

Library Services

The library service is a statutory frontline service that provides all those who live, work or study in the borough with a comprehensive and efficient library service.

All libraries run regular story time sessions for children under 5 & their parents/carers but parents/carers of children with additional needs such as Autism often don't see these sessions as for them due to their child's needs/behaviour.

We wanted to offer story time sessions that were more inclusive for children with additional needs so explored the idea of sensory story times that are aimed at children with Autism and other neurodiverse needs. We hoped that by running separate sessions where the focus was on being more inclusive & promoted as suitable for children with additional needs that we would make our sessions more accessible to all families.

A member of library staff who has children with Autism looked at what resources were needed, came up with a toolkit for the sessions identifying the aims & objectives and then came up with a format for these sessions. We piloted these sessions in one library, Northwood Hills so we could assess & review the session format & gather feedback from a small group of parents/carers.

Due to the success of these sessions, we are now looking to extend the offer across an additional 6 libraries and will be purchasing additional resources as well as providing training for library staff.

Sessions were run fortnightly over a 6-month period with the average attendance being 5-6 children along with their parents/carers. Feedback has been positive with parents appreciating the additional sensory elements to the story time and thanking staff for providing such sessions.