

Have your say

Wirral Libraries Strategy Public Consultation Report



Consultation: 28 June to 20 September 2021
Report: 5 November 2021

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1.0 Executive Summary

Public libraries are trusted, free to enter and open to all, they are safe spaces and are gateways to literature, information, knowledge, and opportunities. They play a crucial role in ensuring the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities. They help jobseekers find opportunities, offer courses and digital skills training, provide essential support to people applying for welfare benefits, and provide spaces in which people can be creative. They can act as venues for concerts, exhibitions, or performances, and enable groups with shared interests to meet. Public libraries can provide information about health and health services, and reading well programmes, as well as being neutral spaces for third sector organisations to provide information and advice.

Wirral Council is developing a new Library Strategy with an aim to modernise our libraries to ensure that they meet today's needs, targeting our resources to where the local need is greatest. We want to ensure that we deliver best value through pooling resources across the public and voluntary sector wherever possible. We will aim to create community hubs, with libraries as an integral part to enhance services for our communities and enrich resident's lives.

The Library Strategy consultation was designed to obtain the views and ideas of residents and stakeholders to inform the development of the new Library Strategy.

The public consultation focused on a number of different themes. Information was requested about current libraries to find out what facilities and services worked for residents, and which don't. People were asked what would improve the service including things such as better book collections, more eBooks and eAudio availability, event space, dedicated work and study pods or digital creative spaces for video editing or gaming suites. Residents could also feed in on ideas on who should run the library and if a community managed library is something they would like to be involved with.

All feedback will be used to develop the final version of the Library Strategy for the next five years and help the council offer a sustainable library service that meets the needs of the community both now, and for future generations.

A summary of key findings is set out below.



1.1 Key Findings

1.1.1 The Questionnaire

- A total of 1,562 survey responses were received, 1,073 online responses to the survey, 459 paper copies and 30 Easy Read forms. All the responses have been amalgamated and are reported on as a whole.
- 90.8% of respondents stated that they were Wirral residents.
- Bebington and Greasby, Frankby & Irby areas of Wirral were, equally, the most well represented areas of Wirral. Clatterbridge & Claughton were least represented (0.9% each).
 - Amongst under 16-year-olds, Bebington (22.2%) was the most represented area.
- 89.9% of respondents overall are library members. Of those respondents aged under 16, 52.2% are library members.
- 93.6% of all respondents and 71.4% of under 16s have visited one of Wirral's libraries or used the Home Reader service.
- The libraries that are most used by respondents are:
 - West Kirby Library (11.8%)
 - Wallasey Central (11.6%)
 - Bebington (11.2%)
 - Birkenhead Central (10.9%)
 - The libraries most used by under 16s are Birkenhead Central (37.5%) and Bromborough (18.8%).
- The most common frequency to use the library is once a month (40.4%) followed by once a week (33.8%).
 - Under 16s were also most likely to visit the library once a month (31.6%).
- The most popular mode of travel to the library was on foot (65.4%), followed by car (43.9%).
 - Under 16s were also most likely to travel to the library on foot (73.7%) and by car (57.9%).
- The most prevalent reason by far to visit the library is to borrow and return books (89.9%), and this is also reflected amongst under 16s (80.0%).
- A café (51.1%) was the most prevalent thing that respondents would like from their library both overall (51.1%) and amongst under 16s (53.3%).
- Most respondents provided an 'other' reason that they do not use the library (40.9%) which was predominantly that their local library is closed due to Covid-19 restrictions (15.0%).
 - Most under 16s (44.4%) cited their main reason for not using the library service as that they do not live close enough to a library.
- In common with question 9, The most popular service that would make respondents want to use the library are café facilities (54.5%), followed by events for adults (36.4%) such as talks or author events.



- Under 16s would also like a café (50.0%), as well as creative spaces (40.0%).

The online library

- The majority of respondents both overall (70.5%) and under 16 (84.6%) do not use the online library.
- Amongst those who do use the online library, the most common reason is to download e-books (64.3%).
 - Under 16s are most likely to use the online library for research purposes (75.0%).
- The majority of respondents, both overall (61.1%) and aged under 16 (66.7%) used the online library more during the last year.
- 74.9% of overall respondents will continue to use the online library, however the majority of under 16s (57.1%) stated they would not continue to do so.
- The top services that people would like to access from the online library are a wider variety of book genres (53.9%) and an increase in the numbers of e-book titles available for loan (52.7%).
 - Under 16s would like archive information, a library service app and streamed film (40.0% each) from their online library.
- The main reason that people do not use the online library is that they do not like to read e-books or listen to audio books (34.8%).
 - Amongst under 16s it is that they were unaware of what services they could access online (31.6%).
- The most desired service on the online library is archive information (38.4%) such as old photographs & soundbites, followed by an increased availability of e-books – more items available to loan of each item (29.3%).
 - Under 16s wished for a wider variety of eBook genres to be available (30.0%).

Libraries Service

- The majority of respondents, 73.2% of respondents felt positively about the service provided by Wirral Libraries. Most under 16s thought that the service was good (50%) or very good (11.5%).
- Most respondents either strongly agree (50.5%) or agree (37.7%) that the library staff are helpful and knowledgeable. Under 16s also agree (82.4%) or strongly agree (11.8%).
- Most respondents either strongly agree (59.1%) or agree (31.0%) that they feel welcome and safe at the library. Under 16s also agree (41.2%) or strongly agree (41.2%).
- Most respondents either strongly agree (56.4%) or agree (34.0%) that they feel the library service is useful. Under 16s also agree (47.1%).
- Most respondents either agree (32.2%) or strongly agree (24.7%) that the library opening hours are helpful.
- Under 16s neither agree nor disagree that opening hours are helpful (37.5%).

- Most respondents both overall (38.8%) and under 16 (43.8%) neither agree nor disagree that they feel confident accessing the online library.
- Reading (reading groups/challenges/books) was deemed the most important service, gaining an average rank of 1.51 (where 1 is most important and 4 is least important), with 19.8% of overall respondents and 19.0% of under 16s ranking it as 'most important'.
- The type of library that most respondents felt would be most suitable for the library that they use the most is a Neighbourhood Library (48.8%). Conversely, under 16s preferred the Central Library option (42.1%).
- Respondents predominantly thought that community groups (58.9%) and volunteers (56.1%) could support the council to deliver the library service. Under 16s thought that volunteers, (46.2%) could support the council.
- Most respondents both overall (70.6%) and aged under 16 (52.9%) would not like to be involved with running a library.
- Most respondents felt that they would be able to help the library service a few times a month (42.8%) or once a week (36.3%). Under 16s can mostly help once a week (40.0%).
- The most prevalent type of support that people indicated that they would need to get involved with a community managed library both overall (47.3%) and amongst young people (50.0%) was additional facilities.
- 360 people, including 2 under 16s, provided contact information to enable follow up discussion regarding volunteering, 23.0% of the total respondents.
- Respondents were asked if they had any further comments or ideas about the draft Library Strategy or how the library service can be improved to meet their needs. The top theme was to open libraries (32.0% of the comments). Many respondents were requesting that libraries that have been closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic are opened, some were saying keep libraries open in general, and some were saying that local libraries are needed.

1.1.2 Ideas Board

71 contributors submitted or commented on 66 ideas to the ideas board tool. Visitors to the board were able to 'vote' for ideas that they liked. Common themes amongst the ideas were:

- Events (41 Ideas) – respondents suggested events they wanted at libraries including: children's events, more courses, guest speakers / authors
- Facilities (17 ideas) – café facilities, agile workspaces, and to improve computer access and support
- Staffing (13 ideas) – use some volunteers, paid staff needed
- Open libraries (10 ideas) – open libraries after the Covid-19 closures, keep libraries open in general, local libraries needed
- Community hub (10 ideas) – libraries should be community hubs
- Books (9 ideas) – greater variety of books needed, concentrate on books, rotate books.



1.1.3 Events and Stakeholder Sessions

A number of events were held in the community and key stakeholders. The key findings are outlined here:

Community Events Held Near Closed Libraries

Key themes:

- That libraries were seen as an essential service and important community hubs for social interactions and to support people including those experiencing loneliness and mental health issues.
- Those involved would like libraries to be re-opened post Covid-19 and to stay open. They would like a greater variety of books available and better use of space within libraries.
- That buildings were outdated, and some had poor appearance and that more funding was needed for libraries.
- Respondents also noted that communication with communities about the libraries, their opening times, and the offer available in libraries could be improved.

Specific Engagement with Young People

At specific engagement sessions in two schools, key findings include:

- 52% of those asked (14 out of 27 students) had never used a library.
- 25% of those asked (18 out of 72 students) still used a library.
- 14% of those asked (10 out of 72 students) were aware of the online library.
- 4% of those asked (1 out of 27 students) used the online library.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

- Public accessibility of libraries was important.
- Public transport was important to users with disabilities, so libraries with good public transport links were key.
- Wirral Evolutions model of work experience and employment for people with disabilities could be possible through Library cafes.
- The Autism friendly libraries message was not being conveyed to the community and could be improved.
- The value of the Home Reader Service was noted.
- There may be potential for health partners in Wirral to link residents they worked with to library services, with a focus on supporting their health and wellbeing and to improve people's use of digital technology.



2.0 Methodology

A range of engagement methods were developed to collect feedback through different routes to optimise the engagement approach and to enable access to all those who wanted to take part.

2.1 Summary of Engagement

To help shape the Library Strategy and delivery model options, a public consultation was carried out using Wirral Council's 'Have Your Say' consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk.

To inform people about the engagement key documents were published on the webpage and were available for download. These included an overview of the consultation and a set of Frequently Asked Questions, the Draft Library Strategy, and an easy read version of the survey. The questionnaire was published on the website to allow residents to answer the questions online. To ensure accessibility respondents were able to request paper copies of the survey and an easy read version. Paper copies were made available in different venues and any groups could request a set of copies as required. In addition, people could contact the team directly and submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the Have Your Say site.

An ideas board was available online where participants could both submit their own ideas and interact with other people's ideas by 'liking' and commenting on them.

In addition to these tools a series of events and key stakeholder sessions were offered and held to allow people to talk directly to Library Staff, get their questions answered and feedback their views and comments. This included sessions in the community, in schools, with Council staff and at specific stakeholder meetings.

At six week and nine-week periods during the consultation the responses received were analysed in relation to the demographics of responses at those time points. Following this analysis communications were reviewed and targeted to specific areas and through different communication methods to different age groups. The aim was to maximise the reach of the engagement and ensure that all residents interested in providing feedback would be able to engage.

Library Officers were in contact with the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). Two meetings took place with the DCMS on 21st May 2021 and 18th June 2021 to update on activity and to provide an informal check on the approach and methodology to the consultation.



2.2 Questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire was developed to enable participants to share their views about Wirral Libraries and the draft Library Strategy.

The public consultation focused on several different themes. Information was requested about current libraries to find out what facilities and services work for residents, and which don't. People were asked what would improve the service including things such as better book collections, more eBooks and eAudio availability, event space, dedicated work and study pods or digital creative spaces for video editing or gaming suites. Residents could also feed in on ideas on who should run the library and if a community managed library is something they would like to be involved with.

Paper copies of the questionnaire were available at Wirral's Libraries and could be provided on request as required. Questionnaires were available for people to complete at all the planned events. All Home Readers that could be contacted within the engagement period were provided with a survey and letter explaining it. Direct engagement with all Wirral schools enabled young people to access paper copies as it was possible that they were less able to engage online due to the requirement to provide an email address.

1,073 online questionnaires were completed and submitted. 489 paper copies of the questionnaire were received as well as 30 easy read forms. These responses were aggregated into the online survey results to ensure the views were represented in the final analysis.

2.3 Ideas Board

The Ideas Board was set up to allow respondents to submit their own ideas about the draft Library Strategy, these could be approved and commented on by other members of the public. The information provided was reviewed and coded based on content and a set of themes were identified to allow reporting. 71 contributors submitted or commented on 66 ideas to the ideas board tool.

2.4 Events and Stakeholder Sessions

The Library Strategy engagement approach utilised a range of different methods to ensure that all who wanted to engage would be able to be involved in the opportunity.

Alongside the questionnaire and Ideas board, a range of events and opportunities for discussion were available. The planned events were spread across a wide range of venues throughout the Wirral to enable accessibility to residents and stakeholders from different areas. Opportunities for meetings were offered to a range of key stakeholders to enable residents and stakeholders



to be involved in discussions, ask questions, and provide their views. The events and planned sessions included:

- In Libraries that were open staff raised awareness of the engagement, could answer any questions, and provide questionnaires.
- Events were planned across the Wirral near to closed Libraries (see Table 1).
- Young People engagement with a specific focus on schools.
- External Key Stakeholder Meetings were offered and held (see Table 2).
- Library Staff and other Council Staff engagement.

2.4.1 Engagement in Wirral Libraries Open During the Consultation

Some of Wirral’s Libraries were open during the engagement period. In these Libraries staff were able to raise awareness of the engagement with Library users. They signposted people to the online tools, provided paper copies of the questionnaire as requested and were able to answer any questions raised. All the questionnaires completed in Libraries were collated with the online responses.

2.4.2 Engagement held near to Wirral Libraries Closed During the Consultation

Due to Covid-19 several Libraries were closed during the engagement timescales. As a result, a series of other venues near to closed Libraries across Wirral were used to hold engagement events. Table 1 lists the venues and dates events were held. The aim was to ensure all who wanted to engage would be able to be involved in the opportunity. The events were publicised through numerous communication channels.

Each event allowed discussion of the draft Library Strategy, people to raise any questions, to discuss options and ideas for libraries in the community and to input their ideas on the future of Wirral’s libraries. Questionnaires were also made available for people to complete. At each event notes were taken, and key themes were identified and collated. The notes from each meeting are included in Appendix 1 and the key themes outlined in the Results section of this report.

Location	Date
Pyramids Shopping Centre, Birkenhead	09/09/2021
Cherry Tree Shopping Centre, Liscard	31/08/2021
Little Beechwood Centre	20/08/2021
St James Centre, Birkenhead	20/08/2021
Heswall (outside library)	19/08/2021
Seacombe Children's Centre	23/08/2021
Heart of Egremont	24/08/2021
Pensby - Kylemore Community Centre	06/09/2021
Leasowe Leisure Centre	28/08/2021



Irby - St Chad's Church	03/09/2021
Moreton - Lingham Park	04/09/2021
Hoylake - Melrose Hall	08/09/2021
Upton - Victory Hall	17/09/2021
Noctorum - St Andrews Church	13/09/2021

Table 1: Community Events Held in the areas of closed libraries.

2.4.3 Specific Engagement with Young People

Alongside community events, to ensure that the views of young people were captured to help develop our future Library Strategy a range of activities were held involving schools and young people. In addition to this young people were able to submit their feedback through the online portal and to engage in the community meetings.

In July 2021 communication, supported by Wirral Schools Library Service, was carried out with all Wirral schools to ask them to advise students of the library consultation and encourage their involvement and to ensure schools could also engage. The Merseyside School Librarian Association Branch were also provided with an engagement process with an offer of Library staff to visit schools and for paper copies to be provided.

To enhance the engagement with young people Wirral Council Library staff offered to attend schools to talk to students. Upton Hall's School Librarian facilitated dedicated engagement sessions with pupils and St. John Plessington took up the offer and discussion groups were held with students in the school and some students completed the survey.

The Hive was contacted to organise sessions with young people, however due to Covid-19 in person meetings were paused for a while and no direct meetings were able to be held. The Hive staff were provided with information about the engagement and how to access it to enable them to share this with young people. Library staff also attended the online Youth Collective to increase awareness of the consultation.

2.4.4 Engagement with Key Stakeholders

In planning the engagement, a stakeholder analysis was undertaken with the aim to ensure that communication was held with all stakeholders who could enhance the findings from the engagement to aid evidence-based decision making.

All identified key stakeholder groups were offered meetings to discuss the library engagement. Key stakeholders included those that were already engaged in delivery of Library services such as Library Friends and Express groups, strategic leaders in Wirral who may provide information in relation to possible co-location options including health and wellbeing partners, and organisations specifically representing key groups such as Together We Are Able.



Library ‘Friends’ and Library ‘Express’ Groups were invited to live events at the Floral Pavilion on the morning and afternoon of 27 July 2021. Questions could be submitted to Library Officers prior to the event or raised on the day. If groups were unable to attend these sessions online sessions were also offered to ensure there was an opportunity for all those who wanted to directly engage to do so.

At each event notes were taken, and key themes were identified and collated. The key themes are outlined in the Results section of this report. Those involved were also signposted to the questionnaire to submit their views and any further thoughts after the sessions.

Stakeholder Group	Date
Delamere Centre	16/07/2021
Wirral Development Trust (Leasowe)	03/09/2021
North Birkenhead Development Trust (St James)	07/09/2021
Together We Are Able	09/08/2021
Supported Living Forum	21/04/2021
Residential Forum	28/04/2021
Domiciliary Care Event	07/05/2021
CCG System Inequalities Group	11/05/2021
Wirral Health and Care Implementation Group	25/05/2021
Bromborough Library Friends Group	27/07/2021
Bromborough Library Express Group	27/07/2021
Birkenhead Friends Group	27/07/2021
Greasby Friends Group	27/07/2021
Greasby Library Express Group	27/07/2021
Irby Friends Group	27/07/2021
Irby Library Express Group	27/07/2021
Pensby Express Group	27/07/2021
Wallasey Central Library Friends Group	27/07/2021

Table 2: Key Stakeholder Engagement and dates of events.

2.4.6 Staff Engagement

A staff programme was developed to ensure meaningful engagement and ensure Library staff were fully briefed on the draft strategy. It also provided an opportunity for staff to get any questions answered, contribute ideas and complete questionnaires.



For Library staff an online session was held, which was recorded. 73 library staff attended the session. A range of questions were asked by staff and questions were answered. There was an opportunity for all staff to email further questions following the event which were answered. Staff were asked to feed in their thoughts and ideas through completion of the questionnaire.

All Council staff were advised of the library engagement through a range of internal communications. Library officers attended all Directorate Management Team Meetings to raise awareness and Library officers were available to speak to groups of staff if requested. Council staff were asked to feed in their thoughts and ideas through completion of the questionnaire.

2.5 Direct Representations

Alongside questionnaire submissions three direct representations were received from specific groups (1) and individuals (2) by email or post. These were specifically about Upton Library and the Birkenhead Reference Service. These representations were reviewed and used to inform decision making by the Library Team. The text of the representations is available in Appendix 2.

2.6 Interpretation of Results

In terms of the results, it is important to note that:

- Percentages have been calculated using the number of respondents to each question as the denominator.
- Some questions are multi-coded, meaning respondents can choose more than one option. Due to this, where a question is multi-coded there are more responses than respondents, meaning total percentages will exceed 100%. Where this is the case the total percent figure is omitted from data tables to avoid confusion.
- Many questions provide an 'Other (please specify)' free text field. Where percentages are stated in relation to 'other' comments, they have been calculated using the number of respondents to the relevant question as a denominator.
- All free text questions that invited respondents to write in comments are multi-coded and therefore add up to more than 100 percent.
- In order that they can be summarised, all free text responses to the public consultation have been categorised using a 'tagging' system based on the main themes arising from the comment. Comments may cover multiple themes, therefore there are more comment categories than comments.
- Young people's (under 16s) responses are highlighted within the narrative.

2.7 Communications

The consultation was promoted in several ways both generally and by signposting specific groups to the part of the consultation most relevant to them. The Covid-19 virus continues to place limitations on our efforts to engage with our local communities however, to raise



awareness amongst as many residents, stakeholders, and business as possible, a full communications campaign, utilising a variety of communications channels, was delivered. This included:

- Organic social media (mix of platforms for corporate and Wirral Libraries)
- Paid for social media (mix of corporate platforms and some posts were specifically targeted areas with low response rate)
- Paid for newspaper ad (ad placed in Wirral Globe newspaper)
- Resident Email (inclusion in 12 editions)
- Press/ Content media releases
- Updates on Wirral View
- Updates to Partners/ Stakeholders
- Outreach through established Covid-19 response cells and Champions Network
- FAQ document
- Artwork (posters, banners, postcards and bookmarks at library sites and community buildings)
- Posts on Staff Facebook Page
- Exec View (Staff Newsletter)
- Staff Intranet

In addition to this, paper copies of the consultation were placed into Wirral's libraries. In areas where the local library was not open for residents to access paper copies, engagement events were set up. These events took place in areas including Heswall, Bidston and St James, Seacombe, Liscard and Leasowe. These sessions were another way to reach non-digital audiences and provide them with a platform to ask questions and collect a paper copy of the survey so they could have their say.

Engagement sessions were promoted using the council's channels – Wirral View, social media, information sent to local press contacts and the residents e-newsletter. Schools were also directly contacted to help increase engagement with the young people. Library engagement posters were placed in several venues to help broaden the reach of the engagement and identified stakeholders were asked to support the promotion and awareness of the consultation. Appendix 3 lists the locations of the posters.



3.0 Results

3.1 Questionnaire Results

Where questions allowed multiple selections, percentages relate to the prevalence of the selected option, rather than as a percentage of respondents. As a result, percentage totals will add up to more than 100% and to avoid confusion, total percentage figures are omitted from tables.

Where questions are single select, where only one option is available to choose, percentages are calculated based on the number of people who responded to that question.

Question 1. Who are you?

90.9% of respondents were Wirral residents.

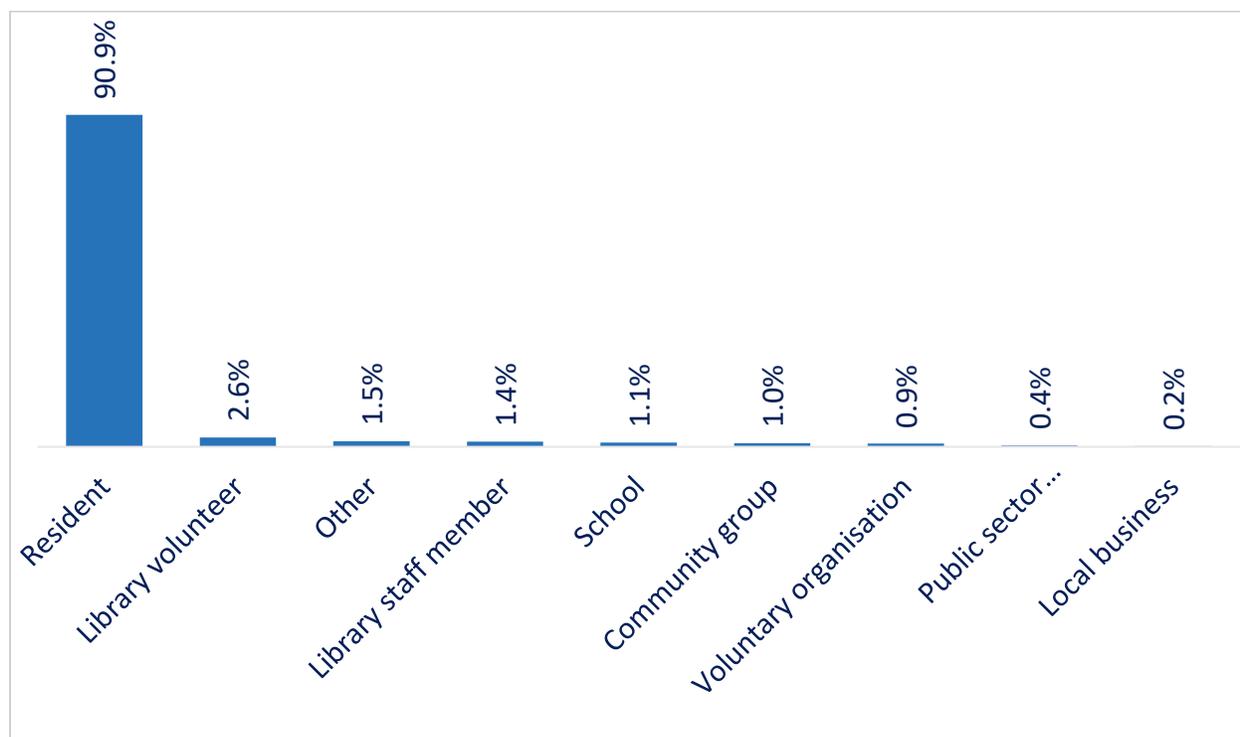


Figure 1: Who are you?

Other respondents included Students (0.7%), those employed, but not living in Wirral (0.1%), 'Friends of' library group members (0.1%) and local councillors (0.1%).

Q1. Who are you?	%	Count
Resident	90.9%	1372
Library volunteer	2.6%	39
Other	1.5%	23
Library staff member	1.4%	21
School	1.1%	17
Community group	1.0%	15
Voluntary organisation	0.9%	13
Public sector organisation/partner	0.4%	6
Local business	0.2%	3

Table 3: Who are you?

Category	% of Q1 respondents	Count
Student	0.7%	10
Voluntary Organisation	0.2%	3
Employed in Wirral	0.1%	2
'Friends of' library group member	0.1%	2
Local councillor	0.1%	2
Community group	0.1%	1
Heritage Canada	0.1%	1
Library staff member	0.1%	1
Local club/group member	0.1%	1
Resident	0.1%	1
Uncategorised	0.1%	1

Table 4: Categorised 'other' responses.

1,509 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 2. If you live on the Wirral, which area of the borough do you live in?

Bebington and Greasby, Frankby & Irby areas were, equally, the most well represented areas of Wirral. Clatterbridge & Claughton were least represented (0.9% each). Amongst those aged under 16, Bebington (22.2%) was the most represented area.

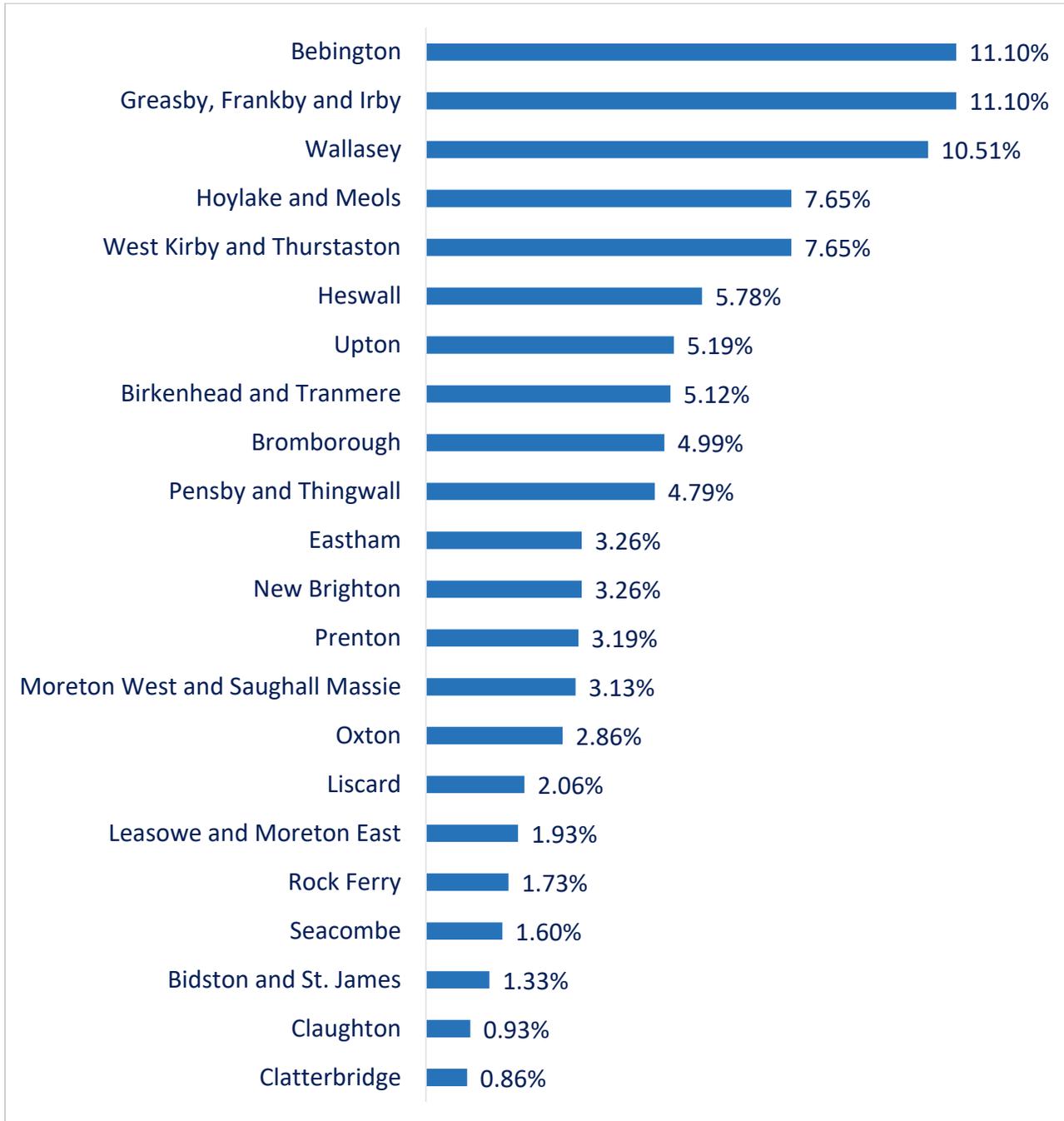


Figure 2: Which area of the Wirral do you live in?

Q2. If you live on the Wirral, which area of the borough do you live in?	%	Number
Bebington	11.10%	167
Greasby, Frankby and Irby	11.10%	167
Wallasey	10.51%	158
Hoylake and Meols	7.65%	115
West Kirby and Thurstaston	7.65%	115
Heswall	5.78%	87
Upton	5.19%	78
Birkenhead and Tranmere	5.12%	77
Bromborough	4.99%	75
Pensby and Thingwall	4.79%	72
Eastham	3.26%	49
New Brighton	3.26%	49
Prenton	3.19%	48
Moreton West and Saughall Massie	3.13%	47
Oxton	2.86%	43
Liscard	2.06%	31
Leasowe and Moreton East	1.93%	29
Rock Ferry	1.73%	26
Seacombe	1.60%	24
Bidston and St. James	1.33%	20
Claughton	0.93%	14
Clatterbridge	0.86%	13

Table 5: Which area of Wirral do you live in?

1,493 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 3. Are you a library member?

89.9% of respondents are library members.

When it comes to respondents who are aged under 16, a lower proportion (52.2%) are members.

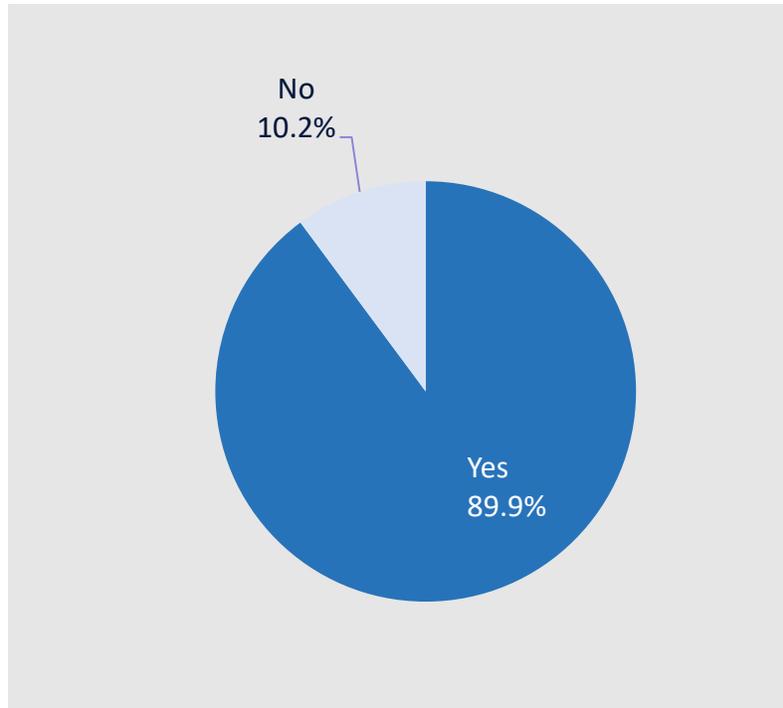


Figure 3: Are you a library member?

Question 3. Are you a library member?	%	Count
Yes	89.85%	1,372
No	10.15%	155

Table 6: Are you a library member?

1,527 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 4. Do you, or have you, visited one of our library buildings, or used the home reader service?

93.6% of respondents do or have visited one of Wirral’s libraries or used the Home Reader service.

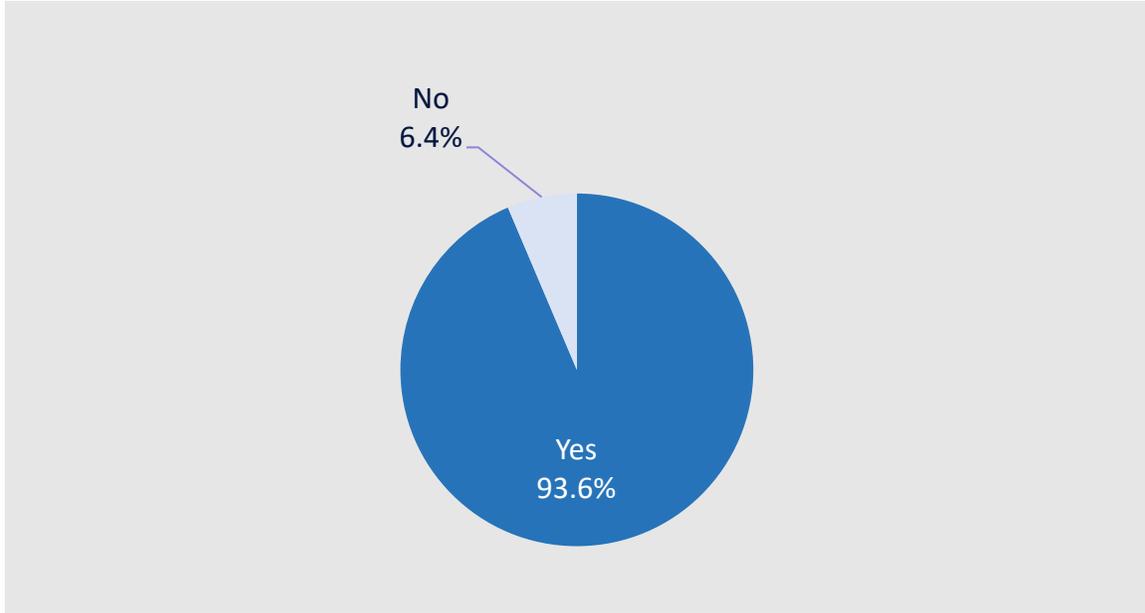


Figure 4: Do you or have you used a Wirral library or the home reader service?

Of those aged under 16, 71.4% had visited a library, or used the Home Reader Service.

Question 4. Do you, or have you visited one of our library buildings or used the Home Reader Service?	%	Count
Yes	93.61%	1,422
No	6.39%	97

Table 7: Do you or have you used a Wirral library or the home reader service?

1,519 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 5. Which of Wirral's libraries do you use the most?

The libraries that are most used by respondents are:

- West Kirby Library (11.8%)
- Wallasey Central (11.6%)
- Bebington (11.2%)

The libraries most used by under 16s are Birkenhead Central (37.5%) and Bromborough (18.8%).

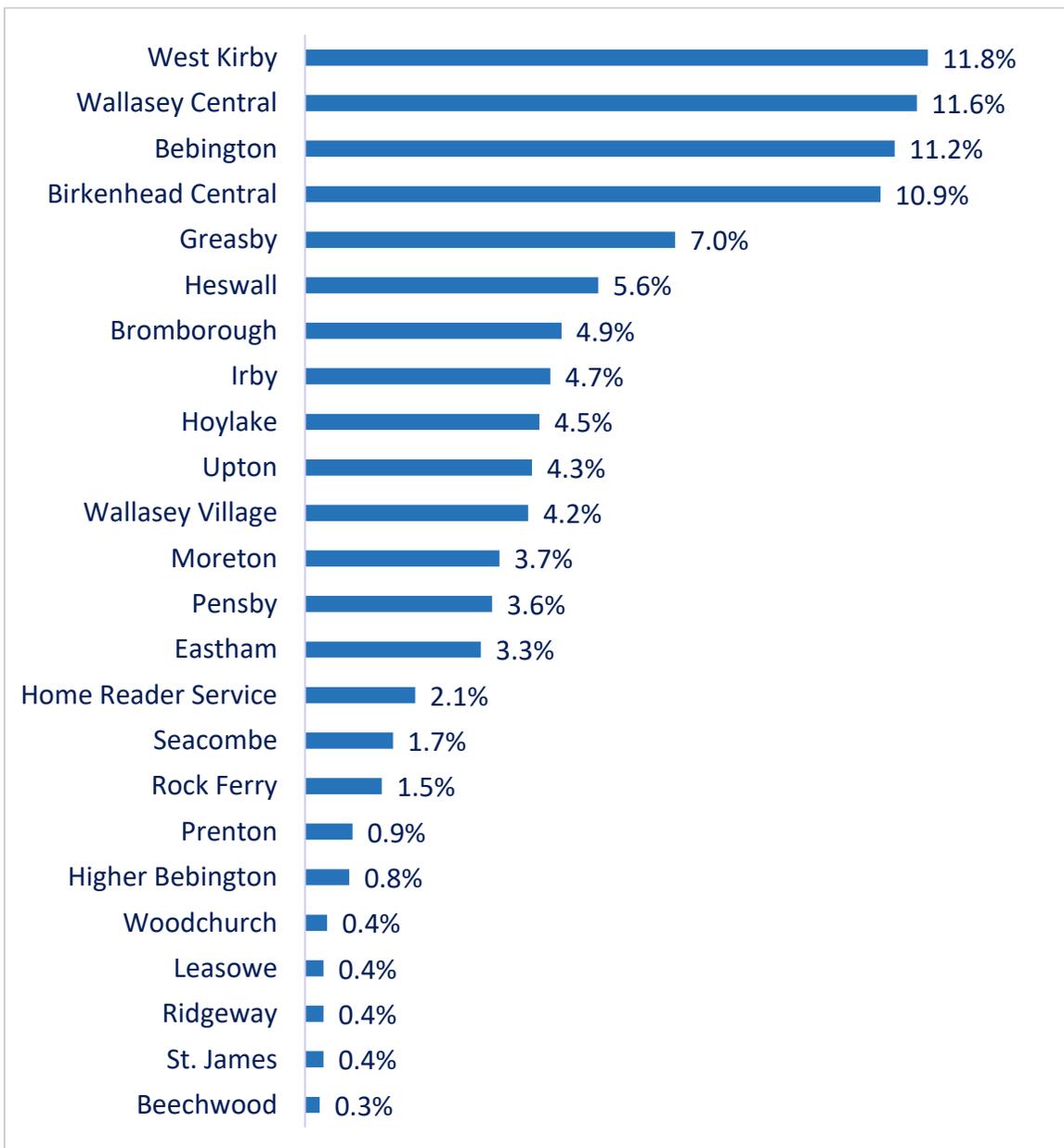


Figure 5: Which of Wirral's libraries do you use the most?

Question 5. Which of Wirral's libraries do you use the most?	%	Count
West Kirby	11.8%	170
Wallasey Central	11.6%	167
Bebington	11.2%	161
Birkenhead Central	10.9%	157
Greasby	7.0%	101
Heswall	5.6%	80
Bromborough	4.9%	70
Irby	4.7%	67
Hoylake	4.5%	64
Upton	4.3%	62
Wallasey Village	4.2%	61
Moreton	3.7%	53
Pensby	3.6%	51
Eastham	3.3%	48
Home Reader Service	2.1%	30
Seacombe	1.7%	24
Rock Ferry	1.5%	21
Prenton	0.9%	13
Higher Bebington	0.8%	12
Woodchurch	0.4%	6
Leasowe	0.4%	5
Ridgeway	0.4%	5
St. James	0.4%	5
Beechwood	0.3%	4

Table 8: Which of Wirral's libraries do you use the most?

1,437 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 6. How often do you use the library?

The most common frequency to use the library is once a month (40.4%) followed by once a week (33.8%).

This is reflected amongst the under 16s who also most commonly visit the library once a month (31.6%).

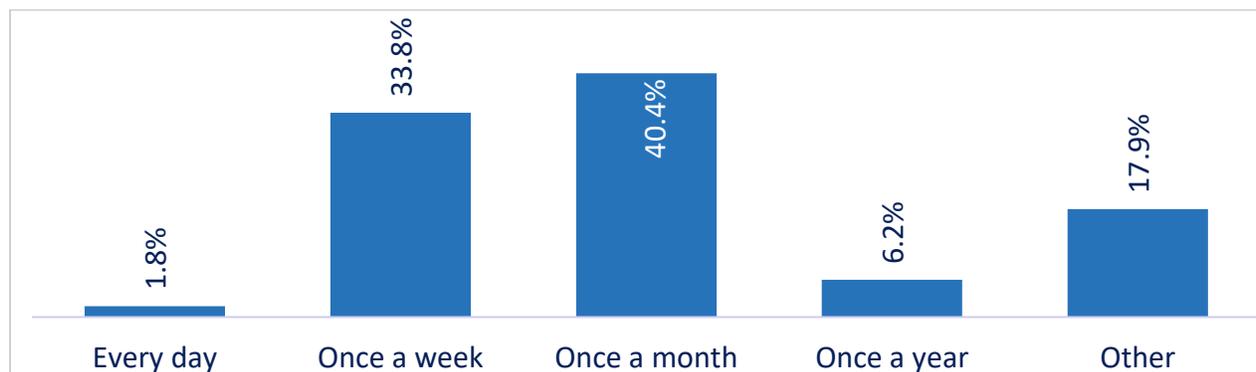


Figure 6: How often do you use the library?

The most common frequency of visits outside of the above categories was ‘fortnightly’, accounting for 3.1% of the overall responses. This is followed by ‘Every few months’ (2.4%) and ‘two to three times a week’ (2.0%).

3.5% of the respondents also referenced Covid-19, and the fact that this reduced their library use and/or that their local library remains closed.

Q6. How often do you use the library?	%	Count
Every day	1.8%	26
Once a week	33.8%	484
Once a month	40.4%	578
Once a year	6.2%	88
Other	17.9%	256

Table 9: How often do you use the library?

Category	% of Q6 respondents	Count
Impacted by COVID-19	3.5%	49
Fortnightly	3.1%	44
Every few months	2.4%	35
2-3 times a week	2.0%	29
Rarely	1.9%	27
Ad-hoc	1.5%	21
Once a month	1.3%	18
Irregularly	1.2%	17
Online Service	0.7%	10
Once a week	0.6%	9
2-3 times a year	0.6%	8
Inconvenient opening	0.4%	6
Uncategorised	0.3%	23
Specific events	0.3%	4
Unable	0.1%	2
Daily	0.1%	1
Home Reader/Delivery	0.1%	1
Never	0.1%	1
Often	0.1%	1

Table 10: Categorized 'Other' responses to 'How often do you use the library?'

1,432 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 7. How do you get to the library?

The most popular mode of travel to the library was on foot (65.4%), followed by car (43.9%). The train was the least use mode of travel (2.2%). Under 16's were also most likely to travel to the library on foot (73.7%) and by car (57.9%).

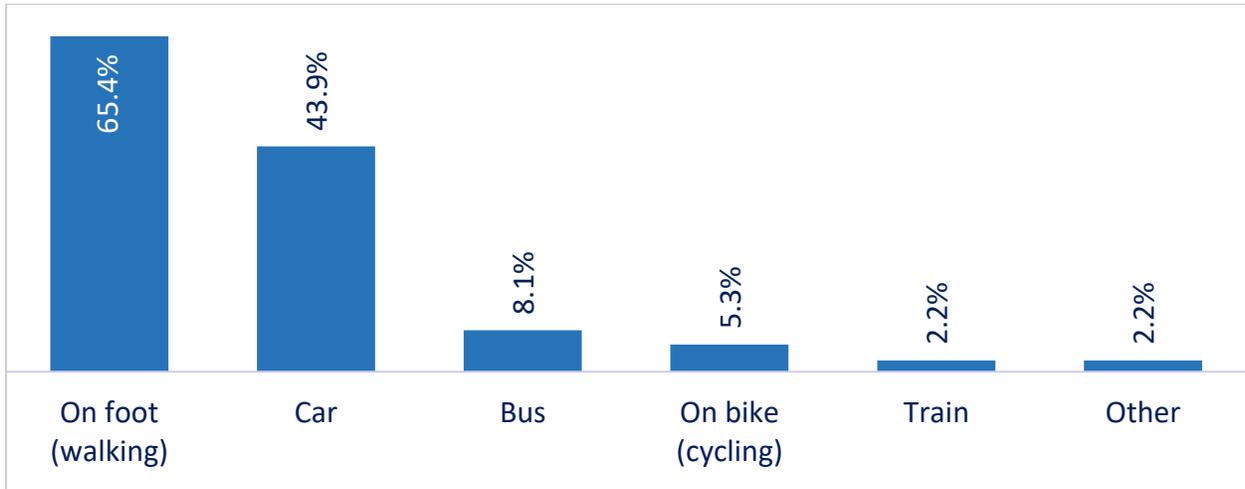


Table 11: How do you get to the library?

The most prevalent 'other' comment was to specify that library books were delivered, either by the Home Reader service, or a friend or relative (0.8%). Other modes of transport were taxi (0.3%), wheelchair or mobility scooter (0.2%) or motorcycle (0.1%).

Question 7. How do you get to the library?	% Respondents	Count
On foot (walking)	65.4%	934
Car	43.9%	627
Bus	8.1%	116
On bike (cycling)	5.3%	76
Train	2.2%	31
Other	2.2%	31

Table 12: How do you get to the library?

Category	% of Q7 respondents	Count of Category
Home Reader/Delivered	0.8%	11
Taxi	0.3%	4
Unable to Travel	0.2%	3
Wheelchair or mobility scooter	0.2%	3
Car	0.1%	2
Motorcycle	0.1%	2
Varies	0.1%	2
On foot	0.1%	1
Online Service	0.1%	1
Open my local library	0.1%	1
Use school library	0.1%	1

Table 13: Categorised 'Other' responses to 'How do you get to the library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%

1,429 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 8. Why do you visit the library?

The most prevalent reason by far to visit the library is to borrow and return books (89.9%). After this, most respondents visit the library for leisure and relaxation (26.5%), to use a photocopier or printer (26.1%) and to attend events for adults, such as talks or author events (25.9%).

The least prevalent reason to visit the library were to complete job applications (2.9%), hire a room (3.1%) or as a representative of a partner organisation (3.1%).

Under 16s also visit the library primarily to borrow/return books (80.0%), and then to study and to borrow and return CDs and DVDs (20.0% each).

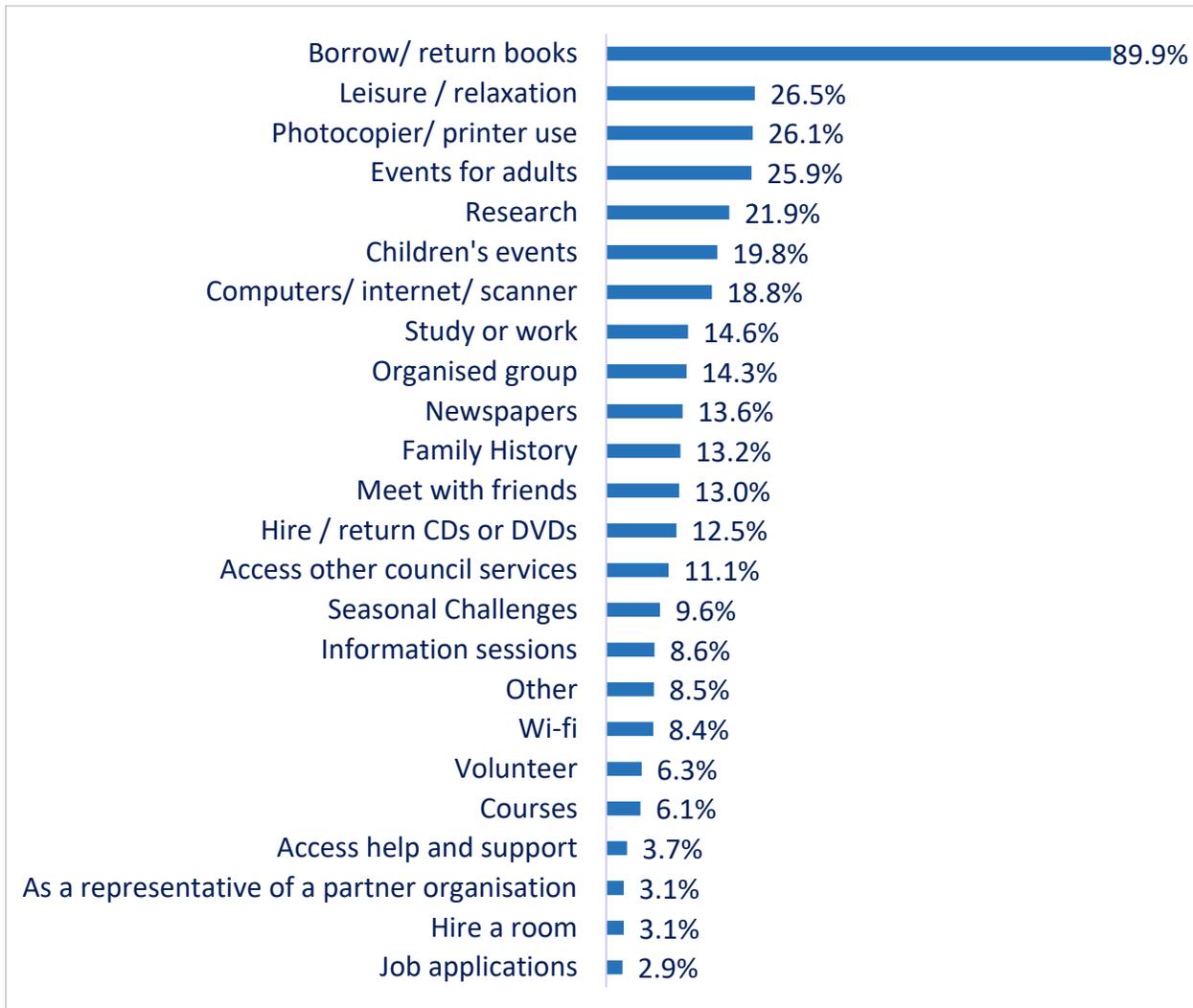


Figure 7: Why do you visit the library?

The top 'other' stated reasons to visit the library are to take children or grandchildren (0.8%), visit exhibitions (0.7%) or attend events (0.6%), access information boards (0.5%) and for social interaction (0.5%).

Question 8. Why do you visit the library?	Q8. % respondents	Count
Borrow/ return books	89.90%	1,291
Leisure / relaxation	26.50%	381
Photocopier/ printer use	26.10%	375
Events for adults (talk or author events)	25.90%	372
Research	21.90%	315
Children's events (Storytime/ Bounce & Rhyme / Lego Club)	19.80%	284
Computers/ internet/ scanner	18.80%	270
Study or work	14.60%	209
Organised group (reading group/ knit & natter)	14.30%	205
Newspapers	13.60%	195
Family History (find my past and birth records)	13.20%	190
Meet with friends	13.00%	186
Hire / return CDs or DVDs	12.50%	179
Access other council services (One Stop Shop Services)	11.10%	159
Seasonal Challenges (Summer Reading Challenge)	9.60%	138
Information sessions (health and wellbeing marketplace)	8.60%	123
Other	8.50%	122
Wi-fi	8.40%	121
Volunteer	6.30%	90
Courses (computing/ maths/ creative writing courses)	6.10%	87
Access help and support (IT computer help, Job seeking support)	3.70%	53
As a representative of a partner organisation (course tutor/ group activity leader)	3.10%	45
Hire a room	3.10%	45
Job applications	2.90%	42

Table 14: Why do you visit the library?



Category	% of Q8 respondents	Count of Category
With children or grandchildren	0.8%	11
Exhibition(s)	0.7%	10
Events	0.6%	8
Information boards	0.5%	7
Social interaction	0.5%	7
Children's events	0.4%	6
'Friends of' member	0.3%	5
Peace & quiet	0.3%	5
Volunteer	0.3%	5
A club	0.3%	4
Audio books	0.3%	4
Borrow books	0.3%	4
Educational visit	0.3%	4
Film Club	0.3%	4
Fitness classes	0.3%	4
Archives	0.2%	3
Courses	0.2%	3
Impacted by COVID-19	0.2%	3
Job search/job club	0.2%	3
Uncategorised	0.2%	3
Community meetings	0.1%	2
Councillors surgery	0.1%	2
Family History	0.1%	2
Jigsaws	0.1%	2
Litter picking	0.1%	2
Purchase cards	0.1%	2
Room Hire	0.1%	2
Safe space	0.1%	2

Table 15: Top categorised 'Other' responses to 'Why do you visit the library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%

1,436 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 9. What other services would you like to access from this library?

A café (51.1%) was the most prevalent thing that respondents would like from their library, followed by events for adults (47.7%), such as talks or author events.

The least popular things were access to help and support (14.2%) such as IT help, or job seeking support.

53.3% of under 16s would also like to see a café in their library, followed by a family history zone (33.3%) bookable spaces for study or work, children's events and a children's play area (26.7% each).

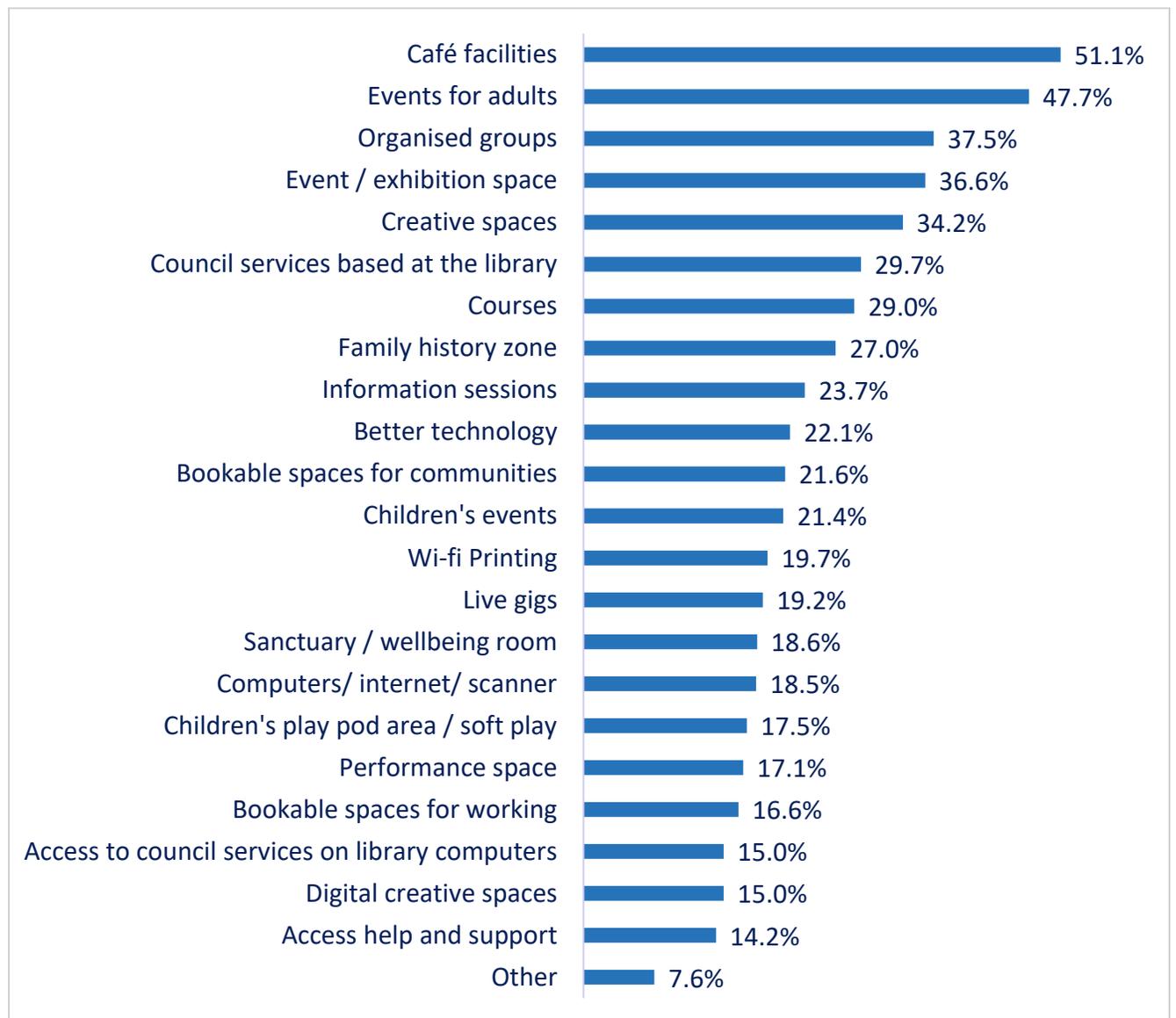


Figure 8: What other services would you like to access from this library?

'Other' services that respondents stated they would like to access from the library were events encouraging social interaction (0.4%) such as coffee mornings/afternoon teas, social events for the elderly or recipe swaps. Local history resources and more recent releases (0.3% each) were also popular 'other' suggestions.

Question 9. What other services would you like to access from this library?	% Respondents	Count
Café facilities	51.1%	656
Events for adults (talk or author event)	47.7%	612
Organised groups (reading groups/ exercise/ wellbeing classes)	37.5%	481
Event / exhibition space	36.6%	469
Creative spaces (crafting resources/ space for art)	34.2%	439
Council services based at the library (leisure facilities/ One Stop Shop Services)	29.7%	381
Courses (computer course/ maths course/ creative writing course)	29.0%	372
Family history zone	27.0%	346
Information sessions (health and wellbeing marketplace)	23.7%	304
Better technology (computers/ laptops/ tablets/ hi speed wi-fi)	22.1%	284
Bookable spaces for communities (room hire)	21.6%	277
Children's events (Storytime/ Bounce & Rhyme)	21.4%	275
Wi-fi Printing	19.7%	253
Live gigs	19.2%	246
Sanctuary / wellbeing room	18.6%	239
Computers/ internet/ scanner	18.5%	237
Children's play pod area / soft play	17.5%	224
Performance space	17.1%	220
Bookable spaces for working (hot desks/ office space/ meeting rooms)	16.6%	213
Access to council services on library computers	15.0%	192
Digital creative spaces (3D printers/ audio production/ video editing/ virtual reality/ makerspace/ gaming suite)	15.0%	192
Access help and support (IT computer help/ job seeking support)	14.2%	182
Other	7.6%	98

Table 16: What other services would you like to access from this library?



Q9. What other services would you like to access from this library? (Other)	% of Q9 respondents	Count of Category
Social interaction events	0.4%	5
Work/study space	0.4%	5
Courses	0.3%	4
Local History hub	0.3%	4
Recent releases	0.3%	4
Autism friendly sessions	0.2%	3
Book shop	0.2%	3
Community garden	0.2%	3
Late night opening	0.2%	3
No other services required	0.2%	3
None	0.2%	3
Reference library	0.2%	3
Uncategorised	0.2%	3
Wider selection (books)	0.2%	3

Table 17: Top categorised 'Other' responses to What other services would you like to access from this library?

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%

1,283 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 10. Why do you not use the library service?

Most respondents provided an 'other' reason that they do not use the library (40.9%) which was predominantly that their local library is closed due to COVID-19 restrictions (15.0%).

An equal proportion of people do not use the library because they are:

- Too busy with family/ work/ other responsibilities (18.9%)
- Use another book service such as Audible/ Kindle/ Amazon (18.9%)
- Library opening hours are inconvenient (18.9%)

Most under 16s (44.4%) cited their main reason for not using the library service as being that they do not live close enough to a library.

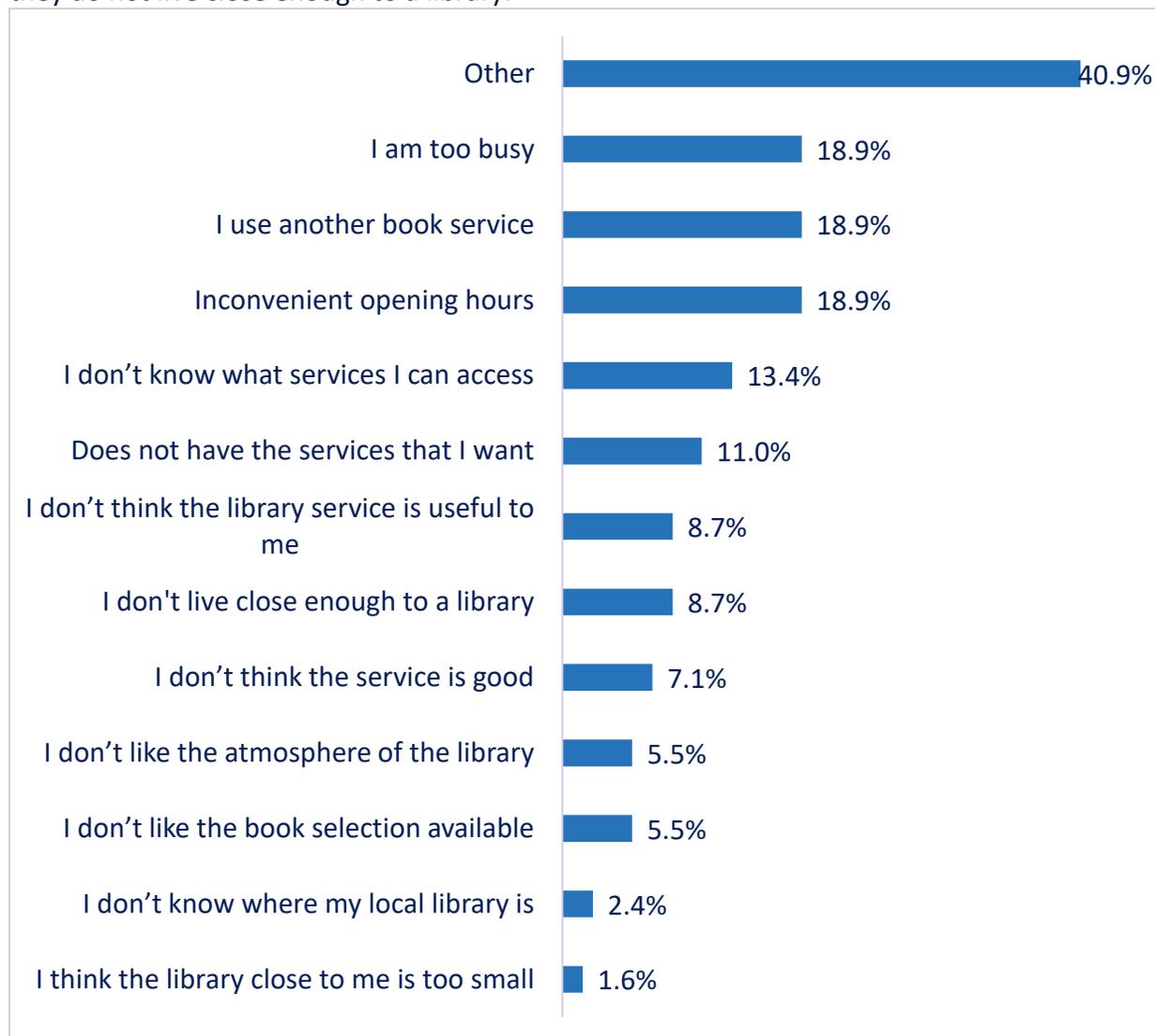


Figure 9: Why do you not use the library service?

Question 10. Why do you not use the library service?	% Respondents	Count
Other	40.9%	52
I am too busy with family/ work/ other responsibilities	18.9%	24
I use another book service (Audible/ Kindle/ Amazon)	18.9%	24
Library opening hours are inconvenient for me	18.9%	24
I don't know what services I can access other than borrowing books	13.4%	17
The library does not have the services that I want (Wi-Fi printing/ music/ films)	11.0%	14
I don't think the library service is useful to me	8.7%	11
I don't live close enough to a library	8.7%	11
I don't think the service is good	7.1%	9
I don't like the atmosphere of the library	5.5%	7
I don't like the book selection available	5.5%	7
I don't know where my local library is	2.4%	3
I think the library close to me is too small	1.6%	2

Table 18: Why do you not use the library service?



Q10. Why do you not use the library service (other)	% of respondents	Count of Category
My local library is closed	15.0%	19
Uncategorised	3.1%	4
Doesn't serve modern needs	2.4%	3
Inconvenient opening hours	2.4%	3
Not yet joined	2.4%	3
Too busy	2.4%	3
More convenient to purchase books	1.6%	2
Unaware of services available	1.6%	2
Use libraries in another authority	1.6%	2
Didn't know about libraries	0.8%	1
Don't know where the libraries are	0.8%	1
Forget about libraries	0.8%	1
Home Reader Service	0.8%	1
I live out of the area	0.8%	1
Inconvenient	0.8%	1
Kindle	0.8%	1
Limited selection	0.8%	1
Not accessible	0.8%	1
Not enough children's activities	0.8%	1
Not user friendly	0.8%	1
Online Service	0.8%	1
Run down	0.8%	1
Services not required	0.8%	1
Too far away	0.8%	1
Too young to go alone	0.8%	1
Unclean	0.8%	1
Unwelcoming	0.8%	1

Table 19: Categorized 'Other' responses to 'Why do you not use the library service?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%

127 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 11. What services could we offer that would make you want to use the library?

The most popular service that would make respondents want to use the library are café facilities (54.5%), followed by events for adults (36.4%) such as talks or author events. Council services based at the library and the availability of creative spaces were equally popular (35.9%). The least popular of the suggested services were performance space (13.2%) and study support (13.6%).

Under 16s would also like a café (50.0%), as well as creative spaces (40.0%).

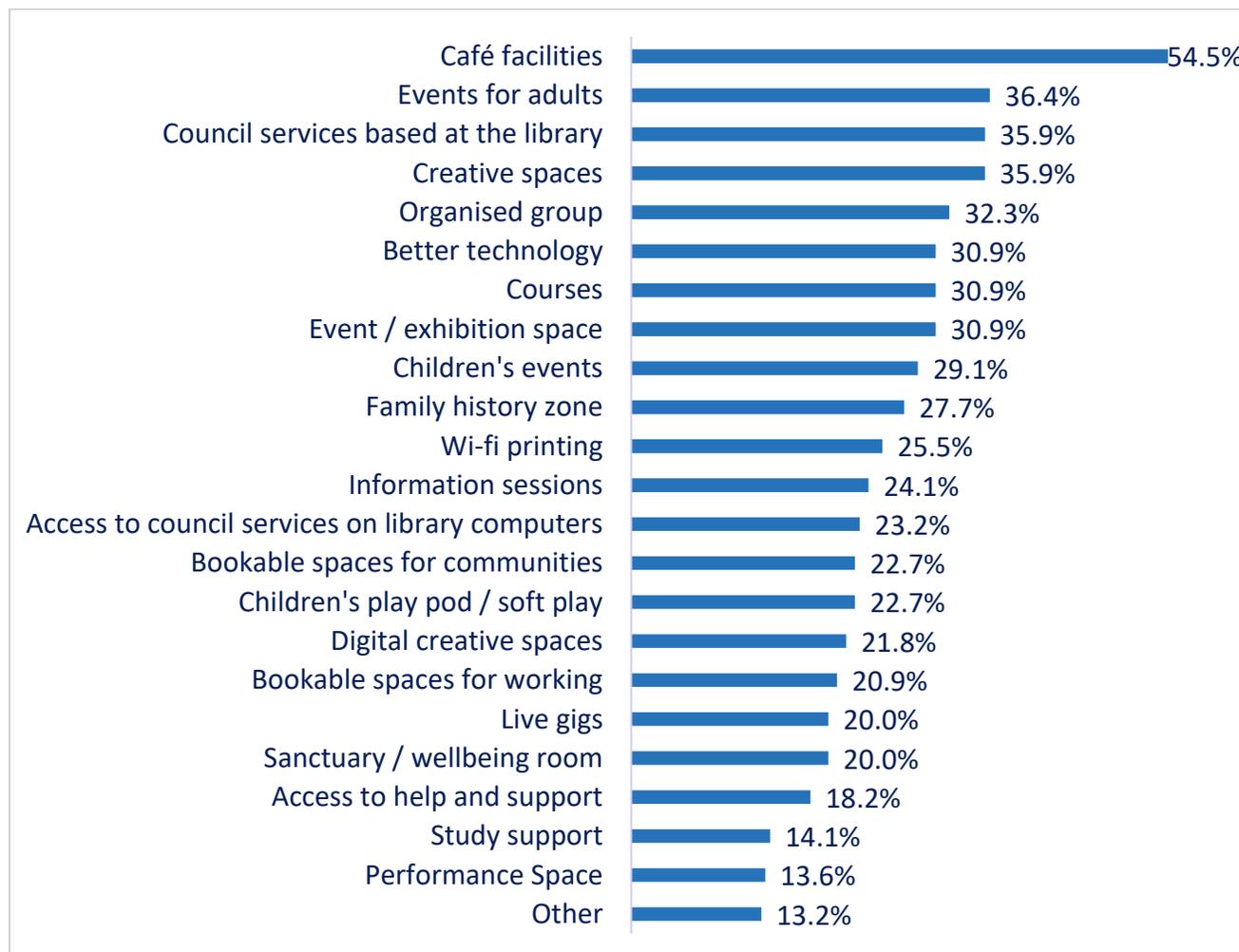


Figure 10: What services could we offer that would make you want to use the library?

'Other' services that would make people want to use the library were better customer service (1.4%), access to the archive and local history resources (0.9%) each.

Question 11. What services could we offer that would make you want to use the library?	% Respondents	Count
Café facilities	54.5%	120
Events for adults (talk or author events)	36.4%	80
Council services based at the library (leisure facilities/ One Stop Shop Services)	35.9%	79
Creative spaces (crafting resources/ space to do art)	35.9%	79
Organised group (reading groups/ exercise and wellbeing classes)	32.3%	71
Better technology (computers/ laptops/ tablets/ high speed wi-fi)	30.9%	68
Courses (computer course/ maths course/ creative writing course)	30.9%	68
Event / exhibition space	30.9%	68
Children's events (Storytime/ Bounce and Rhyme)	29.1%	64
Family history zone	27.7%	61
Wi-fi printing	25.5%	56
Information sessions (health and wellbeing marketplace)	24.1%	53
Access to council services on library computers	23.2%	51
Bookable spaces for communities (room hire)	22.7%	50
Children's play pod / soft play	22.7%	50
Digital creative spaces (3D printers/ audio production/ video editing/ virtual reality/ makerspace/ gaming suite)	21.8%	48
Bookable spaces for working (hot desks/ office space/ meeting rooms)	20.9%	46
Live gigs	20.0%	44
Sanctuary / wellbeing room	20.0%	44
Access to help and support (IT computer help/ job seeking support)	18.2%	40
Study support	14.1%	31
Performance Space	13.6%	30
Other	13.2%	29

Table 20: What services could we offer that would make you want to use the library?



Q11. What services could we offer that would make you want to use the library? (Other)	% of Q11 respondents	Count of Category
Better customer service	1.4%	3
Courses	1.4%	3
Uncategorised	1.4%	3
Archive	0.9%	2
Local History hub	0.9%	2
Bespoke book recommendations	0.5%	1
Bingo	0.5%	1
Borrow audio-books	0.5%	1
Borrow books	0.5%	1
Borrow film	0.5%	1
Borrowing history	0.5%	1
Broader opening hours	0.5%	1
Carers group	0.5%	1
Children's activities	0.5%	1
Children's section	0.5%	1
Choir	0.5%	1
Community centre	0.5%	1
E-books	0.5%	1
Gaming club	0.5%	1
Home reader	0.5%	1
Little Aloud books	0.5%	1
Lounge area	0.5%	1
New bookshelves	0.5%	1
Pensioner social events	0.5%	1
Research	0.5%	1
Reward	0.5%	1
Social Supermarket	0.5%	1
Tool library	0.5%	1
Tuition	0.5%	1

Table 21: Categorized 'Other' responses to 'What services could we offer that would make you want to use the library?'



Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

220 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 12. Do you use the online library?

The majority of respondents both overall (70.5%) and under 16 (84.6%) do not use the online library.

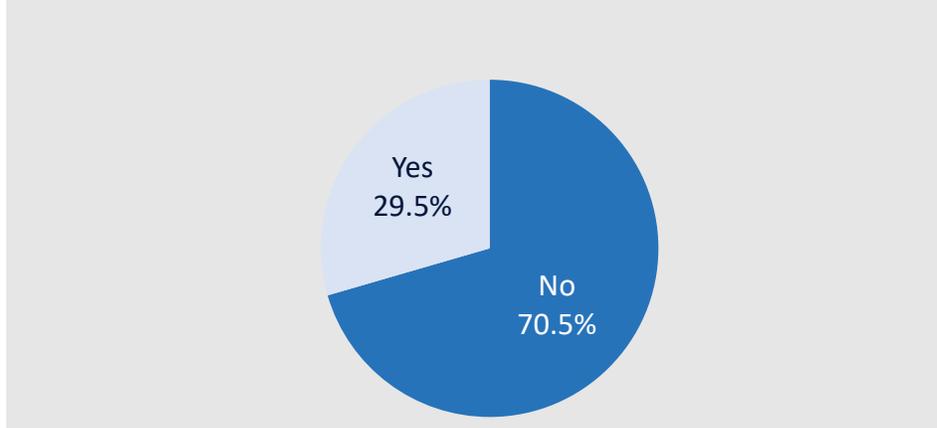


Figure 11: Do you use the online library?

Question 12. Do you use the online library	%	Count
No	70.50%	1,066
Yes	29.50%	446

Table 22: Do you use the online library?

1,512 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 13. Why do you use the online library?

Amongst those who do use the online library, the most common reason is to download e-books (64.3%); the least popular use was for COBRA business support information (0.9%). Under 16s are most likely to use the online library for research purposes (75.0%).

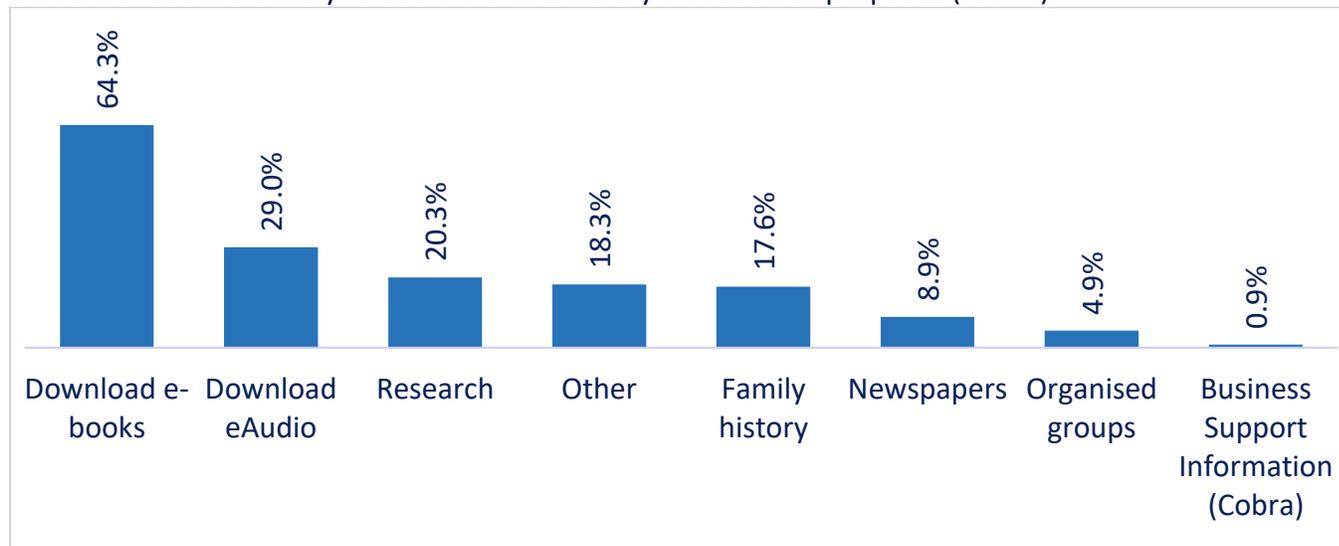


Figure 12: Why do you use the online library?

The top 'other' reasons that people use the online library are to renew books, and to reserve or order books (4.7% each) followed by checking availability of books using the catalogue (4.5%). 2.9% of respondents are using the online library because their local library is closed.

Question 13. Why do you use the online library?	%	Count
Download e-books	64.3%	288
Download eAudio	29.0%	130
Research (information sources - Encyclopaedia Britannica)	20.3%	91
Other	18.3%	82
Family history (Find My Past)	17.6%	79
Newspapers	8.9%	40
Organised groups (reading group)	4.9%	22
Business Support Information (Cobra)	0.9%	4

Table 23: Why do you use the online library?

Q13. Why do you use the online library? (Other)	% of Q13. respondents	Count of Category
Renew books	4.7%	21
Order & reserve books	4.7%	21
Check catalogue	4.5%	20
My local library is closed	2.9%	13
Browse	1.8%	8
Uncategorised	0.7%	3
Magazines	0.4%	2
Archives	0.2%	1
Borrow books	0.2%	1
British Newspaper Archive	0.2%	1
Chat function	0.2%	1
Enquiries	0.2%	1
I use another LA's online library	0.2%	1
Inconvenient opening times	0.2%	1
Research	0.2%	1
Unable to travel to library	0.2%	1

Table 24: Categorized 'Other' responses to 'Why do you use the online library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

448 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Questions 14 and 15. During the last year, did you use the online library more, and will you continue to use the online library?

The majority of respondents, 61.1% used the online library more during the last year and 74.9% will continue to use the online library.

66.7% of under 16 stated that they used the library more, however most (57.1%) said they would not continue to use the online library.

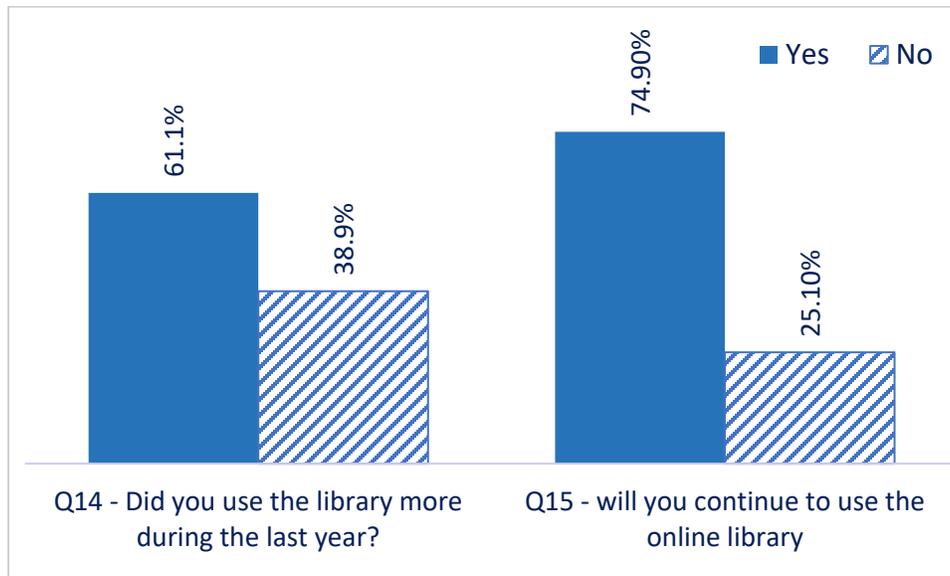


Figure 13: Proportions of respondents who used the online library more during the last year, and who will continue to use it.

Question 14. During the last year did you use the online library more?	%	Count
Yes	61.1%	306
No	38.9%	195
Question 15. Will you continue to use the online library?	%	Count
Yes	74.9%	370
No	25.1%	124

Table 25: Question 14 and Question 15 Proportions of respondents who used the online library more during the last year, and who will continue to use it.

501 people answered question 14 and 494 answered question 15. These numbers are used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 16. What other services would you like to access from the online library?

The top services that people would like to access from the online library are a wider variety of book genres (53.9%) and an increase in the numbers of e-book titles available for loan (52.7%). Dance videos (5.0%) and opera videos (7.1%) were the least desired services.

Under 16s would like archive information, a library service app and streamed film (40.0% each) from their online library.

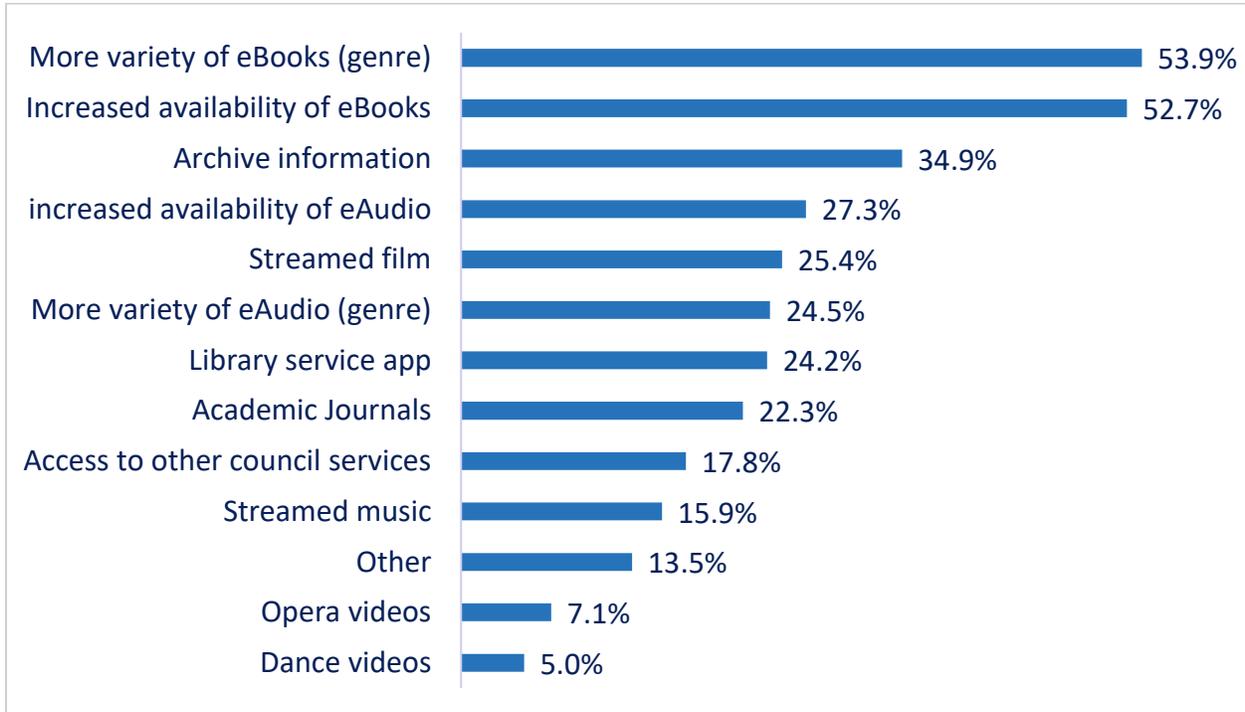


Figure 14: What other services would you like to access from the online library?

'Other' services that respondents to this question would like to from the online library include access to magazines.

Question 16. What other services would you like to access from the online library?	%	Count
More variety of eBooks (genre)	53.9%	227
Increased availability of eBooks (more to loan of each item)	52.7%	222
Archive information (old photographs/ soundbites)	34.9%	147
increased availability of eAudio (more to loan of each item)	27.3%	115
Streamed film	25.4%	107
More variety of eAudio (genre)	24.5%	103
Library service app	24.2%	102
Academic Journals	22.3%	94
Access to other council services (One Stop Shop Services online)	17.8%	75
Streamed music	15.9%	67
Other	13.5%	57
Opera videos	7.1%	30
Dance videos	5.0%	21

Table 26: What other services would you like to access from the online library?



Category	Q16 Other % all respondents	Count of Category
Uncategorised	1.7%	7
Magazines	1.4%	6
Fitness classes	0.5%	2
More variety of eBooks	0.5%	2
Access to Mintel	0.2%	1
Better search facility	0.2%	1
Clearer blue badge process	0.2%	1
Courses	0.2%	1
Entire book series	0.2%	1
Family history resources	0.2%	1
Fewer music/video - available elsewhere	0.2%	1
Guidance to use e-books	0.2%	1
Home Reader Service	0.2%	1
Links to other council services	0.2%	1
Links to support services	0.2%	1
Local History resources	0.2%	1
More non-fiction	0.2%	1
None	0.2%	1
None - happy with service	0.2%	1
None - I prefer physical library	0.2%	1
One Stop Shop services	0.2%	1
School book readings	0.2%	1
Trade journals	0.2%	1

Table 27: Categorised other responses to 'What other services would you like to access from the online library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

421 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 17. Why do you not use the online library?

The main reason that people do not use the online library is that they do not like to read e-books or listen to audio books (34.8%). This is followed by not knowing what services can be accessed online (27.7%). The main reason for under 16s not using the online library is that they were unaware of what services they could access online (31.6%).

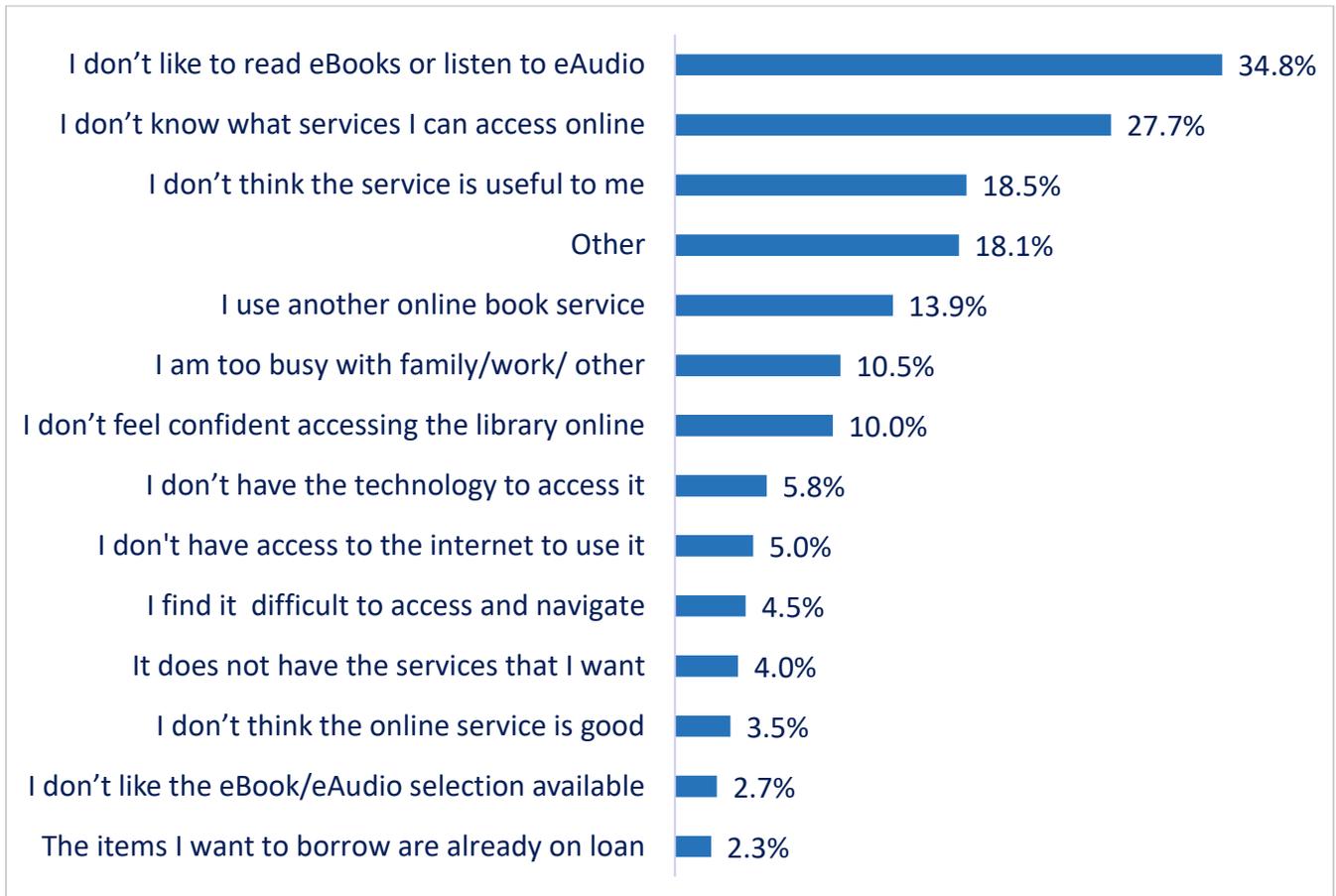


Figure 15: Why do you not use the online library?

'Other' reasons that respondents do not use the online library are that they enjoy the experience of visiting a physical library (6.0%) and that they did not know that the online library existed (3.9%)

Question 17. Why do you not use the online library?	%	Count
I don't like to read eBooks or listen to eAudio	34.8%	364
I don't know what services I can access online	27.7%	290
I don't think the online library service is useful to me	18.5%	194
Other	18.1%	189
I use another book service (Audible/ Kindle/ Amazon)	13.9%	145
I am too busy with family/work/ other responsibilities	10.5%	110
I don't feel confident accessing the library online	10.0%	105
I don't have the technology (laptop/ computer/ tablet) to access the library from home	5.8%	61
I don't have access to the internet to use the online library	5.0%	52
I find the online library difficult to access and navigate	4.5%	47
The online library does not have the services that I want	4.0%	42
I don't think the online service is good	3.5%	37
I don't like the eBook or eAudio selection available	2.7%	28
The eBooks or eAudio I want to borrow are always already on loan	2.3%	24

Table 28: Why do you not use the online library?



Q17. Why do you not use the online library? (Other)	% of Question 17 Respondents	Count of Category
Enjoy visiting physical library	6.0%	63
I don't like to read eBooks	4.6%	48
Unaware of service	3.9%	41
Uncategorised	0.8%	8
Lack of computer	0.6%	6
Use another online library	0.6%	6
Limited selection	0.5%	5
Not confident using	0.5%	5
Yet to try	0.5%	5
I don't want physical libraries to become obsolete	0.2%	2
Disabilities prevent use	0.1%	1
I don't understand how to use it	0.1%	1
Libraries are obsolete	0.1%	1
Memory boxes not online	0.1%	1
Not a library member	0.1%	1
Not required	0.1%	1
Too young	0.1%	1
Use CD audiobooks	0.1%	1

Table 29: Categorized 'other' responses 'Why do you not use the online library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

1,047 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 18. What other services could we offer through our online library?

The most desired service on the online library is archive information (38.4%) such as old photographs & soundbites, followed by an increased availability of e-books – more items available to loan of each item (29.3%). The least desired service is dance videos (4.8%) and Opera videos (6.9%).

Under 16s wished for a wider variety of eBook genres to be available (30.0%).

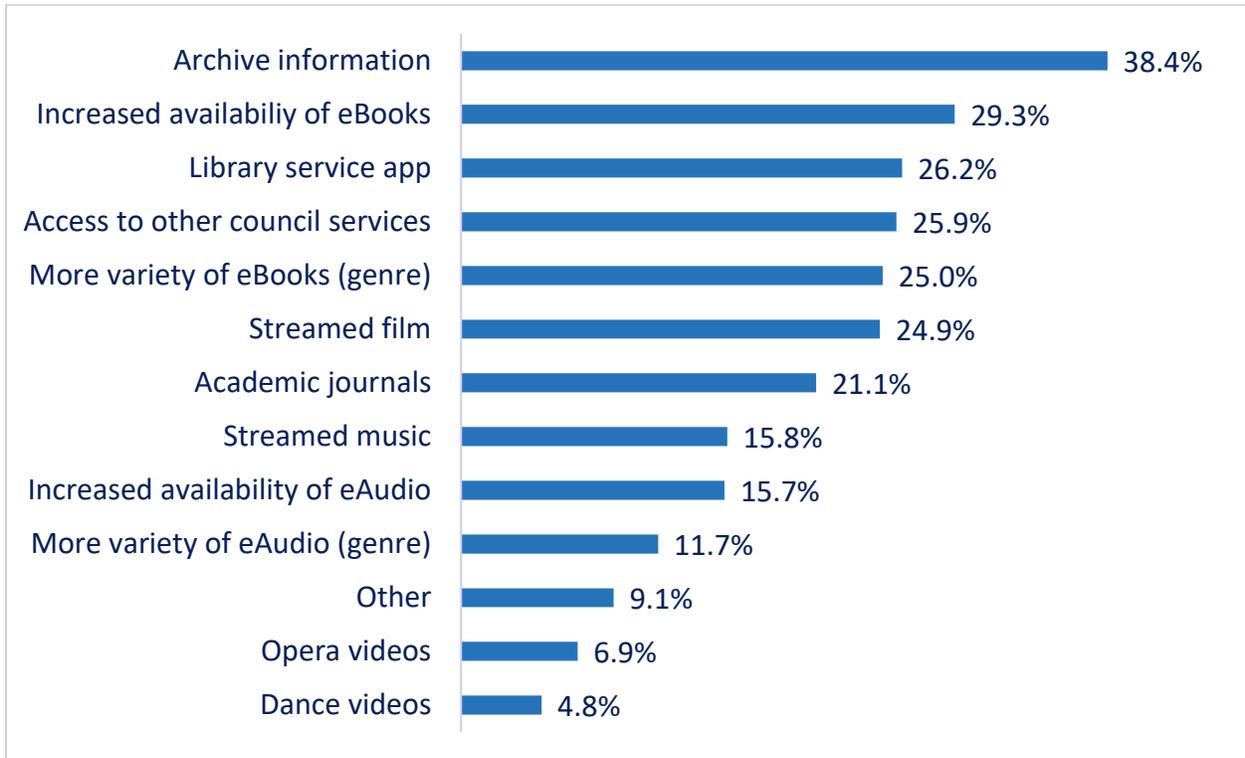


Figure 16: What other services could we offer through our online library?

1.3% of respondents stated, in the 'other' category that there are no additional services that could be offered as they have no interest in using the online library.

Question 18. What other services could we offer through our online library?	%	Count
Archive information (old photographs/ soundbites)	38.4%	233
Increased availability of eBooks (more to loan of each item)	29.3%	178
Library service app	26.2%	159
Access to other council services (One Stop Shop Services online)	25.9%	157
More variety of eBooks (genre)	25.0%	152
Streamed film	24.9%	151
Academic journals	21.1%	128
Streamed music	15.8%	96
Increased availability of eAudio (more to loan of each item)	15.7%	95
More variety of eAudio (genre)	11.7%	71
Other	9.1%	55
Opera videos	6.9%	42
Dance videos	4.8%	29

Table 30: What other services could we offer through our online library?



Q18. What other services could we offer through our online library? (Other)	% of Q18 respondents	Count of Category
Nothing; not interested in online services	1.3%	8
I don't know	0.5%	3
Nothing	0.5%	3
All of the above	0.3%	2
Cooking classes	0.3%	2
Courses	0.3%	2
Family history resources	0.3%	2
Information as to what's available online	0.3%	2
Magazines	0.3%	2
Open my local library	0.3%	2
Social element - groups	0.3%	2
Uncategorised	0.3%	2
Wider children's selection	0.3%	2
Wider selection	0.3%	2
Access to a computer	0.2%	1
Café	0.2%	1
Charities area	0.2%	1
Comic books	0.2%	1
Guidance on use	0.2%	1
Homework hub	0.2%	1
International films	0.2%	1
Kindle compatibility	0.2%	1
Large Print materials	0.2%	1
Local History resources	0.2%	1
Music streaming	0.2%	1
Newspapers	0.2%	1
Offline access	0.2%	1
One to one support	0.2%	1
Online one-stop-shop sessions	0.2%	1
Online theatre productions	0.2%	1
Physical books	0.2%	1
Printed guidance	0.2%	1
Simplified renewal	0.2%	1
Up to date selection	0.2%	1
Which' reports	0.2%	1



Q18. What other services could we offer through our online library? (Other)	% of Q18 respondents	Count of Category
Wider music selection	0.2%	1
Wider non-fiction selection	0.2%	1

Table 31: Categorised 'other' responses 'What other services could we offer through our online library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

607 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 19. What do you think about the service that Wirral Libraries provide?

The majority of respondents, 73.2% of respondents felt positively about the service provided by Wirral Libraries; 28.2% thought the service was good and 48.2% very good.

6.0% did not feel that a good service is provided, 5.2% thought it was bad, and 0.9% very bad.

Most under 16s thought that the service was good (50%) or very good (11.5%).

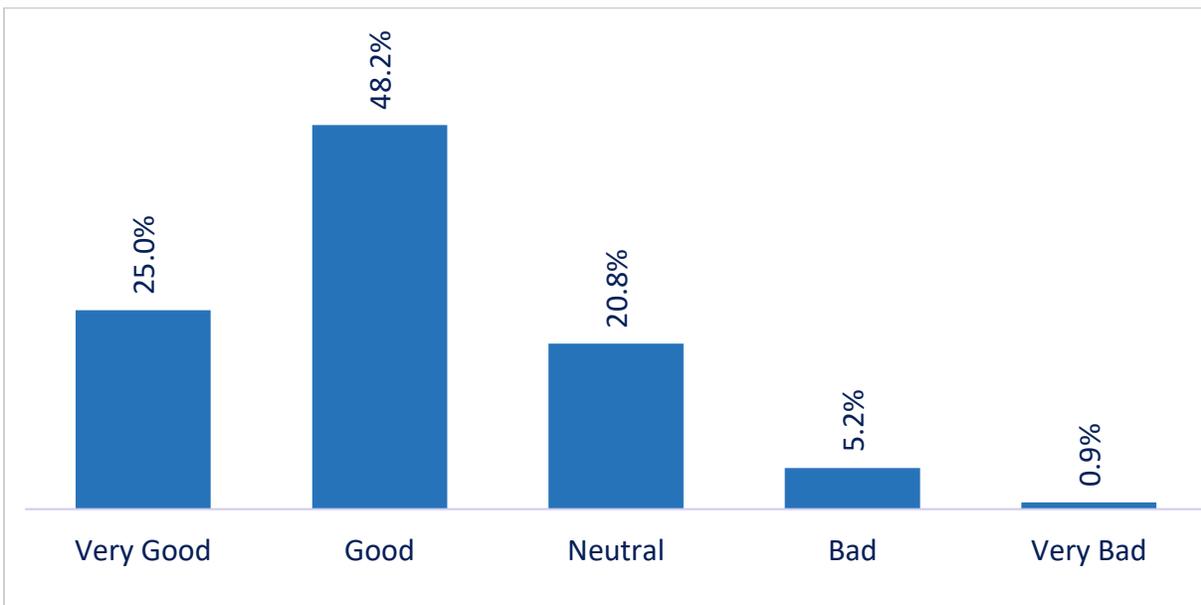


Figure 17: What do you think about the service that Wirral Libraries provide?

Question 19. What do you think about the service that Wirral Libraries provide?	%	Count
Very Good	25.0%	381
Good	48.2%	736
Neutral	20.8%	317
Bad	5.2%	79
Very Bad	0.9%	13

Table 32: What do you think about the service that Wirral Libraries provide?

1,526 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 20. We would like to know more about how you feel about the library service, please can you tell us how you feel about the following statements:

Question 20a. The library staff are helpful and knowledgeable:

Most respondents either strongly agree (50.5%) or agree (37.7%) that the library staff are helpful and knowledgeable. Under 16s also agree (82.4%) or strongly agree (11.8%).

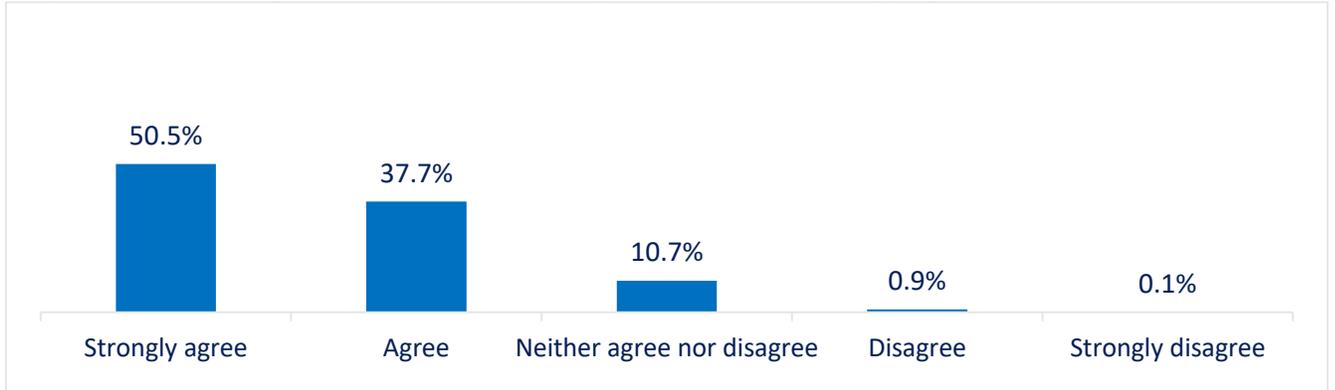


Figure 18: The library staff are helpful and knowledgeable

1,492 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 20b. I feel welcome and safe at the library:

Most respondents either strongly agree (59.1%) or agree (31.0%) that they feel welcome and safe at the library. Under 16s also agree (41.2%) or strongly agree (41.2%).

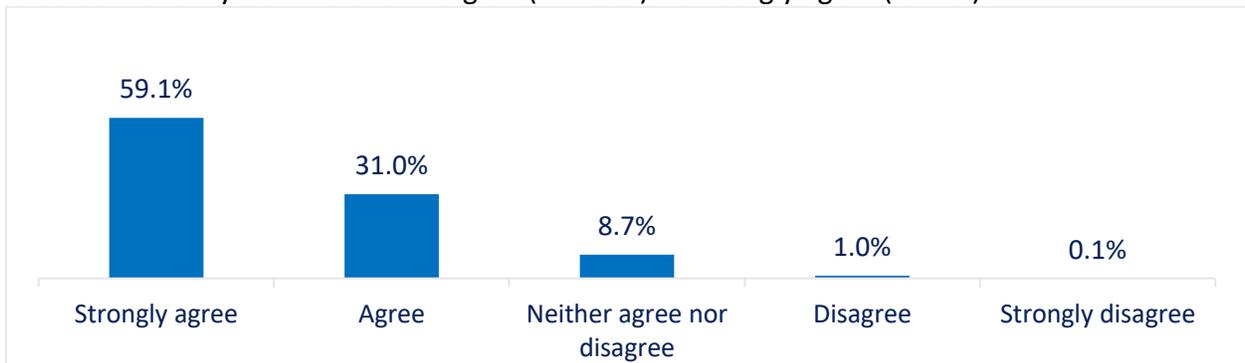


Figure 19: I feel welcome and safe at the library

1,471 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 20c. I find the library service useful:

Most respondents either strongly agree (56.4%) or agree (34.0%) that they feel welcome and safe at the library. Under 16s also agree (47.1%).

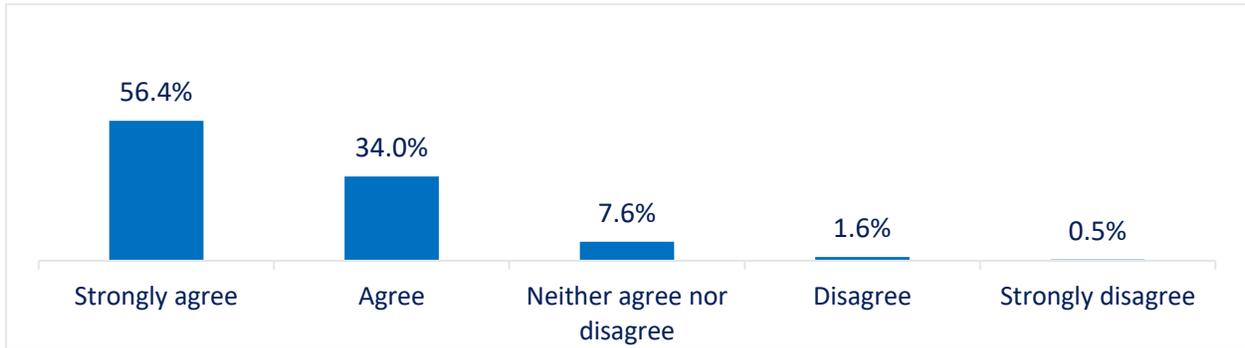


Figure 20: I find the library service useful

1,474 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 20d. The library opening hours are helpful:

Most respondents either agree (32.2%) or strongly agree (24.7%) that the library opening hours are helpful. Under 16s neither agree nor disagree that opening hours are helpful (37.5%).

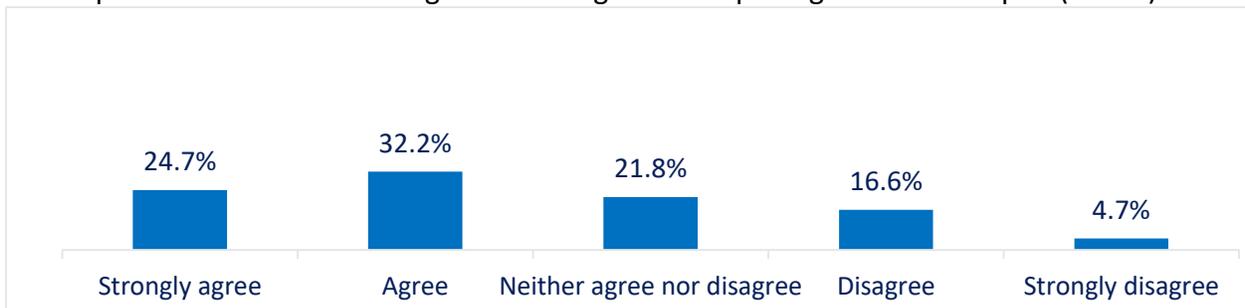


Figure 21: The library opening hours are helpful

1,453 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 20e. I feel confident accessing the online library:

Most respondents both overall (38.8%) and under 16 (43.8%) neither agree nor disagree that they feel confident accessing the online library.

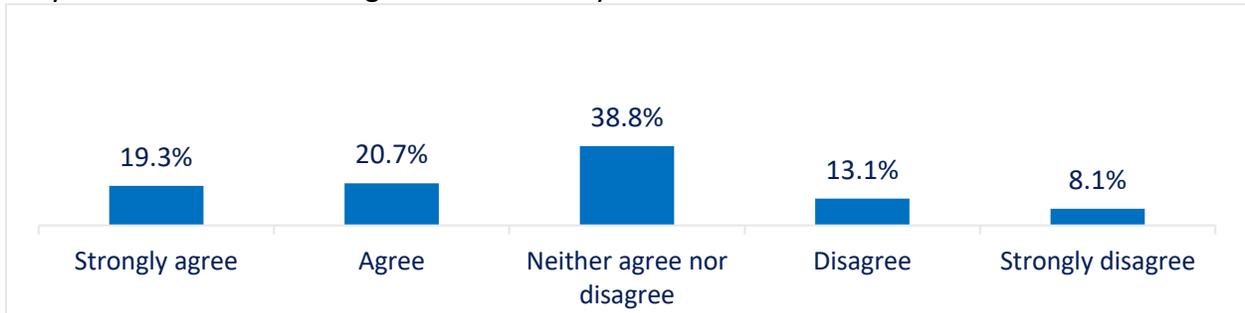


Figure 22: I feel confident accessing the online library

1,388 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 20a. The library staff are helpful and knowledgeable	%	Count
Strongly agree	50.5%	754
Agree	37.7%	563
Neither agree nor disagree	10.7%	160
Disagree	0.9%	14
Strongly disagree	0.1%	1
Question 20b. I feel welcome and safe at the library	%	Count
Strongly agree	59.1%	870
Agree	31.0%	456
Neither agree nor disagree	8.7%	128
Disagree	1.0%	15
Strongly disagree	0.1%	2
Question 20c. I find the library service useful	%	Count
Strongly agree	56.4%	831
Agree	34.0%	501
Neither agree nor disagree	7.6%	112
Disagree	1.6%	23
Strongly disagree	0.5%	7
Question 20d. The library opening hours are helpful	%	Count
Agree	32.2%	468
Disagree	16.6%	241
Neither agree nor disagree	21.8%	317
Strongly agree	24.7%	359
Strongly disagree	4.7%	68
Question 20e. I feel confident accessing the online library	%	Count
Agree	20.7%	287
Disagree	13.1%	182
Neither agree nor disagree	38.8%	539
Strongly agree	19.3%	268
Strongly disagree	8.1%	112

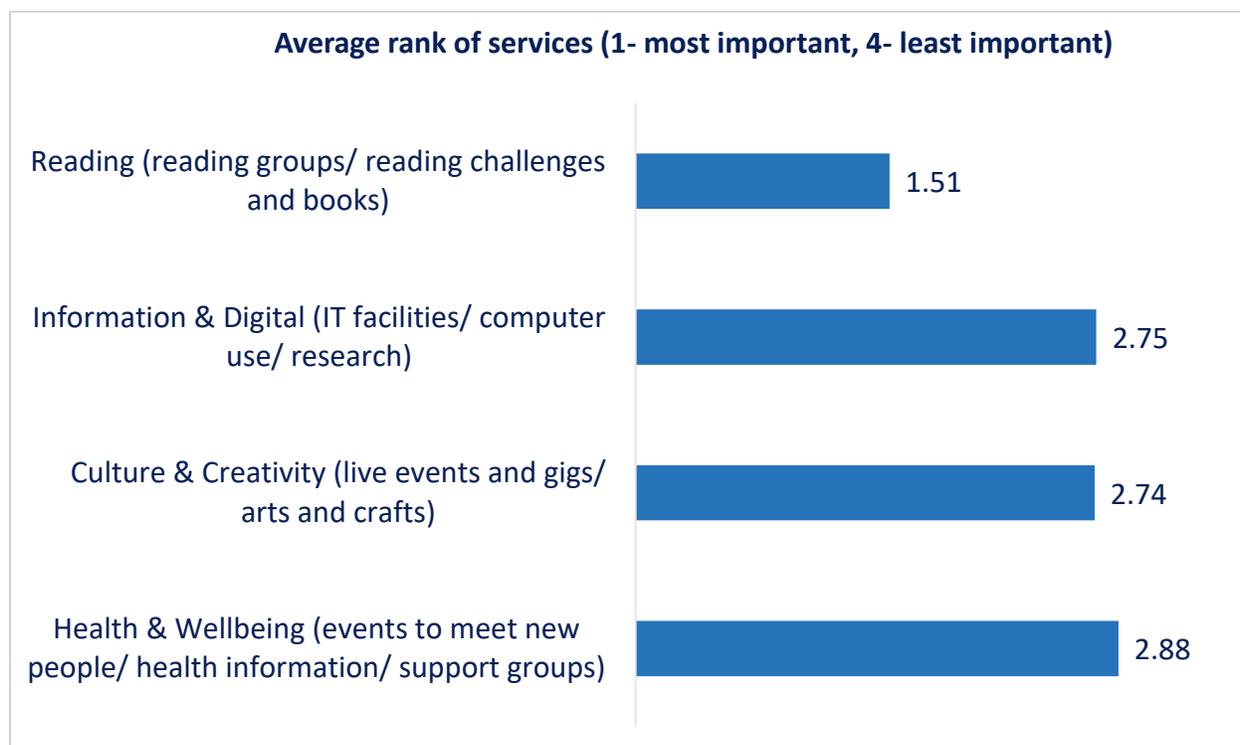
Table 33: Questions 20 a-e



Question 21. Rank which services are most important to you, from 1 (most important) to 4 (least important).

Reading (reading groups/Challenges/books) was deemed the most important service, gaining an average rank of 1.51, with 19.8% of overall respondents and 19.0% of under 16s ranking it as 'most important'.

Health and wellbeing was ranked as most important by the fewest people (2.0%) with an average rank of 2.88.



Service	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Average rank
Reading (reading groups/ reading challenges and books)	1043	177	120	109	1.51
Information & Digital (IT facilities/ computer use/ research)	168	407	307	414	2.75
Culture & Creativity (live events and gigs/ arts and crafts)	127	390	403	317	2.74
Health & Wellbeing (events to meet new people/ health information/ support groups)	104	302	425	364	2.88

Table 34: Table showing rank and average rank of each service.

Question 22. Which of the four different types of libraries in the draft library strategy would be most suitable for the library that you use the most?

The type of library that most respondents felt would be most suitable for the library that they use the most is a Neighbourhood Library (48.8%). The next most popular option is a Central Library (28.6%).

Conversely, under 16s preferred the Central Library option (42.1%) over a Neighbourhood Library (26.3%).

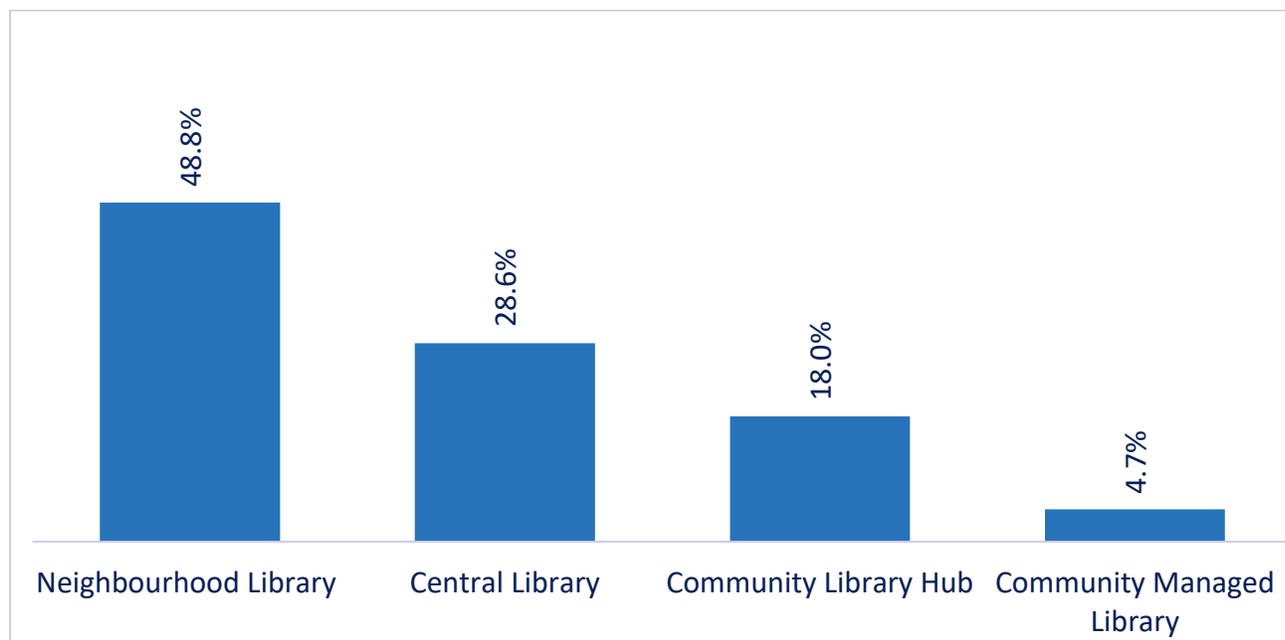


Figure 23: Which of the four different types of libraries in the draft library strategy would be most suitable for the library that you use the most?

Q22. In our draft library strategy, we have thought of four different types of libraries, which of these do you think would be most suitable for the library you use the most?	%	Count
Neighbourhood Library	48.8%	712
Central Library	28.6%	417
Community Library Hub	18.0%	263
Community Managed Library	4.7%	68

Table 35: Which of the four different types of libraries in the draft library strategy would be most suitable for the library that you use the most?

1,460 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 23. Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service?

Respondents predominantly thought that community groups (58.9%) and Volunteers (56.1%) could support the council to deliver the library service. Under 16s though thought that volunteers, (46.2%) could support the council.



Figure 24: Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service?

Amongst the ‘other’ suggestions as to who should support delivery of the library service 4.0% of respondents felt that the council itself should be delivering the service without reliance on outside parties. 3.1% felt that professional librarians and trained library staff should be delivering the library service. 0.9% thought that schools and colleges could support the service by allowing pupils to assist at libraries or complete work experience there.

Question 23. Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service?	% Respondents	Count
Community group	58.9%	804
Volunteers	56.1%	766
Partner organisation	38.4%	525
Local business	31.8%	435
Other	14.5%	198

Table 36: Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service?

Q23. Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service? (Other)	% of Q23 respondents	Count of Category
Council	4.0%	54
Professional librarians/ trained staff	3.1%	42
Schools/colleges (work experience)	0.9%	12
Uncategorised	0.9%	12
Volunteers	0.7%	9
Central Government	0.4%	6
Funding/revenue	0.4%	5
No privatisation	0.3%	4
Against the use of volunteers	0.2%	3
All of the above	0.2%	3
Community Groups	0.2%	3
Existing staff	0.2%	3
Liverpool City region library service	0.2%	3
Local business	0.2%	3
Against local business	0.1%	2
Charities	0.1%	2
Local Councillors	0.1%	2
NMGM	0.1%	2
Advertising/promotion	0.1%	1
Against Community Groups	0.1%	1
Against Partner Organisations	0.1%	1
Any willing organisation	0.1%	1
Arts Director (Council)	0.1%	1
Children's Services	0.1%	1
Churches	0.1%	1
Community group	0.1%	1
Elected, representative board	0.1%	1
Family History experts	0.1%	1
Focus on online service	0.1%	1
HMG	0.1%	1
Leisure Services	0.1%	1
NGOs	0.1%	1
None of above	0.1%	1
Partner Organisation	0.1%	1
Police	0.1%	1



Q23. Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service? (Other)	% of Q23 respondents	Count of Category
Self- employed entrepreneurs	0.1%	1
Third sector co-operatives	0.1%	1
Universities	0.1%	1
UUCG	0.1%	1
Volunteer librarians	0.1%	1
Youth groups	0.1%	1

Table 37: Categorised ‘other’ comments ‘Who do you think could support the council to deliver the library service?’

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

1,366 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 24. Would you like to be involved with running a library?

Most respondents both overall (70.6%) and aged under 16 (52.9%) would not like to be involved with running a library. Of those who would like to be involved, 25.9% would like to be involved as a volunteer/member of the community, and 3.5% as a community group/organisation.

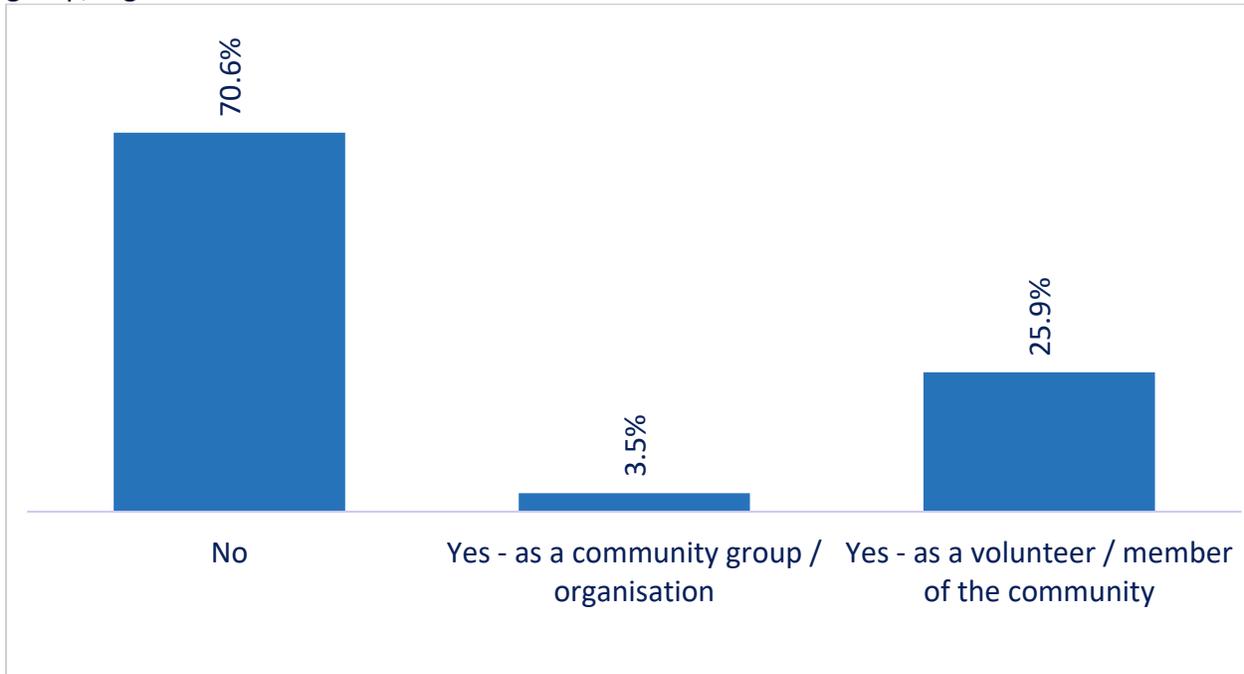


Figure 25: Would you like to be involved with running a library?

Q24. Would you like to be involved with running a library?	%	Count
No	70.6%	1018
Yes - as a community group / organisation	3.5%	50
Yes - as a volunteer / member of the community	25.9%	374

Table 38: Would you like to be involved with running a library?

1,442 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 25. How much time would you be able to give to the library service?

Most respondents felt that they would be able to help the library service a few times a month (42.8%) or once a week (36.3%). Under 16s can mostly help once a week (40.0%).

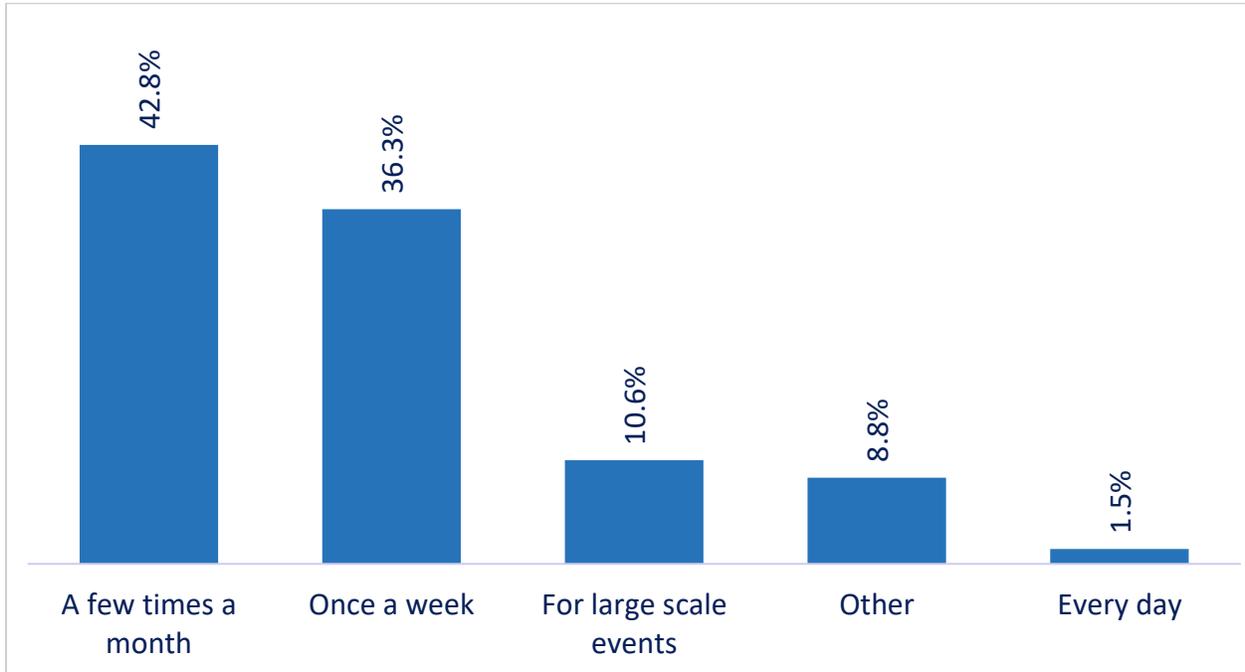


Figure 26: How much time would you be able to give to the library service?

Other comments include those who would like to help but are unable to say how much time they would be able to give (2.2%).

Q25. How much time would you be able to give to the library service?	%	Count
A few times a month	42.8%	170
Once a week	36.3%	144
For large scale events	10.6%	42
Other	8.8%	35
Every day	1.5%	6

Table 39: How much time would you be able to give to the library service?



Q25. How much time would you be able to give to the library service? (Other)	% of Q25 respondents	Count of Category
Unable to say	2.2%	9
Once a week	1.0%	4
Uncategorised	0.7%	3
2-3 times a week	0.5%	2
A few times a month	0.5%	2
A few times a year	0.5%	2
Ad-hoc	0.5%	2
Currently unable	0.5%	2
Once a month	0.5%	2
Rarely	0.5%	2
1- 2 hours a week	0.2%	1
A few hours a month	0.2%	1
As a group	0.2%	1
Comms & digital marketing	0.2%	1
Evenings	0.2%	1
For large scale events	0.2%	1
Once a week	0.2%	1

Table 40: Categorised 'other' comments 'How much time would you be able to give to the library service?'

397 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.



Question 26: What support would you need to get involved with a community managed library?

The most prevalent type of support that people indicated that they would need to get involved with a community managed library both overall (47.3%) and amongst young people (50.0%) was additional facilities.



Figure 27: What support would you need to get involved with a community managed library?

Other types of support that respondents felt would be useful were funding (1.7%), training (0.8%), ongoing support, and good organisation/management (0.6% each).

Q26. What support would you need to get involved with a community managed library?	Q26. % Respondents	Count
Additional facilities	47.3%	43
Recruit volunteers	38.5%	35
Recruit staff	35.2%	32
Other	26.4%	24

Table 41: What support would you need to get involved with a community managed library?

Q26. What support would you need to get involved with a community managed library? (Other)	% of Q26 respondents	Count
Uncategorised	1.9%	7
Funding	1.7%	6
Training	0.8%	3
Good organisation/management	0.6%	2
Ongoing support	0.6%	2
Expenses	0.3%	1
Professional librarian	0.3%	1
Salary	0.3%	1
True partnership	0.3%	1
Unable to say	0.3%	1

Table 42: Categorised other comments 'What support would you need to get involved with a community managed library?'

Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question. Therefore, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

91 people answered this question, and this number is used as the denominator when calculating percentages.

Question 27: We would like to contact you further about your interest to be involved. If you are happy to be contacted by us about this, please provide your email address below.

360 people, including 2 under 16s, provided contact information here: 23.0% of the total respondents. Email addresses have been made available separately to the Libraries Project Team.



Question 28: Do you have any further comments or ideas about our draft Library Strategy or how we can improve the library service to meet your needs?

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments or ideas about the draft Library Strategy or how the library service could be improved to meet their needs.

There were 603 comments from Engagement HQ and 270 from the paper copies, which were categorised into themes; many comments contained multiple themes so the figures will not add up to 100%, nor will they match the figures in the previous questions.

The chart below shows the top 20 themes:

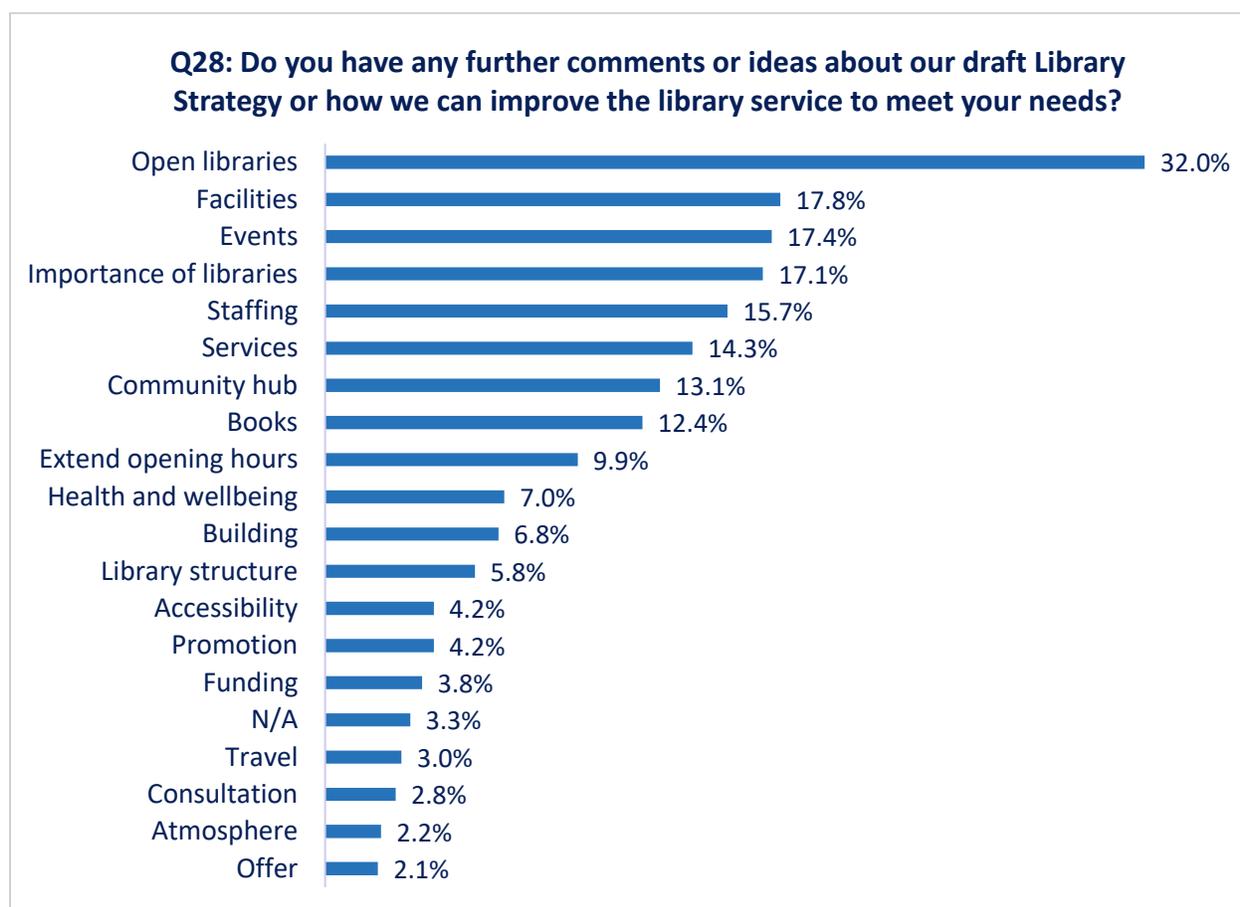


Figure 28: Top 20 themes from the question “Do you have any further comments or ideas about our draft Library Strategy or how we can improve the library service to meet your needs?”

Open Libraries

279 (32.0%) of the comments were people saying that they wanted the libraries to be open:

- **Open libraries (Covid-19)** 125 respondents (14.3%) were requesting that libraries that have been closed due to the covid-19 pandemic are re-opened
- **Keep libraries open** 99 comments (11.3%) said that they want the libraries to stay open
- **Local libraries needed** 51 comments (5.8%) said that local libraries are needed and that they should stay open

Facilities

155 (17.8%) of the comments were about the facilities available in the libraries:

- **Café facilities** 35 respondents (4.0%) said it would be nice to get a hot drink while browsing the books in the library, and felt that a café area would provide space for people to meet up and socialise
- **Like access to computers** 30 people (3.4%) felt that access to computers at libraries was useful, especially for those who don't have access to computers or the internet. People thought that having access to computers could help people in poverty to access services that they wouldn't otherwise be able to access.
- **Make reference resources more accessible** 21 respondents (2.4%) wanted reference resources to be more easily accessible
- **Like rooms and facilities available for groups** 21 comments (2.4%) said they liked the rooms and facilities available for groups
- **Improve computer access and support** 17 people (1.9%) said it they would like the access to computers and support for using the computers to be improved
- **Like space to study** 12 respondents (1.4%) said that they liked the space available for study
- **Improve access to printers** 10 people (1.1%) said they wanted the access to printers to be improved

Events

152 (17.4%) of the comments were people talking about events that the libraries already hold, or events they would like to see in the future:

- **Like children's events** 38 respondents (4.4%) like the children's events that the libraries run, including Bounce and Rhyme, Storytime, Rhyme time and the Summer Reading Challenge. They say the events are so important to try and encourage children to read and to help social interactions
- **More children's events** 31 comments (3.6%) said there are not enough children's events and that more events would benefit children and the whole community
- **Arts and crafts** 19 comments (2.2%) suggested that more arts and crafts sessions are run
- **More events** 15 comments (1.7%) said that they would generally like more events
- **Link with schools** 15 comments (1.7%) suggested linking with schools to help encourage reading
- **Guest speakers / authors** 12 comments (1.4%) said they would like to see more guest speakers and author events
- **More courses** 10 comments (1.1%) said they would like more courses
- **More reading groups** 10 comments (1.1%) said that they would like more reading groups



Importance of Libraries

149 (17.1%) of the comments were about the importance of libraries:

- **Essential service** 122 of respondents (14.0%) said that the library service is an essential service as it is so important to them and the local community
- **Like - encourage reading** 15 people (1.7%) said they liked the fact libraries encourage reading
- **Like - encourage literacy** 15 people (1.7%) said they liked the fact libraries encourage literacy
- **Like - create a love of reading** 13 people (1.5%) said they liked the fact that libraries create a love of reading

Staffing

137 (15.7%) of the comments were about the staffing in the library:

- **Paid staff needed** 48 people (5.5%) talked about the importance of paid staff in the libraries, rather than the libraries being completely/partly run by volunteers. Respondents feel that paid staff are important to make sure they have all the expertise and experience to properly serve the community and ensure continuity of service.
- **Use some volunteers** 26 respondents (3.0%) said using some volunteers (not completely run by volunteers) would help improve and extend the library service
- **Qualified librarians needed** 25 of the comments (2.9%) said that qualified librarians were needed to maintain the good service that the libraries currently provide
- **Like hard work of library staff** 16 people (1.8%) said they like the hard work of the library staff
- **Volunteers not wanted** 10 respondents (1.1%) said they do not want volunteers working in the library
- **Staff friendly** 9 respondents (1.0%) said that the staff that work in their libraries are friendly

Services

125 (14.3%) of the comments were about the services that the libraries provide:

- **Like Home Reader service** 13 people (1.5%) said that they like the Home Reader service.
- **Provide more services** 13 people (1.5%) said that they wanted more services to be provided within the library
- **Like online catalogue** 8 people (0.9%) said that they like the online catalogue
- **Like one stop shop** 7 respondents (0.8%) said that they like the one stop shop services that are available within the library
- **Ability to order books** 6 comments (0.7%) said that they liked the ability to order books
- **Like sharing information** 6 people (0.7%) said that they liked the fact that the libraries were there to share information



Community hub

114 (13.1%) of the comments were about libraries being community hubs:

- **Important community hub** 59 people (6.8%) said that the libraries are important community hubs: places for people to get information, meet, places for community groups to meet and places for courses to be run
- **Become a community hub** 42 people (4.8%) said that the libraries need to become more of a community hub by having more places to meet up, more services provided, more courses run and space for groups to meet up
- **Place to meet/socialise** 25 people (2.9%) said that the libraries are a place to meet and socialise

Books

108 people (12.4%) commented about books:

- **Greater variety of books needed** 58 comments (6.6%) said that a greater variety of books are needed in our libraries
- **Concentrate on books** 29 people (3.3%) said that the library should concentrate on books and not look to change too much
- **Maintain good stock of books** 6 respondents (0.7%) said that the libraries need to maintain a good stock of books to maintain their current service
- **More new books** 5 people (0.6%) said that they would like to see more new books in the libraries
- **Rotate books** 4 people (0.5%) said they would like to see a book rotation system between different libraries to increase the variety of books available

Extend opening hours

86 (9.9%) of the comments were about the library opening hours:

- **Longer opening hours in general** 38 respondents (4.4%) wanted longer opening hours in general. Many said that the current opening hours make it difficult for people who work full time to get to the library and opening in the evenings or weekends would make it easier for more people to access the library
- **Evenings** 24 people (2.7%) would like libraries to be open more in the evenings
- **Evenings and weekends** 10 respondents (1.1%) wanted libraries to be open more in evenings and weekends

Health and wellbeing

61 (7.0%) of the comments were about people's health and wellbeing:

- **Social interactions help mental health/loneliness** 40 people (4.6%) felt that the libraries provide places for people to go, where they can bump into people or chat to librarians, and that those social interactions are so important to people, to prevent loneliness and help people's mental health. This was mentioned as being particularly important to the elderly as well as new parents



- **Like – improves mental and physical wellbeing** 13 people (1.5%) said that libraries improve people's mental and physical wellbeing
- **Like - safe place** 10 respondents (1.1%) said that the libraries were a safe place for anyone to go and feel safe and comfortable



3.2 Ideas Board Responses

71 contributors submitted an idea (66 ideas) or comment (33 comments) on the ideas board tool. Other visitors to the board were able to 'vote' for ideas that they liked.

The 2 most popular ideas, that received the most 'votes' were:

"Why are the branch libraries still closed? Is there an agenda to close some or all of them permanently and claim that folk prefer to go online? If the central libraries can reopen then why not the branches. Will they all reopen in July if the coronavirus restrictions are lifted? Or is the situation seen as an opportunity to carry out the closures that the council proposed some years ago?" 9 votes

And

"A cafe in each of the main libraries and medium or smaller ones if there is the capacity. It would be a meeting point and encourage browsing and use of other library services, e.g., attending events and exhibitions or classes." 8 votes

Common themes amongst the ideas were identified and categorised. The combined number of 'likes' that ideas in each category were calculated to identify the most popular categories of idea. Submissions sometimes contained ideas relating to more than one category, hence there may be more 'ideas' identified below than submissions.

Events – 41 ideas

41 of the ideas were about events that libraries could hold:

- More children's events (8 ideas, 17 likes) or that they liked children's events (2 ideas, 6 likes)
- More courses (4 ideas, 16 likes)
- Guest speakers / authors (4 ideas, 3 likes)
- Libraries should link with schools (2 ideas, 6 likes)
- Use the library as a cinema (2 ideas, 5 likes)
- More IT training (2 ideas, 4 likes)
- A human library (2 ideas, 2 likes)

Facilities – 17 ideas

17 of the ideas were about facilities in the library:

- Café facilities wanted (4 ideas, 16 likes)
- Create agile workspaces (2 ideas, 6 likes)
- Improve computer access and support (2 ideas, 6 likes)
- Improve access to printers (2 ideas, 0 likes)
- Like study space (1 idea, 3 likes)

Staffing – 13 ideas, 22 likes

13 of the ideas were about staffing:

- Use some volunteers (3 ideas, 3 likes)
- Paid staff needed (3 ideas, 3 likes)
- Volunteers – give more responsibility (2 ideas, 1 like)
- Increase librarians' autonomy (1 idea, 4 likes)
- Volunteers not wanted (1 idea, 3 likes)
- Train staff properly (1 idea, 3 likes)

Open libraries – 10 ideas, 29 likes

10 of the ideas were about opening the libraries:

- Open libraries after the Covid-19 closures (8 ideas, 29 likes)
- Keep libraries open in general (1 idea, 5 likes)
- Local libraries needed (1 idea, 5 likes)

Community hub – 10 ideas, 34 likes

10 of the ideas were about how the libraries should become a community hub, a space to meet and mix, and spaces that community groups can use.

Books – 9 ideas, 23 likes

9 of the ideas were about books:

- Greater variety of books needed (4 ideas, 11 likes)
- Concentrate on books (1 idea, 4 likes)
- Rotate books (1 idea, 4 likes)
- Allow donation of books (1 idea, 0 likes)
- Dyslexic friendly books and reading schemes (1 idea, 0 likes)



3.3 Events and Stakeholder Sessions

3.3.1 Engagement Held Near to Wirral Libraries Closed During the Consultation

Fourteen sessions were held in the community at venues close to those Libraries closed at the time of the engagement. At these events 382 people engaged in discussions and 323 questionnaires were given out. From these events 91 questionnaires were completed and submitted on the day and the details for people to submit their questionnaires following the event were provided. The information from all questionnaires submitted is included in with the other questionnaire analysis. Table 43 indicates the engagement at each of the sessions.

Location	Date	Number of People Engaged	Questionnaires Given Out	Questionnaires Completed on the day
Pyramids Shopping Centre, Birkenhead	09/09/2021	27	12	0
Cherry Tree Shopping Centre, Liscard	31/08/2021	42	24	8
Little Beechwood Centre	20/08/2021	15	4	1
St James Centre, Birkenhead	20/08/2021	20	5	2
Heswall (outside library)	19/08/2021	22	17	2
Seacombe Children's Centre	23/08/2021	16	27	7
Heart of Egremont	24/08/2021	15	4	4
Pensby - Kylemore Community Centre	06/09/2021	12	45	6
Leasowe Leisure Centre	28/08/2021	25	2	0
Irby - St Chad's Church	03/09/2021	70	51	15
Moreton - Lingham Park	04/09/2021	64	49	15
Hoylake - Melrose Hall	08/09/2021	25	23	12
Upton - Victory Hall	17/09/2021	16	20	12
Noctorum - St Andrews Church	13/09/2021	13	40	7
Total		382	323	91

Table 43: Summary of Engagement at Community Events.

From the event discussions the key themes raised across the events have been identified and are summarised here. The discussions were noted on the day and further information for individual events is available in Appendix 1.

Key themes that were mentioned several times at the community events included the importance of Libraries, that they were seen as an essential service and important community hubs and that they were valued as part of individual communities. There was a desire for Libraries to be re-opened following Covid-19 closures and for libraries to be kept open. They were also seen as important for social interactions to impact on loneliness and mental health and that services run from Libraries including, One Stop Shops, events for adults and children were valued and that more could be provided.

The feedback also noted that Library buildings were outdated and had a poor appearance and that more funding was required for the service. There was also the view that Libraries could make better use of the space they had including interior design and room hire. A greater variety of books was required, and better computer access and support were noted. Feedback noted that there was an opportunity for Libraries to improve their communication with communities, including what is locally on offer in the library and to be clear on opening times. Comparison with Liverpool Central Library and its service offer was also noted on several occasions.

Key themes arising from the community events:

Theme	Count
Libraries are an essential service	11
Buildings outdated /poor appearance	11
Open libraries (COVID-19)	9
Important community hub	8
More funding needed	7
Greater variety of books needed	5
Better use of space	5
Keep libraries open	4
Liverpool Library model is excellent	4
Improve communication with community	4
Opening hours confusing	3
Important for social interactions help mental health/loneliness	3
One Stop Shops important	3
Improve computer access and support	3
Communicate what is on offer better	3
Local libraries needed	2
Like Borrowbox	2
Like children's events	2
Toddler groups	2



Theme	Count
More events required	2
More children's events required	2
Reference resources site important	2

Table 44: Key themes recorded more than once at Community Events.

3.3.2 Specific Engagement with Young People

Specific events were held at St John Plessington and Upton Hall schools. In each school the events were held with a number of classes and questions were asked whilst allowing the young people to discuss Wirral Libraries and submit their own thoughts and ideas about the future of Libraries. A set of questions were provided to each school although not all questions were asked in each session in the schools. For the questions not asked routinely information is provided based on the number of young people who were asked the question not the total number of students involved.

In both schools a total of 72 year 7 and year 8 young people were involved in the discussions.

- 14 out of 27 students had never used the library - 52% of those asked.
- 18 out of 72 students still used the library – 25% of those asked.
- 10 out of 72 students were aware of the online library – 14% of those asked.
- 1 out of 27 students used the online library – 4% of those asked.

For those that visited the libraries the reasons included:

- Borrow books
- Private study
- Coding club
- For a meeting
- Use computers
- Relax
- Meet friends/family

When asked why they did not use the library the reasons were:

- They used the school library
- Already have access to books at home
- They were reading less / don't enjoy reading
- Covid-19 closures and unsure of opening times
- I don't know where my library is
- Too busy
- I don't think the library service is useful
- I use another book service
- I don't like the book selection



- The library is boring
- I buy books online

When asked what they would like to see in the library the students suggested:

- Home delivery
- Longer opening times
- Recommendations by genre
- Author events
- A trip to the library with school
- Graphic novels
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) resources
- Better website
- A library app
- Newer books- the books available are dated and don't relate to me.
- Quick reads (these are books that are shorter stories but age appropriate i.e. not for younger readers)
- An age specific section
- Horror books
- Headphones and quiet space -soundproof section for gaming
- Books for our age only
- Books that relate to my life/circumstances
- Comic books
- Language learning books
- Wi-fi printing
- Café
- Escape rooms
- Plants/green space
- Games room (non-digital)
- Magazines

For those that used the online library they were asked why they used it:

- Used it because her family did.

When asked why they did not use the online library:

- Pupils were not aware of it
- Want to read physical books

When asked what they would like to see in the online library the students suggested:

- LGBTQIA+ books
- Graphic novels
- Comedy books



3.3.3 Engagement with Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholder meetings provided an opportunity for individuals and groups to learn more about the engagement, get questions answered and offer their feedback and thoughts on developing a new Library model. Library Officers attended each event and information was collected. The key feedback from the sessions included:

- Accessibility of Libraries was important. Upstairs accessibility is an issue at Birkenhead Central Library. It needs improving or services/collections need to be brought downstairs
- Public transport was important to users with disabilities, so libraries with good public transport links were key.
- Evolutions model of work experience and employment for people with disabilities could be possible through a Library café and was there opportunity for this.
- The Autism friendly libraries message was not being conveyed to the community and could be improved.
- In Birkenhead there was positive feedback around the collaborative work around literacy linked to the Cradle to Career initiative and with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- North Birkenhead Development Trust (St James Library) suggested that the community managed model opportunity was not a likely option for them as the current model provided rental income.
- The value of the Home Reader Service was noted by the Residential Forum.
- There may be potential for the Wirral CCG digital champions to improve digital exclusion and make connections for people with the library offer.
- There may be opportunities for community-based health services to support residents to use the Library or the Digital Library.
- There may be opportunities for linkages between health colleagues and Library services to provide people with information the library offer including Home Reader to people on discharge from hospital.
- The new Library model could be linked to the Age Friendly City project that Wirral is a part of.

3.3.4 Staff Engagement

The Staff Engagement events allowed all staff to engage in the consultation and ensure their questions were answered. Staff were requested to provide feedback through the completion of questionnaires and this information is captured in the questionnaire section of this report.

4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic

4.1 Demographics

Information regarding demographics was required to complete the survey, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory. Only the question requesting the participant’s postcode was mandatory, the remaining questions users could choose to select ‘prefer not to say’ or skip the question altogether.

Participant location by ward and IMD decile

Most respondents described themselves as a local resident (95.5%). 4.2% are members of a voluntary or community organisation, 3.5% are employees of Wirral Council.



Figure 29: Chart showing respondents’ connection with Wirral

The most represented Wirral ward, based on postcode, was Greasby, Frankby and Irby ward (10.1%), followed by Hoylake and Meols (8.5%).

The least well represented wards were Bidston and St. James (1.1%) and Rock Ferry (1.7%), which also correlate to some of the most deprived areas of Wirral.

The most represented Wirral ward, based on postcode, was Greasby, Frankby and Irby ward (10.1%), followed by Hoylake and Meols (8.5%). The least well represented wards were Bidston and St. James (1.1%) and Rock Ferry (1.7%), which also correlate to some of the most deprived areas of Wirral.

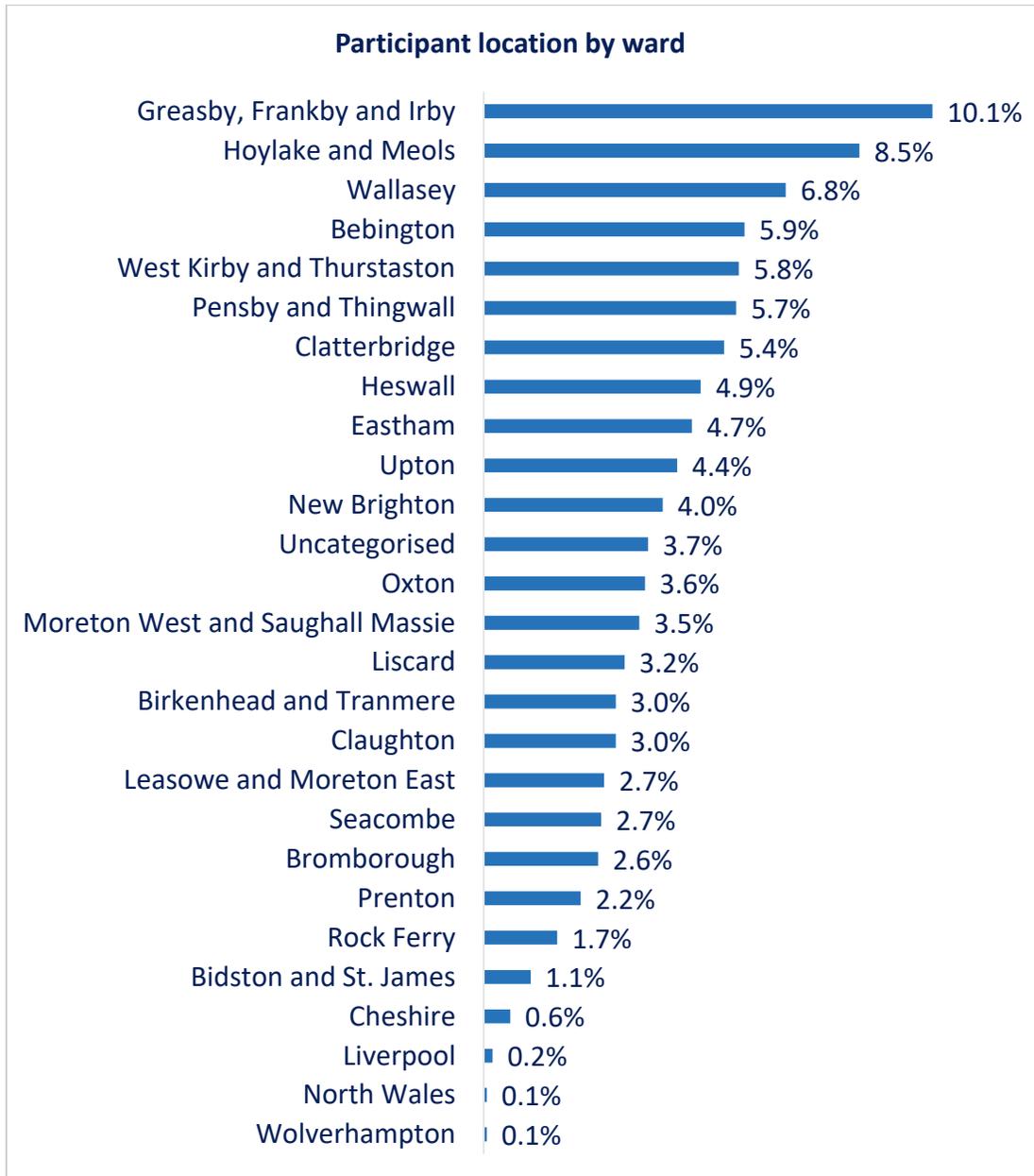


Figure 30: Chart showing the respondent's location by IMD decile.

11.6% of respondents provided a postcode in the first decile (where first is most deprived and 10th is least deprived) of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), predominantly in Birkenhead & Tranmere, Seacombe and Rock Ferry wards.

The eighth (15.0%) and sixth (14.1%) IMD deciles are the most represented amongst participants.

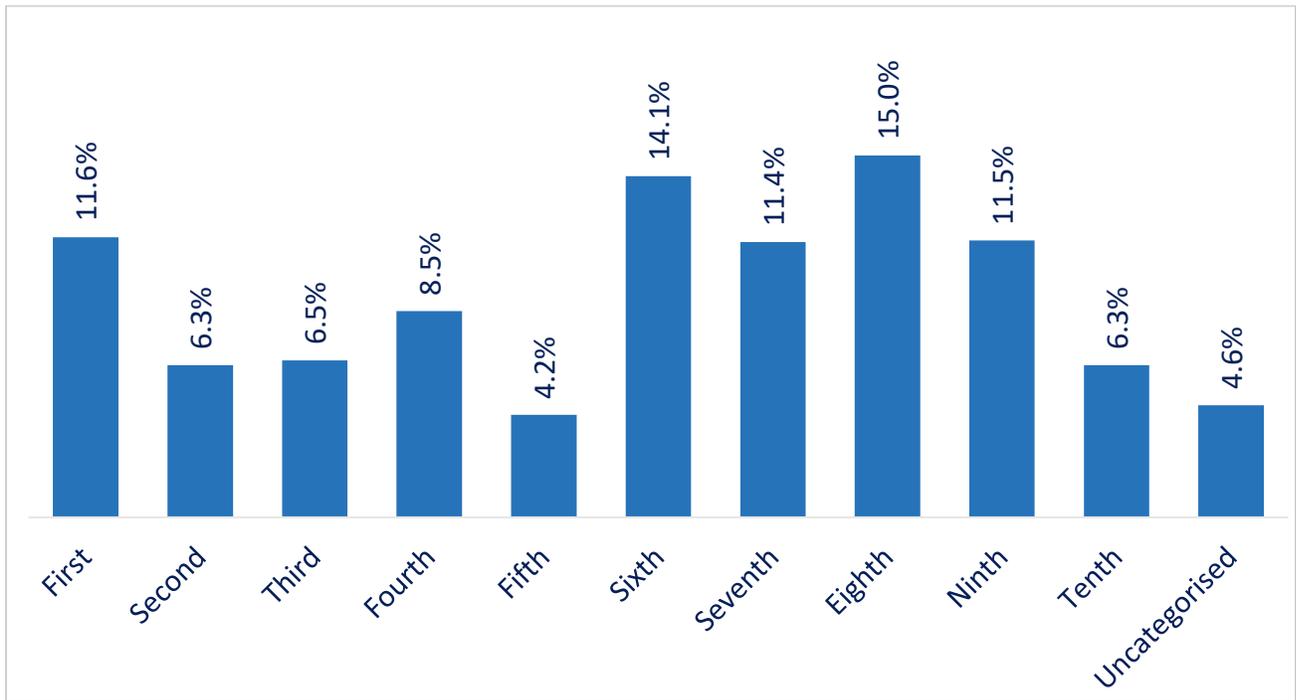


Figure 31: Chart showing the respondent's location by IMD decile.

Most of the respondents (72.0%) were female. 26.0% were male, 1% chose not to say and 0.5% prefer to use their own term.

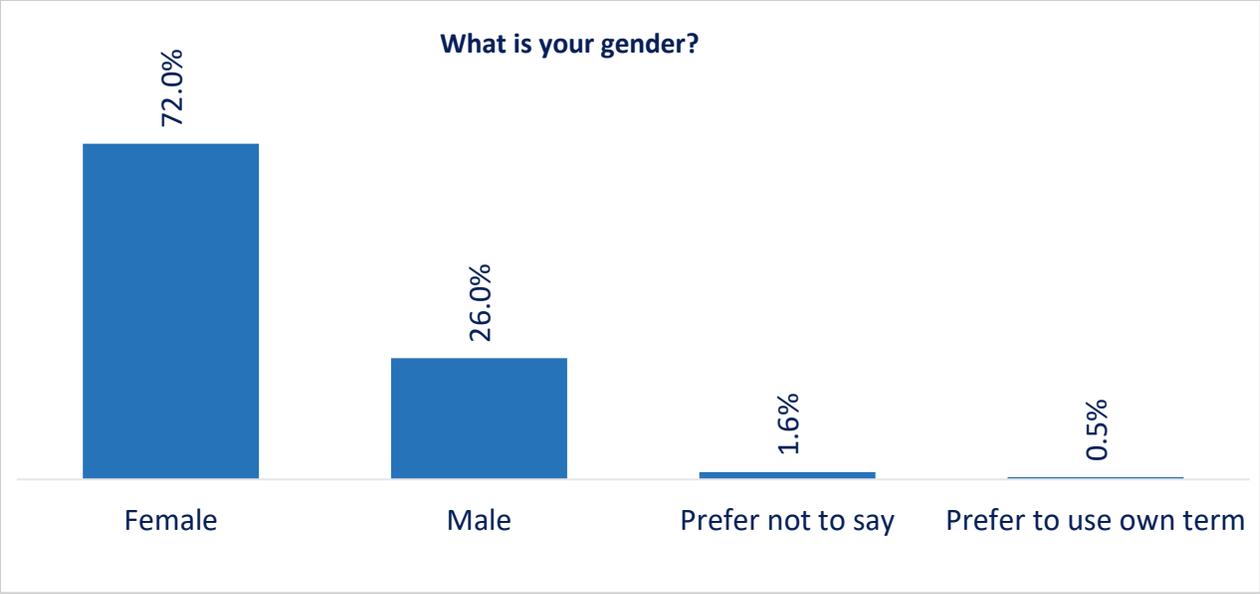


Figure 32: Chart showing residents' gender

The most common age groups were 65-74 years (25.8%) and 55-64 years (20.8%). Only 1.7% were aged under 16 years and 1.8% aged 16-24 years.

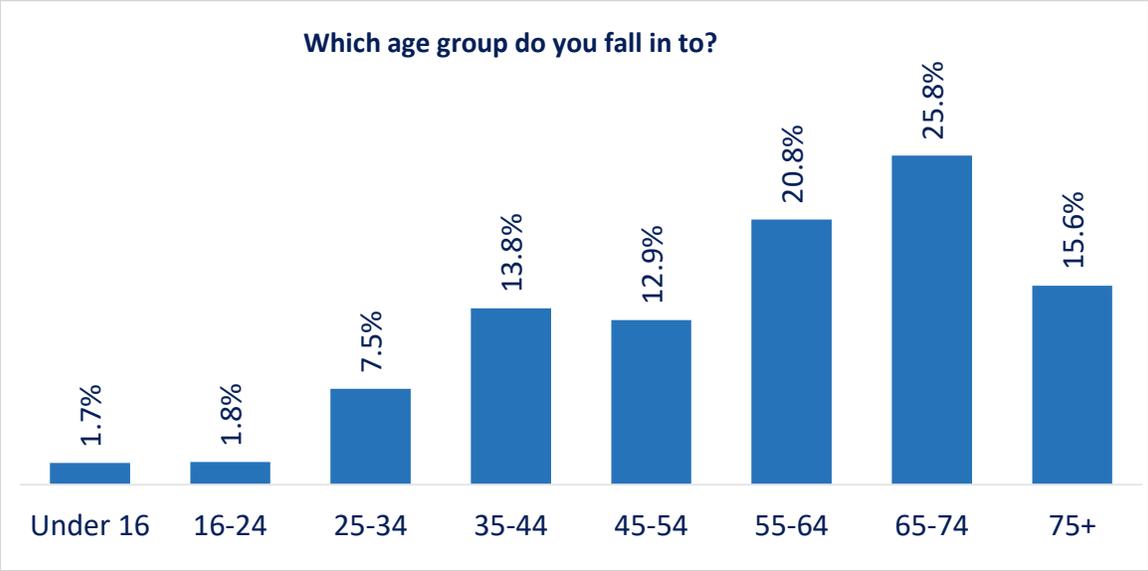


Figure 33: Age group of respondents

94% of respondents were white British. Non-white ethnicities accounted for 2.8% of respondents, combined.



Figure 35: Ethnicity of respondents

Most respondents who answered this question were heterosexual (84.6%)

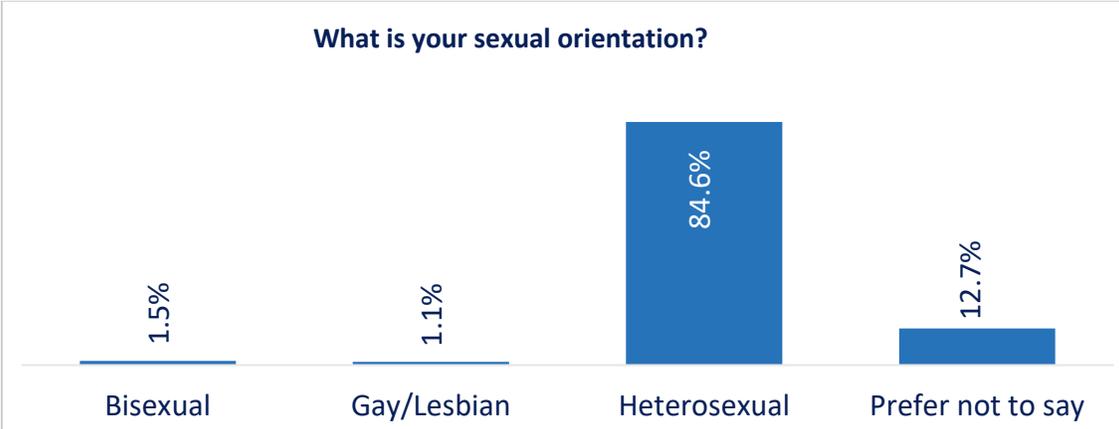


Figure 34: Sexual orientation of respondents

4.2 Site Traffic

6,622 people visited the libraries consultation page, 1,073 of whom participated in the survey and 71 contributed to the ideas board.

The highest engagement rates were from direct visits to the site (23.9%), visits from emails (21.6%) and from search engines (19.0%).

Although social media generated a relatively high level of visits to the site (x1,952) this channel had the lowest rate of engagement, with only 11.4% going on to take the survey.

Channel	Aware visits	Engaged visits	Engagement rate
.GOV sites	102	16	15.7%
Direct	2666	638	23.9%
Email	185	23	12.4%
Referrals	1354	293	21.6%
Search Engine	363	69	19.0%
Social	1952	222	11.4%
Total	6,622	1,261	19.0%

Table 45: Traffic and engagement by channel



5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Feedback Summary Notes from Events Held in Venues Near Closed Libraries

Location: Little Beechwood Centre

Date: 20 August 2021

Number of people engaged: 15

Number of questionnaires given out: 4

Number of questionnaires completed: 1

Comments received:

- Met with Councillor McManus who will continue to promote the consultation to users of the Centre.
- Conversation with Headteacher at St Paul's Primary School on working together once Beechwood Library has re-opened.
- Conversation with Citizen's Advice Bureau about returning sessions at Moreton Library.
- Invited to a stakeholder event at Beechwood Recreation Centre on Tuesday 7th September about wider development of offer out of the Recreation Centre with other key partners.

Location: Cherry Tree Shopping Centre in Liscard

Date: 31st August 2021

Number of people engaged: 42

Number of questionnaires given out: 24

Number of questionnaires completed: 8

Comments received:

- Libraries were a lifesaver when I was a young mum.
- Would like to see tablet/computer courses in libraries.
- Use to like the coffee mornings, film nights, CD's, and Ukulele events in Wallasey Central.
- Young person: Only reads 'at home' – doesn't use library
- Went to library to carry out a job search and was moved from the computer as required by a partner organisation. Was noisy too. Libraries used to be quiet. Won't use the library again due to this happening to her.
- Has to get the bus to Wallasey Central. Only wants to use Seacombe Library as this is within walking distance.
- One person said they filled the questionnaire online.
- My children used to use the library when they were young, but they're too old now.

Location: Melrose Hall, Hoylake (Plus a visit to a coffee morning at St Luke's Church Hall)



Date: Wednesday 8th September

Number of people engaged: 13 at Melrose & 12 at St Lukes Church Hall

Number of questionnaires given out: 23

Number of questionnaires completed: 12

Comments received:

- There was a coffee morning on at St Luke's Church Hall, so officer spoke to those there and handed out forms.
- We left an additional 20 forms for the Friday Club.
- Concerns about the state of the building (Hoylake) and some mentioned the books near the windows looked like they were being bleached by the sun.
- Keen to have a date for reopening.
- Pleased it would be reopening after Covid closure.
- Retired librarian told us Wirral was the worst library authority ever.
- Lots of interest in volunteering.
- One customer extremely complimentary about BorrowBox – said it kept her going during lockdown.

Location: St Andrew's Church, Noctorum

Date: 13th September 2021

Number of people engaged: 10 including 3 Councillors

Number of questionnaires given out: 10 + 20 for bingo club + 20 for the social supermarket

Number of questionnaires completed: 7

Comments received:

- Councillors Gill Wood, Steve Foulkes and George Davies, Mayor of Wirral attended.
- Residents very keen to have a community facility to replace the Community Centre that had been in the grounds of Ridgeway School.
- Would like Ridgeway Library to reopen so it can become a community hub.
- Limited interest in library services.
- Ladies in attendance took forms to distribute at bingo and at the social supermarket. Cllr Wood will collect and return to Birkenhead Library.



Location: Heart of Egremont

Date: 24 August 2021

Number of people engaged: 15

Number of questionnaires given out: 4

Number of questionnaires completed: 4

Comments received:

- Child: Chess club would be good, or a games group. Not interested in books.
- We did visit the library pre Covid but it's not open now.
- We would visit if you ran the group (toddler group) at the library.
- Be good if the library did sessions here, can you come on a regular basis?
- Use Wallasey Central good for groups and I hope you aren't closing it.
- Are you going to offer libraries to volunteers?
- We use Wallasey Central and Seacombe, don't mind which.
- Seacombe Library looks awful, are you knocking it down?
- Seacombe Library needs money spent on it.
- Seacombe Library doesn't offer me anything I want.

Location: Heswall - outside library

Date: 20 August 2021

Number of people engaged: 22

Number of questionnaires given out: 17

Number of questionnaires completed: 2

Comments received:

- University of the Third Age (U3A) classes not being available across the network of libraries is a devastating social loss.
- Volunteer at Beanstalk- baby and toddler groups very important for all as its start their reading journey.
- Heswall library is the only civic building available, and its loss is felt greatly. Getting books to those most in need is crucial.
- We can't travel to West Kirby Library, we need our local library back. Public transport not good.
- Qualified librarians are very important, the loss of so many is detrimental to the service.
- Is Heswall going to close?
- You have Heswall earmarked to close already, why bother with a consultation.
- We need Heswall library open again, it is the only public building in the area, residents are predominately elderly who cannot travel.
- Nothing else in the area.



- The important things about it (Heswall) is the One Stop Shop. No other way to contact and we can't go online. Phone service is useless no one picks up and you need an hour to spare.
- Moreton One Stop Shop is very important.
- I use Moreton Library for respite – I get a carer in for 1 hour a week and the book group is so important to me and many of the attendees who are on their own. Loneliness is a big problem and Moreton Library used to have so many activities and events, but they stopped well before Covid.
- Heswall space should be rented out - the upstairs space should be used more- room hire.
- Heswall One Stop Shop was so useful- please bring it back.
- It was good to see the space in Heswall being used by the Police, there should be more of that.

Location: Kylemore Community Centre, Pensby

Date: 6 September 2021

People engaged: 12

Questionnaires handed out: 45

Questionnaires returned: 6

Comments:

- Why is Heswall Library closed when Greasby Library is open. Should have either Heswall Library or Pensby Library open
- Pensby Library is outdated and needs re-decoration and modernising. There are far too many leaflets and its needs a de-clutter.
- Space is not utilised properly.
- Back-office space would make a great meeting room.
- Shelves need to be on wheels, so space is more flexible.
- Can groups purchase furniture on behalf of the library?
- Staff/volunteers/friends do not get on, they should be working collectively.
- Pensby Library is a great community asset and fully accessible.
- Keep the community events going like bingo, Gamblers Anonymous, storytimes.
- More content for Borrowbox please.
- We don't want to lose Pensby Library, but the library needs a revamp to make it a better - community, multifunctional space. Yes, books are important but it's a community hub and the space needs to reflect that with all the groups that meet there.
- Spend some money on it- needs modernising as it's a great library.
- Very important to the older isolated community- loneliness.
- Volunteers were doing great work there and need to be able to do more.
- Higher Bebington- user came to this session to complete survey.



Location: Leasowe Leisure Centre

Date: 28 August 2021

Number of people engaged: 25

Number of questionnaires given out: 2

Number of questionnaires completed: 0

Comments received:

- Visit specifically for community session (Seacombe Library User). Believes the library is invaluable to the community it serves given high level of deprivation. Wanted to know when Seacombe Library was due to open (signposted to email inbox so we could forward to management).
- We used to visit Birkenhead Library as a family, but we go to Liverpool Central now, much better facilities and it's a better space (E.g. not dated, has a café and a large area for the kids to enjoy).
- Wallasey is looking very tired, and we use to go when the kids were little, but it just needs some money spent on it.
- The free bags (Book Trust) bags are great but after the first few years (under 5s) the library isn't really appealing to us. You need to upgrade the buildings. Look at Liverpool's library.

Location: Lingham Park in Moreton

Date: 4 September 2021

Number of people engaged: 64

Number of questionnaires given out: 49

Number of questionnaires completed: 15

Comments received:

- Lady said she would like to see help for online consultations for her GP.
- A great deal of people did not know Moreton Library was open.
- Comments that the opening hours were confusing for Moreton Library.
- Someone commented that the lack of children's space in the 'new' library in Moreton would be too small.
- Friend of Moreton Library said it was very hard to engage other members to join the 'Friends of Moreton' but hoping that Moreton in Bloom may encourage new members.
- Councillor Max Booth, said libraries were a vital service, and was interested to know that we were engaging with the public.

Location: Pyramids Shopping Centre, Birkenhead

Date: 9 September 2021

Number of people engaged: 27

Number of questionnaires handed out: 12

Number of questionnaires completed: 0

Comments:

- When is Prenton Library re-opening?
- I have no need of the library - physical site or digital.
- Don't use libraries as I buy books. Asked if they had a kindle/tablet- signposted to e-resources.
- Used to use Birkenhead Library but can't since cataract problems so don't read much now. Said service had been brilliant though.
- Don't read, no relevance.
- Have enough books at home and not interested in other services in libraries.
- You need to buy more books- your stock is old and dated.
- Buy more books.
- Need to replicate Liverpool Central, the pc offer is great. Sometimes you can't get a pc as its too busy. The whole space is good to use and very user friendly and a great environment. It is a destination.
- Some libraries are scruffy and dated- you need to invest in them. They haven't changed for years. They are neglected buildings and look it.
- Students (A-level and Uni) will go to Liverpool to study and use pcs you need better facilities. When I was a Sixth Former we would go to Liverpool as a group to study, it was great. We could meet and use the pcs with other people our age. Why do we need to go to Liverpool to get that service? Nothing like that on Wirral.
- St James Library needs security, teenagers can be a problem.
- St James is very important to the local schools and nurseries. The storytimes etc. and engagement with schools is great you need to continue and build on it.
- Seacombe Library is so important to my mental wellbeing. Books are key to this and the social interaction of the groups that use to meet there was so valuable. It is the heart of that community.
- Wallasey Village Library has old stock, needs lots of new books.
- Greasby Library I loved to use this but never know when it's open. The opening hours are confusing. You need better advertising of the library services and opening hours.
- Never see anything about libraries, you don't promote what you do. I don't know what you offer other than books.
- Lack of investment over many years, buildings look tired and facilities old and poor. If you don't invest in them people won't use them.
- We go to Liverpool, it's in the right place with other attractions and looks great.
- Didn't know you did e-books, you need to tell people.



- Book stock is old, you need more books to encourage people to visit.
- Are you going to invest in libraries after this consultation? That's what is needed, it's a managed decline of buildings and services.

Location: Seacombe Children's Centre

Date 23 August 2021

Number of people engaged: 16

Number of questionnaires given out: 27 (20 left on site)

Number of questionnaires completed: 7

Comments received:

- Some didn't use Seacombe Library, no need or too far to walk to.
- Plan for relocating into St John's Church in Liscard suggested.

Location: St Chad's Church Irby

Date: 3 September 2021

Number of people engaged: 70 approximately.

Number of questionnaires given out: 48 + 3 easy read versions.

Number of questionnaires completed: 15

Comments received:

- Why aren't there any evening engagement sessions?
- Why isn't this in the library?
- How much has it cost to hire the hall?
- We were expecting a meeting with a presentation, senior staff, and Councillors, we've been fobbed off.
- Why weren't posters put up on the community notice boards?
- How is it that senior Library Officers can go into Irby this morning but not be here, or us in the library?
- Many attending thought Irby had closed for good, and we spent a lot of time explaining that there was a schedule to open all sites after the Covid shut down and that the Consultation was looking at longer term plans.



Location: St James Centre, Birkenhead - North Birkenhead Development Trust

Date: 20 August 2021

Number of people engaged: 20

Number of questionnaires given out: 5

Number of questionnaires completed: 2

Comments received:

- Met with Trust Manager to discuss timetable about reopening of St James Library.
- Trust Manager to continue to promote the consultation.

Location: Upton Victory Hall

Date: 17 September 2021

Number of people engaged: 16

Number of questionnaires handed out: 20

Number of questionnaires returned: 12

Comments received:

- Most comments received were around the reopening of Upton Library as many attendees thought that the library was not reopening.
- Common themes of discussion were why was Upton Library not open yet, what was the delay.
- We want a library for Upton, Greasby and Moreton are not our community, we are our own community of Upton.
- Need something for the children at Upton Library.
- Its great having a separate children's library.
- Local history/history of Upton important for Upton Library, good to have something based at Upton Library.
- Wallasey Central Library does not need a reference library, it should all be at Birkenhead Library. It seems ridiculous that you have to go to Wallasey Central for street directories when every other area is at Birkenhead Central reference library. Need the ref library open asap.
- Nearly all attendees completed and returned a survey at the session, so more feedback is contained within paper questionnaires.



Appendix 2: Direct Representations

Upton Village Community Group Upton Library

We have heard via xxx, that discussion at the 'Humanitarian Cell' has included reference to the fact that the Council's 'One Stop Shops' have still not opened up following Covid Lockdown.

People with problems or needs have been expected to telephone to arrange a telephone appointment to speak to an adviser and then possibly be offered a Face2Face appointment. This is often too cumbersome for people who are distressed by the difficulties, or problems they need help with. They want easier access. They want somewhere they can go to see someone. A safe space. It has been suggested that 'One Stop Shop' Managers are looking for venues around the Community through which they can offer Face2Face services. The suggestion woven into the Library Consultation process is that some Libraries are likely to be lost, closed, never to re-open. That is not what Upton & Woodchurch people want, nor is that they need!

Given that there has been no 'One Stop Stop' provision in this area, or indeed for several miles around. The Conway Centre, in Birkenhead, is probably the closest, but hardly accessible to people with limited mobility, at a time of distress.

Would the Council (Library Service, working with other departments and the Community) consider developing a mixed economy approach to providing an accessible service for the residents of Upton and Woodchurch, based in Upton Library, delivered by a team of paid staff supported by Volunteer helpers?

The venue found at Upton Library is accessible on foot, by bicycle, by car, or by bus as the 437 and 418 buses stop outside and visitors could connect with other routes which cross through the Village, travelling between Arrowe Park Hospital and Moreton.

The Library is of Historical and Architectural interest locally. It was awarded a Grade II Listing for that very reason. Shouldn't the Local Authority be proud of such a building and want to see it flourish? It is situated on one of the entrance routes into a Village with a rich historical past. We are dismayed to hear that the building has fallen into some disrepair during the time it was abandoned during lockdown and there has been water damage to contents. We hope that the damage will be remedied. This significant building could help Upton to be recognised as the 'Historical Village' it is, at the crossroads in the heart of Wirral. It could provide a base for exploring and promoting local heritage and history, family records, memory groups. Alzheimer support groups etc some of which has done previously.



The Library could enable Upton to be recognised as a ‘Healthy Village’ – its close proximity to Upton Group Practice, across Ford Road, could provide opportunities for developing health related activities, such as hosting talking/listening therapy groups, diabetes management groups, smoking cessation, chair based exercise classes etc.

I’ve run out ‘H’ words, but The Library should be venue which promotes literacy, numeracy and digital skills for people of all ages, stages and abilities in the Community. Its absence is felt amongst those who don’t have internet access in their own homes as more and more activity and services seem only to be available to people who can access them online.

Upton Library stands close to one of the ‘gateways’ to the Village, not far from the entrance to Ford Road, the main route through. For it to appear dilapidated, closed and unwanted does not provide the impression of a good ‘Welcome’ to people coming into the Village nor to people passing through on the main bus route from Liverpool to the Wirral Coastline.

Upon Village Community Group was established in 2019, to raise the profile of the Village, to make it more attractive, to encourage Visitors and thereby Customers to use the local businesses. Volunteers have done this through a combination of securing investment via grants from the local authority, trusts, local donations and fundraising and through the commitment of local residents and traders to work together for the greater good.

We believe the same could happen if a partnership, a working together, a mixed economy approach could be developed and adopted to give new life to Upton Library.

The Community Group includes a local historian who has written about the Library & the history of the Village. We have explored finding a space where the history of Upton could be displayed, where people could come to find out more, whether they be school children from local schools, or adults with a local history or family interest. Thus far we have not found somewhere. Upton Library could provide just such a venue. If the Council has the willingness to be creative in approach, to think outside the box and to put the interests of the local Community first.

XXX

Local Resident & Treasurer, Upton Village Community Group

Wirral Library Strategy Consultation September 2021

I am responding to your request for comments on your Wirral Library Strategy.

I am a male resident of Upton aged 75 years and until the lockdown in March 2020 I used the Upton Library extensively for family history research. I particularly use the access to the FindMyPast website. I probably used the Upton library twice a week every week in 2019. However, I also occasionally borrow other more general books to read at home if I spot something of interest.

I have always found the staff at Upton, notably XXX, extremely helpful, polite and efficient in the way they run the library. They take an interest in every customer and know many by name. I would want to see this standard of service continued.

I have always found the computer facilities at Upton to be well used and occasionally I have had to wait for access to a terminal. However, I don't recall anyone else researching family history at Upton. As a consequence to lockdown I have taken out my own subscription to FindMyPast so I would not return to use that service.

As well as using the Upton library, I am a regular visitor to the Birkenhead Reference Library where I am well known to the staff. At the Reference Library I research my family history and make extensive use of the cemetery microfilms, particularly for Flaybrick cemetery, and also the Trade Directories. These resources are essential to me.

I have absolutely no problem using the microfilm and microfiche readers you have. They were new technology when I first started in Local Government but I imagine I may be in a small minority nowadays. However I hope you keep at least one reader available although you certainly don't need all the readers you currently have.

If in your stated objective on page 14 of the strategy [Section 4.2] you aim to digitise these resources [microfilm, directories], then I support you, especially if it meant I could access them at home. It is vital to retain access to these resources – they are so useful. I could give you many reasons why. A simple reason is to trace a grave number at Flaybrick and then go there actually find the plot. A more extreme reason is as follows. My 2x Great Grandfather is buried in the Non-Conformist Section of Flaybrick and without access to the microfilm and to the column in the burial register that names the minister who conducted the funeral how else might I learn which branch of Non-Conformist he was? Yes, I know I could ring Landican Cemetery but is that really what the staff there are for? I think not. Would you use a partner to digitise the burial and grave registers?

Digitising the Trade Directories could be an enormous exercise but no doubt one that could be shared with the other Merseyside & Cheshire Authorities or carried out by partners such as



FindMyPast. The few Directories currently available online are very useful but obviously limited to only a few selected years. Whatever the way forward, I feel you need to overcome the current situation where both Birkenhead and Wallasey have extensive collections of Trade Directories but neither have a complete set. In one past line of research I had to pay 2 visits to Wallasey simply to consult an 1848 Directory and on both occasions the volunteers there could not find it for me (until I showed them where it was that is).

I would support concentrating all local family history resources in one place, preferably in Birkenhead, including all the various books that you have.

I find the staff at Birkenhead Reference Library very helpful and not only on my own account. I recall an occasion in 2019 when 4 ladies came in seeking help. All were obviously born in Birkenhead but three had moved away. They came in to see what they could find about their ancestors but with an air of hopelessness and desperation that this was their last chance. The lady-in-charge, who I believe is XXX, sat them down, calmed them down, and proceeded to tackle the problem. After half an hour, she had made headway and had the 4 ladies purring with delight. They later left the library very impressed with the level of service they had received. This is an aspect of the service that should be retained.

At the same time I cannot why XXX has to spend so much time showing the public the latest Electoral Register. It must be a diversion from her main purpose. I understand that she has all the previous Registers in her control and I understand the need to ensure that copies of the current Register are not secretly taken but I would have thought this was something a more junior member of staff could carry out downstairs in the main library.

Finally, for those who wish to visit the Birkenhead Library in person, I think you should do more to advertise the excellent free parking that is available at the site at the bottom of Ball Road East. I also use the Archives Service and find that service acceptable but clearly they could do with better accommodation and a couple of designated car park spaces for visitors.

XXXX

From:
Sent: 16 September 2021 21:14
To:
Subject: Upton Library

Hi XX,
Some thoughts in advance of the event tomorrow...they're rather more random than is ideal; time is short.

As you'll well know, Upton library is listed Grade 2, and that listing covers the building as well as its interior fitting out - including the checking in / checking out counters. The provision of a public library in Upton pre-dates the current building, and links to the important role played by shipping magnate Inman in the evolution of Upton, and indeed of Wirral. Heritage is important, and features prominently in Wirral's Economic Strategy Consultation Framework. However, we also need to make sure that heritage doesn't suffocate, and if I were to be a little critical of Wirral libraries generally, and I guess of Upton library specifically, I might say that there has been little progress beyond the very traditional library offer, as it has been for many years. They basically lack energy, lack appeal for important age groups and are not bastions of innovation. Although it's an unfair comparison - because of scale and location amongst other things - look at somewhere like Peckham Library in South London. I was on a bus, and saw the building; I didn't know what it was so I abandoned my journey and went to find out - and was intrigued by the sheer vitality and energy of what was going on there. Of course, different circumstances, but my view is that we need to think beyond the traditional when considering the future for Upton Library.

Clearly Wirral Council has financial problems, and we can debate whether those are the product of poor management by the Council over the years, or whether they are the product of destructive neoliberal policies pursued by a distant London-based government. Whatever the cause, the reality is there are very limited resources,

The provision of library services have been pretty central to what local authorities have done for many years. Libraries have been community hubs; they have played an important role in improving literacy and in education; they have been a conduit for community information; they have been hubs for community activities; they have been a means for people, especially older people- to tackle loneliness; they have provided leisure resources. So much. So in the current circumstances, how and in what form can they be maintained?

Upton Library provides a 'nice' comfortable space; it's a relaxing place to go to, and it is I think highly valued by parts of the community because of that. It's a facility that contributes to the sense of 'place' that underpins Upton. The local library is important in terms of 'placemaking', a term that I note features in the Council's Economic Strategy. Placemaking is important in



terms of securing and holding on to businesses and the labour that business needs. Having said that, Upton Library's offer is in my view a little tired. It needs new energy.

What's the 'rescue' strategy? Possibilities:

- Cut costs. Is there an appetite for more volunteer input?
- Make the library more central to delivering key Council economic and community priorities.
- Strengthen relationships with local schools.
- Strengthen the digital offer to attract younger people
- Look at the library as a community asset that could be used to provide other services on days when it's not functioning primarily as a library. My main thought here is that directly opposite we have a busy GP surgery...with limited space. Could the library be used for talking and listening therapies? For health and wellbeing groups such as the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. For the delivery of health and wellbeing promotion advice which requires a bigger venue than can be provided in the surgery setting. Sure - space compromises may have to be reached but if that would help the building fulfil an enhanced function, that wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing.

Random thoughts - tossed into the pond.

Regards

XXXX



Appendix 3: Locations for Posters Communicating the Engagement

Train stations	Community Centres
New Brighton	Delamere
Wallasey Village	Windsor Close (NF)
Birkenhead Conway	St James Centre (North Birkenhead)
Bebington	Little Beechwood
West Kirby	The Parade (HO)
	CarrBridge (WO)
Supermarkets	Leasowe Millennium Centre
Asda Liscard	Leasowe Community Centre
Morrison New Brighton	
Sainsburys Upton	Children's Centres
Tesco Heswall	Seacombe
Tesco Bidston Moss	Brassey Street
Asda Bromborough	Bromborough
Health Centres/Hospitals	Leisure Centres
Eastham	Oval
New Ferry- Parkfield	Concourse
Miriam- Birkenhead	Bidston Tennis Centre
St Catherines	Giunea Gap
Moreton Medical Centre	Leasowe
Orchard Surgery - BR	Woodchurch Leisure
Eastham Group Practice	
Allport Rd Surgery	Other locations
	The Lauries
Council Building	Wirral Change
Williamson (via FOBCL)	Involve NW- (Lauries)
Floral	Tomorrows Women
	Tam O'Shanter
	Deen Centre
	Involve NW - Royal Standard House

Table 46: Locations for Posters Communicating the Engagement.

