

**Performance & Finance Select Committee  
24<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

**Briefing Note - Vital Sign: Number of Library Visits per 1,000 of Population**

This indicator measures physical visits to libraries. In 2005/6 Brent's libraries had 1.8 million visitors, 7205 visits per 1000 population. This falls short of the outer London target of 8600 to meet the Public Library Standard. Brent's performance against this indicator puts us in 10th position (out of the 20 outer London boroughs).

Visitors to Brent libraries have been steadily rising over the past three years. This is due to a number of factors, particularly the comprehensive programme of targeted events and the introduction of free internet access in all libraries. However, although visitor figures are still rising in real terms, an Audit Commission visit in 2006 revealed serious inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the way visitor data was collected in individual libraries. This problem had developed over a number of years. Following this the management team have carried out work to ensure that the collection method is uniform across the service and we are now totally confident that the figures are accurate. These changes have meant that our performance appears to have dropped. Fortunately visitor figures are still rising but the service may fall short of this year's target of 7800 visits per 1000. However, every effort is being made to meet this target. Measures being taken include a continuing programme of events and school visits to all libraries, marketing and promotion of services and redesign of library layouts to encourage active use. Library Managers have individual visitor targets and performance is reviewed on a monthly basis.