Recommendations for Designing Home Library Service Flyers
NSW Home Library Service Working Group

These recommendations have been developed by the members of the Home Library Service Working Group, a working group of Public Libraries NSW. They acknowledge that there are a variety of style guides and communications requirements across councils in NSW.

These recommendations should be viewed as a guide to:
1. reducing barriers that prevent people who have low vision from accessing printed information[1]
2. improving the effectiveness of flyers promoting home library service to the target audience
3. ensuring flyers do not inadvertently discourage potential clients through age, gender or cultural bias

Who is the audience for the home library service promotional flyer?

Clients	Family and friends of clients	Health care / aged care workers
• Housebound due to age, disability or carer responsibilities • Men and women • People from a variety of cultural backgrounds • High proportion of people with visual impairments • Some potential clients may have cognitive impairments or low literacy skills	• Carers • Neighbours • Seniors • Meals on Wheels volunteers	• GPs • Aged care workers • Community health workers • HACC workers

How / where is the flyer to be distributed?
• In the library
• In the community via health workers, meals on wheels volunteers, agencies serving older people and people with disabilities

What are the potential risks?
In 2009, the members of the NSW Home Library Service Working Group conducted an analysis of existing flyers promoting home library service and identified a number of common problems, including:
• Fonts that are difficult to read
• Inadvertent gender or cultural bias via choice of images
• Too much information
• Colour / style choices that reduce legibility
• Not being clear about eligibility criteria (eg. can carers apply?)

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[1] Vision Australia Guidelines for Producing Readable Text

Readable Text
The NSW Home Library Service Working Group endorses the *Guidelines for Producing Readable Text* [2] recommended by Vision Australia, the peak blindness agency in Australia. The Guidelines are reproduced below with permission*:*

Accessible text
It is important to reduce barriers that prevent people who have low vision from accessing printed information. Following these guidelines can help ensure as many people as possible are able to read what is published.

Contrast
Text should be printed with the highest possible contrast. It is difficult to achieve high contrast with colour combinations other than black and white.
Black text on a white background is best practice. However some people who have low vision find it easier to read white letters on a black background.

Colours
Colours should only be used on large text such as headlines and headings. The colour of the text should be significantly darker or lighter than the background.

Type size
Type should always be a minimum of 12pt, but 18pt is ideal.

Typefaces
Simple sans serif typefaces (without 'feet') such as Arial or Helvetica are recommended for maximum readability.

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[2] Vision Australia Guidelines for Producing Readable Text

Complicated or decorative fonts should be avoided. Unusual or irregular character shapes can be difficult to read.

Decorative typefaces *are less* readable
than plain typefaces.

Type styles

Bodies of text are easiest to read when they have a combination of upper and lower case characters. Avoid using capital letters and italics for bodies of text.

CAPITALS, *italics* and SMALL CAPS
can be difficult to read.

Use bold text if necessary for emphasis, but ensure the type does not become so thick it reduces the white space within characters. This may make it difficult to distinguish between some characters. For example, e may look like s or a.

**Bold text may make some
characters difficult to read.**

Spacing

Spacing between letters should be kept at the software's standard default setting. Closely spaced, condensed and widely spaced letters are often difficult to read.

Condensed and w i d e l y   s p a c e d
typefaces are harder to read.

Margins

Extra-wide margins make publications easier to read with a magnifier. Wide margins in other documents make them easier to hold without obscuring text.

Paper

Paper with a glossy finish tends to reflect light. This can obscure type and make it difficult to read. Choose paper with a matt finish for best results.

Source: Vision Australia www.visionaustralia.org.au

The NSW Home Library Service Working Group workshopped a range of the home library service flyers in circulation in 2009. In reviewing those flyers there were a number of characteristics that were positive and others that were negative. The list is provided to give some 'thinking points' in reviewing or creating home library service flyers:

Positive characteristics:

FONT / TEXT:
- Font size of 14 or 14+, bold or italics
- Use of colour and white space
- High contrast between font and background
- Use of simple key words
- Double spacing of lines
- Clearly branded as Home Library Service
- Simple layout

IMAGES:
- Use of photos preferred over clip art
- Professionally designed flyers present a better image than "home made"
- Better images were inclusive (gender, ethnicity, age)

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED:
- Who's eligible for the service
- "Free" status of the service is identified
- Bookmark can be given as referral for people who need service or for potential volunteers (eg. UK example)
- Clearly labelled (who, what, how)
- Identifies the service is also available to CALD members of the community
- Clear contact details for the service
- Option to phone and join rather than fill in a form
- Informative
- Application form included
- Pamphlet size, easy to pick up
- Separate services offered eg. Full home library service or 'self select – home delivery'

Negative characteristics:

FONT/TEXT:
- Font too small
- Background colour is pretty but not good for people with poor eyesight
- Too much information, overwhelming, too wordy
- Negative language / communication
- Requiring a doctor's certificate to join (Can another type of health worker or community worker provide a referral? NB: Vision Australia will accept referrals from public librarians.)
- Doesn't identify eligibility criteria (eg. are carers eligible for the service?)

- Warning people they may be placed on a waiting list – will this discourage applicants unnecessarily?
- Some content is confusing
- Using a personal name as a contact point for the service rather than a phone number (a change of personnel can make the flyer out of date)
- A4 flier may not work as well as DL tri-fold or a bookmark size
- Layout can be confusing or difficult to follow

IMAGES:
- Clip art can appear dated and may not communicate effectively what the service is or who it is designed for
- Use of irrelevant photos

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