such as Heinemann and Longman that were the most sought after by parents and children.

Richmond Library felt that the large print books for children were well used by children with dyslexia. The date labels confirmed this and most of the books, which were predominantly fiction, appeared to have been borrowed quite frequently. However, as many of the books in the Wordwise collection in Richmond were children's large print books it was not possible to compare their popularity and usefulness with other resources, for example, high interest - low reading age books and CD-ROM material. Sheen Library commented that although large print books can be useful as a reading aid for people with dyslexia, it was felt that they would be even more popular if the publishers produced more non-fiction material.

Audio material such as story tapes and book/cassette packs (tape with matching book) were mentioned by all of the authorities with collections targeting dyslexic individuals themselves as being well used by children and young people. Richmond Library indicated that if they had a more substantial budget to augment their 'Wordwise' collection some of the money would be spent on unabridged story cassettes and book sets together.

Beat Dyslexia: Activity Packs with cassette in separate series of Books (1, 2, & 3) were cited by Kettering Library as being very popular with teachers and parents of dyslexic individuals. The community services librarian had high praise for this resource because she felt that it is multi-sensory and a practical based resource that encourages dyslexic children and adults to improve on all aspects of literacy - i.e. spelling, reading, handwriting and letter writing skills. Kettering Library was one of the last of the case studies and as their collection was started later than Richmond Library and Ealing Library, their collection also included CD-ROM material.
The CD-ROM material for use by people with dyslexia, especially the software targeting children and young people had been heavily used. This would suggest that the interactive medium of CD-ROM with sound, text and colourful graphics were a helpful multi-sensory source of learning to individuals with dyslexia.

The libraries that had collections about the subject of dyslexia, i.e. East Sheen and Sevenoaks libraries felt that information books on the various aspects of dyslexia were well used, and in particular, by parents and teachers of dyslexic children.

6.11 Updating the Collection

The Ealing 'Wordwise' collection was augmented with Hi-Low material particularly from Heinemann, Longman and Anglia Young Books. "Read-Along" audio cassettes and large print book packs were added to the 'Wordwise' collection. These packs which contain a large print book plus a complete unabridged book on cassettes are produced by Chivers Press Limited. The stories are by well known children's authors and include Allan Ahlberg, Dick King Smith, Enid Blyton and David Tinkler. New Hi-Low material from the LDA was very limited and they have not produced many new titles. The children's librarian felt that the mainstream publishers are producing much more exciting and better produced material than most of the 'specialist' publishers.

During the initial interview/survey with Weston Favell Library it was their story book and cassette tape packs that were more heavily used. At the time of that research (1995) CD ROM was fairly innovative in public libraries and it appeared that Weston Favell Library did not have this facility for use in the library or for loan.

Subsequent telephone conversations with the Weston Favell children's librarian indicated that the more specialised material obtained from the LDA was losing its popularity and was hardly going out on loan. There was still very little 'specialised' material aimed at dyslexic children and what there was available was presented in a boring and non stimulating way. She had seen several of the Barrington-Stokes books but was not impressed by them. After the initial success of the collection (up to
approximately two years after the launch), the children's librarian has become concerned about choosing new materials to put in the collection in order to maintain and update it. There had also been requests for educational videos. This particular resource was not initially included as part of the budget for the 'Dyslexia Pilot Collection'.

The break-down of the spending by Kettering Library for their Dyslexic Collection indicated that CD-ROMs are expensive but well used. However, in order to build on this successful momentum it is clear that more CD-ROM items need to be purchased to offer an interesting range of choice for users of this media. There are copyright problems with CD-ROM material used in libraries and therefore the choice via RAMESIS has been restricted.

The general consensus of the librarians was that it has proved difficult to maintain the standard of the initial stock purchases when it comes to updating the specialist collections. Lack of budget is a factor since there is a marked tendency to let the budget drop off after the first year or two, but this is not the prime point mentioned. The specialist material loses its appeal rather quickly and it is not easy to find adaptable generalist material from the standard suppliers. There are a limited number of reasonably well known specialist publishers, but once their range has been exhausted it is necessary to wait for the modest number of new titles to be published. It becomes increasingly difficult to find new sources of supply at a time when the initial project to create the collection comes to an end and the librarian's time is allocated elsewhere.

Multimedia resources such as CD-ROM are becoming increasingly popular, but this brings new problems of budget, space for terminals and availability of suitable material from RAMESIS.

6.12 Target User Group

The Ealing 'Wordwise' collection of resources is primarily targeting children and young people with reading difficulties. There are Adult Literacy Collections in other libraries
in the borough, but not in Ealing Library. Before the collection was set up, the children's librarian would refer adults to the libraries that had Adult Literacy Collections. The librarian is quite happy for the adults to use the 'Wordwise' collection if they feel that there is material that will help them with their particular difficulties.

The Weston Favell Dyslexia Pilot Collection was aimed at 7-14 year olds. Some adults with dyslexia, however, make use of the collection. The 'Dyslexia Collection' at Kettering Library is targeted at children, young people and adults. The Northamptonshire collections aim to provide a complementary service to cover the needs of all ages.

The 'Wordwise' collection at Richmond Library is targeted at children and young people with dyslexia. However, the collection also has a number of books about dyslexia for use by parents, teachers and school governors interested in the subject. The whole collection is used "quite extensively" by a lot of people particularly by students learning to teach dyslexic children.

East Sheen Library's Wordwise collection, which is predominantly made up of books about the subject of dyslexia, targets any person who wishes to learn more about the problems associated with dyslexia. The collection is accessible to the various user groups within the dyslexic community - i.e. parents, teachers, carers, students, governors and policy makers. Although the collection primarily targets adults who want to gain information and insights about what can be done to help people with dyslexia and in particular children and young people, a dyslexic individual wishing to learn more about their condition could use the collection. The target user group for the Wordwise/Numberwise collection in Sevenoaks is similar to that of East Sheen Library's. However, the Sevenoaks collection also contains 'Adult Basic Skills' material, which is specifically targeted at young people and adults who wish to improve their literacy and learning skills.

In general, the collections with just material about the subject of dyslexia are for use by adults (parents, teachers, carers or perhaps to a lesser degree adult dyslexics themselves). In the mixed collections, the material for leisure or self-study is mostly
targeted at children and young people who are still in full time education. Adult
dyslexics are something of an afterthought in most cases. Adults are sometimes
reported to use the collections but much of the subject matter is aimed at younger
people. The normal policy seems to be to refer adults to the adult literacy collections
rather than to use the special collections. The exception noted was Kettering where
there was a conscious decision to address young people and adults in order to
complement the children oriented collection at Weston Favell in the same county.

6.13 Monitoring Use of the Collection

The Ealing children's librarian did not think it was worthwhile to monitor the use of
the 'special' collection. The collection was quite small and it was relatively easy to see
how well the collection was going out on loan from empirical observation as well as
examining the date labels. The 'Wordwise' collection does not have a separate category
on the computer system for statistical analysis of its lending patterns since the
collection consists of a variety of media e.g. children's music tapes, picture books and
fiction books each with a different category on the computer.

For monitoring and statistical purposes, the collection at Weston Favell is catalogued
as the 'Dyslexia Pilot Collection'. Like Weston Favell Library, the Kettering collection
is specially catalogued on the computer so that issue figures can be monitored by
category of material and borrower (e.g. Dyslexia Collection - Talking books borrowed
by young adults).

The collection at Sevenoaks was monitored by checking the date labels on the books
and other materials. The 'Wordwise/Numberwise collection is very well used, although
it was not possible to determine which user group uses the collection most often.

At Sheen Library, it was not possible to collect issue figures for specific books due to
limitations of the computer systems. Monitoring is done on a visual basis, by seeing
which books are on the shelf or by checking the date labels. Approximately half of the
collection is on loan at any one time.
Apart from the Northampton libraries, none of the libraries monitored their collections on an automated basis. In general, manual monitoring was also limited to observing either the shelves or the date labels in the books. In the case of Sheen, interest in having better statistics through automation was noted. This was less evident in the other libraries where there was relatively little interest in formal measurement. This was justified by the small size of the collections, which allowed for easy visual checking. More modern systems would allow for automated statistics that could be used for making purchase decisions and allocating scarce resources. Statistics could also reveal patterns over time and not just the instant "snapshot" view obtained from shelf checks or date labels. This lack of monitoring could also be seen a reflection of a tendency to be less concerned with the ongoing management of the collections compared with the initial set up.

6.14 Promotion of the Collection

For the launch of the Ealing 'Wordwise' collection in 1993, there was publicity for two weeks running in the local newspaper; initially an article about the collection followed up by photographs of the mayor at the launch party. Networking with the local Ealing Dyslexia Association was used to good effect. The Ealing 'Wordwise' collection was presented positively by the publicity leaflet which states clearly the aims and objectives of the collection. It covered the collaboration between the library service and the Ealing Dyslexia Association and some of the contents of the collection. It also contained an open invitation for any child who has difficulties with reading to come and use the collection.

When the Weston Favell collection was launched, it was also publicised in the local newspaper. Many members of the Northampton Dyslexia Association with their children attended the launch. Northampton Library Service felt that word of mouth, especially by the local Dyslexia Association is sufficient to make this collection known to members of the local community that needs to have access to it.
It was originally intended that the Kettering Dyslexia Collection would be launched via an Open Day with the local Dyslexia Association. Instead, a mailing list of 82 organisations and individuals identified as potential long term users within the Kettering area was drawn up and invited to come and view the collection. The list included local primary and secondary schools as well as higher educational institutions. Moreover, to reach to adults with reading and or literacy problems, the mailing list also targeted agencies such as the local Job Centre. The promotion of the collection is ongoing. Very close to the entrance of Kettering Library is a notice board that displays information about the Northamptonshire Dyslexia Association, including information about their 'Helpline' as well as signposting the 'Dyslexia Collection' in the Library.

The East Sheen Library Manager produced a leaflet about the 'Wordwise' collection which was sent out to all schools, youth organisations, all the other libraries and sports centres in the borough as well as to libraries and schools immediately surrounding the borough. The publicity was also sent to the Roehampton Institute and other teaching colleges nearby. A booklist was compiled in order to give the target group an idea of the range of material available on the subject of dyslexia in the 'Wordwise' collection. The launch was also marketed via an official press release with the local newspaper and various display cabinets around the borough were used to promote the collection. The interviewee said that after the launch of the collection there had been no other event held in the library relating to the subject of dyslexia.

The Richmond Dyslexia Association produced an information leaflet listing all the 'Wordwise' collections in the borough (i.e. Richmond, Teddington, Twickenham and East Sheen Libraries) which gives brief details of the type of resources held in the collections and details of their location with the telephone numbers of the various libraries. The children's librarian at Richmond Library also keeps an information folder (about the subject of dyslexia) for reference use, which is located in an accessible place near the collection. The front cover of the information folder has a notice on it, which also promotes the 'Wordwise' collections throughout the borough.

The West Kent Dyslexia Association published what the library holds in the collection in their newsletter. The list contained books about the subject of dyslexia for use by
parents, teachers or carers rather than books that dyslexic individuals can use themselves. The West Kent Dyslexia Association held several events in Sevenoaks Library, including an Open Evening for parents, teachers, carers and people with dyslexia to come and discuss their problems. A video about dyslexia, a resource from the 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection, was also shown.

There are similarities in the launch programmes undertaken by the various authorities. There tended to be an initial launch event with coverage before and after in the local press. The local dyslexia association was usually involved especially in those cases where they were active in the creation of the collection. Very often it was the members of the local association who were the prime targets of the launch event publicity. As noted in the Weston Favell case, the library was willing to rely on the local dyslexia association to use "word of mouth" to ensure that the existence and contents of the collections are known in the dyslexic community. This is logical as far as it goes, but this policy runs the risk of missing individuals who are outside of the established dyslexic community.

By contrast, the East Sheen approach was more broadly based with material going to a wider range of individuals and organisations, even extending beyond the local authority boundaries. Kettering also took the broadly based approach with contacts to schools and notably Job Centres in order to reach an adult audience.

The prime publicity activities seemed to be focused on the launch of the collections with much less being done on an ongoing basis. The notable exceptions in this area were the leaflets produced by Ealing, Richmond (for the entire borough) and East Sheen. These leaflets serve multiple functions, both on the library site and in the wider community. Aside from the leaflets' value as a publicity device announcing the existence of the collections, the leaflets serve as invitations to dyslexic library users when they approach the enquiry point. They can bring the actual leaflet to the desk and ask for the help promised rather than having to explain themselves and their disability.
The Sevenoaks and West Kent Dyslexia Association use of the space and facilities that the library could offer for meetings and presentations was an example of creative good practice to break down barriers and to forge positive links to the dyslexic communities.

6.15 Dyslexia Collection Surveys

At each of the libraries where the interviews were carried out, a site survey of the physical location, general layout, and contents of the collection was also undertaken. Points of comparison and additional points of debate are discussed drawing upon the observations at all of the libraries.

6.15.1 Physical Location

The 'Wordwise' collection at Ealing Central Library had been located in the children's Library on the second floor of the library building. Initially the collection was free standing in a very prominent position. More recently the 'Wordwise' collection had been moved to a section against the main shelving linked to the fiction books for six to seven year olds. The new location was more discrete and the previous space was needed for exhibitions, classroom visits and promotional displays.

Weston Favell Library is based in a purpose built shopping mall called the Weston Favell Centre. The Library is on the first floor of the centre and occupies one floor only. The library is fairly modern and open plan (i.e. there are no separately screened or partitioned sections, for example for the children's Library). The 'Dyslexia Pilot Collection' was situated in front of the children's section and close to the adult non-fiction section. Both children and adults using the library could easily see the collection.

The Wordwise collection had been moved from the first floor to the ground floor of Richmond Library. The re-siting of the children's Library which houses the 'Wordwise' collection was a marked improvement in terms of access. The children's Library is quite small but appeared to be better organised and not as cluttered during the
previous visit. The 'Wordwise' collection had been weeded extensively and the resources also looked much better presented and less rundown. The 'Wordwise' collection was located near the 'Parent and Child' collection. The collection was small and occupied four shelves. Two shelves were made up predominantly of large print books for children. The Richmond Wordwise resources are still presented as a dedicated collection. It was thought best to keep the collection visible.

The Dyslexia Collection' at Kettering was situated next to the 'Parent and Child Collection' in the children’s section of the library. Kettering Library is a traditional municipal building whereby the whole of the library occupies the ground floor only. The shelves which accommodate the Dyslexic Collection are easily accessible, situated behind the adult non-fiction section of the library. The collection is aimed at dyslexic adults as well as children and young people. To exploit the 'Dyslexia Collection' fully the collection needed to be moved away from the children’s section into an area that will be more obviously seen by dyslexic adults. The area close to the computer terminal used for 'Open Learning' access would be more visible and appropriate, but to date this move has not taken place.

East Sheen Library is a building that occupies the ground floor only. The 'Wordwise' collection is based in the children’s section of the library, next to the Child and Parent Collection.

The Sevenoaks 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection with the materials on dyslexia are housed in a separate bay which is located in the Adult section of the library. The teens' section is close by. There are some steps down to the Junior Library. Sevenoaks Library were asked to site it, if possible, between the two. It was thought that if the collection was in the children’s section, it would be too demeaning for the adults who wanted to use it to be seen going into the children’s library.

The most common location for the dyslexia collections visited was either in or adjacent to the children’s library, which ideally would be sited on the ground floor for ease of access. This observation of a physical linkage with the children’s library re-enforces the sense that children are the prime target group and relatively little is being done, by
comparison, for adults. Kettering is an exception to this general rule in that there has been a conscious effort to include adult provision and this is reflected in the decision to locate near to the adult non-fiction collection. Plans to make a linkage to the 'Open Learning' collection would further support this policy. Sevenoaks, which has a collection about the subject, is also aiming to target adults in the sense that they are trying to reach parents and carers who would make use of the information rather than dyslexic individuals themselves.

Another theme that can be observed is the choice between visibility and privacy in the choice of the site for the special collections. This is mentioned specifically in the Ealing case, but was included in the decision making process elsewhere as well. It is not an easy decision in that it is an advantage for the collection to be visible for potential users to find it, but on the other hand there could be some embarrassment to be seen using the collection. This point is linked to the concerns over naming the collections (e.g. avoiding the use of words like 'basic') and on the awareness of appearance of remedial material. If a less visible location is chosen, promotional activity must be improved as in the Ealing case with the descriptive leaflet.

6.15.2 Resources Available in the Collection

Amongst items noted in the Ealing Wordwise collection were cassettes covering a broad spectrum of user needs. There were cassettes for educational needs as well as for listening for pleasure, for example, Musical Spelling; Fun with Sums; Fun with French; J.H. Brennan's True Ghost Stories and John Cunliffe's Postman Pat Takes a Message. Book/cassette packs also covered a wide range of titles, for example, Stories for seven-year-olds; and popular classics such as E. Nesbit's The Railway Children and Frances H. Burnett's Secret Garden. In addition to large print books and a variety of paperback titles by popular authors there were 'special' dictionaries aimed for children with reading and spelling difficulties, for example Richard Carlisle's Letterland Picture Dictionary 1992. For parents, carers and teachers there were books relating to the subject of dyslexia written by experts in the field, for example, Beve Hornsby's Alpha to Omega, A-Z of Teaching, Reading, Writing and Dyslexia: A
Hundred Years On by T.R. Miles. There were also leaflets giving information about
the local Dyslexia Association.

The Weston Favell 'Dyslexia Pilot Collection' was small. At the time of inspection it
consisted mainly of story cassettes; books with matching story cassettes; high level of
interest but low reading age books in both paperback and hardback formats, and
picture books. Ghost and horror genre (for example by Christopher Pike) had gone out
well as had the Asterix books. There were also spelling aids, such as Ace Spelling
Dictionary. There was information on the subject of dyslexia on display shelves with
the 'Dyslexia Pilot Collection'. This material was not for loan but for reference
purposes only. Examples, of this were as follows:

Booklets from the British Dyslexia Association - (e.g. Your Questions Answered)

Events list (relating to meetings and courses) from the British Dyslexia Association.

British Dyslexia Association leaflet Supporting Children with Special Needs: The
Governors Role.

Dyslexia Contact: The Official Magazine of the British Dyslexia Association

Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre - (e.g. - Introduction to Dyslexia - A Dyslexic's Eye
View.

Department of Education - Special educational needs: a guide for parents

Northampton Dyslexia Association Newsletter

The 'Norview' on-line local information service also lists and gives details of the local
Northampton Dyslexia Association.

There were several books written by dyslexia specialists in the field, for example, T.R.
Miles - Dyslexia 100 Years On available for reference purposes only. Books on the
subject of dyslexia are for loan in the Weston Favell Adult Lending Library, shelved
with the 'Parents' collection. This does raise the question of why they are not with the
special collection for ease of location.

Many of the large print books at Richmond were written by popular and well known
children's authors, such as Nina Bawden, Judy Blume, C.S. Lewis, and Clive King.
Most of these authors would appeal to both genders, and the story lines of most of these books have high interest content but the presentational style is not too difficult to read. The volume size of the large print books, for example Lythway Books published by Chivers and Charnwood Library Series published by Thorpe, are quite slim in appearance and not too overwhelming for a young dyslexic person to attempt to read. Because the print is large there are not too many words on the page. There were also audio taped books on the shelf by popular authors, for example Terry Pratchett and Judy Blume produced by Chiver's Children's Audio Books. There were several 'specialist' dictionaries on the shelf published by the LDA, for example, the *Ace Spelling Dictionary* by David Mosely and Catherine Nicol. The books at Richmond on the subject of dyslexia were core texts written by well known dyslexia experts, for example T.R. Miles (British Dyslexia Association) and Beve Hornsby (Hornsby Centre). There were also a few audio tapes on the subject of dyslexia, for example *Understanding Dyslexia* produced by the Dyslexia Institute. There was not, however, a copy of the core journal (*Dyslexia Contact*) published by the British Dyslexia Association.

The 'Wordwise' collection at East Sheen is small, but during the interview the library manager indicated that approximately 50 per cent of the collection is out at one time. The stock selection for the collection appeared to be well informed with a range of titles written from well known dyslexia specialists. The titles at East Sheen deal with a range of topics from how dyslexia impacts on the young person themselves as well as the family; symptoms that are experienced by people who are dyslexic. There were some specific titles that dealt with certain learning problems such as difficulty with Maths and Music. The books that appeared to have gone about particularly well were specifically geared for parents/carers of children with dyslexia rather than the books that are targeted for an academic audience. There were two information leaflets from 'Project for Children with Special Needs'. One set was relating to their 'Counselling Service' for children with 'special needs' in the borough of Richmond-upon-Thames and the other leaflets outlined "What is a Special Need?" and how the 'Project for Special Needs' aims to "enable parents and carers to help themselves and their child". There was also a *Magazine for Kids by Kids* produced by the British Dyslexia Association. There was not a copy of *Dyslexia Contact*.
The Kettering 'Dyslexia Collection' was small and consisted predominantly of material from the LDA. The book/cassette packs (bought separately and packaged by Kettering library) appeared to have gone out reasonably well. Books from LDA. (Mean Reads) of a similar type and format to the books contained in the cassette/matching book package were available on the shelves, but these books had been issued very rarely. Books of a similar format have also been obtained from Ann Arbor Publishers Ltd. (e.g. High Noon Books) and like those from the LDA, the books are small in size but the words on the page are large with very few words on each line.

Even compared to the books from LDA, the books at Kettering purchased from Ann Arbor Publishers appeared to be old fashioned and the titles of some of the stories rather boring. These books were not unlike those specially formulated in the 1970s for individuals with literacy and reading problems such as the B.B.C. 'On the Move' series. In the 1990s these books have very limited appeal because they look so 'out of date'. The small CD-ROM collection is geared towards helping children, young people and adults who encounter difficulty with reading, writing, spelling or numeracy. The majority of these resources, 6 items in total, are for accessing in the library only. On the shelf was Casper: Interactive Storybook plus Reading Games, distributed by Random House, New Media. This CD-ROM title was available for loan. Kid Works (Builds writing, reading and creativity skills) distributors ABLAC - Learning Works, was used for access in the library only. In general it was the CD-ROM based resources that appeared to have been the most heavily used in the collection. The Kettering Dyslexic Collection also included books about the subject of dyslexia. The ones observed on the shelves were core texts written by 'specialists' in this field, and they had all gone out very regularly.

In the Sevenoaks 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection there is basic literacy material as well as resources relating to the subject of dyslexia. The core collection is non-fiction material, but in the past there were some fiction books with a simpler text included. These books, however, did not go out on loan very well. The librarian was always puzzled by this because some of the titles she had chosen for the collection she thought would be very popular, for example, books in a simplified text written by Stephen
King. It was possibly because these books were intermingled with the non-fiction basic literacy material that people did not think to look there. These simplified fiction texts were re-shelved with the teenage and junior books and now go out on loan very well. Classic texts such as titles by Charles Dickens that were also found with the 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection were borrowed frequently. These texts were studied at GCSE level and it was not necessarily the people with literacy problems who were borrowing the books.

The resources available in the Sevenoaks 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection itself were a combination of 'Adult Basic Skills' material in multi-media formats, for example, books and video material; dictionaries; and information books (non-fiction) on the various aspects relating to the condition of dyslexia. Resources that formed part of the 'Adult Basic Skills' material included books on learning skills, for example, *How to manage your study time* (Roger Lewis); *How to improve your memory* (Robert Leach); and *How to use your dictionary* (Roger Lewis and Martin Pugmire).

Examination of the date labels indicated that these books had been borrowed quite frequently. There were a number of books by the National Extension College relating to examination techniques, for example, *Answer the question: The secret of exam success*. These books appeared to have been on loan quite frequently. Video material aimed for people who wish to improve their literacy skills included a series of videos titled *Punctuate well at any age; Spell well at any age; and Write a perfect letter*. These are a series of videos presented by Carol Vorderman. The date label on each of these titles indicated that they were very popular.

The books on the subject of dyslexia in the Sevenoaks 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection were 'core' titles by well known experts in the field. Examples, of some of the titles of the books in the collection included *Dyslexia and Mathematics* (T.R. Miles and E. Miles); *Dyslexia and Stress* (T.R. Miles and V.P. Varma); *Dyslexia - Parents in Need* (Pat Heaton); *Overcoming Dyslexia* (Dr Beve Hornsby); and *Instrumental Music for Dyslexics - A Teaching Handbook* (S.Oglethorpe).

Books on the subject of dyslexia had gone out on loan frequently, particularly the books that were targeting parents who suspect that their child/children are dyslexic.
In the 'Wordwise/Numberwise' collection there was a range of videos about the problems that people with dyslexia encounter. All of the video titles examined showed that they had gone out very well indeed. Some of these titles were: One in five - A parents guide to special educational needs designed to help parents understand the five steps of the Code of Practice; Dyslexia in the primary school (BBC videos with a 28 page booklet of teacher's notes); and Understanding dyslexia - The Dyslexia Institute's Perspective. There was a charge of £1.00 for the loan of these videos for a period of one week.

The material found on the shelves matched well the materials described in the interviews with the librarians. Story cassettes and combined packs with texts, graphic novels, large print books and simplified texts by popular authors were all found in the various collections aimed at the dyslexic individuals. It was evident that attention had been given to the format of the material and the key specialist publishers (Ann Arbor and LDA) had been used. However, the issue rate for this material was not high compared with more mainstream material, co-located with the specialist collections. Non book materials such as CD-ROMs, videos and audio tapes appeared to be very popular, although the choice of the more modern media such as CD-ROMs appeared limited.

Material about the subject of dyslexia was well represented in the mixed collections as well as the collections that were predominately just about the subject. Although these collections were not generally large, there was typically a range of both monographs and information leaflets. It was somewhat surprising that the Richmond libraries did not have Dyslexia Contact, which is the core journal for this subject. The key authors (e.g. Dr Beve Hornsby) were found in several collections, but given the range of material about the subject and the limited size of the collections, the collections reflect the individual choice of the librarians and the local Dyslexia Associations, which typically fund this type of collection. Good material about dyslexia and its symptoms, aimed at parents, was universally well used, as indicated by the high loan rate. This popularity supports the observation of high interest and concern amongst parents for a condition that is more widespread than previously accepted.
Another area of interest was how the mixed collections were displayed and how the balance was maintained. The Sevenoaks collection was a case in point in that if a small number of simplified texts of popular novels are co-located with a collection that is otherwise almost exclusively about the subject, the fiction can be overlooked. In other cases of genuinely mixed collections of fiction and non-fiction, the fiction material was very well used. The message would seem to be that libraries should be clear concerning their objectives and target markets, which should be addressed in a wholehearted way.

6.15.3 Publishers and Resource Providers

There was a considerable range of publishers and other resource providers noted on the shelves in the various collections. A representative list follows:

Ealing Library had the material listed below:

ALBSU (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit)
'Chillers' series of 5 titles published in association with Hodder and Stoughton.

ANGLIA YOUNG BOOKS
'Town through stories' series (National Curriculum linked and recommended by teachers as easy reading and popular)

BRITISH DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION
For publications list relating to the subject of dyslexia and advice leaflets and booklets.

COLLINS EDUCATIONAL ('Primary and secondary school' catalogues and 'Special Needs' catalogues. 'Skyways' series, 'Collins English Library' graded readers which provide simplified versions of popular classics and modern fiction. Some titles are also available on cassettes.

HEINEMANN INTERNATIONAL
Heinemann Guided Readers. These are intended as "reading material for learners of English". Some material is available on cassettes.

HODDER & STOUGHTON (Special Needs Catalogue)
'Vardo' series and 'Chillers' (for age 10 plus)
LDA
Several series of high level, low reading age books suitable for 9 to 16 year olds. Tape cassettes are provided separately for some of these books and, therefore, need to be bagged together by the authority to provide book/cassette packs. LDA also publish 'special' dictionaries and, in particular, the ACE Spelling Dictionary which is specifically targeted for children and young people with dyslexia.

LONGMAN GROUP U.K. LTD.
Longman Structural Readers
Longman Classics
Longman Movieworld

LYTHWAY LARGE PRINT BOOKS published by Chivers Press.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
'Oxford Bookworms' graded readers. Cassettes are also available.

STANLEY THORNES (Publishers) Ltd
'Spirals' series (stories and plays) for teenagers and adults.

USBORNE PUBLISHING LTD
'Usborne Puzzle Adventure' series and 'Usborne Story Books' series.

Weston Favell Library had material from the following publishers:

ASTERIX BOOKS

WATERFRONT BOOKS
(a title on the shelf was Josh. A Boy with Dyslexia by Caroline Janover)

HEINEMANN Guided Readers
(e.g. Great Expectations by Charles Dickens)

HEINEMANN upper; intermediate; elementary; beginner; starter (colour coded) books.

LDA
High level of interest but low reading age books with matching cassette tapes of the story. These items, however, cannot be purchased as a package together. The book and the cassette of the book are sold separately and need to be packaged in plastic bags together before they can go out on the shelves for loan.

JETS
Books and tapes

YOUNG LIONS (part of Harper Collins)
I am reading' series.
Sevenoaks Library, where the focus was on books about dyslexia, had material from:

WHURR Publishers, which was the most frequently used publisher for obtaining books about the subject of dyslexia.

BETTER BOOKS and Software, Dudley, West Midlands.

OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

ROUTLEDGE

BASIC SKILLS AGENCY

There were few surprises on the shelves of the special collections and there was a considerable commonality of stock, especially from the specialist publishers such as LDA. Heinemann Guided Readers were noted as being successful in a number of instances. Longman and Collins were also well represented.

6.16 General Observations on the Case Studies

These authorities with specialist collections were identified through the questionnaire mailing to over 150 library authorities, searching the professional literature, and by networking within the library profession. There may be a few other examples of these types of collections that have been created recently, but there are not many. These authorities are the ones that have done the most in this field.

These authorities, mostly operating on limited budgets, have done some impressive work. A great deal of personal and professional commitment was demonstrated by the librarians involved. Personal research and networking with other librarians were the prime methods of creating the collections. Outreach to the British Dyslexia Association and similar organisations was only moderately successful in that lists of material about the subject were available, but nothing in terms of material for use by dyslexic individuals. There was also a sense of surprise, or even perhaps disapproval, at the idea of librarians taking an active interest in providing such materials.
In most cases, the library authorities responded positively to initiatives arising from the activities of the local dyslexia associations. Northamptonshire went a step further through their Challenge Fund, which provided the means for the librarians to take the initiative. In no case did the authority itself appear to drive the creation of the collection as a matter of agreed policy. Also, none of the librarians quoted any significant benefits from consulting the professional library literature. Apart from using a few specialist booklists and consulting colleagues, the librarians were pretty much operating on their own. This personal approach had limitations and could be a problem when the original creator of the collection moved on, as in the case of Richmond.

There was also the sense that the attempt to serve the dyslexic community tended to lose some momentum within a year of the collections being created. A number of factors were mentioned including budget limitations for updating the collection, limited amounts of suitable new material being published, publicity being treated as a one-off event, and lack of active monitoring as the basis for new acquisitions.

Most of the collections targeted children, either directly or indirectly by providing material about the subject for use principally by parents. Only Kettering made a special point of addressing the needs of dyslexic adults. Certain materials could benefit adult dyslexics, but the typically close association with the children's library would be a barrier to wider use. In the context of lifelong learning, this relative lack of attention to users who have completed their formal education is a gap that needs to be addressed.

A number of issues and examples of good practice can be seen in the case studies. For example, the difficulty in obtaining specialist material that is attractive and non-remedial in appearance was noted in many of the interviews. Greater use of the mainstream collection to supplement the limited specialist material was a strong recommendation. The intention should be to open up the variety of choice for readers with reading problems, rather than to be prescriptive about what is appropriate for them. Since the stimulation of reading is the goal, it is not necessary to confine the choice to 'worthy material' if other media, such as graphic novels, can stimulate the initial interest. Multimedia materials such as CD-ROMs and cassette and book packs
appear to be very popular and are in line with the multi-sensory approach found in the Hickey and Orton-Gillingham Methods of teaching.

It is also necessary to think beyond the selection of material when creating a collection. The choice of an informative, but non-prejudicial name for the collection was noted in several of the cases. On a related point, choice of location for the collection is important in that it must be reasonably visible and located near other resources for that target group, but it should also have a degree of privacy to avoid the stigma associated with using remedial material. Bringing diverse materials (fiction and non-fiction) together also reduces the problem that dyslexics may have in dealing with a complex library environment. Another significant tool for overcoming the barriers to library use is the production of an informative leaflet describing the collection and inviting dyslexic individuals to make use of it. The leaflet also serves as a ready-made explanation of what is needed when the dyslexic person approaches the enquiry desk. This is important for an invisible condition such as dyslexia, which can be embarrassing to explain to a stranger. This point was confirmed in the interviews, which indicated that it was very rare for dyslexic individuals to identify themselves to library staff without such a clear invitation and implied promise of sympathetic help.
CHAPTER SEVEN: RESOURCE PROVISION

Difficulties in obtaining suitable material were noted in the Case Studies and in the results of the questionnaire. This issue is considered further in this chapter.

7.1 REACH: National Advice Centre for Children with Reading Difficulties

7.1.1 Background

REACH was formerly known as the National Library for the Handicapped Child but was changed to REACH: National Advice Centre for Children with Reading Difficulties in 1998. At the time of the name change the Centre moved from its previous address in Wokingham, Berkshire to California Country Park, Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire.

REACH (under the auspices of the National Library for the Handicapped Child) was established in 1985 by Imogen Smallwood to commemorate the memory of her mother Enid Blyton, the children’s author. REACH is a registered charity and as such relies almost entirely on voluntary funding and support from companies, grant making Trusts and individuals. Donations of new children's books are also made by many publishers in the United Kingdom as well as various pieces of equipment that can be used at the Centre by children with a disability. (Marshall, 1991, p.72). The Centre, at the time of the interview/survey in May 1995, needed £250,000 annually to maintain the services at their current level.

The ethos of REACH: National Advice Centre for Children with Reading Difficulties is embodied in the Centre's name. Its aims are to provide advice covering a wide range of resource provision for children and young people who experience difficulty with reading. These conditions can include hearing or vision loss, physical or motor difficulty, speech and learning difficulties (including dyslexia), and children "who suffer with unnamed and un-diagnosable learning problems" (1995, NLHC information.
The library is the only one of its kind in the United Kingdom that has a collection of resources specially selected to help children and young people who have reading difficulties. The objective of REACH is to enable all children to read to their optimum level and to encourage them to read independently.

7.1.2 Resources

The Centre holds an extensive range of resources aimed to facilitate children and young people with a special need to learn to read or gain access to information through non written media such as videos and sound tapes of books. The Centre also holds a wide range of information about particular special needs, for consultation by parents, teachers, librarians, publishers or anyone interested in special needs education.

Multi-media resources include over 8,000 children's books in print, sound tapes, videos, microelectronic hardware and software (e.g. for computers, CD-ROM) and language games. The Centre gives special attention to children's picture books, both fiction and non fiction, including extra large versions for group sessions. The Centre houses approximately 2000 reference books relating to various aspects of special education including reading difficulties, 68 journals relating to the wide spectrum of special needs, many from organisations active in this field, and information files relating to current practice regarding particular special needs.

REACH is not a lending library. All the material in the Centre is available for assessment by anyone wishing to gain insights as to resources available to help an individual with a reading difficulty learn to read. The staff at the Centre are experienced in offering guidance in the selection of materials for any young person who has a problem with reading. In order to meet this aim the Centre houses a plethora of material specially chosen to stimulate and help children and young people...
take an interest in reading. Examples of resources held in REACH include the following:

Cloth books
Wooden books
Tactile cloth books
Handbag cloth books
Pop-up-Books
Lift-the-flap books
Picture books 0-8 years
Picture Books 9+ (including teenage, e.g. Where’s Wally books)
Sound Books
Spiral bound books
Braille books
Hand-made books
Board books
Clearvision books (which have an extra page with Braille)
Non-fiction books - with clear pictures and not too much text)

Much of the material listed above, such as the handbag cloth books, wooden books, pop-up and lift-the-flap books, have a high novelty value. This type of material appeals to children because the materials are colourful, with an element of surprise and discovery. The obviously tactile nature of the “books” could help to overcome reservations about handling such formal items as conventional hardback books.

7.1.3 Information Services

The Centre offers an information service for anyone who wishes to find out which books or other resources would be suitable for a child or young person with a specific disability. Enquiries can be made to REACH by phone, letter or by visiting the Centre in person to evaluate the various resources available. If a person is unable to visit the premises personally, they will be sent a list of resources (with the details of titles and publishers names) appropriate for the individual concerned. REACH will also direct enquirers to other organisations that might be able to offer further help and advice relating to a specific disability.
7.1.4 Inservice Training

Courses and workshop seminars are available on request to organisations and institutions, including schools and library services. All topics relate to reading difficulties encountered by children and young people. The courses include advice on the selection of suitable materials, using books and other media with children and assisting children with reading problems in the classroom. REACH have undertaken courses organised by the Youth Libraries Group at the Library Association headquarters to raise awareness of how staff working in public libraries can improve their services to children and young people with special needs.

One of the main objectives of these courses is to alert library professionals, in particular children’s librarians, on how resources held in main stream library collections can be exploited more fully to facilitate children and young people who have a reading difficulty. For example, children’s large print books traditionally are targeted for individuals who are partially sighted. It has become recognised, however, that large print text can assist people who have difficulty with language and the written word. Sound tapes of books not only allow an individual with a visual loss to gain access to stories by popular and classical authors, but they also can be used by children with a reading difficulty as a stimulus to encourage them to learn to read. The printed version of the sound tape can be used in conjunction with the tape as a learning tool. The fundamental point is that library resources, notably those commonly used to address a particular disability, can also be used to meet other special needs requirements.

The courses are either half day or full day. For groups who wish to hold in-service training at the Centre, a speaker can be arranged. Charges are made to cover the speaker's fee and expenses. Groups with a common interest can arrange a visit to REACH free of charge to assess materials for their own specific needs. A member of staff will also give a brief explanation of the nature of work carried out in the Centre.
7.1.5 Publications

In its advisory capacity REACH also produces various publications in order to disseminate information about the work undertaken by the Centre as well as providing up to date information for parents, teachers, carers, and librarians about helpful resource provision for children with disabilities. REACH published an extensive list called Activities, Games and Equipment for the Disabled Child: Charities, Organisations, Manufacturers and Booklist. This publication includes a booklist entitled 'Library Services to Children with Learning Problems and Disabilities' which is a valuable bibliographical source of information for librarians in a school or public library environment. The publication also has an extensive listing of books relating to wordless picture books for the younger and the older reader, simple text picture books, high interest/low ability series for children aged eleven plus, and book series of interest to children aged five to eleven years.

REACH also produces a Newsletter to organisations and individuals who have made a donation to the Centre. Another publication called Reach Resource Centre: Information Pack is despatched on request to libraries, schools, colleges and interested individuals who wish to gain more in-depth knowledge to the various activities undertaken by the Centre. A charge of £2.50 is made for the pack. This publication also includes details about the various information sheets that can be obtained from REACH that relate to various types of disabilities and appropriate resources for their reading needs. Moreover, the publication lists the addresses and telephone numbers of key organisations that specialise in specific disabilities encountered by children. In order for information contained in the information pack to be updated individuals are invited to either sponsor the project or contribute funding towards this venture.
7.1.6 Liaison with Publishers

In order to raise awareness and meet the reading needs of children with a disability the Centre liaises with publishers for the improvement of book production to fit the particular special need (Marshall, 1991, p.146). REACH will offer assistance "prior to publication for authors, illustrators, editors and others wishing to test a product, or have a manuscript read. This information remains confidential. A fee is charged for this service". (1995, NLHC information brochure).

7.1.7 Interview with the Information Officer

The interview was carried out with the information officer in order to learn as much as possible about the work carried out at REACH. The interview also provided the opportunity of asking the information officer how he perceived dyslexia and what resource materials would be recommended to help children with this condition.

7.1.7.1 Awareness of Dyslexia

The interviewee believes that dyslexia does exist. On a very basic and simplistic level the term 'dyslexia' refers to someone who has a language and sometimes a speech problem. Letters and sounds enter the brain but somehow what is seen or heard does not come out in the same way. Something gets distorted in the circuits of the brain. He was aware that even the 'experts' do not know what causes dyslexia and that there is a continual debate about what is the cause.

The interviewee indicated that although he was aware of the term dyslexia he felt that this could be a misused term. The staff at the Centre will first ask the parent of a child who is suspected of having dyslexia, if they have taken their child to see a child educational psychologist to get him or her professionally assessed. If an assessment has not been carried out, REACH will advise the parent to speak to the school or go to one of the various Dyslexia Organisations to ascertain if the child is dyslexic. The three
organisations cited as the main authorities on the subject of dyslexia were the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), the Helen Arkell Centre, and the British Dyslexia Institute.

Concern was expressed by the interviewee, that these three organisations approach the issue of dyslexia from completely different angles, i.e. they cannot agree on what dyslexia is and how one is meant to treat the condition. The Centre is sometimes dubious about individuals who seek advice using the specific term dyslexia. The interviewee prefers to do a lot of background questioning before giving advice and trying to find suitable resources that will meet the particular needs of the child.

7.1.7.2 Information Requests by Teachers

Some teachers seek advice from REACH concerning the selection of suitable reading material for dyslexic children. The Centre, however, will firstly ask whether the child/or children have been diagnosed as having dyslexia. When this is ascertained, some of the following questions are asked:

- What age are they?
- What is their language age as opposed to their chronological age?
- What types of books they are reading?
- What type of books does that individual child like?

REACH will try to build up a picture of that individual child because each child is unique. Once this information has been gathered they will suggest specific titles and/or other resources, for example, cassette/book packs that will have a particular appeal to the child concerned. REACH will often suggest books that are in unconventional format, for example, books that are approximately A3 in size with large print and large illustrations. These are now beginning to appear in public libraries and are very good for story-telling sessions because all the children can see the text and pictures clearly. REACH would suggest this format as being very helpful to a dyslexic child or children.
7.1.7.3 Information Requests by Parents

Some of the questions that REACH will ask of the parent are:

- How old is the child or young person?
- What is her/his reading age?
- What is her/his writing like? Is it easy to read or is the writing back to front? Is the spelling poor?
- Does s/he know their alphabet? Can s/he say their ABCs completely? Does s/he recognise all the letters? If a letter, for example, N was put in front of them on its own would the child recognise it or would it have to be done in order - ABCDEFG etc?
- Can they do the alphabet backwards?
- Can s/he sequence?

7.1.7.4 Assessing the Needs of a Child

If the child were actually at the Centre, the Goldilocks and the three bears in bed model, would be suggested for the child to use to see whether they could put the bear in the right bed with the right sized blanket.

- Can s/he put the bears into the right sequence - small to big or big to small?
- Do they know their right and left?
- Can they count from one to ten? or from ten to one? (dyslexic children often find it very difficult to count backwards because it is difficult to visualise).
- Find out what the child can actually visualise.

7.1.7.5 Suggestions to Help a Child with Dyslexia

To help a child learn the letters of the alphabet, tactile material is often suggested, for example, books with the letters of the alphabet made in felt. The individual child can then feel the shape of the letter and get the sense of it. For some children saying the letter out loud, hearing what they are saying and feeling the letter at the same time helps them retain it in their brain. REACH will also suggest that the parent obtains plastic individual letters of the alphabet in upper and lower case and uses them as a tactile aid (as suggested above). If letters are expensive for the parent to buy it is suggested that the parent make their own out of cardboard or felt.
In order to help a dyslexic child to make sense of letters and to begin to identify their meaning as words, the interviewee suggests that the parent labels utility items, for example, in the kitchen to label the table, the cooker, the cupboard etc. When the child goes to the table the parent can get him or her to look at the label and tell them that the label says table. When the child has associated the word with the object, get him or her to say the word out loud tracing the words with their fingers as they are saying it. This should be repeated as often as possible to reinforce the fact that the letters mean something.

With a child who has dyslexia, one of the problems could be that there might be too much information on the page. They cannot actually focus on a line, or a diagram or a word and process this before going on to the next one. What one has to do is to restrict the amount of information that they are seeing. A method that is helpful is to get a cardboard box (e.g. a cornflake box) and cut the side off the box. Cut a narrow window from the side of the box and this can be placed over the page of the book so that the child can only see one line at a time. For many children only seeing one line at a time can be helpful because they can concentrate on one line and not be overwhelmed by the text. The size of the window in the cardboard can be widened gradually so that the dyslexic individual can gain the confidence to deal with more information.

Another method that can be as equally helpful to assist reading, not only for dyslexia but for other conditions, is the use of coloured plastic overlays. Some children have problems with black and white print. A yellow overlay strip can help a child to focus the brain on the words on the page.

Small print for individuals who are dyslexic can be serious problem. A suggested way to overcome this, especially if the book the child is interested in does not come in a large print format, is to use a plastic magnifying sheet. This method is very basic and costs very little but can assist concentration with a child who experiences difficulty in reading.
The interviewee also mentioned that there is now a reasonable range of fiction cassettes which are particularly helpful to children who have difficulty with reading. For example, there is a good range of Shakespeare texts for young people (suitable for G.C.S.E level) in cassette form. This can take the pressure off reading. Likewise in a leisure situation, texts can be enjoyed by hearing them.

It is very important to ask a child or a young person who is dyslexic what sort of interests they have in order to stimulate their interest in reading. Question the dyslexic individual which books they have read in the past and those that they have found to be particularly enjoyable. Also take note of any author, genre or subject matter that is appealing to them. Particular care also must be taken to ask the child or young person what sort of pictures they like and what sort of print or format they find helpful when reading. Once this has been established, suggest a series of books that are comparable to the language and reading level of those that the child is currently reading.

This process will enable the dyslexic individual to extend the number of books they are reading. When the child has finished a particular series, they can be encouraged to read more by suggesting that they try a particular book or series because it is similar in style to the ones they have previously read. It is important that the dyslexic individual tells the teacher and or librarian what they have been reading and what the story lines of the books are about because it will make them realise that they are reading and they are becoming knowledgeable.

For teenagers it is particularly helpful to find a lively interesting book, where the plot is about a child who has a 'disability' similar to their own. For example, in the 1995 Carnegie Award winner *Ghosts in the Graveyard* by Theresa Breslin (a community librarian) the hero is a boy who is dyslexic. This could be recommended to a young person with dyslexia.

The interviewee felt that it is very helpful to the dyslexic individual to pursue the reading schemes available in schools which are useful for learning basic grammar in partnership with books available in libraries. The latter will enhance reading for
pleasure and offer a wide range choice from which the individual can select for
themselves.

7.1.7.6 International Resources

The interviewee mentioned that a great deal of resources for children with 'special
needs' (e.g. tactile books, books with sign language symbols for children with hearing
loss, and books about a child with a disability) can be obtained from other countries
such as America, New Zealand and Australia. He considers Britain to be very far
behind with resources that will facilitate children who have, for whatever reason,
difficulty with reading. He also felt that the United Kingdom, compared to other
English speaking countries, is not as forward thinking regarding education and library
provision for children with 'special needs'. Britain does not have a central national
library section dealing with library services for people (of all ages) with disabilities.

A journal called *Link-up* is published in Australia and is solely about what is happening
in education and libraries for children and adults who have learning difficulties. *'Link-
up'* serves as an umbrella that pulls everything together concerning these issues and
disseminates the information to the whole of Australia. Moreover, the journal *Link-up*
also discusses innovations that are taking place in other countries including the United
Kingdom. The interviewee indicated that REACH often found out things that are
happening in this country, which he might otherwise have missed, by reading *Link-up*.

7.1.7.7 Promotion of Services

REACH is a charitable organisation and is, therefore, very heavily reliant on voluntary
donations. At the time of the interview REACH had a part-time fund raising and
promotions officer whose main responsibility was to promote the services of the
Centre. Occasionally, articles have been published in some of the library and
educational professional journals, notably the *Library Association Record; Youth
Library Review* and *Language, Reading and Education* which have increased the
awareness of the Resource Centre within the library and teaching professions.
Each year REACH runs their own writing competition for children who have reading and learning difficulties. This event is called the 'Apple Tree award' and it is the only one of its kind that targets children who have difficulty with reading and writing. REACH sends the poster and entry forms for this event to the head of every educational authority and to all Central Library authorities. The interviewee expressed a certain amount of frustration in that he felt that often publicity material remained on the desks of the central authorities and was not sufficiently distributed to the schools or branch libraries. On a positive note, he also indicated that authorities who are aware of the advisory work undertaken by the Centre will often phone for advice on resource provision for a child with a particular learning and reading problem.

7.1.7.8 Stock Selection

REACH will read every book individually that is selected from the approval collections. This also is carried out even if they are part of a series. The interviewee stressed the importance of reading every book because each book is unique and has to be considered in the light of a special need. For example, is the book suitable for a child who has a hearing loss? Does the book contain signing? For children with dyslexia it would be necessary to consider the typographical arrangement of the print on the page. Is there too much print? If so, it could overwhelm the child. Is the print large enough for the child to see and grasp the meaning of the text? Are there are illustrations to match the storyline or action in order for the child to grasp the meaning of the narrative? Is the language level aimed too high?

The interviewee stressed the importance of involving library assistants, but particularly branch library mangers, in the book selection process. He was aware of the current climate in the library profession whereby many branch libraries are staffed by non qualified staff. He felt that a vital role of professional librarians is to disseminate as much information as possible to staff who often work in isolation in branch library outlets. Being part of the book selection choice process would enable the staff to gain a greater knowledge of the material available for individuals with special needs. When
they are faced with an initial enquiry concerning a particular special need, such as a child who is dyslexic, the branch manager or library assistant would be able to locate resources that will facilitate that particular learning and reading need.

The interviewee was aware that staffing levels and time constraints make the likelihood of branch managers and library assistants attending book selection meetings on a regular basis very difficult. He stressed, however, the need for library authorities to send as many staff as possible on 'insight training courses', which cover the range of special needs and show how some material available in the main stream stock can be used to assist the individual in reading and learning.

REACH has a highly organised method of cataloguing their resources for special needs. At the time of the interview they were using a card cataloguing system which was shortly to be converted to a computerised on-line system. The catalogue card had a grid that denotes the various special needs relating to, for example, hearing loss, sight loss, mental handicap, speech/language problems and physical disability. More than one box is ticked if the resource is suitable for more than one disability. For example, large print, Big books, spoken word (cassettes) would be suitable for a child who has partial sight, but would also be very helpful to a child who is dyslexic, which at the time of the interview would be part of the language/speech catalogue category.

The Centre also marks each book inside the front cover with symbols denoting which special need the book is suitable for, for example, visual loss, hearing loss, physical disability, and language/speech problems. The lowest reading age and interest age is also noted.
7.1.7.9 Publishers of Resources for Dyslexics

The interviewee was asked if there were any particular publishers who produced material suitable for dyslexic children. The following were specifically mentioned:

A & C Black
Hamish Hamilton
Watts

The importance of looking at each book individually at the book selection stage was reiterated because, although most publishers do not specifically target their market to encompass a learning/reading disability, a great deal of material will meet the criteria needed for individuals with special needs, including dyslexia.

7.1.7.10 Layout and Ambience of the Centre

REACH at the time of the interview/survey in May 1995 was based at their venue in Wokingham. One of the first impressions of the Centre was how young and colourful it was. It was quite clear from the ambience of the Centre that a great deal of care and consideration had been made to make visits to the Centre by any child or young person with a special need feel welcome and wanted. For example, the Centre had an extensive range of children's toys and models that were either displayed or made accessible for children to handle or play with. Many of the soft toys were characters which had a disability, for example, a doll with one arm or leg and a character in a wheelchair.

The height of the shelves (totalling four to a bay) were not too tall, therefore, making many of the books accessible to older children and young people who wanted to explore some of the material independently. The resources were very well organised, thus making it easy for people visiting the Centre to identify what types of resources are available for children of all ages with special needs to help them overcome their reading difficulties. An example of this was that picture books for young children are kept separately from picture books aimed for a teenage audience. Spine labelling was
used to indicate which books (and other materials) were especially appropriate for individuals with specific needs, such as dyslexics.

7.1.8 Summary

One of the prime philosophies of REACH is to make the Centre all inclusive for every child or young person who has a special need whether it is because of, for example, a visual or hearing loss, physical disability, language or learning difficulty. It is a unique resource that should be used widely by the library profession.

There is great potential benefit to be realised from use of the Information Services, Training and Publications provided by REACH. There was some doubt that information about whether information about REACH was finding its way to the working level in libraries.

The collection of resources at REACH was very comprehensive with over 8000 items that libraries could include in their lending stock and 2000 items for reference use. The range of resources demonstrated a high degree of creativity through the choice of unusual materials to break down a dyslexic child's fear of books. Choices of user friendly formats (e.g. print size, words to the page, background colour) were identified as important.

Perhaps the most important areas for further exploration arising from the REACH case study were stock selection and cataloguing. All books and other materials should be assessed for their suitability in addressing particular special needs. The book selection meetings are a key time to evaluate how the particular books can be used for special needs, for example, hearing; visual; learning; language; mental; and emotional requirements. The findings should be recorded (perhaps in grid format) to aid retrieval. This can be done on card based systems, but should be especially suitable for computer based systems.
As a final point, the interviewee was asked if he felt that public libraries were doing enough to help individuals with special needs with resource provision. In short his answer was "no". The United Kingdom lags behind other English speaking countries in addressing the needs of dyslexic individuals. He felt that there is hesitation to do more because public libraries think that, if they attempt to address special needs, it is going to cost them a fortune. This need not be the case because 95 per cent of books, tapes and video materials required can be drawn from the main stream stock and are suitable for a range of different needs. What Library authorities need to do is to reassess what is available in their main stream collections and identify items of benefit to users with special needs.

7.2 Survey of Publishers and Resource Providers

7.2.1 Background

The Literature Survey (Chapter Three) revealed that a number of librarians and information professionals, notably in Scandinavian countries, were concerned that very little appeared to be happening in public libraries to facilitate the resource needs of people with dyslexia and that lack of specialist material was part of the problem. Petersen's paper on the Handicapped in Reading and the Public Libraries, presented at the International Federation of Library Associations in Copenhagen in 1979, suggests that publishers were only producing a limited amount of specialist material that could be used in libraries for individuals with "reading handicaps", including dyslexia. Moreover, Petersen stated that reading difficulties due to a "handicap" affect a large percentage of the population and that "it would pay the publishers to make an effort in this field" (Petersen, 1979, p.470).

Marshall's book Managing Library Provision for Handicapped Children" published in 1991 notes that "there is a lack of simple but aged-appropriate material for teenagers and adults with reading difficulties" (Marshall, 1991, p.111). However, Marshall comments further in a later chapter of her book: "In practice publishers and producers of books and related materials all over the world tend to be the disablers in that they
see the market for 'special' books as commercially not viable" (Marshall, 1991, p.56). Marshall expresses similar views to Petersen, when she says that:

Given the figures world-wide for the percentage of the population requiring some form of special attention there is a huge market for ability appropriate and, in the teens and adulthood, for age-appropriate material to fit the abilities (Marshall, 1991, p.56).

All of the library professionals interviewed for the case studies, at REACH and at the various public libraries, said that they felt that there was a shortage of resource materials specifically targeted for the reading needs of people with dyslexia.

Four visits were made between 1992 and 1997 to the Library and Information Show (formerly the Library Resources Exhibition) held annually in Birmingham, and to the International Book Fair held in London, Olympia in 1995. The prime objective of these visits was to ascertain whether any publishers and resource providers were targeting their material to embrace the needs of people with dyslexia. Over the period, there was a consistently disappointing response from all but a handful of publishers. Typically the publishers would state that it was likely that some of their material might be useful for dyslexic individuals, but they were usually unable to make specific recommendations.

It was the larger mainstream publishers who dominated the exhibition and Book Fair. Specialist educational publishers made up only a small proportion of the exhibitors and many of the better known special needs publishers, including those known to deal with dyslexia, such as Ann Arbor, did not attend.

7.2.2 General Findings

There appeared to be only one publisher that specifically identified material in their catalogue for use by practitioners who teach dyslexic pupils, plus one or two additional items that could be used by the dyslexic individuals themselves. This resource provider was LDA. In the 1995 LDA catalogue most of their dyslexia resources were for use by teachers of dyslexic children, for example, *Alpha to Omega* Activity Packs. These consist of activities and exercises, including flashcards and worksheets, that are
specially designed to help children and young people with learning and reading
difficulties, including dyslexia, learn to read, write and spell.

Another resource, *Beat Dyslexia*, mentioned by the Kettering Library case study as
being very helpful for dyslexic people, is also a series of Activity Packs with
photocopiable worksheets and cassettes for use as a teaching tool. *Beat Dyslexia* is a
resource that can be used by the individual working by themselves to learn phonics,
spelling, reading and writing at home at their own pace.

There were several publishers who felt that some of their resource provision would be
beneficial for people with dyslexia, although not described in the catalogues and
promotional material in this way. Given that a good deal of stock selection decisions
must be taken based on catalogues or CD-ROMs, failing to identify useful material by
these means is a considerable problem.

There follows below brief accounts of the type of material that was suggested that
could help the reading and learning needs of dyslexics. Most of the publishers and
resource providers named below were questioned during the visits made to the Library

Collins Educational felt that some of the material in their 1994 catalogue for 'Special
Needs' could be helpful to children with dyslexia. Although not noted in the catalogue
as being useful for this target group, the representative from Collins Educational
suggested that the *Jets Series* of books, which are aimed for younger children, could
be useful because many of the stories are humorous, not too long, and not too difficult
to read. The *Jet* books and *Jumbo Jets*, the latter series a slightly more advanced read,
contain cartoon-type illustrations integrated with the text which can be appealing to
someone who has difficulty with reading.

Hodder & Stoughton, like Collins Educational, had a catalogue pertaining to 'Special
Needs'. The 1994 catalogue listed material that was particularly to help pupils with
literacy problems reach the required standard in core curriculum subjects. Although
most of the material listed in the catalogue was aimed for use in a classroom
environment, the representative from Hodder & Stoughton suggested *Chillers* for use by adults with dyslexia. *Chillers* is a series of five books with illustrations. Each of the books contains two stories that are suspenseful in nature. The books were developed by, and published in co-operation with, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU).

Ulverscroft, who distribute a wide range of abridged and unabridged audio books for adults and children from audio publishers such as BBC Radio Collection, Chivers, HarperCollins Audio, Macmillan Audio and Penguin Audio Books, felt that this material could be used by people with a range of 'special needs' including dyslexia. The extensive 'Stocklist Titles' (1997) aimed for adult and children did not specify which target groups this type of material could benefit. Perhaps the company did not want to limit the market for the material by indicating the special needs aspects.

Observations during the annual visits to the Library and Information Show between 1992 and 1997 were remarkably consistent. There appeared to be very little awareness by the mainstream publishers who exhibited during this time that there was a potential market for meeting the reading and learning needs of dyslexic individuals. Virtually all stands related to publication of printed material were visited and their catalogues were checked. Apart from LDA, no specific references to material published for use by dyslexics was found.

In September 1998 the National Year of Reading began as part of the government's National Literacy Strategy. The aim was to ensure that 80% of eleven year old children in the United Kingdom reach their expected literacy and reading standard for their age in English by the year 2002 (Howarth, 1999, p.142). The aim of the National Year of Reading was not just to target children, but also to reach out to individuals of all ages. To make progress on a national scale, a variety of organisations and commercial enterprises need to make a commitment to the programme. Creation of a common theme and shared goals lies behind the publicity and governmental support. Such cooperation is not always easy, especially for companies that are largely driven by
commercial considerations. Kate Wilson of Macmillan Publishers noted that:

Many of the ideals of the Year pose serious challenges for publishing houses like Macmillan. It is used to working commercially and competitively, rather than co-operatively. It is used to short-term, not long-term objectives (National Literacy Trust, 1998, p.19).

She goes on to cite an example of promoting poetry readings in supermarkets. This indicates that the thrust is seen as publicity and public relations, rather than fundamental changes to a publisher's range of material or even highlighting resources that could benefit people with reading problems.

Elaine McQuade of Penguin recognised the issue of identifying appropriate resources for certain groups such as reluctant readers. She notes that there are over 7000 children's books published each year and therefore there is bound to be good material to meet most needs. "The problem for professionals promoting literacy is to find the right book among all the thousands out there" (National Literacy Trust, 1998, p.19). Puffin addresses this issue to a degree by employing an independent expert to create lists of material for various groups, including boys, the gifted as well as reluctant readers.

The National Year of Reading could be seen as an opportunity for publishers and resource providers to take a more proactive role in encouraging reading and literacy by providing innovative and accessible reading material for people with 'special needs' including dyslexia.

7.2.3 Interviews with Publishers

In November and December 1998, shortly after the commencement of the National Year of Reading, ten publishers were contacted by telephone to ask if they targeted any of their material specifically for use of by people with dyslexia. A short list of questions had been prepared to form the basis of the telephone interview (appendix 5). The prelude to the telephone interviews was to mention the National Year of Reading as being a time when many publishers were supporting the government's initiative to
encourage literacy and the love of reading. Dyslexia was mentioned in the context that the ethos of the National Year of Reading was to especially reach out to the people who found reading difficult, including individuals with dyslexia.

Some publishers contacted for the telephone interview were selected because they had been mentioned by library authorities in the questionnaire responses as having useful resources for dyslexic individuals. Other publishers had been identified as being helpful for 'specialist' resources through the various case studies, such as Ealing, Richmond, REACH and through comments made by individuals in Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities (Chapter Four).

LDA and Collins Educational were contacted by telephone in 1998. Initial information about what they provided for dyslexic individuals had been obtained in 1994 and the new contact was made to track the changes over the period. All the publishers spoken to by telephone were also asked to send a copy of their current catalogues. Apart from Dorling Kindersley, all the other publishing houses sent a copy of their catalogue or stock lists.

The publishers that were contacted were:

ANN ARBOR
BARRINGTON STOKE
CHIVERS
COLLINS EDUCATIONAL
DORLING KINDERSLEY
EGMONT CHILDREN'S BOOKS (Heinemann Young Books; Methuen Young Books; Mammoth; Hamlyn Young Books are part of this publishing house)
LDA
LONGMAN
ULVERSCROFT Large Print Books
WINSLOW PRESS

Of the ten publishers contacted, three said that they specifically publish material targeted for use of by dyslexic individuals themselves. The publishers concerned were Ann Arbor; Barrington Stoke; and LDA. Winslow Press answered that they provide books about the subject of dyslexia, which are predominantly targeted at teachers, carers and parents of people with dyslexia.
Three publishers, Collins Educational; Dorling Kindersley and Edmont Children's Books commented that although they did not specifically target any of their resources for dyslexic individuals themselves, they felt that there would be some material that would be helpful to them.

Ulverscroft Large Print Books and Longman answered that they were not sure whether any of their material would help people who are dyslexic. Chivers replied that did not supply any books or other material that would be of use to individuals with dyslexia.

The three publishers (Ann Arbor, Barrington Stoke and LDA) who answered yes to supplying resources for dyslexic individuals are all 'specialist' publishers dealing with 'special needs'. Ann Arbor and Barrington Stoke specialise in reading material for children and young people with dyslexia. LDA, as identified in the public library case studies, produce a range of resources targeting a wide range of 'special needs' including material for dyslexic children and young people.

The respondents who answered the questions on behalf of the specialist publishers had a sound knowledge of the material that their company provided. This was in distinct contrast to the less knowledgeable response obtained, with a couple of exceptions, from the mainstream publishers. This was not too surprising given the unusual request for information about a specialised subject and the large range that the generalist publishers offered. More could have been done, however, to seek information from colleagues or from an electronic database. This lack of informed response was similar to the experience reported by various librarians in the case studies who found it difficult to obtain material for their collections from main stream publishers.
7.2.4 Comments from the Specialist Publishers

Ann Arbor Publishers predominantly target their material towards 'special needs' practitioners, including teachers of dyslexics. The spokesperson at Ann Arbor said that a great deal of the material they provide is highly specialist and, therefore, is typically more suitable for the needs of children and young people with special educational needs in a classroom environment. However, they do have a range of high-interest, low-reading ability books called High Noon Books that could be used in public libraries for use by dyslexic individuals. There are approximately 190 novels that are part of the High Noon Books, written for individuals aged nine to eighteen. The 1997-8 catalogue describes these high-interest, low-reading ability books as being exciting stories that engage and hold the interest. The books are presented with short chapters, few characters and one-plot stories so that the reader does not get easily confused or has to unravel a convoluted storyline.

Ann Arbor liaise with the British Dyslexia Association to seek advice concerning the books they provide for 'special needs' students including people with dyslexia. The resources that Ann Arbor provides are books only. Their prime objective is to provide material in print form that is presented straightforwardly with a simplified vocabulary that makes the book easy and enjoyable to read. To encourage individuals, who have difficulty in accessing the written word to learn to read, it is beneficial to produce texts that are not overwhelming. Moreover, the books are written "with purposeful repetition of the most frequently used English words - words which are not phonetic and need to be learned by sight recognition" (Ann Arbor, 1997, p.19). In each of the books there are five black and white drawings that illustrate the action of the storyline.

The High Noon Books are presented in various series. For example, there are the Tom and Ricky Mystery Series written by Bob Wright. There are nine sets to this series and within each set, there are five different books to read. The reader can progress to the next set when his or her confidence increases. With 'specialist' material of this nature, it would be very important that the librarian actually looked at the books to evaluate
them and to establish whether they were suitable for a public library use as opposed to a "special needs" classroom environment.

Anecdotal comments regarding 'specialist' literacy material made during the course of the research project indicated that often 'literacy' material can be rather off-putting in its appearance as well as the story content being rather boring or mundane. They clearly come across as a teaching tool rather than a book to be accessed for pleasure. The Ann Arbor catalogue describes the covers of *High Noon Books* as either two or four colours, which could suggest that the two colour covers were rather drab. The Ealing Library case study indicated that it was the more colourful and dynamic *high-interest, low-reading ability* materials produced by mainstream publishers that were most sought after, because they appeared from the front cover to be "normal" books.

The Ann Arbor catalogue promoting their 'special needs' books was in black and white. To describe the appearance of the books, it relied on words rather than images. In the case of the *High Noon Books*, although some information was given about the appearance of the books, for example, their size and how many colours were used in the front cover design, it was still quite difficult to imagine what the books actually looked like. Small publishers are probably unable to match the publicity expenditure of the major companies, which typically produce high quality full colour catalogues. The catalogue makes it clear that a full range of books that Ann Arbor Publishers produce is available to those working with special needs' children and adults. These books are permanently displayed in a hotel venue in Belford, Northumberland. Orders for books can be placed by completing an order form on the back of the catalogue.

The publisher Barrington Stoke was started in 1998. Like Ann Arbor Publishers, it is a 'specialist' publisher that produces material for children who are reluctant readers or who find difficulty reading fiction for enjoyment. The first six books that were produced when the company was launched were aimed specifically for dyslexic children. These books are not part of a series, but are separate books written by well known children's authors, for example, Vivian French, Mary Hoffman, Colin Dowland and Michael Morpurgo. Titles of the six books are *Kick Back, Billy the Squid, The*
Gingerbread House, Virtual Friend, Wartman and Screw Loose. The titles are lively and the front covers of the books are illustrated in a colourful and eye catching way.

Patience Thomson started Barrington Stoke. Before starting the company she had previously been the Head teacher of Fairley House (a school for dyslexic pupils). The design and format of the first six books published by Barrington Stoke were produced with the insight and experience of a practitioner who had first hand knowledge of the type of reading material that will help a dyslexic individual learn and enjoy reading.

The presentation of these books has been very carefully considered to maximise accessibility and pleasure for the young dyslexic reader. The text is printed on cream paper so that dyslexic individual can see the print clearly. The text of the story is in a larger than usual typefaces in order for the reader to see each word clearly and so that there are not too many words to the lines on the page. The books have short chapters and frequent paragraph breaks so that the pages are not overwhelmed by the text. All of the books have illustrations on nearly every page that link to the events of the story line.

As Barrington Stoke was only launched in 1998, the catalogue that was received was not substantial. However, it was very noticeable was that in addition to the six titles that were predominantly targeting the reading needs of young people with dyslexia, there were a further eighteen titles with the focus on 'reluctant readers'. The description in the catalogue was not dissimilar to the way the first six books had been promoted in Dyslexia Contact, which described them at "being aimed for dyslexic readers". The additional titles have also been printed on cream paper which they claim "is proven to be more restful than stark black on white", with frequent paragraph breaks and short chapters. Although the catalogue did not specifically state that these
books would be suitable for dyslexic readers, they could embrace the needs of this user group as well as:

children who have passed the stage of reading graded material, but are reluctant or unable to read fiction for pleasure. The contents reflect the interests of readers of 8 to 13 years, but the texts assume a reading age of 8 plus if they are to be read independently by the child (Barrington Stoke, 1999, p.1).

The catalogue itself was printed with black text on yellow paper. This monochrome presentation does not show that the front covers of the books that they are promoting in the catalogue are highly coloured as established by coloured pictures of the books in the September 1998 edition of Dyslexia Contact. Although the catalogue gives a great deal of detail about the books, including a brief synopsis of the story line and a sample of the font size of the text, it does not indicate that the front covers of the books are illustrated in colour by professional illustrators.

Barrington Stoke commissioned a number of popular, well known children's authors to write these 'special' books. Some of these authors already have achieved popularity through their books that have appeared in children's sections of public libraries. Specially commissioned authors for the 'Books for reluctant readers' included Hazel Townson, Terrance Dicks, Jeremy Strong, and Tony Bradman. The catalogue predominantly targets these books for consideration and selection by the Special Educational Teacher, Head of English, School librarian. There was no mention at all of public libraries or children's librarians in the public library Sector. This was surprising and disappointing especially since one of the writers of the new titles was Theresa Breslin who is an author and community librarian in Scotland. Breslin's book Whispers in the Graveyard about a boy with dyslexia who is the hero of the story winner of the Carnegie Medal in 1995. The targeting of the educational community as the key users of material for people with dyslexia, rather than public libraries, is consistent with the findings from the dyslexia collection case studies.

The Barrington Stoke catalogue outlines various incentives to encourage reluctant readers, which include the 'Barrington Stoke Club', Feedback Packs, and the Barrington Stoke Website. These incentives aim to gain insights into what children
think about the books and to become "special advisors" to the company. This invitation to children to be critics of the Barrington Stoke material in order for the publishing company to strive to make "constant improvements to the readability of the books" is admirable. Adults are also invited to visit a special section on the Barrington Stoke Website to gain information, news and advice to encourage reluctant readers to enjoy books.

The Barrington Stoke catalogue reveals that this small publishing company is attempting to expand into a 'specialist' market that has been neglected by many successful mainstream publishers. The number of popular and well respected authors who have written books especially for this new publishing company signifies their support to the venture which they view as meaningful.

Barrington Stoke does not provide media other than the books for reluctant readers. Book orders can be placed by using an order form inside the catalogue. The distributor of the books is Macmillan Direct which indicates an attempt to reach a wider market via a mainstream distributor. However, Barrington Stoke do not send their books out on approval. This would make it difficult for public libraries to evaluate whether the material is suitable for their use, for example to determine how durable the book would be for multiple loan purposes.

LDA has been established for over twenty-five years. The multimedia resources they provide are predominantly for use by teachers in a classroom environment to assist young children at primary school level or children who have 'special needs'. LDA provide specific resources for the teachers of the dyslexic as well as material that can be used by the dyslexic pupil in school or at home. Like Ann Arbor and Barrington Stoke, LDA work in conjunction with external organisations such as the British Dyslexia Association and the Dyslexia Institute. The Dyslexia Institute is co-publisher "of a range of teaching resources, which are valuable to the specialist teacher of dyslexic pupils and non-specialists alike" (LDA, 1999, p.64)

The LDA catalogue was one of the few that had dyslexia in their index. It had pages devoted to resources such as 'Dyslexia Assessment' aids, Alpha to Omega Activity
Packs, and *Units of Sound* (an audio/ literacy programme for dyslexics with cassettes and pupil book). Compared with the LDA catalogue obtained in 1994, it was clear from the 1999 Primary and Special Needs catalogue that LDA has kept abreast of the dynamics of information technology by adding CD-ROM material for use by dyslexic individuals, including adults. For example, the *Units of Sound* is also obtainable on CD-ROM and is called *Units of Sound Multimedia*. This resource is "for students from 9 years of age to adults" (LDA, 1999, p.65). It can be inferred from the word "student" that this resource is seen by LDA as being more appropriate in an educational environment. However, the questionnaire responses indicated that many authorities have CD-ROM capability. In the Kettering Library case study, there was a CD-ROM workstation available in the library to access the software. Moreover, this resource would be particularly useful as a resource in Open for Learning Centres, many of which operate in public libraries.

*Beat Dyslexia Activity Packs*, which are a series of "multi-sensory literacy programmes for all dyslexic pupils" could be used in public libraries. This material was in the 1994 LDA catalogue and the 1999 edition indicates that more of this series has been added. The findings of the Kettering Library case study revealed that CD-ROM was very popular in their 'specialist' collection targeting dyslexic individuals. Although *Beat Dyslexia Activity Packs* are primarily promoted in the catalogue as being an educational tool for classroom use, it is possible to have this material in a public library so that dyslexic individuals can borrow it, take it home and learn at their own pace. Although this material is made up of audio cassettes with a book containing worksheets, Kettering Library found that the worksheets had not been damaged whilst on loan.

On close examination of the LDA catalogue, apart from the items mentioned above, most of the material targeting dyslexic individuals would be more suited for use in a classroom rather than for loan. Many multimedia resources aimed for dyslexic children are supplied with 'flash cards' or 'phonic practice cards', which could easily be lost or damaged.
LDA also produce a range of Hi-Lo books targeted at individuals who are 'reluctant readers'. Although the Hi-Lo material is not indexed in the catalogue as being specifically for use by dyslexics, the books are intended to encourage individuals learn to enjoy the experience of accessing a book for pleasure. Series of Hi-Lo books include First Base (interest level 9 plus), Meanreads (interest level 10 plus) and Double Fastbacks (interest level 11 plus). Some of the high interest - low reading age material, for example, the Five Minute Thrillers also have a separate audio cassette of the story read by well know actors. However, these items are not packaged together but must be bought separately. This particular series, compared to the others, appeared rather drab. By contrast, most of the books in the various series mentioned previously had lively titles and colourful front covers with more popular culture appeal, for example, horror or romance genres.

All the resources in the LDA catalogue can be obtained directly from the LDA's address in Cambridge. Moreover, they operate on a thirty days sale or return basis. Being able to evaluate resources for use by a targeted user group such as dyslexic individuals is an important opportunity for the librarian to ensure that the material is suitable.

The LDA spokesperson during the telephone interview said that much of the material that the LDA produces is particularly geared towards the literacy needs of primary age children and young people with 'special needs'. The focus of the 1999 resources is towards helping teachers prepare for and implement both the Literacy and Numeracy Hours within schools. Moreover, he commented that the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 will also influence the way that material will progress in the future so that people with 'special needs' can gain access to a wider range of resources.

The spokesperson for Collins Educational said that they do not specifically target any of their resources for use by people with dyslexia. She was aware that certain material that they supply for school libraries can be used for dyslexic children. She mentioned in particular the Jumbo Jets/Colour Jets series that contain lively and comic illustrations and large print. This comment was consistent with the suggestion made by Collins Educational in 1994 at the Library and Information Show that the Jets books are
suitable for use by dyslexic children. The spokesperson for Collins Educational felt that because they provide a wide breadth of multimedia resources, fiction and non fiction books for children and young adults, as well as audio and CD material, there would be something that would be useful for people with dyslexia. The Editors of Collins Educational consult many organisations, including the Adult Dyslexia Association, for advice regarding some of their 'Special Needs' provision.

Collins Educational offers free inspection/approval copies service in order for teachers and school librarians to evaluate the material. As the material produced by Collins Educational is principally seen as targeting schools and colleges, it was not indicated by the spokesperson or in the catalogues whether the free approval service would apply to public libraries.

Dorling Kindersley, like Collins Educational, felt that although they do not promote any of their multi-media resources for use specifically for dyslexic individuals, there would be some material that would be beneficial to them. The Eyewitness series of non-fiction books was cited as possibly helpful to dyslexic people because they are highly illustrated with drawings, graphics and photographs, arranged to visually lead the reader to the text on the page. Unfortunately, the spokesperson who participated in the telephone interview was unable to answer many of the questions asked. Although a catalogue was requested at the time of the telephone interview it was not received.

The spokesperson for Edmont children's Books said that as far as she was aware there was no material supplied by them that was specifically targeting children with dyslexia. Since they produce a wide range of material for children of all ages and reading levels, there was possibly material that would be useful for dyslexic individuals, but she was not sure of which items to suggest. A 'Complete Stocklist and New Titles' for May - December 1998 was sent. There was a section relating to 'Special Needs - School', but only eight titles were listed for this client group. Theresa Breslin's *Whispers in the Graveyard* (about a dyslexic boy) was listed which would suggest that some books were about characters with particular 'disabilities' which would also appeal to people with special needs. Since Edmont sent a Stocklist rather than a catalogue, it was
difficult to tell if any of the resources listed would be suitable for children with dyslexia.

7.2.5 Information Technology Providers

Providers of Information technology based resources appear to be more proactive than traditional publishing houses when it comes to marketing their range to people with dyslexia, either directly or via public libraries. One notable example of this tendency was the mailing produced in support of the Libtech International 99 exhibition by iANSYST, a company which specialises in training products with a special emphasis on dyslexia. iANSYST was founded in early 1983 to supply software for training and education. Their Dyslectech products include Text-to-Speech Synthesis, Speech-to-Text Dictation, sound devices, electronic dictionaries, scanners, typing programs, other software products and complete computers to meet the needs of dyslexic people.

The mailing, sent by name to librarians in charge of major public libraries, covered a range of products including ones that the company felt could be beneficial to libraries in serving dyslexic users. The specific page covering these products was a direct download of that page from their website, which opens by asking if the librarians are ready to help people with disabilities, especially in light of the Disability Discrimination Act. The printed web page lists various text to speech and text scanning software products, such as textHELP and Kurzweil 3000. It also mentions innovative products such as Genie CCTV that allows a dyslexic reader to magnify text and easily change background colours to aid reading and comprehension. Another device with potential for use in a library context was a reading pen that scans words, reads them aloud and provides a dictionary definition.
The products in the mailing give food for thought for innovations that could be added to libraries as they move more into information technology. These capabilities could also be coupled with requirements outlined by Pottage (1997) to improve the way that library catalogues and database searches work. Perhaps even more significant is the awareness shown by iANSYST of the needs of dyslexics and the potential role of libraries in providing solutions for them. This is in considerable contrast to the relative lack of awareness of these issues shown by conventional book publishers.

7.2.6 Summary and Conclusion

Specialist publishers are aware of the opportunity and are attempting to provide material for dyslexic people and in particular, children and young people. However, material is targeted more specifically for an educational market rather than for the public library environment. From the description in the catalogues and from case studies findings, some specialist material, for example from Ann Arbor, could have a rather limited appeal. The books can look too much like adult literacy material. LDA is attempting to do more, but the range is still limited and the multimedia material is more useful in a primary or 'special needs' classroom environment. Barrington Stokes is on the right track with newly commissioned material, but needs to target a wider market, i.e. public libraries and not just schools and school libraries. Not having an approval arrangement makes it difficult for libraries to evaluate their material.

None of the publishers, in spite of a lead in to the National Year of Reading, mentioned what initiatives that they had undertaken to embrace this event. LDA appeared more politically aware with the knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act and implications for 'special needs'. Suggestions of what might be helpful to dyslexics from the mainstream publishers appeared to be based on anecdotal experience, but their comments and suggestions were useful. Collins Educational was consistent over time in what they recommended, i.e. *Jets* series of books. It is somewhat difficult to understand why they cannot include mention of dyslexia with, for example, *high interest / low reading age* books, as well as for material targeting reluctant readers. Many dyslexics are able to read and proper presentation of books
helps them to read for pleasure. Books that meet these criteria (larger print, fewer words to the line) could easily be noted in catalogues.

Ulverscroft Large Print Books and Chivers produce material such as large print books and talking books, that was consistently identified as helpful in accessing the written word through the various case studies and the comments from dyslexic individuals. In the course of the telephone interviews this point was made to the respective respondents, but in both cases the spokesperson was unaware that this material is helpful to dyslexic individuals.

The forward looking approach adopted by information technology product providers, such as iANSYST, which directly addressed the dyslexic community and the library sector, stands in considerable contrast to the traditional book publishers who have generally failed to make these linkages. Multimedia provision in libraries has grown throughout the 1990s and looks likely to expand much further through new government backed initiatives. Information technology providers are showing signs that they mean to take full advantage of the commercial opportunities.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

8.1 Introduction

The prime aim of the research undertaken was to ascertain to what extent public library authorities are meeting the resource needs of the dyslexic community. Although information about the subject of dyslexia is recognised as a valid resource requirement for dyslexic individuals and other people who work on their behalf, this was a secondary consideration in this thesis. The main thrust was to examine how well public libraries were providing resources for use by dyslexic individuals themselves.

A number of core research questions were proposed and investigated. Findings included:

- Dyslexia is a real condition and dyslexic individuals have additional obstacles beyond those faced by other library users.

- Helping potential users to overcome obstacles to effective use of libraries is a valid task of the public library service.

- In general, public libraries are not organising and promoting resources for dyslexic individuals in a way that helps them to overcome the obstacles limiting library use.

- Information about dyslexia is commonly held in public libraries, but few library authorities are doing much to address specifically the wider resource needs (e.g. fiction, non fiction, multimedia) of dyslexic individuals.

- Some library authorities are doing more than others, and it is useful to study in greater detail what is being done in the recognised centres of good practice.

- The library profession and major bodies dealing with dyslexia are not providing proactive leadership in the area of resource provision for people with dyslexia.

During the course of the research, a number of key issues were raised. These are discussed briefly in this chapter and, where possible, lessons learned are noted. Finally, some points are suggested in terms of good practice for the way ahead.
Existence of Dyslexia and Obstacles Faced by Dyslexic Individuals

The findings of the literature survey confirmed the existence of dyslexia. The combination of symptoms that are indicative of this condition have been recognised and charted, particularly by the medical professional literature, for over a hundred years. In 1896 Morgan diagnosed a mentally bright fourteen year old boy who had great difficulty with reading and spelling to be suffering from the condition known a century ago as "word-blindness" (Morgan, 1896). This term was subsequently used by the medical profession to describe people who had serious difficulty with the written word.

As revealed in the survey of the literature (Chapter Three), there have been many attempts to define precisely what the term dyslexia means. The terminology used to describe the symptoms associated with dyslexia appears to have become less well defined since disciplines in the social sciences, such as education and educational psychology, have studied and taken a more active interest in this condition.

It has been estimated that dyslexia affects approximately 10 per cent of the population (Hornsby, 1984). The condition of dyslexia has been described as a "syndrome" (Hicks & Murgatroyd, 1985) with a wide range of symptoms that can include difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, sequencing and poor memory recall and physical coordination. These obstacles can hinder the individual's ability to deal with written language and complex environments (Augur, 1986).

The Case Study of the Parent with Two Dyslexic Children (Chapter Four) highlighted the problems and frustrations experienced when parents attempt to get 'specialist' remedial help for their dyslexic children from their local educational authority. The literature survey revealed that there is still reluctance from some educational authorities to use the term 'dyslexia', preferring the blanket term 'specific learning difficulties' or 'special educational needs'. This scepticism has been a barrier to progress in the educational environment and can also be seen to affect libraries, which are
controlled by the same local authorities. The resistance to the use of the specific term 'dyslexia' may not just reflect the debate about what exactly dyslexia is or whether it exists, but perhaps also relates to the requirement that if a child is diagnosed as being dyslexic, those pupils must have 'specialist' tuition.

One of the prevailing obstacles identified by parents of dyslexic children was that they found that libraries were not providing material that was in a suitable format for their children to read. Dyslexic individuals can experience reading difficulties with certain formats of printed material. The findings from the interview/survey carried out with the information officer at REACH (Chapter Seven) indicated that children and young people can have problems with accessing the written word if the book, for example, contains complex vocabulary, small print, too many words on a line and lack of paragraphing. Much printed material consists of black print on white pages. This format has been cited as presenting difficulties for people with dyslexia because they find that the glare from the white background can prevent them from seeing the words clearly on the page. Yellow paper or coloured overlays are sometimes helpful in overcoming this particular problem.

Libraries are complex environments with huge amounts of resources, laid out in a specific pattern so that resources can be accessed and retrieved by people who can follow the sequences of that organisation. Examples from Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities (Chapter Four) revealed that some adults, who use libraries, find the Dewey classification scheme bewildering and intimidating because they do not have numeric and/or sequencing skills. Several adults also mentioned the problems that they encountered when attempting to navigate themselves around the library because they find the layout of the library is not clearly signposted. Other comments indicated that computerised, on-line public access catalogues (OPAC) are of limited use for dyslexic individuals if they have difficulty with spelling because the systems do not have a 'spell check' facility to cope with minor spelling errors.
8.3 Responsibilities of Public Libraries in Resource Provision

Public libraries have a long and honourable tradition of service to the community. They are a true public service that have a commitment to deliver benefits to anyone who wishes to make use of them (Kinnell & Sturgis, 1996). There is an ethos of self help, or in the more recent terminology, 'lifelong learning' (Shepherd, 1998). The important point here being that education need not stop at the end of formal schooling. Part of the public library tradition is to help individuals who, for one reason or another, did not obtain full benefit from formal education.

The Library Association in its *Guidance notes on the Code of Professional Conduct* makes clear that the primary responsibility of the professional librarian is towards the client:

> Members' primary duty when acting in the capacity of librarian is to their clients, i.e. the persons or groups of persons for whose requirements and use are intended the resources and services which the members are engaged to provide. In all professional considerations, the interests of the clients within their prescribed or legitimate requirements take precedence over all other interests (Library Association, 1986, p.8).

There are also specific legal obligations on public library authorities such as the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964*, which places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive library service which also meets the special requirements of its users and potential users. Furthermore, authorities are supposed to encourage full use of the service. The guidelines of the Library Association, as expressed in their various leaflets, for example, *Library Services for Young People with Disabilities and Special Needs* (LA, 1994) confirms their commitment to meet their obligations through increasing the awareness of their staff. For a service to be considered full and comprehensive as well as meeting the special needs of its users, it cannot be limited to users without handicaps, either physical or mental. The *Disability Discrimination Act*,
1995 makes this obligation clear. The Act that began its implementation in December 1996 has implications for public library services because the Act stipulates that:

all providers of goods, facilities or services, whether paid for or free of charge, are obliged, in so far as it is reasonable, to provide a service of equivalent standard and on equivalent terms to that offered to people without a disability (Library Association, 1997, p.2).

Furthermore, as shown in the section on Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities (Chapter Four) there is a growing awareness of the existence of the Disability Discrimination Act amongst dyslexics and a determination to use it to force libraries to take action.

It is clear that by long-standing tradition and practice in the library profession, the written policy statements of many local authorities, and the force of law governing libraries and treatment of people with disabilities, public libraries should be addressing the obstacles facing the dyslexic communities.

8.4 Provision of Resources for Dyslexic Individuals in England and Wales

The questionnaire sent to 152 library authorities in England and Wales, elicited a high level of response (114 replies or approximately 75 per cent) indicating considerable interest in the subject of dyslexia resource provision. However, the quantitative data from the questionnaire revealed that the level of activity in support of people with dyslexia was very modest. Only about a sixth of the authorities responding claimed to have policy statements on special needs in general, and even fewer (a total of 7) claimed that their policies directly covered dyslexia. Study of the policy documents provided, showed that many of the policies only covered dyslexia by inference and in no case was dyslexia specifically mentioned. Reluctance to use the term was almost universal amongst library authorities. Less than a seventh of the authorities claimed to have concentrated special collections. Of the more than 60 per cent of respondents who claimed to have dispersed collections, many indicated through additional comments that what they really meant was they would try to satisfy the needs of dyslexic individuals by using their mainstream materials.
Study of the qualitative data, such as the comments page and the additional documents submitted with questionnaire responses, confirmed that, with a few notable exceptions, little was being done to address the needs of dyslexic individuals. A number of respondents reported that the questionnaire had raised their awareness of the issue and that they were interested in ways of addressing the issue, but were uncertain about how to do it. Policy statements on special needs mostly addressed ways of overcoming physical disabilities, such as hearing loss, visual impairment and wheelchair access to libraries and other public buildings.

Several authorities reported that they were in the process of drafting new policy statements, and that they would consider how to include the issue of dyslexia resource provision. These intentions were positive, but were coupled with awareness that current provision was not adequate. Many respondents mentioned the difficulty of library staff to identifying dyslexic individuals as a barrier to planning and delivering an adequate service for them. Although 70 per cent claimed that they were providing some resources for dyslexics, many qualified that statement by noting that, given the number of people with dyslexia in the community at large, it was almost inevitable that people with dyslexia used the resources of their libraries.

Only a handful of authorities (about six per cent) reported that they had specific budget allocations for special needs collections, which tended to be small with somewhere between a dozen and two hundred items.

On the positive side, virtually all of the respondents reported that they had material about the subject of dyslexia in either their lending or reference collections. They also typically have standard reference works such as the Directory of British Associations, which could be used to obtain contact details for the British Dyslexia Association and the Dyslexia Institute. Only 7 authorities, out of the 114 responding, claimed to have copies of the core journal for dyslexic community, Dyslexia Contact. This is a telling point, since availability of this journal would indicate an active awareness of the condition, compared with the expected stocking of standard works such as the Directory of British Associations.
The findings from the questionnaire responses directly address the key question as to whether public libraries are providing an adequate level of resources for dyslexic individuals. The quantitative evidence clearly indicates that there has been little conscious attempt on a national scale to address this need. The qualitative information is also clear on this point with virtually all respondents indicating, either directly or indirectly, the need for further action in this area. It is interesting to note that not a single comment was received that disputed the existence of dyslexia as a distinct condition.

8.5 Activities in the Centres of Good Practice

Research through the professional literature, the questionnaire sent to over 150 library authorities, and informal networking with librarians revealed that only a handful of authorities were actively addressing the needs of the dyslexic community. Almost all of these collections, except for those in Northamptonshire, were started through close involvement of the local dyslexia association. In all cases the local authorities and the librarians involved responded positively to the challenge through allocation of space, staff time and in some cases matching funding for the initial establishment of the collections or their continuing support. The funding provided was usually small, typically a few hundred pounds up to about £2000, including contributions from the local dyslexia association.

In general, the collections are relatively small and tend to be based around a core of material about dyslexia, gathered in one location. Some of the collections were limited to information provision about the subject and local information about where to obtain help and further information. Other collections attempted to address the wider needs of dyslexic individuals by providing a variety of other materials, either from other special needs collections used by people with visual impairment (for example, large print books, book and cassette packs) or from their mainstream collections. CD-ROM material was also well used but usually limited in terms of items available. Positive professional librarianship was much in evidence when it came to seeking new materials
that might be useful for the collections. In a few cases these materials were obtained especially for the dyslexia collection, but more typically they served a variety of uses and were rotated from other parts of the library.

Librarians managing the specialist collections were aware of certain types of material that might be suitable for dyslexic users (picture books, high/low books etc), but were not generally prescriptive about which types of materials would be suitable. The widest possible choice was usually sought, giving the individual the opportunity to sample across a wide range. This approach was in line with modern multi-sensory teaching methods, often employed by specialist teachers.

Despite the typically small scale of the operations, most of the special collections were believed to be successful in improving the delivery of service to the dyslexic community and in raising staff and public awareness of the condition. A number of problem areas were identified, including the relative lack of newly published specialist material, which tended to cause a loss of momentum a year or two after the collection was established.

8.6 Role of the Library Profession, Academics and Key Dyslexia Organisations

In the course of the survey of relevant literature, it became increasingly obvious that very little had been published in the library profession literature (for example, the Library Association Record and the Public Library Journal) on how libraries should deal with this condition. Other than the brief but useful reference to the special collection at Ealing, a passing mention of Theresa Breslin as a community librarian and author of a book about a boy with dyslexia (LA, 1995) and very recently some useful material by Ted Pottage on the use of information technology in libraries to overcome problems faced by dyslexics (Pottage, 1997), there was next to nothing to be found via United Kingdom on-line searches. A few references from outside of the U.K. were noted, but several of these were rather old. Some professional advice could be gleaned from books and articles addressing library provision for other handicaps, but there was little sign of the library profession giving a positive lead to its members in this area,
other than obliquely in the context of preparations for the impact of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Viewed from the perspective of the dyslexia organisations, the role of libraries was seen to be limited largely to providing information about the subject. Local dyslexia associations initiated many of the special collections, but they tended to prescribe the material, mostly about the subject of dyslexia. As noted in the case studies, the British Dyslexia Association and similar organisations were not helpful when it came to recommending resources for the use by dyslexic individuals. This may have arisen from lack of understanding of the full potential of libraries. This situation may be improving particularly with increased focus on information technology for libraries, but through most of the period of this study, the key dyslexia organisations were not particularly interested in the role of libraries regarding provision of resources for dyslexics. It also cannot be denied, however, that there are dedicated people associated with the BDA who, once they understood the direction of this research, facilitated linkage to the dyslexic community through the Internet chat group, for example.

8.7 Issues Raised in Course of the Research

In the course of the research, certain themes and debates arose repeatedly. These may not always have been the core questions posed at the beginning of the thesis, but they are an important element of the overall findings.

8.7.1 Visibility versus Discretion

Public libraries at a basic level attempt to address the needs of people with hearing and sight loss by providing appropriate resources such as talking books and large print material. It was observed during the collection surveys that talking book and large print material targeting this client group were arranged in dedicated collections so that they would be readily apparent to individuals who wished to access them. Moreover, as the dedicated collections are separate and visible, the library staff are aware of their
location and can either guide disabled users to the precise location of the resources or, if appropriate, make a selection on their behalf from the stock available.

One of the findings from the case studies relating to public libraries that provide targeted dedicated collections for dyslexic individuals themselves was the consideration of where to locate the material, how visible or discreet it should be and what to name the collection.

The case studies (Chapter Six) revealed that the libraries that had collections specifically about the subject of dyslexia to provide information to the wider dyslexia communities, for example, parents, teachers and carers, had located their collections near the 'Child and Parent' collection in the children's library or close to the children's section. The local dyslexia association initiated all the collections about the subject of dyslexia. The ethos of the local dyslexia association follows closely that of the British Dyslexia Association's philosophy in that they want to disseminate as widely as possible the problems that children with dyslexia encounter and particularly in an educational context. Having a collection in the children's section of the library close to the 'Child and Parent' collection is useful because this is a logical starting point for a parent in search of information about their children.

Public libraries that had dedicated collections that targeted the specific resource needs of the dyslexic individuals themselves appear to have undergone a process of deliberation about where to locate the collection and how to label it. This aspect was, to some extent, encountered even when the materials were specifically aimed at children and suitably located in the children's section of the library.

One of the significant issues to be resolved appeared to be whether or not to locate the collection in a visible or discreet way. From anecdotal comments made during the course of the research it became clear there is ambivalence from the dyslexic community concerning how the condition of dyslexia in general should be approached. On one hand, people with dyslexia, in particular some adults with dyslexia, feel that their condition needs to be known and labelled in order for their requirements to be
On the other hand, there appears to be reluctance from some people with dyslexia to declare publicly their condition or to have noted by others.

In the case of collections that are located visibly and in a prominent position in the library targeting children with dyslexia, this quandary could also apply. Parents with dyslexic children may find a dedicated visible collection helpful, especially if they are selecting material on behalf of their children in order for them to improve their reading skills. As sequencing and co-ordination skills can be a problem for dyslexic individuals, a visible dedicated collection can help them locate resources targeting their needs immediately. However, there is the reverse problem in that some young people (and adults) with dyslexia would not want to be embarrassed by being seen using the collection. To attempt to overcome this predicament is not an easy one. If the decision is made to provide a more discreet collection that does not stand out too obviously from the mainstream stock this could create problems for dyslexics who do not locate things easily.

The naming of a 'special' collection, whether it is targeting the needs specifically of children and/or adults with dyslexia, can also present a similar problem to that encountered when considering whether to have a highly visible or discreet collection. The majority of the public libraries that have 'special' collections targeting the needs of dyslexic individuals chose to name the collection. It was interesting to note that all the different authorities with a named collection called them 'Wordwise'. The name appears to have originated either from Richmond-upon-Thames or Kent County Council. The choice to name the collections 'Wordwise' demonstrates sensitivity towards the dyslexic communities because it conveys a positive image of wanting to learn the written word and does not carry the stigma sometimes allied with materials relating to literacy problems.

Weston Favell and Kettering libraries (Northamptonshire) consciously chose not to name their collections. The rationale for this decision was to minimise embarrassment and possible stigma to those who made use of the collection. Although the collection at Weston Favell was targeting children, the collection was deliberately placed between the children's and adult section so that nobody would feel excluded from the collection.
A title or named collection signifies to the user what to expect in the collection. It also is useful in terms of publicity, either in the library, through external media or even by word of mouth within the dyslexic community. The consensus of opinion of the libraries in the case studies tended to towards reasonably discreet collections. The logic is that the lack of visibility should be offset by greater efforts in the area of publicity and promotion. A memorable, non-prejudicial name would be an advantage in this regard. Another criteria for location would be the target client group that the collection is addressing. Most of the collections in the study targeted children and young people and supported this by locating the collection near the children’s library. This choice begs the question of what to do to address the needs of adult dyslexics, which is another significant issue arising from the study.

8.7.2 Concentrated versus Dispersed Collections

Public libraries that have 'special' concentrated collections targeting the needs of the dyslexic community demonstrate good practice and a commitment to address their particular needs. Whilst it is possible, especially with information technology based catalogues, to create effective dispersed collections, the act of creating even a small dedicated collection is an important signifier of intention. Dedicated collections signal to staff the requirement to deal with this client group. It also signals to the client group that the library is prepared to help them.

As discussed in the Survey of the Relevant Literature (Chapter Three) there are problems with the terminology in the field of 'dyslexia'. Information about the condition of dyslexia is spread amongst a number of disciplines (for example in the social sciences: psychology and education, and in the sciences; medicine and health). In effect, this means that anyone wishing to retrieve information about dyslexia must consult several diverse fields within the Dewey system. Locating books from the various disciplines and Dewey classification system in one collection can be seen to be enabling for the user because it allows for ease of information retrieval as well as
gaining insights about the condition of dyslexia from a wider multi-discipline perspective.

The findings from the case studies revealed that there are some difficulties in choosing appropriate material for a concentrated collection in order to embrace the spectrum of needs for children with dyslexia. One of the prevailing concerns expressed by librarians was the lack of interesting 'specialist' material to put into the collection. Weston Favell attempted to meet the more 'specialist' needs of children with dyslexia by predominantly selecting high/low books and tapes obtained from LDA, a publisher who specialises in providing literacy material for primary and special needs. The collection was somewhat limited due to the budget constraint and the limited 'specialist' material available. After the initial success of the collection at Weston Favell the interest in the collection appears to have declined which would suggest that the collection is too limited and is not being sufficiently augmented with resources that appeal to the dyslexic community.

The collection at Kettering, which had a mixture of media targeting young people and adults, appeared to be successful. The CD-ROM material in the collection proved to be the most popular. However, like Weston Favell the collection was very small since only a very small number of CD-ROM packages could be purchased for the collection due to cost and a limited selection on the market for public library use.

The concentrated collection in Ealing library, in contrast to Weston Favell library, appears to have been the most successful and continues to be used very well. There are several possible reasons for this. The initial budget was higher than Weston Favell's (i.e. £2,000) and the collection has been augmented annually. The resources that are in the Ealing collection have a mixture of both 'specialist' material obtained from LDA as well as other books and cassettes obtained from mainstream publishers. Many of the books from mainstream publisher have been chosen because they are of a suitable format to be read by children with reading difficulties. The high interest/low reading age books from Heinemann were cited as being popular. The collection also houses a range of comic strip type material, for example, the Asterix books and picture books that can also be found in the mainstream collection in the children's library. This
collection, therefore, attempts to meet a variety of needs. There are 'specialist' remedial resources as well as books and tapes that have a popular appeal. One of the key findings, however, is that the collection does not appear to be too remedial in nature and, therefore, would not necessarily be perceived in a negative way by the user of the collection or by onlookers in the library. Moreover, the mixed collection can be useful in providing at least samples from other parts of the mainstream collection in one place and also acts as a guide for parents, carers and the children themselves as to what material they may find helpful and appealing.

8.7.3 Children Focus or Adult Focus

Most of the collections in the case studies that were targeting the needs of dyslexic individuals themselves, with the exception of Kettering and Sevenoaks libraries, were focused on the needs of children. Apart from the two libraries in Northamptonshire (Weston Favell and Kettering), all the other collections were initiated by local dyslexia associations. Many of the members on dyslexia association committees are parents of dyslexic children. It follows logically that the focus of interest would be to meet the reading and learning requirements of dyslexic children. In a number of the cases, it was the children’s librarian who set up and maintained the collections. Also, the collections were often located in or near children’s section of the libraries.

Kettering library, however, had particularly identified a gap in resource provision for adults with dyslexia. This was the only instance where this requirement was directly addressed. In other cases, there were references to adult literacy and Basic Skills, but little else of a creative nature. As mentioned in Chapter Four on Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities, adult dyslexics are often critical of adult literacy materials, which are often about all that they perceive that the libraries are attempting to offer. It is also evident from the comments that it is more difficult for adults to seek help from library staff than it is for children. Librarians will often ask a child if they need help. It is less likely that they would do the same for adults for fear of giving offence. Given the tendency for special collections to be associated with the children’s library, it is not surprising that few adults make use of the facilities.
Despite the observed problems of getting educational help for children, at least there are provisions for special educational needs. The picture for dyslexic adults is a lot less clear and many of them passed through the educational system in an era when the existence of dyslexia was even more in doubt. This means that there is a large population of adults who could benefit from a lifelong learning programme to address their needs. Whilst Basic Skills material no doubt has value for adults with literacy problems, it is far from being adequate to address their wider needs as library users. The challenge would be to organise a structured programme based on attractive, multi-sensory resources and to overcome, through outreach activities, the belief of many adults with dyslexia that there is little or nothing in the complex library environment for them.

8.7.4 Role of Information Technology in Addressing Special Needs

Use of information technology by dyslexic individuals in public libraries was a strong theme in all phases of the research, especially in the recent period. The outlook for the use of information technology was usually very hopeful in terms of how it could be used directly by people with dyslexia, and by libraries to assist them to use the facilities of the library.

Much has been made of the multi-sensory approach to dyslexia teaching both as an educational method and as a support to library provision of a variety of stimulating material such as videos, audio tapes and CD-ROMs. These recorded media have the additional advantage of being under the user's direct control, which means that difficult passages can be replayed so that the person can learn at their own pace. Such materials are, by their nature, non-judgmental, compared to teachers and fellow students in a classroom environment. It is significant that providers of information technology materials and systems appear to be more inclined than traditional publishers to market their products by highlighting features that can assist individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter Seven, at least one company was aware enough of the opportunity to include librarians as well as teachers in their mailing list.
From the library's point of view, new technology is becoming more flexible and hopefully more user friendly. This flexibility could be used to create extended virtual collections to supplement small concentrated collections, by assigning fields to materials in the catalogues, indicating that they are potentially useful for people with certain disabilities. Automated systems would make measuring and monitoring of collection use effective. From the user's point of view, catalogues and retrieval systems could be made friendlier through easy adjustment of the text size, type face and background colours. Another useful facility, as noted by Ted Pottage amongst others, would be to make such systems more tolerant of minor user errors, such as misspellings (Pottage, 1997). The introduction of 'fuzzy logic' is becoming more common with the advent of the Internet and spelling checking facilities have been a standard feature of word processing for many years. These facilities offer alternate suggestions if the user does not enter the correctly spelled name of the author or title of the material.

Information technology has high potential in a number of areas, but the current state of its development in the library environment is mixed to say the least. A large number of the respondents to the questionnaire highlighted the issue of limited amounts of available CD-ROM material and terminals due to budget constraints. Attempts to use E-mail as part of the dialogue process with libraries met with only limited success, since relatively few had access to this facility for external use at their libraries. Constraints such as lack of space and the requirement for extensive staff training were also mentioned. On the positive side, new initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning and New Library: The People's Network are giving focus and impetus to introducing an unprecedented level of information technology into public libraries. The scale of this task is very large and the skills for executing it are typically in short supply in the library service. It is likely that the main goal will be to get the core service up and running before additional refinements can be introduced. This could be a missed opportunity, since often such facilities can easily be added if the client asks for them early in the process. The opportunities for significant improvements along the lines suggested are available, if librarians and the local authorities are ready to seize them.
8.7.5 The Challenging Library Environment

The library environment has been highlighted by the dyslexic community (Chapter Four) as not being user friendly for dyslexic individuals. There is often an assumption made by library staff that because they are familiar with the layout of the library and the location of the various resources, people who use the library will also have no problem finding their way around. For many regular library users this may be true, and they are able to locate resources and use the various bibliographical tools such as library catalogues, either on-line or hard copy, with very little difficulty.

For people with dyslexia, however, library orientation and information retrieval has been cited as a major problem. Due to short-term memory lapses, alphabetical and numeric sequencing problems (e.g. difficulty with the Dewey classification system) dyslexic users relied heavily on support from the library staff member at the enquiry desk. One of the significant findings of this research was that the reception that a dyslexic user received was not always positive and this made them feel embarrassed or inadequate. This suggests a certain degree of insensitivity by library staff or perhaps the lack of awareness in the profession of the difficulties that dyslexics encounter.

Inadequate signage denoting the layout of the library environment was also cited as being problematic for dyslexics. Bigger and clearer labelling of shelves was also identified as being helpful for people with dyslexia. However, one of the key findings concerning the ambience of the library was that there were no signs mounted in the libraries stating that if the user has a reading difficulty 'Ask Here' for help.

8.7.6 Monitoring Dyslexics' Library Use

The use of public libraries by people with dyslexia is not well measured. One of the problems is that many people who are dyslexic prefer not to identify themselves as being dyslexic. One of the reasons for this is because dyslexic people are sensitive about their problems and attempt to conceal their difficulties from other people for fear of appearing stupid or inferior.
The Case Studies of public libraries with concentrated dyslexia collections (Chapter Six) found that, apart from Weston Favell and Kettering, the use of the resources are not monitored in a systematic way. This is understandable with small collections and limited automated library control systems. The advent of more flexible technology makes data collection much more feasible. It is very difficult to make improvements without at least some basic data. If an activity is not measured, it is very difficult to make improvements and to track their effects.

A view expressed in *Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities* was that the last place an adult with dyslexia would go would be to a public library. They have had enough of literacy schemes, or if they have difficulty with reading, they perceive the library as not the place for them.

Petersen suggests that dyslexics and people with reading difficulties would like to use libraries to gain information but are non-users because either there are not appropriate resources for them or because they perceive that to be the case (Petersen, 1979). It is possible, therefore, that people with dyslexia, especially adults, perceive the public library environment as only being accessible for people who are fully literate. Petersen suggests that the library potentially has many resources for dyslexics, especially if they obtain material that is presented in a format that they can access, for example, adapted material (or high interest/low reading age books) or talking books. Many dyslexic adults may not be aware that they do not have to exclude themselves from using a public library because there are many types of resources such as large print books, CD-ROM, talking books and video material that they could use and enjoy.

The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 will bring about a greater awareness within the disabled communities, including people with dyslexia, that their needs should not be peripheralised by society and that the level of public service provision should be on a par with people who are not disabled.
With the exception of the public libraries highlighted in the case studies (Chapter Six) as being providers or resources for dyslexic individuals, the library authorities generally appear to have neglected to consider seriously the needs of this client group. All the policies that were returned with the completed questionnaire had not included dyslexia in their 'special needs' policies. The Review of the Relevant Literature (Chapter Three) also suggests that the library profession has also not acknowledged the need to address dyslexia. This would suggest, perhaps, that the condition of dyslexia is not seen as part of the remit of the library profession but rather that of educationalists.

The British Dyslexia Association tends to focus more particularly on the educational needs of children. Parents of dyslexic children, as the Parent and Children Case Study (Chapter Four) shows, find it very difficult to obtain 'special need' help from the local education authority. The British Dyslexia Association, therefore, has expended a great deal of attention on preventing educational failure in the state school system for children with dyslexia. It is unfortunate that they have not given same sort of attention to the role of libraries in helping people with dyslexia. Several of the librarians at the time of setting-up their respective collections attempted to gain some advice from the British Dyslexia Association about suitable material to put in the collection. No advice at the time or encouragement was offered to the librarians who sought their help. This would suggest, therefore, that the British Dyslexia Association, as well as dyslexia professionals generally, overlook the potential role of libraries in provision of resources for dyslexia. To be fair, the British Dyslexia Association recently has been attempting to become more involved with libraries especially on the information technology side. This is a positive development.

8.7.8 Successful Specialist Collections Require Proactive Librarianship

There was highly personal input from librarians in virtually all of the case studies of the special collections. With little in the way of formal guidance, it was largely left to the librarians to seek resources, other than core texts about the subject of dyslexia. The
personal element was particularly noticeable in the period after the initial establishment of the collections. Creative use of existing materials including an awareness of the type of format that would be appealing to dyslexic children (for example, comic strip books) from the mainstream collection was an example of proactive librarianship.

It could be argued that the library profession is perceived as rather passive when it comes to taking the lead in areas of social concern. This perceived passivity might also reflect such issues as budget constraints and de-professionalisation. Lack of time to take part in stock selection, use of CD-ROM in place of hands-on viewing and evaluation of new materials, and the decline of specialisation in the library service (for example, difficulty in recruiting children’s librarians) were all mentioned in the course of the case study interviews. Use of non-professional staff in what used to be professional positions was also noted. In this sort of environment, it is not surprising that there is less evidence of proactive librarianship.

8.7.9 Public Library Culture

The fundamental question arises as to why there is so little evidence of serious activity to address the resource needs of the dyslexic community. Lack of discretionary funding for non-core services is a fairly obvious answer, but this does not fully explain the relative lack of modest, low cost initiatives as demonstrated in some of the case studies. A number of supporters of community librarianship suggest that the lack of pro-activity also relates to the prevailing public library culture.

Patricia Coleman in her publication *Whose Problem? The Public Library and the Disadvantaged* suggested that the library profession has a predisposition to passively wait for middle class users to access the resources available in the libraries rather than proactively going out into the community to discover what people from different cultural and/or socio-economic backgrounds need from libraries (Coleman, 1981). Evidence from the 114 responses to the questionnaire (Chapter Five) suggests that very few authorities have a coherent action plan to address special needs in the communities that they serve. Only a sixth of the authorities who responded claimed to have a written policy concerning special needs. None of these authorities that provided examples of their policies mentioned dyslexia specifically although three authorities
claimed that dyslexia was covered in their policies. Fewer than a seventh of the authorities claim to have specialised, concentrated special needs collections. Only 6 per cent of authorities reported having a specific budget for dyslexia related resources.

In 1981 Coleman found that only 1 in 7 authorities have really done anything significant in providing services to the disadvantaged. The findings from the questionnaire suggest that very little has changed in the late 1990s, and it is only a few local authorities who are providing leadership for special needs provision, including dyslexia. This reflects a tendency, as Coleman suggested, towards a general, relatively passive service rather than one dedicated to looking at the specific needs of communities.

Moreover, Coleman criticised librarians as having a tendency to “dabble” by delivering short term solutions without considering the longer term implications of the service. The case studies in Chapter Six focused on the small number of authorities that were providing dedicated resource collections specifically targeting dyslexic communities. It was evident from the case studies in the various authorities (i.e. London Borough of Ealing, London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames, Northamptonshire and Kent County Council) that there was a great deal of commitment undertaken by individual librarians to address the needs of the dyslexic communities. However, once the initial collection had been launched there was a lack of clarity about ongoing funding of the collections. It is difficult to accuse these librarians of “dabbling” but perhaps it is the public library authorities that stand open to this accusation by failing to make ongoing budget commitments. On the other hand, these authorities at least undertook the short term projects to create these collections, which makes them much more proactive than the great majority of authorities that took no action in this area.

Coleman views the public library culture as being narrow in its professional outlook. Several librarians sought advice from the British Dyslexia Association when they were initially setting up a ‘specialist’ collection targeting the dyslexic communities (Chapter Six). The British Dyslexia Association did not seem to understand the librarians’ interest in providing resources for individuals. Moreover, several librarians had problems getting information from the BDA or their local dyslexia associations, which
expected public libraries to provide only basic information as chosen by the local
dyslexia associations. This view could reflect genuine concern by the dyslexia
professionals over the complexity of dealing with the problems of dyslexia or their low
opinion of librarians’ skills and commitment. The latter viewpoint could be seen to
support Coleman’s view of the generally passive reputation of the library profession.
There was also an indication of resistance to librarians attempting to move
significantly into other professional spheres. This resistance could have arisen in line
with Winter’s views about how various professions, especially those without secure
status of their own, resist the incursions of others into their specialist areas.

The findings from the Public Library Case Studies (Chapter Six) showed differing
models of how the collections targeting the dyslexia communities arose. The degree of
proactivity shown by the librarians was a key differentiator. Northamptonshire
(Weston Favell and Kettering libraries) were proactive in setting up the ‘specialist’
collections for this target group. The libraries in the remaining authorities (i.e. London
borough of Richmond, London borough of Ealing and Kent County Council) tended to
develop their collections as a result of initial contact by the local dyslexia association
rather than the librarian making the initial contact with the user group.

A prime concern raised by publications such as Library Services to the disadvantaged
(Martin, 1975), The Libraries’ Choice (Department of Education and Science, 1978)
and Whose Problem? The Public Library and the Disadvantaged (Coleman, 1981)
was that in order to serve the whole community and, in particular the disadvantaged,
librarians must consciously reach out to individuals in their various communities to
ascertain their particular needs. Elements of good community awareness, as advocated
by these publications, were demonstrated by librarians in Weston Favell and Kettering
libraries. Both librarians sought to meet the needs of individuals with dyslexia in their
respective local communities and took positive action successfully bidding for funding
to set up their ‘specialist’ collections via the Northamptonshire ‘challenge fund’.
Moreover, in both cases, the librarians consulted external organisations such as the
British Dyslexia Association, the local dyslexia association and local schools. It was
particularly noteworthy that both librarians also sought the views and resource needs
of the users themselves before the collections were started.
Patricia Coleman contended that libraries tend to be static institutions, whilst Bob Usherwood suggested that the nature of public libraries was complex and subject to various political pressures and priorities. These contentions are not necessarily contradictory in that there could be a good deal of internal activity (e.g. reorganisations, short term initiatives) without producing a fundamental change in the nature of the institution towards a more community based approach. The variety of librarians' job titles described in relation to the management and development of dyslexia resources (Chapter Five) may reflect multiple attempts to restructure library services to meet national and/or local government policies and initiatives. However, the low level of outreach to users revealed in the questionnaire responses supports Coleman's belief that public libraries have remained static when it comes to fundamental operational changes to serve diverse communities.

8.7.10 Public Library Services to the Disadvantaged

In 1978 The Libraries' Choice stated that few authorities provide services to the disadvantaged in a comprehensive way. Furthermore, the report suggested that usually there needed to be a national initiative to make progress in providing services to the disadvantaged (Department of Education and Science, 1978, pp.8-11). Only 19 authorities from a total of 114 replies to the questionnaire (Chapter Five) indicated that they had a written policy for 'special needs'. However, 19 authorities responded that they had a policy in preparation. One authority commented that they were preparing a 'special needs' policy in response to the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. The Disability Discrimination Act could provide the impetus for public library authorities to better address 'special needs', although there was very little evidence of this at the time of the questionnaire (1997). On a positive note, however, many authorities commented that the questionnaire had increased their awareness to the fact that they should be addressing the needs of people with dyslexia.

The Libraries' Choice suggested that there was little direct contact made by the public library profession to 'disadvantaged' users or potential users of the service. The Public Library Case Studies (Chapter Six) appear to confirm this statement. Apart from...
Northamptonshire (i.e. Weston Favell and Kettering libraries) the authorities (i.e. Richmond, Ealing and Kent County Council) used an intermediary (the local dyslexia association) rather than undertaking outreach to the dyslexic individuals themselves to gain insight into their particular needs. Moreover, with the exception of the libraries in Northamptonshire, the authorities did not monitor the use of the collection using statistical data generated by an automated system. To ascertain the success of a collection and/or particular items in the collection it is necessary to have access to the pattern of loan statistics. The lack of formal monitoring could be seen as a lost opportunity to obtain feedback on how well the collection serves the needs of its community.

Lack of material for adult new literates was cited by *The Libraries' Choice* as being an area of concern. The findings from the *Public Library Case Studies* (Chapter Six) indicated that librarians found it difficult to find publishers that provided materials specifically targeted for people with dyslexia and particularly for adults. The publisher mentioned most frequently in the case studies was LDA which produced material that was generally more suitable for a primary or 'special needs' classroom environment rather than for public library use. The findings from the *Survey of Publishers and Resource Providers* (Chapter Seven) also revealed that only a very few 'specialist' publishers provide material that is suitable for use in a public library environment for people with dyslexia. Although the evidence from the research supports the contention of a lack of material for adult new literates, there were strong indications from the *Perceptions of Public Libraries by the Dyslexic Communities* (Chapter Four) that adult learners were not interested in literacy scheme materials so much as items from the general collections of an appropriate degree of difficulty.
8.8 **The Way Ahead**

This research set out to explore the current state of public library resource provision for dyslexic individuals. It was not the intention to give a comprehensive blueprint for addressing the problems and issues that were discovered. It is reasonable, however, to make some comments and general recommendations based on the findings of the thesis.

8.8.1 Policy and Leadership

At policy leadership level, much more could be done by the library profession to set the agenda for more proactive librarianship in dealing with special needs. The professional journals, such as the *Library Association Record* and *Public Library Journal*, should address the lack of articles both to raise awareness and to suggest basic approaches to improving resource provision.

Library authorities should be encouraged to create meaningful policy statements that give a strong commitment to address these needs and back this up with detailed guidance for staff about the subject of dyslexia as well as practical stock selection criteria. For example, the British Dyslexia Association is an excellent source of information about the subject dyslexia. Libraries could make use of some of their information booklets in order to raise the awareness to staff what dyslexia is. The British Dyslexia Association's booklets and leaflets explain simply and concisely the problems that dyslexic individuals experience in their everyday life due to their condition.

8.8.2 Stock Selection

Practical stock selection guidelines should be incorporated in 'special needs' policies that include the needs of dyslexic individuals. For example when selecting non fiction
books for children and young people (and adults) the following criteria for stock selection will need to include:

• Accessibility of the language.
• Information is presented clearly and is jargon free.
• Print style is clear and is not too small.
• There is not too much text and information on one page.
• Short paragraphs with white space between them.
• Illustrations are colourful, appealing and are linked to the text.
• Books have high interest level, age appropriate but accessible to a lower reading ability.

Additional criteria for fiction books should include:

• Not too many words on the page.
• Books should not look remedial in nature.
• Books are well illustrated and are linked to the narrative of the story.
• The colour of the paper should ideally not be too white and glaring.
• Books look attractive and appealing with an exciting story content.

8.8.3 Networking and Outreach

As shown by the Public Library Case Studies (Chapter Six) a great deal can be done through local initiatives at a relatively low cost. Although there are a small number of key references that could be consulted, such as the Kick-Start booklist (Cornwall Education Library Series, 1997), the most productive method for locating material for special collections is via networking with other librarians and outreach to specialist organisations, such as local dyslexia associations.

Library authorities should be actively involved in working in collaboration with their local dyslexia association. Representatives from local dyslexia associations (as revealed in Chapter Four) often would be pleased to talk to library staff about the subject of dyslexia in order to raise awareness of the problems that dyslexics face in their day to day life. There are pitfalls in letting others determine what is appropriate for libraries, but there is a small but growing body of experience that can be accessed. It is particularly useful to gather information from individuals with dyslexia, or from parents
or teachers. This is not easy due to the invisible nature of the condition, but simple activities such as recording requests for particular materials can be very enlightening.

8.8.4 Improving the Library Environment

The public library environment should be evaluated from the perspective of users who have difficulty with reading, sequencing and orientation problems. Signage should be clear, large enough to be read easily, and perhaps colour coded to indicate subject categories. Simple maps using the colour coding could also be provided at various locations, with symbols indicating that "you are here". Aside from signs identifying the material on the shelves, other signs could direct users to nearby sections of the library.

Catalogues were identified as being a considerable problem for users with dyslexia. With existing systems, staff help is vital to overcome the problems with spelling and sequencing. With newer computerised systems, there are more opportunities to adjust the presentations in terms of text size, background colour, and simplicity of presentation. More advanced features such as spell checking can be provided to aid information retrieval. Systems often have more features than are commonly used. It is worth seeing what is available on existing systems and specifying useful facilities when choosing new ones.

8.8.5 Staff attitudes and Training

Training should be undertaken to improve staff attitudes towards people with dyslexia. It is important that library staff have the knowledge of the problems encountered by dyslexics and are sympathetic and helpful towards their needs. This could be part of wider based training in listening and skilful questioning of library users to ensure that their needs are met. Training to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act should also be provided. Staff should be encouraged to seek help from professional agencies such as REACH, to ascertain the type of material and resources that are currently available or found to be particularly useful.
8.8.6 Importance of Promotion and Publicity

Positive promotion of collections is absolutely vital to their success. There is a danger that collections will only be used by people associated with the local dyslexia associations, especially since these groups are often instrumental in establishing the collection. A high proportion of adult dyslexics were not identified as such when in full time education and they are less likely than the public at large to be library users. They need to be made aware that resources exist that could help them and that library staff will deal with them sympathetically and professionally. People with dyslexia are not likely to identify themselves to library staff. A well designed leaflet describing in simple terms what the library can do for people with dyslexia, can also serve as an invitation to approach the enquiry point. Signs could be displayed near enquiry desks inviting people, who encounter difficulty in the library, to ask for help relating to the particular problems that they encounter, for example with the library catalogues or locating material.

8.8.7 Making Full Use of the Main Collection

Public libraries hold a wealth of multi-media resources that can help people of all ages gain access to the written word. Librarians should use their professional expertise to exploit these resources to the full by ensuring that dyslexic individuals are aware of them and by ensuring that they are easily accessible. Librarians should avoid fixed ideas of needing to provide 'specialist' remedial material exclusively. Since it is difficult to judge exactly which sort of material would be suitable for a dyslexic individual, a better approach is to provide the widest possible choice of diverse resources. Aside from the usual contents of special needs collections, such as large print books and audio tapes, videos, graphic novels can also prove to be stimulating.
8.8.8 Benefits of a Concentrated Collection

As shown by the Public Library Case Studies (Chapter Six) even small concentrated collections are useful because they provide a sampling of material that can be found in the mainstream collection. Concentrated collections can be used to gather together information about the subject, along with interesting material that a person with dyslexia might wish to borrow for self development or pleasure. The concentrated collection is the starting point for the dyslexic user to sample materials found in greater numbers in the main collection. A concentrated collection is also a reminder to staff of the range of material that could be suggested.

8.8.9 Expansion of Choice via Virtual Collections

Whilst concentrated collections give focus to dealing with disabilities such as dyslexia, a complementary, virtual collection approach to expand choice also can be used. At the simplest level, a virtual collection can be organised by paper based booklists which record resources that have proved useful or new material that seems to meet the stock selection criteria. The increasing availability of computer databases makes this approach easier to manage and will allow for a number of virtual collections to meet a variety of user needs. Ideally new materials could be assessed at the cataloguing stage and a variety of fields used to aid retrieval. This would be a vital tool for mobilising the depth of resources to be found in the main library collection, to meet the needs of diverse user groups, including the dyslexic community.

8.8.10 The Role of the Librarian

At the heart of these proposals for addressing resource needs of dyslexic individuals, there is the role of the librarian as an innovator and a project owner. Other agencies may contribute to the solutions, but proactive librarianship is needed to make these
ideas work effectively. Librarians need to break the dusty stereotype and demonstrate the important role of their profession.

Librarians have undersold themselves where they are seen to concentrate on everyday clerical routines in libraries, instead of developing their skills and knowledge of the materials they work with. Librarians have a professional role in the provision, promotion, exploitation and development of the materials available in a library (Aslib, 1995, pp 243-244).

The above statement from the Review of the Public Library Service in England and Wales: Final Report is an affirmation of the vital role that the library profession should play in providing access to resource provision that will enable disparate communities to make sense of the world in which they live. Moreover, it is a recognition that the library profession has the potential of being an enabler to every individual who has need of public library services. However, and more importantly, the statement stresses the need for librarians (and the profession as a whole) to have confidence in their professional expertise that embraces a range of skills and to break out from the narrow boundaries of their traditional roles.

As seen in 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 above, during the 1970's and 1980's there was a number of theorists and library practitioners who were concerned that public libraries were failing to meet the needs of the community as a whole and, in particular, the disadvantaged. The Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion research project funded by the British Library and the Library and Information Commission have revealed in their various working papers relating to 'social exclusion', for example, Dave Muddiman's working paper no.9 Images of Exclusion: User and Community Perceptions of the Public Library (1999) that the situation has not greatly improved in the late 1990's. Therefore, the essence of the problem is well established and it will be a major challenge to make significant improvements. It is the clear intention of the Blair government to attempt to revive some of the positive aspects of community librarianship under the guise of 'social inclusion'.

The recent publication Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries (1999) is a challenge to the public library service. In the foreword of the publication Chris Smith,
the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport stresses the importance of public libraries in helping to combat social exclusion:

.....Many organisations within the cultural sector have important contributions to make to this campaign, but few are likely to be as well placed as public libraries to generate change (DCMS, p.4).

Smith goes on to state the significance of public libraries (and by extension the role of the librarian or library manager) in entering into a positive and proactive dialogue with the various communities that they serve:

The Government wants libraries to be at the very heart of the communities they serve, allowing everyone, irrespective of their age or social background, to have access to the widest possible range of information, knowledge and services. We want libraries to play a major role in supporting formal education and life-long learning for everyone. We want the facilities and services they provide to be accessible at the times when people most want to use them; and we want the local community to be involved in developing the range of services that they provide (DCMS, p.4).

The statement from Smith echoes some of the feelings expressed by practitioners such as Martin (1975), Liddle (1981) and Coleman (1981) who saw the role of librarians as putting the needs of people first by reaching out to the community.

At the end of the publication there are a number of points highlighted for future action within the library service. These include: responding to the new ICT environment, community ownership/community partnership, and the need for a cultural change within libraries (DCMS, 1999, p.23).

In section 8.7.6 above, the role of information technology (more recently called information communication technology - ICT) was stressed as being highly significant in assisting people with special needs (e.g. dyslexia). The government’s New Opportunities Fund will provide public libraries with the chance to embrace wholeheartedly the recent initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning and New Library: The People’s Network. The role of the librarian will be to ensure that access to ICT is extended to people who have previously been excluded from using it. This exclusion might have arisen from lack of money to pay for Internet service or from a disability, such as dyslexia, which makes use of this new medium appear daunting. The
Librarians should be more than the caretaker of the ICT resources. Librarians should be encouraged to build on their information handling skills to help guide new users towards getting maximum benefit from this new resource.

In order to serve the resource needs of the disadvantaged, librarians should enter into partnership with their local community to gain insights as to how to best shape the service delivery to meet the various resource needs of the people within the community. The librarian should consult with the various segment groups within the community to find out if the needs are being met or if the service provision needs to be improved. The consultation should cover a variety of aspects of the service, including choice of stock, methods of delivery, and problems that need to be overcome. Active engagement with the service will lead to a greater sense of community ownership.

If public libraries are to become meaningful to people in society who are disadvantaged for whatever reason, for example, people with dyslexia or some other form of disability, there is the need for a cultural change within the library profession. Librarians should be outward looking and push the boundaries of the profession by undertaking outreach activities in order to find out the information and resource needs of their local community. A vital part of outreach in the community is to those who are not significant users or do not use the public library because they are unaware of the range of resources in libraries that are available to meet their particular need. Part of the librarians professional ethos is to be a disseminator of information to the people that they serve. An integral part of this, therefore, is to enter into the community and inform groups and individuals of the range of materials that exist in library collections that will be enabling and beneficial to them.
Appendices

Appendix 1 Personal Web Page

Public Libraries and Dyslexia

My name is Hazel Rutledge and I am doing a research degree project on the Public Library Provision of Resources for Dyslexic Individuals.

In the course of this project I sent a questionnaire to 152 library authorities in England and Wales seeking information about provision of resources for dyslexic individuals. The questionnaire achieved a high response, indicating considerable interest in the subject, but with a few notable exceptions, relatively little in the way of a structured approach to the issue.

I would be most interested in hearing from any interested parties who have information about this subject, especially on the needs of dyslexic individuals in a Public Library context.

My email address is: hazelrut@cockatiel.u-net.com
Appendix 2 CAROL/Questions/Case study 1

16th June, 1994

How did you first engage with the term 'dyslexia'?

When and how did you first become aware that your children are 'dyslexic'?

To what extent are your children 'dyslexic'?

What problems are they encountering at school and at home?

What information sources have you consulted that have been of help to you?

What sources have you found to be the least helpful?

Which key groups; organisations; people have been the most help to you?

Did you consult Reference or lending libraries - and if so which libraries?

Have you found any reading or other resources in the library that have been of help to your children - and if so which?

Which factor or information source did you discover through your investigations would have been most helpful to have found in the beginning?

Your daughter is going through the process of 'statementing'. How difficult is this process?

What is the outcome you hope to achieve if your daughter is statemented?

What sort of books or other material in public libraries are helpful to your children?

What sorts of books/resources would you like to see provided in the lending library for your children?
Appendix 3 Questionnaire and Letters

Department of Information and Library Studies
Loughborough University Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 3TU UK
Switchboard: +44 (0)1509 263171 Department: +44 (0)1509 223052

29 April 1997

Dear 

Dyslexia: Information Needs and Provision in Public Libraries

I am a part-time PhD research student in the Department of Information and Library Studies, Loughborough University. My research is concerned with the information needs of individuals who are dyslexic.

"Dyslexia is best described as a specific difficulty in learning, in one or more of reading, spelling and written language which may be accompanied by difficulty in number work, short term memory, sequencing auditory and/or visual perception, and motor skills." (British Dyslexia Association).

There is much written about the various aspects of dyslexia but little on provision by public libraries to dyslexics - and this is the focus of my research.

I would be extremely grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire (sent to all library authorities in England and Wales) or forward it to the appropriate member of staff within your library service. Responses will enable me to identify the range of services and initiatives currently offered by public libraries as opposed to School Library Services. (A separate questionnaire is also being sent to all the School Library Services.) As a librarian myself working in a busy public library, I appreciate how many such requests you must receive, but I can assure you that I aim to review my findings and publish the results in an article in the professional literature. All replies will be treated in confidence.

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for return of the completed questionnaire. I would appreciate the return of the questionnaire by 23rd May 1997. (If you have any queries or would like further information, please contact me on 0181 946 7979, e-mail hazelrut@cockatiel.u-net.com or write to me at the above address). Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Rutledge
DYSLEXIA: INFORMATION NEEDS AND PROVISION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

QUESTIONNAIRE

Contact details of respondent:

Name ________________________________
Position/Job Title _________________________
Name of Library __________________________
Address ___________________________________

Telephone Number __________________________ E-Mail _________________________

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate boxes or providing brief comments as indicated. Please return the questionnaire to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

1. Does your library service have a written policy for provision of resources for 'special needs'?
   □ yes    □ no    □ in preparation
   I would be grateful if you could send me a copy with your completed questionnaire.

1a. Does your written policy include dyslexia?
   □ yes    □ no    □ currently no policy

1b. Even, if you are without a written policy, do you provide any resources for dyslexic individuals?
   □ yes    □ no

2. At which age group(s) are these resources targeted:
   □ 0-5    □ 6-11    □ 12-18    □ 18+    □ Not targeted at any group

3. Are these resources concentrated as a 'special' collection or are they dispersed amongst the mainstream collections?
   □ concentrated    □ dispersed

3a. If a) size of collection (no. of items)? ........................... or □ Not known

4. Who is responsible for the management or development of dyslexic resources? Please give job title(s).
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Which of the following resources for dyslexics are available in your library service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book/cassette packs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story cassettes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large print books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling aids (eg Dictionaries)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROMs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer games software</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books with higher interest age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than reading age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how regularly the various resources are used to satisfy special needs requirements of dyslexics by ticking the appropriate box.

Is a specific budget allocated for dyslexic resources?

- □ yes
- □ no
- □ proposed

Please give the figures for purchase of resources for the last 3 financial years:

- 1994/95 £_______
- 1995/96 £_______
- 1996/97 £_______

Are there resources that dyslexic individuals request but are not available?

- □ yes
- □ no
- □ don't know
9a. Please give brief details of the types of resources that are requested but are not available for access in your library.

________________________________________________________________________________________


9b. Why are these not available?

________________________________________________________________________________________

10. Is there information about the subject of dyslexia in your lending and/or reference libraries?

□ yes □ no □ don't know

10a. Please indicate if any of the following are available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia Contact (Journal of the British Dyslexia Association)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directory of British Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Societies/Associations Folder/Database (for reference)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books on the subject of Dyslexia (for loan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return this questionnaire to Hazel Rutledge, Department of Information & Library Studies, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU (sae provided)

Thank you for your help and co-operation
please use this additional sheet should you wish to make any further comments or raise any specific issues relating to this topic.
Dear

At the beginning of May I sent you a questionnaire entitled DYSLEXIA: INFORMATION NEEDS AND PROVISION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES. This questionnaire was sent to all library authorities in the UK (excluding Scotland).

I have been very encouraged by the number of replies I have received thus far. However, it has been brought to my attention that several authorities, due to pressure of work loads and the intervening Bank Holiday, have been concerned that they were unable to meet the original deadline specified on the questionnaire.

Therefore, I am writing to inform you that in order to facilitate library authorities who would like to take part in the questionnaire and have been unable to do so for some of the reasons mentioned above, that I have extended the cut off date to MONDAY 23rd JUNE 1997.

If the questionnaire has been mislaid and you would like to take part, please contact me at the above address. Alternatively you can telephone me at 0181 946 7979 or you can reach me by email (hazelnut@cockatiel.u-net.com) and I will be pleased to send you another one.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Rutledge
2 June 1997
Appendix 4 Interview/Survey Questions

1a Are you aware of the term 'dyslexia'?

1b What does the term mean to you?

2a Does your borough recognise the term 'dyslexia'?

2b If not, what term does it recognise?

2c If no specific term is used, how do they describe learning difficulties in reading and writing?

3a Are there professional librarians in the school libraries?

3b If not - do the teachers receive any formal training for library and information handling skills (including book selection for users with 'special needs')?

4a Do teachers ask the Schools Libraries Department for advice concerning book selection or other material e.g. cassette book packs for children/young people with 'dyslexia' (or 'special learning' needs)?

4b Which type of material is most popular?

5a Is there information on the subject of dyslexia in your public library?

5b Can you give me a few examples of what sort of information you have?

5c Is some of this information available for loan?

5d If so, what sort of material is available for loan?

5e If you do not provide information about dyslexia do you refer the enquirer elsewhere?

5e (If this is the case) - Where do you refer the enquirer to?

6a Do parents or children ask for help in selecting suitable reading material aimed specifically for individuals who are dyslexic?

6b Do you record these requests?

7a Do your public libraries have any reading and learning material/resources aimed for children/young people/adults who are dyslexic?

7b If so, what types of materials are they and which particular publishers/resource providers do you use?
Appendix 5 Publishers Telephone Questionnaire

Name of firm

Contact name

Date of Interview

Do you supply books or other materials that would be of use to individuals with dyslexia?

What types of materials do you provide? (books, audio, video, CDs, other .............)

Could you suggest some titles of what you provide? (brochure?)

Which are the most popular?

Are they targeted at specific age groups?

Do you have material for a variety of ages?

How are they distributed? via Bookstores? Mail Order? Direct to Libraries or Schools?

Do you have any regular contact with organisations that specialise in Dyslexia?

If so, which organisation(s)?

Do these organisations give advice about which materials are suitable for dyslexic individuals?

How did your firm first become involved with the provision of such materials?

How do you see this line of material progressing in the future?
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Cornwall Education Library Services (1997) *Kick-Start: A Selection of Titles with a High Level of Interest but a Low Reading Age*. Cornwall, Bishop and Barnicoat Company Ltd.


Library Association .(1993) 'Kate Girling, children's librarian at Ealing Central Library, arranges books in the new Wordwise section for children suffering from dyslexia and other reading difficulties'. *Library Association Record*, vol.95 (4) April, p.256 (Calendar page).


RELEVANT INTERNET WEBSITES

Addison Wesley Longman, www2.awl.com/corp/

British Dyslexia Association, www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

Child Development Institute - About Dyslexia and Reading Problems, www.cdipage.com/dyslexia/htm

Dyslexia Mailing List, www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/dyslexia

Dyslexia on the Web, www.surrey.ac.uk/Psychology/WDNF/sites.html

Heinemann, www.heinemann.co.uk

How IT can help people with Dyslexia, www.pottage.demon.co.uk/it-helps/

Internet sources of dyslexia information, www.hensa.ac.uk/dyslexia/www/remote-servers.html


National Association for Special Educational Needs, www.nasen.org.uk

National Year of Reading, www.yearofreading.org.uk

Pick: quality Internet resources in Library and Information Science Thomas Parry Library, www.aber.ac.uk-tpl/www/e/Pick.html

Public Libraries & Dyslexia - Hazel Rutledge home page (ceased April 1999), www.cockatiel.u-net.com