



An Chomhairle Leabharlanna



Frontline: Online Training in Reader Development for Public  
Library Staff

Final Report



December 2011





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## 1. Introduction

The *Branching Out: Future Directions* report in 2008 identified the imperative of relevant training and staff development programmes to facilitate the continuing improvement of the public library service in Ireland in the second phase of the national plan. This fundamental requirement centred on support for the public library staff:

In order to ensure that library staff can fulfil their potential, the Steering Group recommended that they be enabled through... training programmes to develop their managerial and information skills. (Ireland. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2008, p.8)

There were further concerns. Detailed recommendation focussed on investing in library staff development in *Branching Out* and identified the need for investment in human resources and for an assessment of open learning tools.

The Standing Committee on Public Library Staff Training and Development established by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (ACL) at the request of the *Branching Out* Steering Group, is charged with the identification of training needs, the sourcing, design and delivery of suitable courses and the recruitment of competent trainers.

In its reports and deliberations to the Standing Committee on training courses organised since the establishment of the Committee, ACL had identified a wide disparity in the participation rates across authorities. There were particular gaps in training in core services and these were common to most authorities and needed a national focus. Priorities were set on the targeted agendas that required urgent attention in the first year of *Branching Out: Future Directions*.

ACL, in consultation with the county and city librarians, agreed that the primary agenda in the training programme for 2008 was to enhance the reader development strategies of local authorities. This being a core focus of all library authorities, the issue also gained traction with the staff. It was a priority and a challenge for all library stakeholders to attract and retain readers at a time when the European trend was towards a reduction in library lending resources. The



use of the Internet and the development of social media were competing for readers' time and focus.

This competition for providing access to content was of particular concern as considerable investment at local and central government levels in better buildings, ICT and stock had led to a better offer for the library user in a range of authorities in the years leading up to 2008. Value for money exercised the minds of senior staff in the local authorities, An Chomhairle and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government as regard stock budgets and competing demands for allocation of resources, including staff. If libraries were not lending stock, the argument went, why should so much materials be purchased and why should we have newer and bigger buildings?

The challenge could be summarised as addressing how to expedite a successful outcome to increased investment. To encourage also further funding support for the improvement of the library service in more communities, deliverable objectives were necessary in terms of increasing the loans of library stock and developing an awareness of the needs of library readers and meeting those needs. The scene was set to address a nationwide promotion of the combined book and multimedia resources held in libraries. There was no disjunction between literature and other content held in different formats. The two could be addressed as complementary and lending levels could increase.

Facing the challenge on how best to provide training to all authorities on print-based material was the primary focus, given the pre-eminence of books. The training should aim to satisfy the following requirements:

- A single course should be chosen/ designed and delivered to suit all authorities
- the course should be fully accredited,
- the course could be delivered at a scale that would be wide-reaching in its influence,
- the course would be offered to all grades,
- the course would be delivered over a in a three year period, and
- the course would by preference be delivered online, to reduce the need to release staff operating at the frontline.



Having researched local government take up of online training in local authorities in Ireland for precedents as to best practice, there was no roadmap. Furthermore, no online course on this topic was on offer in Ireland at the time. It was necessary to review the market in such courses offered overseas and through the medium of English.

The most suitable course identified by ACL was the Frontline course. The course is accredited by the United Kingdom Skills Council. Co-funded by the library authorities and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, all thirty-two library authorities subscribed to Frontline in 2008 for the three-year period and the subscription expired in June 2011.

ACL agreed with the local authorities, in partnership with the county and city librarians and the Department to co-ordinate the roll-out of Frontline. Frontline would be available to public library staff in all library authorities in a three year programme to be completed between 2008 and 2011.

The management of this pioneering programme provides a roadmap for other online learning for public library staff, and staff in other library sectors. This could be equally applicable to other staff in the local authorities, and in the civil and public sectors. The results could be equally cost-effective and provide beneficial outcomes if appropriate weight is given to the issues highlighted in this report and to the requirements for appropriate training.

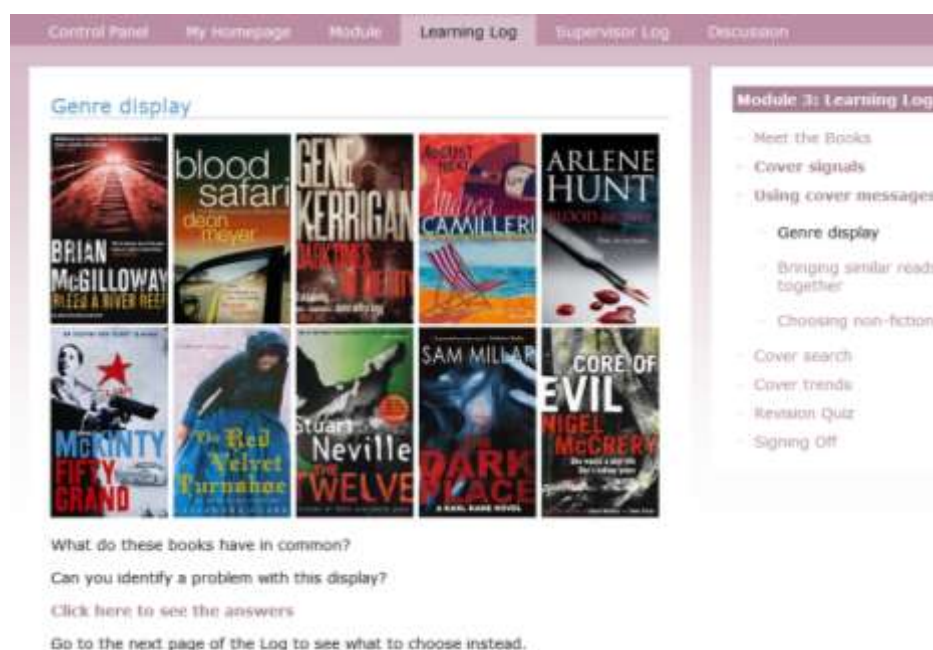
It is not possible to provide such a level of participation in these straitened times without consideration of online learning options, having regard to the need to maintain frontline services in a time of reduced staffing levels.



## 2. Course description

Frontline is an interactive online course aimed at library staff and developed in the UK by Opening the Book (OTB). OTB has extensive experience of designing and delivering reading development training courses. 97% of public library services in England have availed of the course, together with all public library services in Wales and Northern Ireland, and the take-up of the course in Scotland's public library services is growing. The State Library of Victoria in Australia has engaged in a three-year programme to roll out Frontline to 850 staff in library services across the state.

*Figure 1: a page from the Frontline course website.*



The course was adapted for the Irish public library context by Opening the Book in co-operation with An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, Fingal County Library, Mayo County Library and South Dublin Libraries. We wish to thank these library authorities for their support in this regard.

Frontline can be taken anywhere, at any time, in variable timeslots of five minutes to two hours. It can take as little as twenty-eight hours over a period of one month to complete the course, and participants simply need internet access and an email address to participate in the programme.





Frontline is structured in seven modules (see Appendix 6). Modules 1-4 can be taken as a self-contained short course for those who cannot be released to undertake the complete course. Modules 1-4 explore the needs of a variety of reader interests, the difference between personal attitudes to reading and the job-related skills of working with books, the power of reader-to-reader promotion and the importance of stock awareness. Modules 5-7 cover techniques and the value of displaying books and delivering and monitoring a small-scale promotion to an identified audience.

## 2. Participants in the national roll-out

591 public library staff in Ireland took part in the national roll-out in the three years up to June 2011, including thirty co-ordinators. The training of the co-ordinators was completed in 2008, and then followed by the enrolment of the other staff in the programme as shown in *Table 1* below.

*Table 1: Staff participation in Frontline*

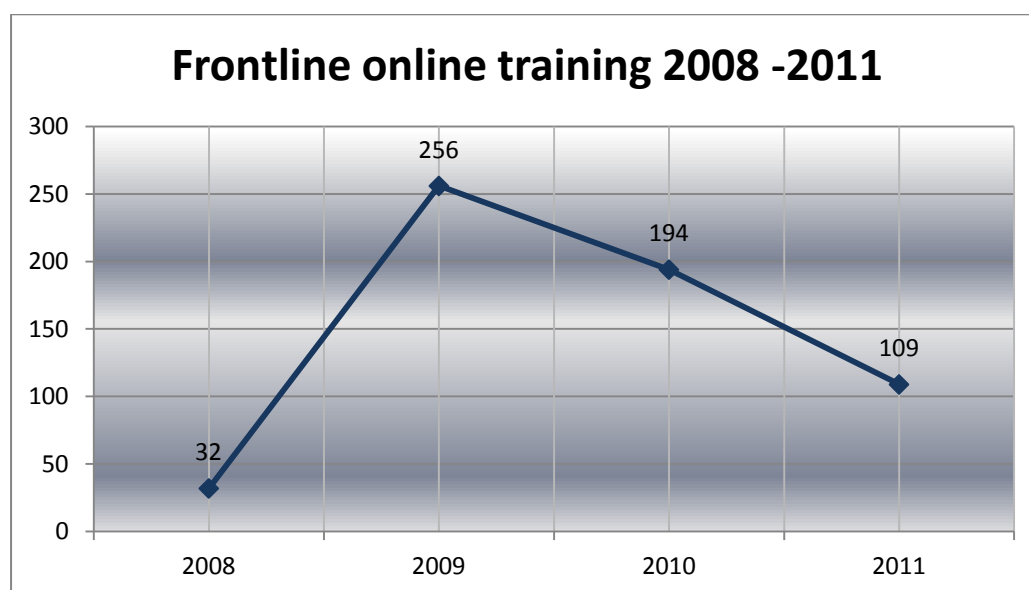
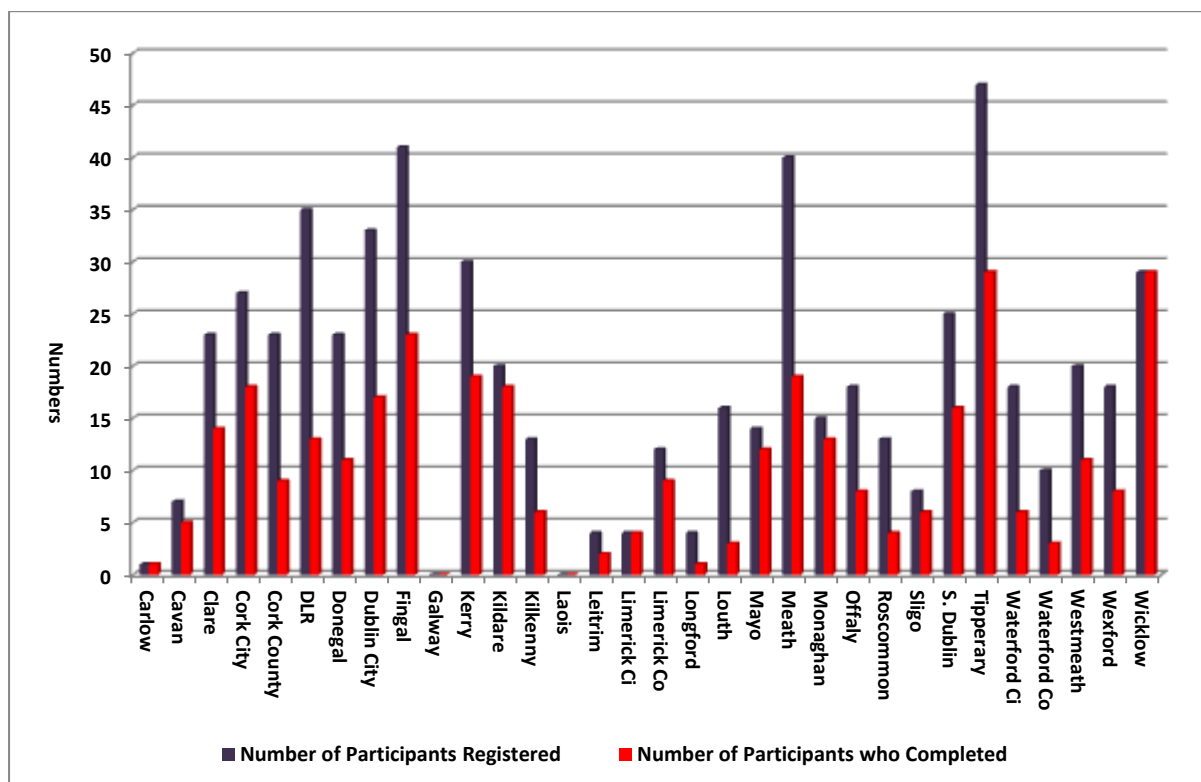


Table 2 below records the breakdown of participants in each authority and the ratio of staff who completed the programme in the timeframe. Each library authority provided the course for its own library staff with at least one co-ordinator acting as supervisor (see below).

*Table 2: local authorities' participation in Frontline*



337 trainees completed the course, with a further 254 in training (as of November 2011). Of the 337 trainees who completed the course, fifty-seven have gained the mentoring skills associated with supervising colleagues and thirty-one are co-ordinators who received training and were well supported by Opening the Book. These skills will benefit authorities and the individual staff. Such support should also provide the possibility of including further support to internal staff development programmes from within the authority. In a time of competing economic challenges in budgetary terms, such support would yield significant outcomes.

Twenty-four library authorities have re-subscribed to the Frontline course to date (as at November 2011) in order to ensure that staff may complete the course. Due to this re-subscription, 214 of the 254 participants who had not completed the course by the end of the subscription period under review will be able to do so. This re-engagement by two-thirds of the library authorities is funded by local authorities. OTB has provided a reasonable rate to the authorities and the rate of potential completion is to be commended. Table 2 (over) records the



engagement and re-engagement of the twenty-four library authorities which have re-subscribed to the course.

*Table 2: Subscription renewals*

Library Authorities Re-subscribing to <i>Frontline</i>					
Renewed to July 2012 by library authority	At 30/6/11 No of trainees registered	At 30/6/11 No. of trainees completed	Renewed to July 2014	At 30/6/11 No. of trainees registered	At 30/6/11 No. of trainees completed
Cork City	27	18	Carlow	1	1
Cork County	23	9	Cavan	7	5
Donegal	23	11	Clare	23	14
Dublin City	33	17	Fingal	41	23
Dún Laoghaire/ Rathdown	35	13	Leitrim	4	2
Galway	0	0	Limerick City	4	4
Kerry	30	19	Meath	40	19
Kilkenny	13	6	Sligo	8	6
Longford	4	1			
Offaly	18	8			
Roscommon	13	4			
South Dublin	25	16			
Waterford City	18	6			
Waterford County	10	3			
Westmeath	20	11			
Wexford	18	8			

### 3. Impact and quality of learning

Trainees who have completed the course are invited to publish feedback on their training experience and value of the course for their work on the Frontline site. Overall the feedback has been very positive and live feedback from staff who completed the course is available at <http://www.openingthebook.ie/feedback/>.

As part of the recognition of staff commitment to the training, Opening the Book awarded the 'Frontline Trainee of the Month' distinction to four Irish participants



in the period under review. Deirdre Whooley of Cork County Council's Clonakilty Library and Tommy Fahey of Waterford City Council's Ardkeen Library received the award during 2010 and Eimear Sullivan of Sligo and Una Mathewson of Donegal County Council during 2011.



*Una Mathewson, Donegal; Eimear Sullivan, Sligo; Veronica Whooley, Cork County; Tommy Fahy, Waterford City.*

Library authorities also reported positive feedback from library users in branches where Frontline has been put into practice.

#### **4. Feedback from participants**

Three months after trainees successfully complete either the short or full version of Frontline, each participant is furnished with a short questionnaire which asks what he/she remembers best from the learning and what impact, if any, the course still has on their day-to-day work. The library elements of the learning retained from the course and what difference it has made to the practice, the library and the borrowers is also queried (see Appendix 5). Completed questionnaires are emailed automatically to their co-ordinator and also to Opening the Book.

The feedback from this small survey for the year 2010 has been analysed, as follows:

- 100% of those surveyed reported that display and promotion in their libraries had improved;
- 75% reported that they were more confident in talking to readers about books that they themselves would not read;



- 85% reported that readers had chosen something new for themselves as a result of their promotional work in Frontline;
- 50% said that they increased their stock knowledge as a result of taking the course;
- 99% said they enjoyed the course and found it really useful.

In 2011 92% of trainees interviewed for an MA thesis on Frontline rated the course as excellent. This was a result from a separate survey and supports the findings of the Frontline initiated results.

## 5. Monitoring and support



**Frontline co-ordinators November 2008**



**Anne Downes, Opening the Book**

Opening the Book and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna monitored progress on how the authorities made the best use of the course and reported on this to the Standing Committee on Public Library Staff Training and Development and to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on a regular basis throughout the three year programme.

An Chomhairle, in co-operation with Opening the Book, organised yearly workshops for Frontline co-ordinators. In 2008 events for thirty participants were held at two venues in Dublin and at one in Cork. In 2009 a workshop was held in the County Library, Tallaght where twenty-three participants attended, while in 2010 co-ordinators from twenty-eight library authorities attended the workshop and shared their experiences of the roll-out.



*Frontline staff meeting September 2010*

Library staff also reviewed the value of the Frontline online training on reading development at the closing meeting organised by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna in September 2011 (see Appendix 2). The event took place in the recently refurbished Rathmines Library and was attended by representatives from twenty library authorities. Further feedback has been received by email from the balance of the authorities. This concerted view forms the basis of this report.

An Chomhairle thanks all the authorities for their participation and also the host authorities for providing the venues and valuable support. The OTB final report is attached as Appendix 1 and gives further detail on the energy and drive which infused those who took part. We wish to thank Opening the Book and in particular Anne Downes, for the professional timely and valuable support throughout the three years to the library authorities and to An Chomhairle.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations**

The introduction of Frontline, the first Irish online training programme aimed at local authorities and public library staff on a nationwide basis, has led to an unprecedented take-up in this format by library authorities in Ireland. Some 600 library staff participated in the national roll-out of the programme.

At the closing event in September 2011, Margaret Hayes, Dublin City Librarian, reported that the

Frontline training develops both staff confidence and competence in talking to clients, recommending materials, creating exhibitions and expanding their own reading horizons.



She pointed out that, with the implementation of the course,

The customer choice has increased and more books are offered in different ways. This is broadening the choice for readers, providing easy access to a wide variety of books and tempts them to borrow more. (See Appendix 3 for her full report).

Brendan Martin, Wicklow County Librarian, reported that both staff and users benefitted from the training in his library authority. He noted that completing the Frontline course requires more hours than was suggested by the training providers. He recommended that thought should also be given to what stock is displayed in order to make the most out of the course (see Appendix 3 for the slides of his presentations).

Dave Corcoran from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government also spoke at the meeting reporting that the 'increasing number of library users over the term of the programme and since is a testament to staff contribution and engagement'. He concluded his presentation by 'thanking staff for participating in Frontline and taking the programme in a challenging environment of fewer staff' (see Appendix 3 for the slides of his presentations).

The results of this pioneering approach met the aims set by ACL and the Standing Committee, as outlined in the introduction to this report and are summarised below:

- This was the first national rollout of an on-line course for public library staff, a learning curve for the local authorities and An Chomhairle;
- Staff flexibility and commitment was a major factor in its success;
- The importance of managerial support to staff release and completion was crucial;
- The course represented excellent value for money at an average of €203 per participant;
- Display and promotion standards were improved in those libraries where staff had completed the course. In Wexford County Council, trainees were consulted on the layout of Gorey library;
- Positive feedback on the content, on the roles undertaken by OTB and ACL, and on the learning modules was recorded on the online facility

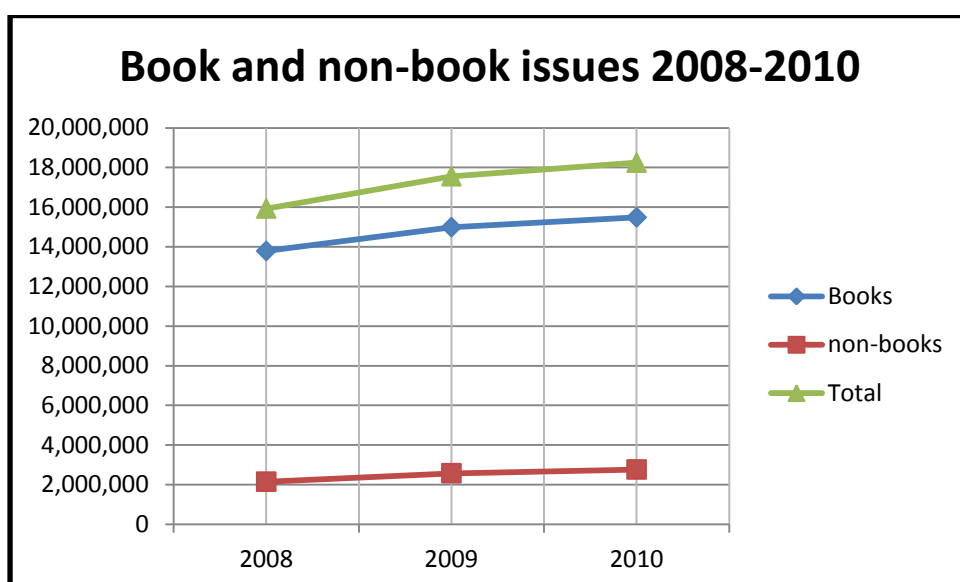




and also in a survey undertaken for an MA thesis for School of Library and Information Studies, UCD;

- The course boosted staff morale and improved their confidence in dealing with customers and promoting the stock, including setting up new promotion initiatives and opening new horizons for book clubs;
- The level of library lending increased during this period. Even in a time of reducing budgets and competing demands including stock requirements, the number of loans increased in libraries where Frontline techniques have been put in practice.

*Table 3: books and non-book issues 2008-2010*



- Figures collected by ACL for the Public Lending Remuneration Scheme show that loans of books increased by 7% over the period of the Frontline course as shown by *Table 3* above;
- A better knowledge of display techniques has enabled staff to suggest new designs for current display furniture. It was suggested that companies might consult library staff before finalising their products;
- Access to extra modules for Frontline graduates was valuable feature of the course;
- Planning support for further reading development is a core requirement for library staff.





An Chomhairle considers that the decision to support this programme has yielded tangible benefits to the staff, management and users of public libraries. 337 staff completed the course. 254 are continuing the programme to date. A minimum completion rate, as outlined by the authorities, of 539 staff at the end of 2014 is considered to be a conservative estimate.

The additional value to be gained in the renewal of subscriptions by the majority of library authorities is testament to its support. The online learning delivery and support by the providers as part of library related training has demonstrated its usefulness to staff by a range of library grades. The co-ordinators' role cannot be underestimated and their feedback has been positive. This was a new role for these staff and the flexibility demonstrated is appreciated.

The insight gained also into the learners' needs in online learning has been valuable when supporting online learners in the library for the public. This present offer available through the library authorities ranges from following courses such as the participants in the FÁS e learning at the library programme aimed at late adopters to the Internet, the NALA Write on 4 work course for jobseekers to courses of progression for the independent learners at all levels who are negotiating the printed and electronic resources available through the library service.

An Chomhairle considers that the lessons learned through the programme are applicable to the wider local government staff aiming to meet other training requirements. Library staff could assist the Training Officers and participants with their concerns in either planning future online support or in advising on best practice in undertaking such courses. The successful take up has undoubtedly been achieved through the positive feedback from colleagues and chief librarians and the encouragement that the successful graduates have imparted to their fellow learners. This is amply illustrated in the comments recorded in the appendices and on the live feedback facility on the Frontline programme website.

The underlying needs of systemic supports for such concerns as accreditation, focussed outcomes, staff support and concerted management have been addressed and resulted in a speedy roll-out of practical support delivered directly



in the workplace to the library staff. The programme will continue to provide positive results in the second phase underway at present and up to 2014.

## **References**

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## **Appendix 1. Opening the Book Final Report**

### **Frontline in Ireland**

#### **July 2011**

The three-year partnership project to supply Frontline online training to all library services in Ireland comes to a close on July 1st 2011. This report reviews the experience of Opening the Book and looks at the future use of the course in Ireland. A round-up of the detail of user numbers at 1st July 2011 is attached to this report.

#### **Usage**

Of 32 authorities, only 3 have been unable to make any use of the course. Of these, one lost their first co-ordinator just after she finished her training and could not replace her. Another could not find a member of staff able to finish the course online with Opening the Book. The third has been unable to nominate a co-ordinator for the course at all to date, but, owing to some delays at the start, have been offered an extra year free of charge.

Where there have been difficulties, Opening the Book has offered to help in a variety of ways and tried to ensure that we do everything we can to help authorities get best value from the training.

Rates of use in the remaining 29 library services have varied. Some authorities trained staff at a steady rate over the life of the subscription. The participation rates of other authorities varied: some services were able to train all the staff they wished during the subscription whilst others found that on-the-job training took longer to fit into normal working routines.

A total of 337 certificates were issued during this period. Of these 57 graduates have gained the mentoring skills associated with supervising the learning of their peers. There were thirty one co-ordinators trained and supported by Opening the Book. There are 254 currently users of the site, making a total usage of the site by 591 people over the three year period. 30 trainees were deleted from the site over this period.



Library authorities have adopted different strategies to using the short version of the course: certificates were issued for the short course. Most authorities have used the full seven modules, with staff taking the short version depending on their circumstances. Some have led with the short version at first, moving people onto the full version if they showed enthusiasm or were able to take the time within their job.

Taking these final figures into account and the total subscription charge for all authorities Frontline has cost of £163 sterling per head. We see this as extremely good value for a supported course that has embedded new practice and had visible impact on libraries and some reported influence on issues.

### **Strengths**

One of the major advantages of the rollout of Frontline in Ireland is that it has been so strongly supported by the Library Council. The national reach, the relationship of respect with library services and the widespread contacts that the Council shared, helped the course get piloted and widely adopted early on in the project.

The support of the Library Council allowed for a thorough pilot and smoothed a mid-term upgrade of the site. The strategy and support from the Council enabled us to set and negotiate the first deadlines with co-ordinators. This ensured that the use of the course got off to a good start in the majority of authorities.

The two rounds of meetings that the Council organised and supported with Opening the Book were supplemented with regional meetings for co-ordinators. This created the face-to-face support and discussion that made sure that standards were shared and maintained across all users. The meetings opened up discussion and stimulated new approaches to using the training. They also facilitated discussion of how to measure the impact on staff, libraries and the service for readers. The meetings were very valuable in boosting confidence and cementing the learning network.



The strategies we devised with the Library Council taught us how to advise others with very large rollouts across geographical and political divides, for instance Victoria State Libraries in Australia.

The other marked feature of the roll-outs in Ireland has been the hard work and dedication of the co-ordinators, the majority of whom have worked really hard to support the learning and get the course and its impact widely recognised by their colleagues. In particular the co-ordinators who helped us pilot the course Paula Leavy McCarthy in Mayo. Kathleen Ryan in Fingal, Catherine Gallagher in South Dublin County Council gave invaluable help right through the three years.

We have also had the opportunity of discussions with other co-ordinators over the period and have had enthusiastic support from so many.

In comparison with our experience of rolling out the course in the UK, there were very few technical problems for individuals or for services to access all the features of the course. IT support to co-ordinators within their own services seems to have been high. Where site problems have occasionally occurred, we have been able to fix them within twenty-four hours of them being reported to us.

In authorities where the co-ordinator was able to involve other managers, or the training officer in their roll-out strategy and link the learning experience of trainees with wider staff appraisal systems the training seems, from our viewpoint, to have been seen to have more impact and to have rolled out faster.

Most co-ordinators reported that Graduates were often their best advocacy tool with their colleagues. We heard or saw no negativity from trainees, although individual authority co-ordinators would be able to report more fully on this.

The face to face meetings organised by the Council gave the best opportunity for coordinators to share standards, gain confidence and gain new ideas from others. They were a valuable foundation and prime stimulus to the use of the open offer of such support by email from OTB.

We see the excellent rate of re-subscription as a vote of confidence in Frontline.

Barriers to progress



Frontline is vocational, on-the-job training for staff working directly in the library and, as such, encounters problems where rotas and daily work routines need to accommodate the learning tasks. A lot of the work is done away from the counter, and in libraries where staff need to be behind one most of the time, the training has taken time to do.

In the majority of services the training took a long time for a Trainee to finish, some taking over a year to do seven modules that we advise are completed in seven to eight weeks. There are many reasons for this. Floods, holidays, babies, illness and chronic short-staffing were some of them. This would have reduced the enjoyment of some trainees, as it is better to work through quickly, to an agreed deadline.

It is inevitable that the pace of the training has slowed as staff losses in libraries increase and spending cuts bite. Some library services could not provide adequate furniture to house effective displays of books and so some Trainees were not able to embed new skills so easily. One or two co-ordinators were not able to attend the face to face meetings, or send representatives, which meant that they missed out on that vital support.

Just as in the UK, we gained the impression that some co-ordinators found it hard to get recognition for their role and to get the training noticed within their own structures. Some reported that it was difficult to find good opportunities for advocacy.

There was a need to show some impact to make a case for wider use of the training, but of course the learning needed to be done before the impact could be measured and reported. If our experience in the UK is repeated in Ireland, impact will be more clearly seen over a longer time period.

### **Impact and Quality of learning**

Approving work and maintaining the quality of learning is the responsibility of the co-ordinators. However, we have had several opportunities to sample the work being done on the course, but not in all authorities. We have looked at specific work when asked to and at work being done in authorities where co-



ordinators have needed our opinion or our support for various reasons. We also look at the first Trainees supervised by co-ordinators.

The majority of our sample were achieving good standards that equal those achieved elsewhere. co-ordinators are being careful to issue certificates to those achieving good work. Some Trainees struggled, but most misunderstandings appear to be being put right by Supervisors. We can be confident that Frontline Trainees share a standard across the country and that a certificate denotes a shared level of skill not only across Ireland but also the UK.

We can supply no evidence of the impact of the training in library services or the new skills being used by staff, as this can only be measured within the authorities themselves and we have had only one report sent to us, despite requests to share any such information.

This was from Sligo libraries who saw a dramatic increase in issues of targeted stock as a result of one Trainee's experiment as a result of a task on the course that was measured over a six month period.

co-ordinators who have extended rollouts and supervisors are generally making good use of their online Experience Bank – a place to record their guidance for Supervisors to assess the work of their Trainees. This ensures that if the co-ordinator gives up the role, their expertise and advice is not lost to the next person to take it on.

From the feedback from those graduates who responded three months after the issue of a certificate, it would seem that the training has been useful, lasting, practical and invigorating. Graduates tend to report an improvement in their display skills and the look of their library and a confidence in approaching borrowers to talk to them about their reading.

We will archive all users' records and their work in the library authorities which are not taking up a subscription at the current time and should they decide to return to using the course at a later stage, the data will be available to the participants as they left it as of 1st July 2011.



## **Appendix 2. Frontline closing meeting**

(21st September 2011, Rathmines library Dublin)

### **Frontline: 3 Years on**

21st September 2011, 1.30 pm - 4.30 pm, Rathmines Library, Dublin 6

The introduction of the Frontline online training on reading developing aimed at public library staff has led to an unprecedented take up by library authorities in Ireland. Some 600 library staff participated in the first phase of the programme. This pioneering approach agreed between County and City Librarians, local authorities, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government was implemented over the years, 2008-2011. The pilot was co-funded by the library authorities and the Department and managed by An Chomhairle. An Chomhairle is preparing a report for the Standing Committee on Public Library Staff Training and Development to inform future directions in this format. An Chomhairle invites each library authority to send a representative to this half day debriefing to give their views on its value and to plan for the future. 22 authorities to date have agreed to offer the 28 hour course, accredited by the UK Skills Council to their staff in the second phase of the programme.

Aims of the event: Participants are requested to focus on the outcomes of the online training including the following actions:

- To review the take up of the Frontline programme in each authority;
- To share experience on the impact and to evaluate the Frontline offer for public library staff nationwide;
- To plan the future of use of Frontline and to provide guidance on optimizing the results in the second phase from 2011 onwards.

### **Programme**

1.30 Registration

2.00 Welcome: Norma McDermott, Director, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.





2.15 Dublin City: from a rocky start: opening doors to reading development, Margaret Hayes, City Librarian, Dublin City Council.

2.30 Frontline on-line training: an alternative in challenging times, Brendan Martin, County Librarian, Wicklow County Council.

2.45 The Department of the Environment's view, Dave Corcoran, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

3.00 Frontline: local roll-out and impact. Tour de table with each library authority's co-ordinator participating.

4.15 Closing remarks, Norma McDermott.



## **Appendix 3 Presentations at closing meeting**

(21st September 2011, Rathmines library, Dublin)

### **Dublin City: from a rocky start: opening doors to reading development**

(Margaret Hayes, Dublin City Librarian)

Why? Driver; The classic The Five Laws of Library Science (Ranganathan 1931) were created by Shiyali Ramamrita (SR) Ranganathan. These laws offer principles and objectives for the organisation, access to and use of library materials.

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader, his book.
3. Every book, its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. A library is a growing organism.

**Philosophy:** Frontline training delivers on these five principles and equips staff to deliver the core public library objective of bringing people and books together. Library staffs in the Frontline of service delivery are critical mediators and advisors to library clients.

**Policy:** *Branching Out* Recommendations for action: 2.4 In order to ensure that library staff can fulfil their potential, the Steering group recommends that they be enabled through quality facilities, technological enhancements and training programmes to develop their managerial and information skills .

It also recommends a target per capita spend on collections and the development of collection development policies. The recess has made it difficult to deliver on this objective.

DCPL Business Plan – To promote Dublin as a literacy city and to support the development of a reading culture



**Experience:** We had worked with Rachel Van Riel of Opening the Book and were impressed by her enthusiasm and expertise in the area of creating reader friendly places. The co-ordinating role of the Library Council also endorsed the quality of the programme and ensured efficient and effective management of the project.

**Context:** Dublin City Public Library (DCPL) Service is experiencing year on year increases in loan figures, with 2.1 million items borrowed in 2010. This is taking place against a difficult budgetary environment with a corresponding decrease in book budgets, at 3.19 (3.31) per capita for 2011 from a position of 4.69 in 2009. Branching Out target of 3.77 not reached.

Critical additional points for consideration by DCPL :

- It is critical that our collection development is policy driven and strongly client focused.
- Value for money can be achieved through the competitive procurement process, but
- ensuring that the materials chosen are read and borrowed is the key service outcome and impact required.

**Rocky road:** Responsibility for Frontline was assigned at too senior a level within the organisation to a staff member with already extensive brief. Organisationally, the introduction coincided with the designation process for Dublin as a UNESCO City of Literature.

Initially the uptake of Frontline training was very disappointing. The situation was reviewed. It was decided that a champion at an appropriate grade in a Frontline service location would be assigned to promote and encourage staff to avail of the training programme.

Librarian Susan McDonagh was identified as a suitable candidate for this role. There has been a marked improvement in the uptake of Frontline amongst our staff since she assumed the role, and given the positive results, the decision was taken to renew the Frontline licence.

## **Current status**



- 50 staff members have completed or are currently completing Frontline. All grades from Library Assistant to Senior Librarian are represented in the training.
- 20 trainees have completed the full course and 3 have completed the short course.
- 27 staff is currently completing the course.
- All staff who completed the full course became supervisors. Every trainee who completed the full course took on at least one trainee, most have taken on more. 15 staff is currently acting as supervisors, of whom 4 are continuous supervisors.

### **Roll out and Supervision**

- Frontline has now been rolled out in all of the DCPL branches except for two locations (Phibsboro and Ringsend). At least one member of staff has completed or is currently completing Frontline in all of the other branches.
- Branches that were not yet involved in the training were targeted by the Frontline Champion and encouraged to sign-up at least one member of staff.
- Where staff has completed the full course, the Frontline Champion encourages them to become supervisors. The role of supervisor is clarified to them i.e. that they do not train staff (Frontline does this) but rather they provide support to trainees to help them get the most out of the course.

### **Experience**

- Initial hesitation with regard to signing up for the training programme because of concerns about how time intensive it may be and how it may impact on other duties and responsibilities
- Concern that priority would be given by branch managers to the completion of Frontline by their staff in assigning rosters and rotas
- Concerns amongst supervisors about pursuing trainees who are not progressing adequately



- Concerns amongst supervisors with regard to having to ask a trainee to redo a task that was not completed satisfactorily, especially where the trainee is of a higher grade

## **Responses**

- Where possible, relief staff is assigned to locations to allow trainees more flexibility and time to do the training.
- Branch managers are reminded that Frontline is a core training objective and of the need to provide support to trainees amongst their staff. The Frontline Champion encourages branch managers on behalf of trainees who may be experiencing local scheduling difficulties.
- All branch managers are now being encouraged to undertake the training themselves and then to act as champion for the training amongst their own staff.
- The Frontline Champion advises and, if necessary, intervenes on behalf of supervisors who are experiencing difficulties with their role. If a supervisor finds that the role does not suit them, the Frontline Champion does not assign anymore trainees to them.
- Benefits for staff
- Frontline training develops both staff confidence and competence in talking to clients, recommending materials, creating exhibitions and expanding their own reading horizons.
- Staffs also gains an insight into client behaviour, browse patterns and preferences which helps staff in arranging and configuring dynamic changing points of interest throughout their library.
- Staff experience learning in the online learning environment and can proceed at their own pace. This also gives them an insight into the challenges faced by clients studying in an online environment.
- Frontline offers value for money, at home training with technology tools provided. This is critical when releasing staff for formal training is difficult and when training budgets are under pressure.
- The support of colleagues is critical to helping students, recourse to blogs, shared directories etc



- Many graduated have joined the library's online blog, where staff recommend books online

### **Benefits of Frontline for clients**

- Increased customer choice: more books are offered in different ways. This broadens the choice for readers, provides easy access to a wide variety of books and tempts them to borrow more.
- The Library stock is organised in a more manageable and user-friendly way. Research from Opening the Book shows that
- Most customers find Library shelves overwhelming and have great difficulty browsing.
- 75% of borrowers choose by browsing and only 25% know what they want and how to get it.
- The average duration of a visit to a Public Library between 5 and 10 minutes.
- Frontline makes browsing easier and faster for borrowers.
- Equal Access: all books, borrowers and their preferences are treated equally. The library is more accessible and inclusive.
- Invisible borrowers benefit: borrowers who are not comfortable approaching the staff or who do not have the time.
- Added value for borrowers: borrowers are consulted and offered a platform for their opinions.
- Three of our branches now have self-service and a critical element of this is that it frees up staff to talk to, help and advise customers. Frontline is an important factor in ensuring that staff have the requisite skills to do this effectively and with confidence.

### **Future steps**

- Aim is to recruit twenty more staff to take on the training programme by the end of October 2011
- To hold a meeting centrally with all branch managers at which the Frontline Champion will report and staff who've completed the programme will give positive testimonials of their experiences
- To include Frontline in all team plans for 2012



- Include Frontline training in Induction training
- Create shared drive space on the DCC intranet for sharing experience
- Hold a formal receipt of certificates occasion for staff
- Progress application for LAI CPD accreditation

### **Extracts from testimonials by Frontline graduates of Dublin City Public Libraries**

Frontline is a useful course for library staff – it allows for new ways of seeing, and a different perspective on things we take for granted in our local branches. For instance, that people always know what they want when they come into the library, but more often than not people are willing to try new things, if they're presented in the right way. The course also shows you that people like to read what other people read – recently returned books always being very popular and word of mouth and reviews making something very much in demand. Frontline also makes you think about your audience when it comes to displaying stock, as different styles of books appeal to different groups. Of course, people do read outside their typical book style, but the course shows that this in of itself is a target group.

*Allayne Cassidy, Library Assistant, Central Library*

I enjoyed my borrowers' participation in the course and I know that they enjoyed our chats which included recommendations that I did avail of and enjoyed as part of this course.

*Paul Doyle, Library Assistant, Walkinstown Library*

One of the main things this course has helped me with is recommending books to customers. I always dreaded being asked this before, but am much more comfortable with it now that I know I don't have to have read a book to be able to recommend it. I find myself getting into conversations about books and reading now with customers much more often than I used to.

*Sonya Magee, Library Assistant, Pearse Street Library*



The most unexpected benefit to me wasn't even part of the course proper. The discussion board is a great place for library staff to talk to people working in other libraries in other authorities and other countries. Just hearing how familiar problems were viewed and handled in a different ways can inspire you to look at issues anew. What worked and what didn't. The discussion there was, for me, as illuminating as the course work itself and something I am still going back to on a regular basis.

*Eoin Dardis, Library Assistant, Central Library*

Reading is part of my job now. I don't read books cover to cover but I make sure I read the summaries on the back so I know what kind of a book it is and I can recommend it to a borrower who doesn't know what to read next. The training has also reminded me to be impartial and non judgemental of a borrowers reading preference.

*Eileen Gogan, Library Assistant, Relief Panel*

Frontline is like having a number of building blocks. The ability to put each of these blocks together by the end of the course can help the participator gain confidence and experience in dealing with readers and exhibitions.

*Brid Ni Laoithe, Librarian, Central Library*

### The Frontline Experience

As a recent graduate of Frontline I was delighted to hear that Dublin City Libraries is offering the course for another year. I started Frontline around this time last year and am now acting as a supervisor. I am learning as much by supervising others as I did when taking the course myself.

I was attracted to Frontline by the stated aim of the course which is that each trainee would acquire extra knowledge and skills to make the library a more reader friendly environment.

It's all about introducing readers to new reading possibilities and 'marketing' or promoting books through attractive displays and word of mouth messages that can be inserted into various books.





Probably the best way to explain how it all works is to give a brief description of my own experience.

Frontline is an online course the whole way through. You do your work online, you communicate with your supervisor online (although you can also have phone contact) and you participate in an online Discussion Board. Basic computer skills will get you through the course as it is very user friendly. It also introduces you to some interesting websites.

Module 1 is about talking to borrowers by asking a few open ended questions about how they choose books and how they use the library. The only difficult part of this module is getting started and I procrastinated for at least a month, which was not at all necessary because borrowers were more than willing to talk about their favourite books and how they found them.

I interviewed five borrowers ranging from a seventeen year old to a seventy five year old, males and females, and these interviews bore out the statistics arrived at through research, which are as follows:

- 75% of fiction borrowers choose their books by browsing;
- 25% know what they want and are able to find it;
- Few people visiting libraries ask the staff anything;
- 5 to 10 minutes is the average length of time for a library visit;
- No one under 40 would choose a hardback over a paperback;
- The returns area can be responsible for up to 50% of issues
- The majority of visitors to the library look at the returns section first.

Through these interviews I encountered first-hand the variety of readers who visit libraries and the different ways in which people use libraries.

Module 2, for me, was the most enjoyable because it involved my own reading preferences and prejudices! We are probably all aware of our preferences but may not be so aware of the variety of books we never read – books we would regard as 'bargepoles'. Frontline insists that we



bury our own prejudices because all sorts of books are attractive to a variety of people. I realised that I never read fantasy, science fiction, vampire books or anything to do with the paranormal. On this module I was lucky enough to talk to a borrower whose taste in novels was quite different to my own and who left me feeling that I was missing out on a whole world of heroism, drama and escapism by not getting lost in a fantasy saga. I am not saying I am going to change my reading habits, but I do know a lot more about what makes fantasy fiction, with all its sub-genres, work for so many people.

Modules 3 and 4 were about the visuals and clearly demonstrated that, contrary to the popular cliché, many people do in fact judge a book by its cover. Most borrowers examine the cover, even if only, as one reader said, 'to filter stuff out'. Many younger borrowers are well tuned in to the visual media and probably have higher expectations about visual presentation. Previously I would have insisted that I never judged a book by its cover – it was always by author, word of mouth or reviews. But after these two modules I was not so sure, as I witnessed how a cleverly designed cover could put a book to the top of the pile. Colour, design, font, blurbs and spine all unite to give an instant impression. Modules 3 and 4 culminated in a small book display that put into practice what had been done online. The key concept here was 'target audience' which involved distinguishing between different types of readers mainly according to age group but many other possibilities were suggested, for example a display targeted at those who use the computers. Face-on displays were encouraged and trainees examined online many different displays with commentary on each one.

At this stage trainees may opt out of the rest of the course and will have completed the 'short version'. I recommend, however, doing the full course because it goes deeper and you have the option of becoming a supervisor. That may sound like a lot more work but so far I find that being a supervisor is not time consuming and it keeps me in touch with the Frontline approach.



Module 5 is about spreading the word about a book, in acknowledgement that 'word of mouth' is a powerful way of promoting a book: we probably all remember 'We need to talk about Kevin'; more recent examples are 'One Day' and 'The Hare with Amber Eyes'. Instead of 'word of mouth' we can insert personalised comments into well-chosen books.

Modules 6 and 7 examine the library as a physical space with its own strengths and weaknesses, encouraging trainees to examine this space with a more critical eye, perhaps seeing some potential for change. Module 7 culminates in a display for a target audience chosen by the trainee in consultation with his/her supervisor. Frontline is committed to research findings that a well-chosen range of books, face-on in a prominent position, is the most effective way to help more readers discover something new for themselves. The course encourages mixing narrative non-fiction with fiction. This final display draws on all the skills acquired in the previous modules, including managing the display and drawing on the advice and good will of other staff members and manager.

Finally you are awarded with a certificate and an invitation to become a supervisor. The latter, of course, is optional but it is a good of communicating with others and staying in touch with the Frontline approach.

Overall this was a stimulating and positive experience for me – one which I would strongly recommend to anyone who is curious about how a library works.

*Maureen Meleady, Finglas Library*



## **Appendix 4. Example of a report by co-ordinators at final meeting**

Frontline Online Training Programme – Report 27.10.2011, Marianne Lynch, Donegal County Library

Donegal County Library consists of 41 staff (not including clerical/general operatives):

The current state of training is:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Yet to start</b>
7 modules	6 completed	2 Active	
4 modules	7 completed	18 Active	1 Yet to start

With 6 staff currently operating as Supervisors, and with still 8 months left of the contract, I expect all remaining staff to have completed the training by June 2012.

In general, the course demands one hour per week with each module requiring four hours. Hence, the objective is one module per month. In the vast majority of cases, this has not happened. It has taken trainees much longer to complete the course. The reasons for this are varied: maternity leave, promotion, change of work location, staff shortages and increased workloads. In addition, a hands-off approach adopted by the Coordinator and Supervisors allowed for great flexibility, but also therefore longer completion times.

No staff member has refused to undertake the Frontline training, all staff are aware that it is compulsory, but not all feel positive towards the course. It is not seen as a priority by many and this affects the time it takes to complete modules.

All line managers have agreed to allow time for Frontline training on the job, but only Central Library has a formal staff rota where a Frontline training period can be scheduled. One Supervisor is also a Line Manager and has noted that 'I am



very aware of giving them time and it is paying off as two of three have their modules completed.'

Errors and omissions have occurred when trainees are trying to complete Frontline Learning Logs while simultaneously working at front desk. Work entered has not been saved as the site times out while they are dealing with customers. Many trainees have reported doing the course at home. Since this is delivered as on-the-job training, this aspect would need to be reviewed.

Feedback from 6 Supervisors was requested on two levels – as a Trainee, and as a Supervisor. Their comments are as follows:

**From a Trainee's perspective:**

PRO	CON
<i>Firstly I enjoyed the course</i>	<i>It was often very difficult to get the time to do the course at work</i>
<i>I enjoyed engaging with the public and listening to their opinions and views on reading materials</i>	<i>I am very aware of giving them (scheduled) time and it is paying off as two of three have their modules completed.</i>
<i>I really loved the coursework and thought the content was very work-centred and the ideas certainly work in a very practical way.</i>	<i>Possibly 7 modules were too long. Although a module a month sounds fine it was hard when working in a very busy Library. I found I did my work at home</i>
<i>I do not think the Frontline course is difficult, it is just taking the time out and making it a priority</i>	<i>I did the seven module course and I thought it was extremely long. Trying to fit it in around other duties was really challenging and I ended up doing quite a lot at home</i>
<i>It questioned my beliefs about other people's reading experiences</i>	<i>I felt that there was too much reading and writing involved and</i>
<i>It was most interesting how I had pigeon holed people by material choices</i>	
<i>I enjoyed the discussion board as it let me talk to other trainees</i>	
<i>Made me think about how people use the</i>	



<p><i>library</i></p> <p><i>It made me think more about Library users and their needs</i></p> <p><i>I always suggest the whichbook website to people when they are stuck for a new author or title</i></p> <p><i>Learned tips on how to display stock e.g. It showed me how to exhibit a display naturally positioned in front of issue desk or a prominent position- eye catching (2 supervisors comments)</i></p> <p><i>Made me aware of marketing techniques from a library perspective</i></p> <p><i>Frontline forced me to interact with the public in a more direct manner and I think this has helped me in being more reader aware/centred.</i></p> <p><i>I feel more confident in recommending titles to customers</i></p> <p><i>Because of the course I now realise that displays/promotions are a great marketing tool e.g. how readers will chose what they think is popular as it is on the desk; Older stock has had to work harder and Frontline has helped immensely. (3 supervisors comments)</i></p> <p><i>No module was difficult but each was a challenge.</i></p> <p><i>Easy to complete the course without</i></p>	<p><i>not enough practical element to the course. Even with the introduction of the 'short course' I still feel that there has to be some way that more practice in creating displays can be built into it...</i></p> <p><i>It was off-putting when you submitted a module and it took the approver a week or more to approve the module – Its nicer and more encouraging to get a response within a day or two of submitting a module</i></p>
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*assistance or guidance.*

*The tasks are relevant to my day-to-day work.*

*It's a practical course where you can see the benefits from when a display goes well.*

*A lot of the material in the course is common sense, but unless you think about it you may not necessarily use it.*

*Out of all the courses offered over the years this is the one that most directly impacts on your daily work. It makes you think about customer service, about how books work and how you can best utilise what you have in stock. In these challenging economic times it is more important than ever to offer a quality service to the public even on limited resources. Frontline provides the tools to do just that.*

*Receiving positive feedback and comments from your supervisor throughout the course is very motivating.*

*Good support from supervisor and acknowledgement of continuing supervision.*

### **From a Supervisor's perspective**

PRO	CON
<i>It is easier for me as a supervisor to keep track of 1 trainee at a</i>	<i>I find it hard sometimes to motivate my trainees due to staff shortages in their</i>



<p><i>time rather than multiples</i></p> <p><i>The course should be easier for all as it is reduced to 4 modules now.</i></p> <p><i>I think the shorter course is better and trainees do not feel under as much pressure to complete the course in the specified time frame.</i></p> <p><i>The one trainee I've had has been very positive and eager so it was no hassle.</i></p> <p><i>I'm looking forward to looking at the Frontline refreshers to get a few new ideas when I get a chance</i></p>	<p><i>Libraries</i></p> <p><i>As a supervisor I find that getting the trainees motivated is the biggest issue.</i></p> <p><i>It creates more work for me to do at a time where there is less and less staff.</i></p> <p><i>As a supervisor now myself I can see the frustrations; waiting on modules to be submitted etc...</i></p> <p><i>It can be time consuming as you need to understand what it is the trainee has to do before you can leave a comment on the supervisor's log</i></p> <p><i>I am not enjoying being a supervisor, I feel I don't have enough knowledge of the Frontline course to "critique" the trainees on but I am committed to it and I will see it through.</i></p>
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7 library staff have not undertaken Frontline training (Co. Librarian; 2 SELs; 4 ELs).





## **Appendix 5. Feedback examples from individual Frontline Graduates, 3 months after certificates were issued.**

### **Cork County**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *Frontline evaluated my job as librarian and showed how important it is to make the public library more user friendly.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *I expect you to find me a good book each time I come in.* The reader gets this service all the time!

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *It taught me that I must be neutral in my choices of authors for my customers.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *A trolley is now permanently placed in front of issue desk to promote a "quick pick" for the reader.*

### **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *I will remember what I learned about how to make displays look more attractive and that they can be more effective by being aimed towards the needs of a particular type of borrower.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *A reader said that she was very pleased with the convenience of and attractiveness of a quick-pick section that I had made from the doing the course.*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *I am now more aware of the needs that different borrowers who use the library have and I try to arrange displays with these different needs in mind.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *There is a lot more face-forward display of books in the library than before and a lot of attractive looking books are displayed apart from the general stock.*

### **Limerick County**



If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *people like to express views.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *She liked a book of the month, and would never have tried that author, only it was on display, as such.*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *Assessing a book for a reader, who might ask for a suggestion, to suit them?*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *More books on display, and changed regularly.*

### **Sligo**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *Learning how to make visually appealing displays.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *Something along the lines of 'I didn't even know you had these, makes sense really, but I never thought to look for them!' (cookery books).*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *I feel more confident at spotting genres by the covers and am more aware of the differences and links between different genres, I'm more aware all round and I also feel better able to recommend books to customers even if the content wouldn't appeal to me.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *A stronger focus on display, forward facing books etc. The main display area that I set up is still in use and it attracts a lot of positive attention and issues a lot of books.*

Any other comments? *I still think about what I learned on the course virtually daily, so I feel it was extremely useful.*

### **Waterford**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *The sudden realisation that good-looking paperbacks look better and move faster than anything else!*



One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *My book of the day display prompted a good few discussions at the desk about what constituted a good book.*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *Being more conscious of how a display looks and is presented, not just what it contains.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *More targeted displays for certain demographics/library users.*

### **Cork City Libraries**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *I really enjoyed the "moving book cover" exercises it was great to make you think about the types of displays that are effective.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *Most people preferred 'less is more' displays and face out displays and quick pick displays.*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *It made me more aware of patrons and their needs in relation to choosing books.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *Themed displays, and book displays that are clearer I hope!*

Any other comments? *I enjoyed the course. Its greatest achievement is to make us all aware of what we do with books, how we display them and to make us aware that we have to listen to our patrons to find out what it is they are looking for when they come to a library.*

### **South Dublin Libraries**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *The importance of selecting stock with different types of reader in mind, rather than trying to cover everybody.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *Become a more regular repeat borrower.*



One difference that taking the course made for me was: *Greater awareness of the importance of book covers in 'selling' a book to readers.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *a greater emphasis on the display of books, allowing the books to speak for themselves without lots of additional frills.*

Any other comments? *Some people had to be told that it was OK to take the books from the display, they thought they were for display only!*

### **Tipperary Libraries**

If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *I really enjoyed asking readers about their book choices. Now, I regularly ask if a reader enjoyed a book they are returning. It has opened up a dialogue with our borrowers.*

One thing a reader said/did in reaction to the work I did on the course was: *When I interviewed readers, some mentioned there being too much choice and that they didn't know where to find things. From this, I'm more conscious of keeping recommended books and books in the media on display - mixed in with other titles of course!*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *The course has made me more aware of how the library can be viewed - by library users and people who don't use the library regularly. I'm conscious of making it a welcoming place, both in how it looks and staff demeanour.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *More thought is now put into book displays. I have moved away from the confines of a genre type display and am now, hopefully, giving readers more choice from the displays.*

Any other comments? *I really enjoyed doing the Frontline course because it was about the Frontline job of any library – promoting reading and meeting the needs of our borrowers. It gave a lot of practical tips, which I still use.*

### **County Sligo**



If there is one thing I will remember about doing the Frontline course, it is: *More interaction with customers regarding what books they read. Learning to be more creative with book displays.*

One difference that taking the course made for me was: *Not to be too narrow minded about what people read. For example the older woman who read science fiction.*

One change that borrowers might notice in my library as a result of Frontline is: *The layout of display books. Books facing front out attracting more readers. Different displays throughout the library, and themed displays depending on what time of year it is.*



## **Appendix 6. Frontline course contents**

Modules 1-4 can be taken as a short course.

Modules 1-7 constitute the full course.

### **Module 1: Readers**

- Introduces the fundamental principles of active reader-centred work
- Discusses why and how libraries can widen choice for readers
- Main task is to talk to 5 different borrowers about how they choose what to read
- Gives support on who to approach, what to ask, how to use what they say
- Explores a reader-centred website and considers how to use it in the library
- Introduces the trainee to the international network on the discussion board

### **Module 2 : Library staff**

- Main task is to explore the difference between personal reading and the job-related skills of reader-centred work with books
- Looks at the impact of staff views about books, including the views of those who think of themselves as non-readers
- Explains the difference between recommending and promoting books
- Shows how to promote books trainees haven't read and don't want to read
- Shows sustainable ways of talking to readers in order to increase stock knowledge

### **Module 3: Books and audiences**

- Introduces ways to improve and update stock knowledge by learning to analyse book covers
- Main task is to practise understanding book cover signals and how books are targeted to readers
- Shows how to use this knowledge to choose which books to promote
- Gives support on testing this with practical tasks in the library



#### **Module 4: Displaying books**

- Explores the importance of browsing to 75% of library customers
- Demonstrates how to use book covers to make effective displays
- Shows how displays help borrowers choose
- Main task is to make a small face-on display and monitor how it issues
- Gives support on locating a display and using existing shelves, tables, dump bins and stands

#### **Module 5: Reader-to-reader**

- Introduces ways to use readers' recommendations
- Main task is to undertake one small, instant promotion which uses the power of reader recommendation from a choice of four
- Resources and print needed for the promotions are downloaded from the site
- Gives support on locating, monitoring and extending the promotions

#### **Module 6: Targeting a promotion**

- Introduces how to target a small-scale reader-centred promotion
- Discusses how to differentiate reading audiences and meet different needs
- Main task is to identify one target audience, consider their needs and plan an appropriate location in the library for a promotion
- Practical exercise in analysing the trainee's own library space from a reader's point of view

#### **Module 7: Running a promotion**

- Introduces how to identify and manage stock for the targeted promotion
- Main task is to set up, run and monitor the promotion
- Gives practice in different evaluation techniques
- Exchanges promotional ideas and results in an international discussion forum
- Summarises and tests what has been learned