

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Overview of responses .....	3
Online data form response analysis .....	5
Convenient visiting times .....	17
Library priorities .....	19
Key themes analysis .....	22
Equality and diversity analysis .....	25
Other findings .....	28

## Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the findings from the public consultation and engagement which was undertaken by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) between 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

The purpose of this consultation and engagement was to seek the views of Rotherham residents regarding how they use their library service and what is important to them in the service offered. It has also questioned why residents do not use the library service, and what would make them more likely to visit.

To ensure full engagement with Rotherham residents, the Council sought to collect data through several methods. Online and paper-based surveys were made available, along with a dedicated email address, and drop-in sessions were held at each of the 15 libraries in the Borough. Drop-in sessions were also held for library staff and Trade Unions. Correspondence was sent to senior officers within the Council, Elected Members, and MPs, inviting them to take part.

A meeting was held with the Community Reference Group, which included representatives from Sight and Sound, the Older Peoples Forum, Different but Equal, the Rainbow Project, Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance, Voluntary Action Rotherham, Faith Leaders Forum, the Youth Cabinet, the Looked after Children Council. Invitations to feedback on the draft strategy were also sent to Town and Parish councils and a seminar for Borough Council Elected Members also took place.

Consultation and engagement was also carried out with children and young people, with guided sessions taking place in six schools to assist children in completing the

survey. Support was also given to the Herringthorpe Youth Centre, the Youth Cabinet and Code Clubs to complete the online survey.

Data collected through the online web survey was gathered on a weekly basis and has been collated in to this summary report.

Section 1, 'Overview of responses', provides details around the number of responses by week and day. Section 2, 'Online data form response analysis', breaks down the responses to the questions asked within the online survey. Section 3, 'Convenient visiting times', analyses the responses given when the respondents were asked to select which days of the week and times of day are convenient for them to visit the library. Section 4, 'Library priorities', analyses the responses given when the respondents were asked to rank a list of decision-making criteria options. Section 5 is the key themes analysis, which provides an analysis of the free-form comments provided by the respondents and identifies trends within the comments. Section 6 discusses the equality and diversity responses from the respondents.

## Overview of responses

**Number of online form responses**

Week	Total
03/06/2019 - 09/06/2019	204
10/06/2019 - 16/06/2019	62
17/06/2019 - 23/06/2019	75
24/06/2019 - 30/06/2019	122
01/07/2019 - 07/07/2019	84
08/07/2019 - 14/07/2019	118
<b>Total consultation responses</b>	<b>665</b>

Table 1

Table 1 shows the number of responses captured weekly, with an overall response rate of **665**.

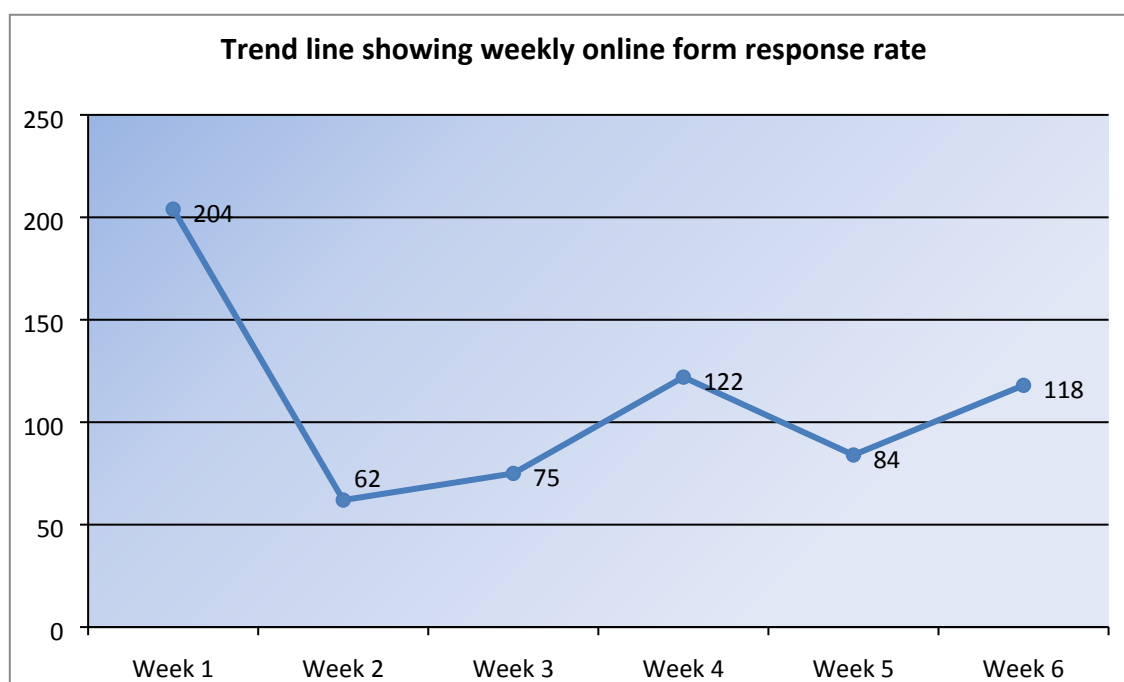


Figure 1

Figure 1 (above) shows that the highest number of responses was received in the first week. This was followed by a sharp decline in week two, then a steady increase over the following four weeks. Table 2 (below) shows the number of forms submitted on each day of the consultation, with a running total and weekly total.

## Appendix 2 – Library Strategy Consultation and Engagement Analysis Report 2019

Submitted forms by date				
Date		# forms	Total to date	Weekly total
Mon	03/06/2019	15	15	204
Tue	04/06/2019	27	42	
Wed	05/06/2019	72	114	
Thu	06/06/2019	49	163	
Fri	07/06/2019	18	181	
Sat	08/06/2019	17	198	
Sun	09/06/2019	6	204	
Mon	10/06/2019	12	216	62
Tue	11/06/2019	9	225	
Wed	12/06/2019	7	232	
Thu	13/06/2019	20	252	
Fri	14/06/2019	6	258	
Sat	15/06/2019	6	264	
Sun	16/06/2019	2	266	
Mon	17/06/2019	24	290	75
Tue	18/06/2019	13	303	
Wed	19/06/2019	11	314	
Thu	20/06/2019	10	324	
Fri	21/06/2019	11	335	
Sat	22/06/2019	4	339	
Sun	23/06/2019	2	341	
Mon	24/06/2019	5	346	122
Tue	25/06/2019	39	385	
Wed	26/06/2019	27	412	
Thu	27/06/2019	42	454	
Fri	28/06/2019	3	457	
Sat	29/06/2019	1	458	
Sun	30/06/2019	5	463	
Mon	01/07/2019	19	482	84
Tue	02/07/2019	12	494	
Wed	03/07/2019	6	500	
Thu	04/07/2019	14	514	
Fri	05/07/2019	31	545	
Sat	06/07/2019	0	545	
Sun	07/07/2019	2	547	
Mon	08/07/2019	34	581	118
Tue	09/07/2019	14	595	
Wed	10/07/2019	16	611	
Thu	11/07/2019	10	621	
Fri	12/07/2019	28	649	
Sat	13/07/2019	5	654	
Sun	14/07/2019	11	665	
Total		665	665	665

Table 2

## Online data form response analysis

The tables below are based on a total response rate of **665**. Some of the questions allowed users to select more than one answer. The percentage figures are rounded up or down to the nearest decimal place and the **No Response** segment represents where the question has been left unanswered.

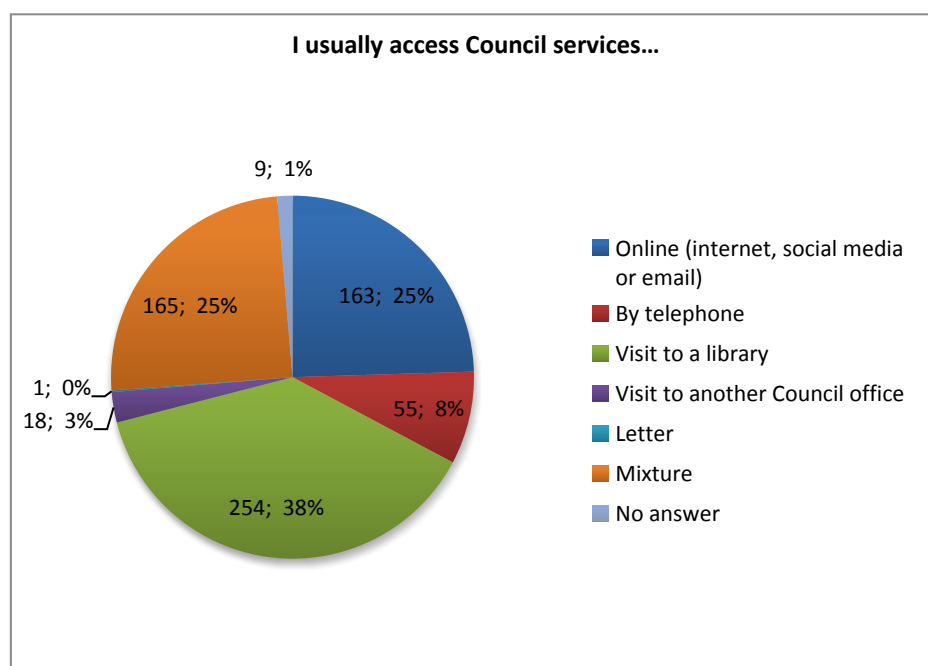


Figure 2

The above chart (figure 2) shows that of the 665 respondents, the majority stated that they currently access Council services by visiting a library (**254 respondents, or 38%**). A **quarter** of respondent's access Council services online (internet, social media or email) and a **quarter** access services through a mixture of communication methods. **55** people access the Council via the telephone (**8%**). This suggests that **75%** of respondents access Council services through a single channel of communication.

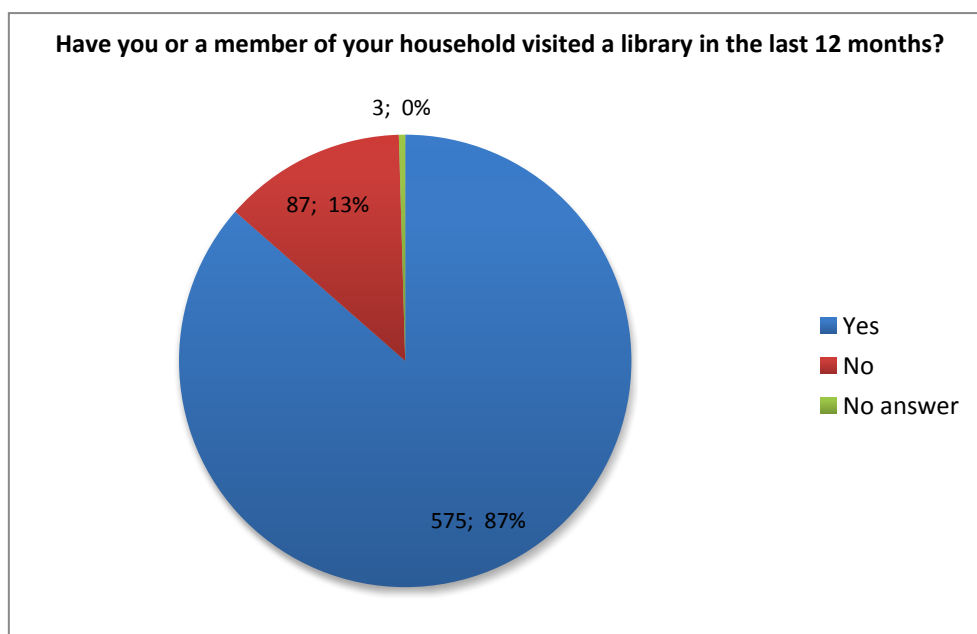


Figure 3

Figure 3 demonstrates that **575** of the 665 respondents (**87%**), or a member of their household, have visited a library within the previous 12 months. Of the 665, **87** have not visited a library (**13%**), and **3** provided no response.

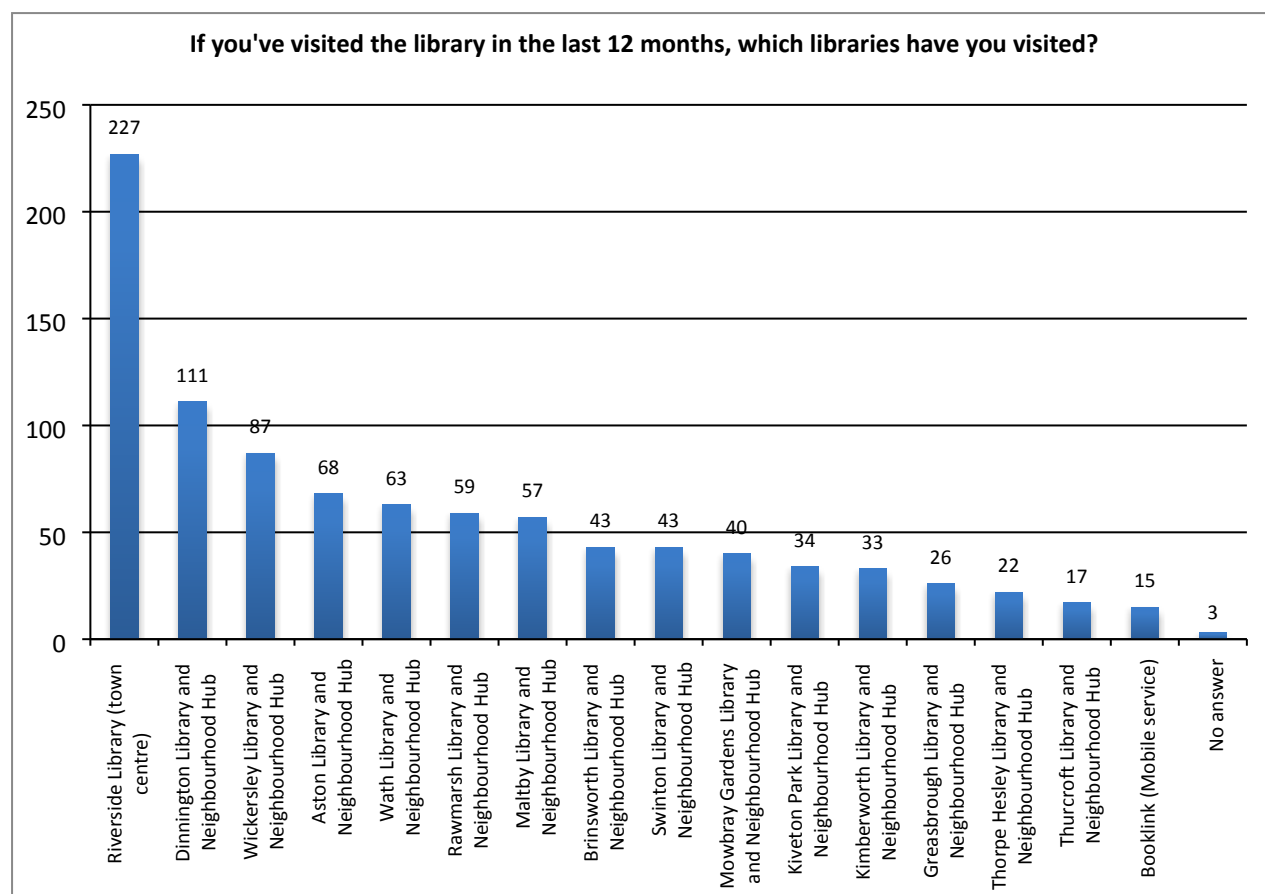


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the number of self-reported visits to each library. Responses to this question total **948**, significantly higher than the total number of respondents for the whole consultation and engagement. This response rate is a result of the respondents being provided with the option of selecting multiple answers and demonstrates that some respondents have visited more than one library within the last 12 months.

The most visited library was Riverside Library which, with **227** visits, had more than double the number of visits than the second most visited library, which was Dinnington Library with **111** visits. The least used library of the respondents was the Booklink mobile service, with **15** respondents having used this service.

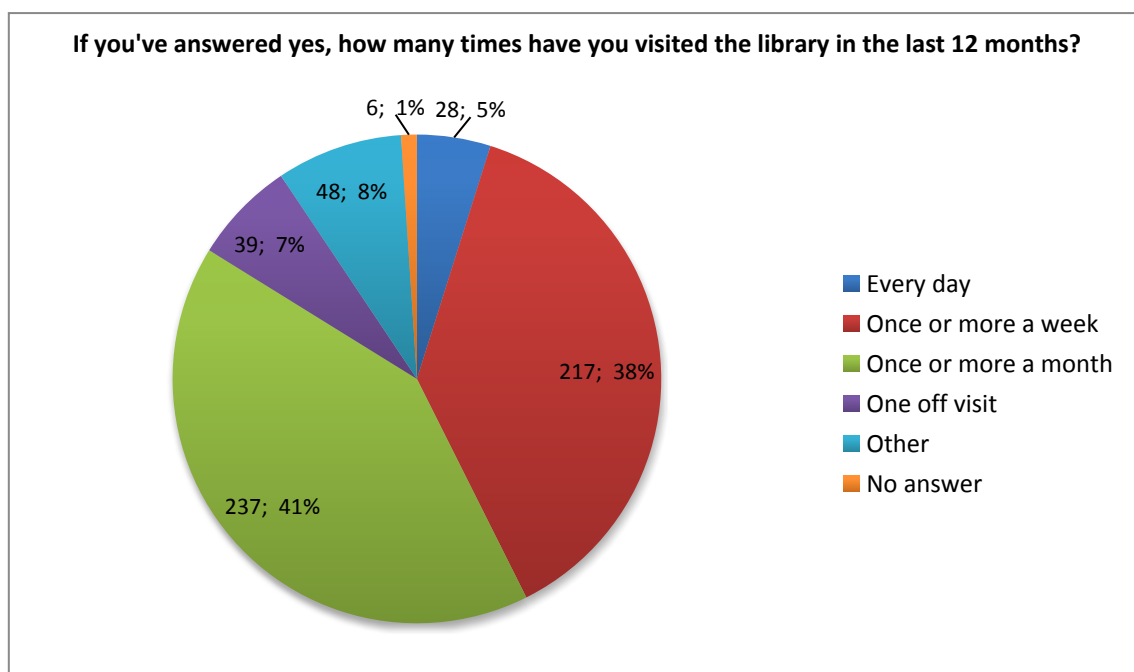


Figure 5

The above chart (figure 5) shows that of those who have visited a library in the last 12 months, the majority either visited once or more a month, or once or more a week (**237** or **41%**, and **217** or **38%** respectively). **28** respondents visited the library every day (**5%**), while for **39** respondents it was a one-off visit (**7%**).



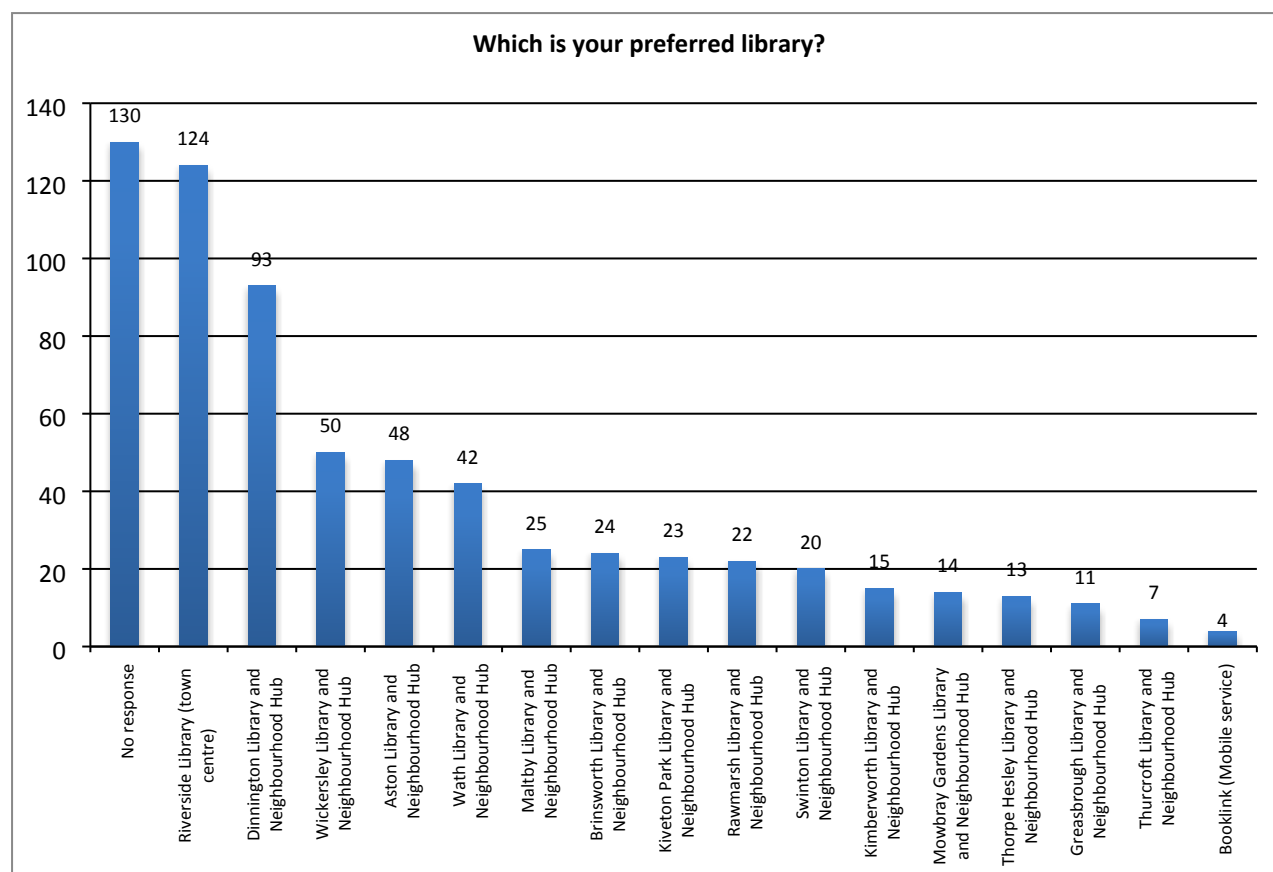


Figure 6

Figure 6 shows that when asked which their preferred library is, **130** of the 665 respondents (**20%**) did not provide a response. **124** respondents prefer to use Riverside Library (**19%**). The least preferred option was the Booklink mobile service, with **4** respondents opting for this.

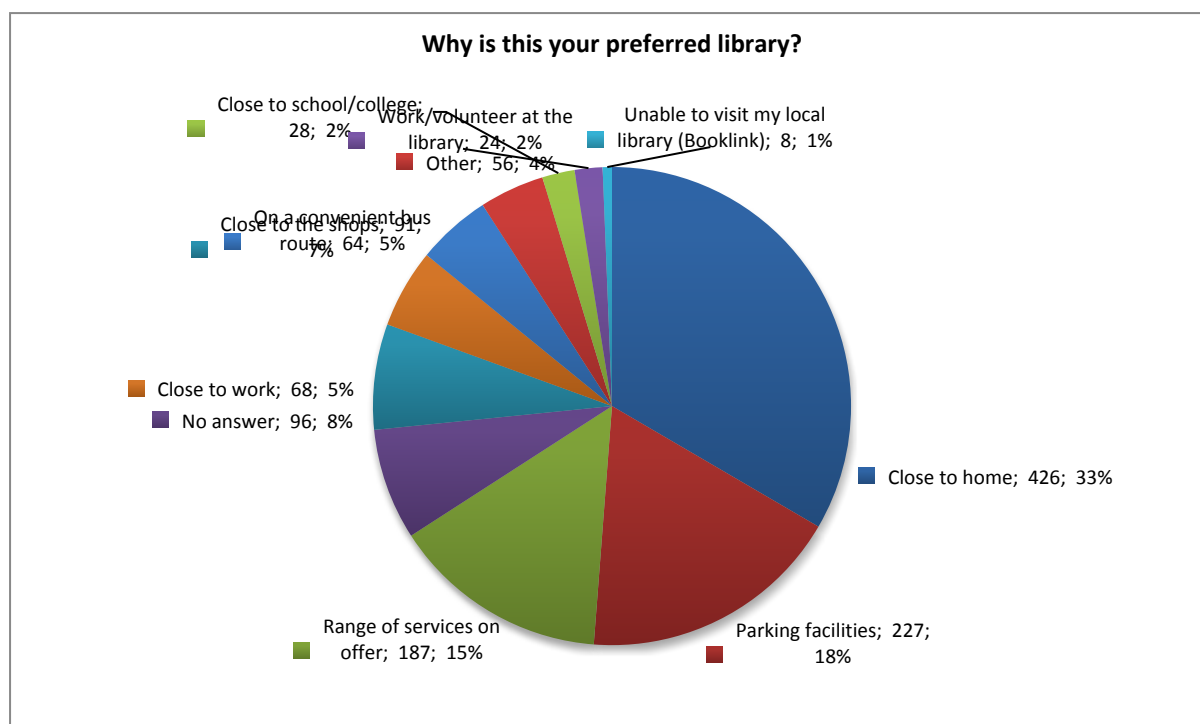


Figure 7

Respondents were asked why they use their preferred library (figure 7). Responses to this question total **1275**, significantly higher than the total number of respondents for the whole consultation and engagement. This response rate is a result of the respondents being provided with the option of selecting multiple answers and demonstrates that some respondents had more than one reason for using their preferred libraries.

A third of the total responses (**426**) prefer their library as it is close to home. **227** respondents (**18%** of the total responses) like the parking facilities offered, and **187** respondents (**15%** of the responses) like the range of services on offer.

The online survey included a free text field where respondents could advise of other reasons, they use their preferred library. There were **69** comments from the respondents. **16** of these comments mentioned helpful and/or friendly staff. **13** respondents found location to be important and used the library which was close to their home or family members' home, or close to local amenities or transport hubs. **5** mentioned a good range of stock, **3** of which referred to children's books. **9** comments mentioned activities, including children's clubs, courses and other groups. **5** comments mentioned the atmosphere of their library, stating that it is fun, friendly or modern. There are **3** comments mentioning an appreciation of access to computers. A key theme related to children and young people, with **13** comments mentioning visiting libraries with their children, children's activities and children's books.

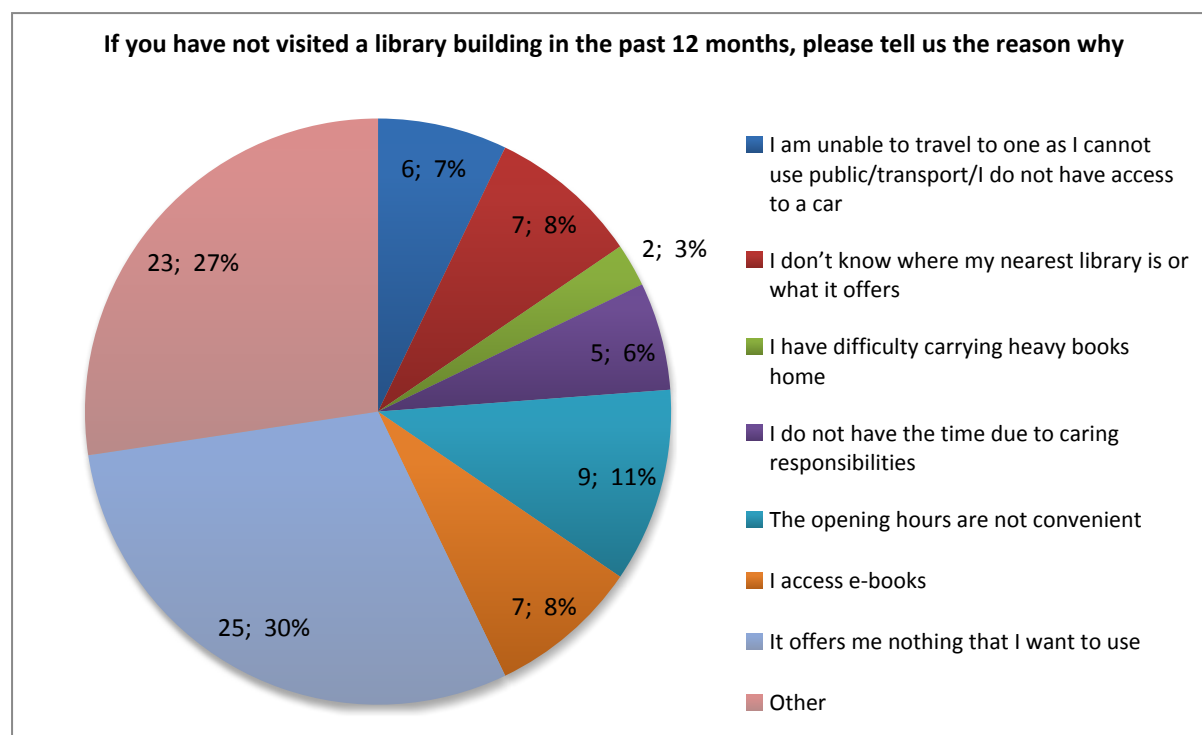


Figure 8

Those who had not visited a library within the past 12 months were asked to provide the reason why – this resulted in **84** responses (figure 8). Almost a third advised that it does not offer any service that they wish to use (**25**, or **30%**), while another **27%** stated that there was another reason (**23** respondents).

A free text field was provided where respondents could advise of other reasons, they had not used a library. There were **34** comments from the respondents. **9** comments refer to a lack of need, buying their own books or accessing online information at home. **3** comments refer to a poor choice of books. **1** person commented that they are unsure what services are available, while another said that they don't know what's on offer. **2** advised that they have health problems so do not travel.

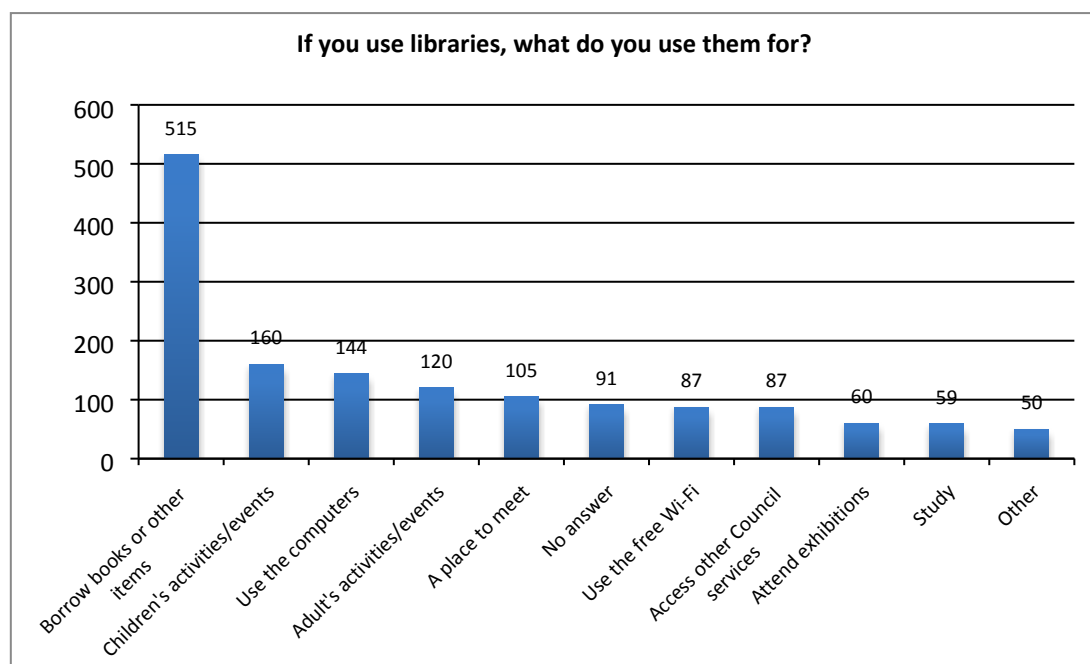


Figure 9

Respondents were asked what they use libraries for – this resulted in **1478** responses (figure 9). This response rate is a result of the respondents being provided with the option of selecting multiple answers and demonstrates that some respondents had more than one reason for using libraries. **515** respondents (**35%**) advised that they use the library to borrow books or other items, a majority in comparison to the other options. The next most common usage was children's activities and events, with 160 respondents selecting this (**11%**).

A free text field was available where respondents could advise of reasons, they use library computers, with **144** comments from the respondents. **22** respondents stated that they use them for job searches and applications, **44** use them for printing and **14** use them for research on various topics, particularly ancestry. An additional **19** use them to access emails, and **7** use them for social media.

A second free text field was available where respondents could advise of other reasons, they use the library, resulting in a very wide-ranging **59** responses. These included hearing aid clinics (**6**), reading newspapers (**4**), photocopying (**4**), school visits (**2**), volunteering (**2**) and baby groups (**2**).

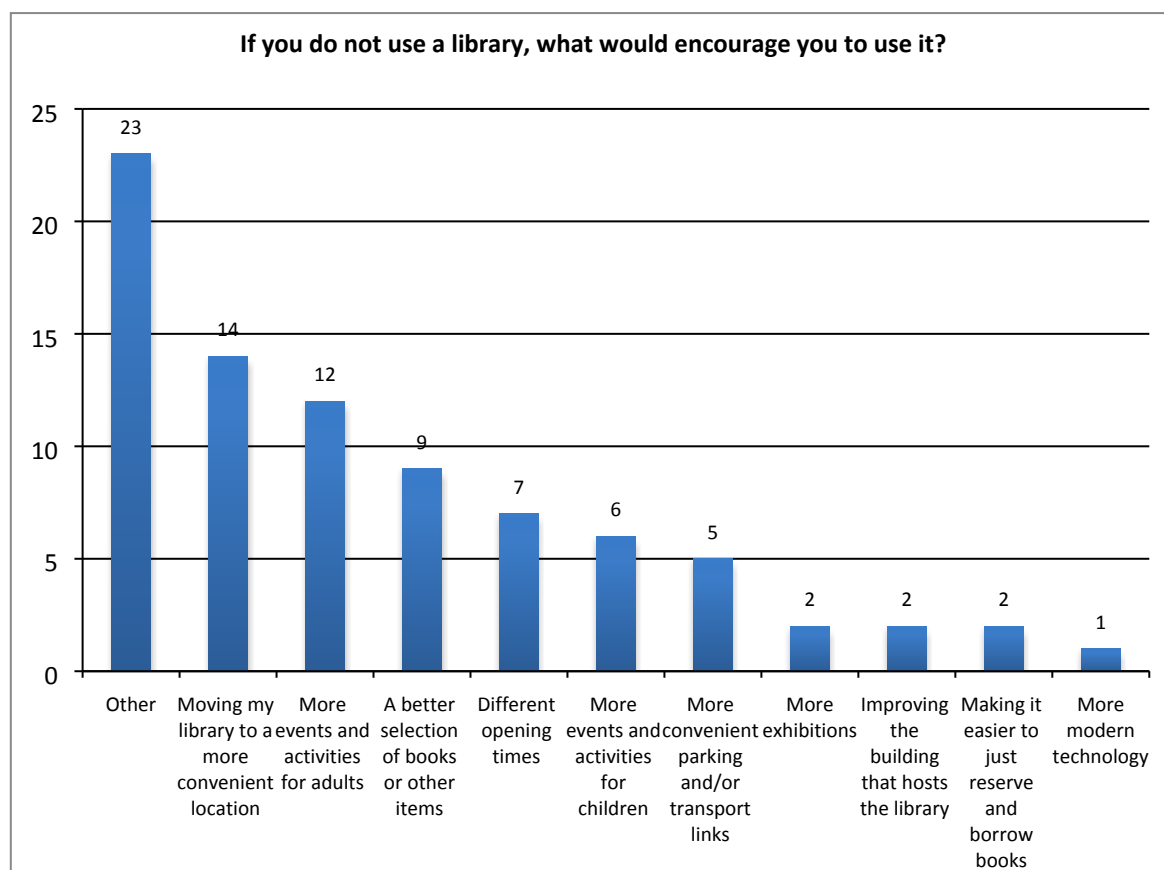


Figure 10

Respondents were asked what would encourage them to use a library, if they do not currently do so, yielding **83** responses (figure 10). Of these, **23 (28%)** chose 'other', opting to provide their own responses. The second most selected option was to move the library to a more convenient location (**14**, or **17%**). More modern technology was the least common selection, with **1** respondent opting for this.

A free text field was available where respondents could advise of other things that would encourage them to use a library, with **33** comments from the respondents. **5** suggested improved parking, **7** suggested more activities and events and **2** wanted more information on what is offered by the library. Another **2** respondents advised that libraries are outdated and so need to offer a community hub instead. **3** suggested a better selection of books.

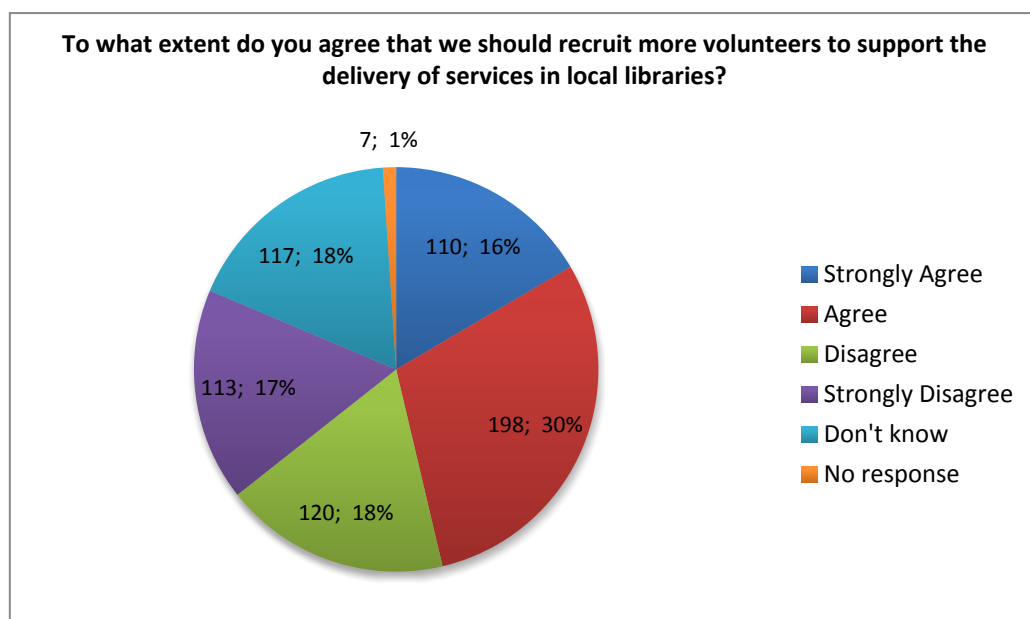


Figure 11

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree that more volunteers should be recruited. The above chart (figure 11) demonstrates that in total, **46%** of respondents agree and strongly agree with this statement. **35%** disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, and **18%** didn't know.

Some respondents made additional comments. **28** respondents did not approve of recruiting more volunteers, citing a lack of skills and commitment compared to paid staff:

- 'Being a librarian is a skilled role and requires knowledge and ability, staffing via volunteers will only degrade the experience if assistance is needed'
- 'I feel that whilst the use of the voluntary sector may be essential to reduce staffing costs volunteers should be supported with a healthy level of trained, motivated and contracted staff.'

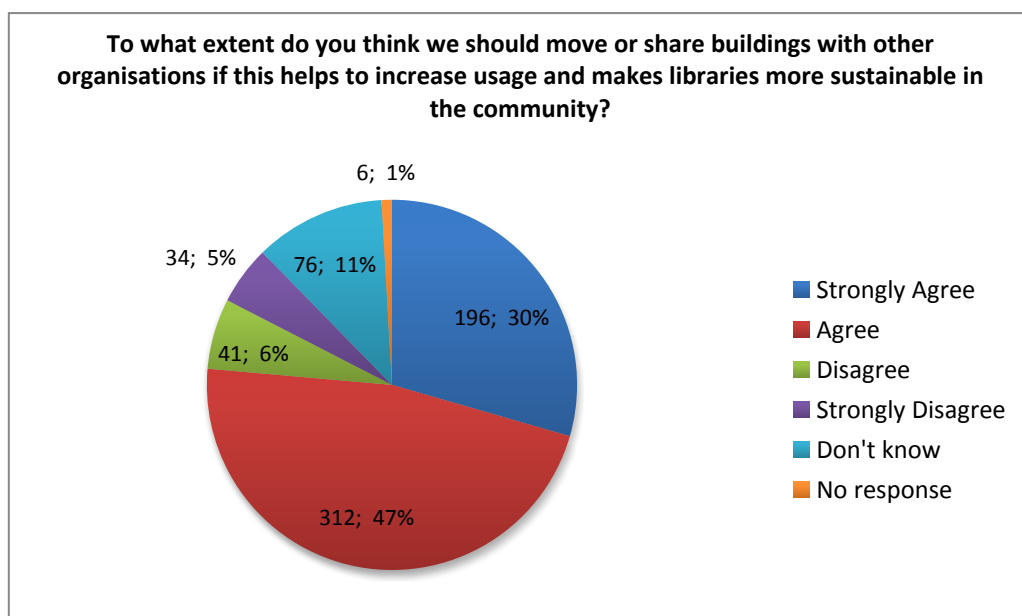


Figure 12

Respondents were asked to what extent they believe that RMBC should move or share buildings with other organisations. The above chart (figure 12) shows that almost half of the respondents agreed with this statement (**312, 47%**). Another third strongly agreed with the statement (**196, 30%**). A collective **11%** of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed.

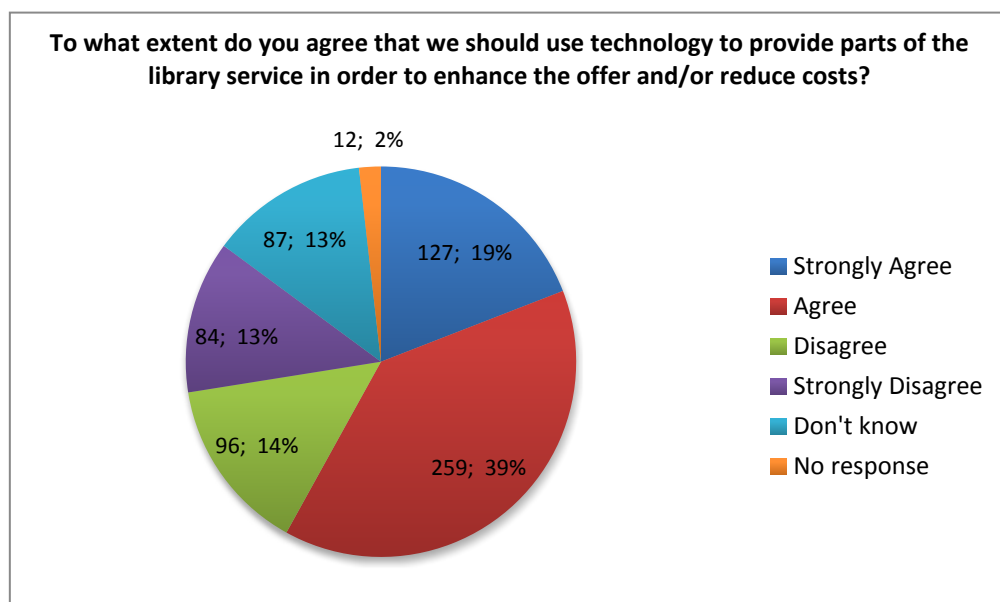


Figure 13

Respondents were asked whether they agree that RMBC should use technology to provide parts of the library service to enhance the offer and/or reduce costs (figure 13). Examples were provided of increasing the number of self-serving units and technology that allows for unstaffed libraries at certain times of day. **259** respondents

agreed with this statement (**39%**), while **127** respondents strongly agreed (**19%**). This shows that a majority of the respondents had a positive response to this statement.



## Convenient visiting times

The respondents were provided with a list of days and times (morning, lunchtime, afternoon and evening), and asked to select all of the options that they considered convenient for them to visit the library. Table 3 below shows the number of responses:

Day	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon	Evening	Total
Monday	324	187	266	214	<b>991</b>
Tuesday	299	179	265	206	<b>949</b>
Wednesday	280	173	257	192	<b>902</b>
Thursday	282	173	251	203	<b>909</b>
Friday	289	178	259	196	<b>922</b>
Saturday	357	183	207	98	<b>845</b>
Sunday	176	130	145	74	<b>525</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>1650</b>	<b>1183</b>	<b>6043</b>

Table 3

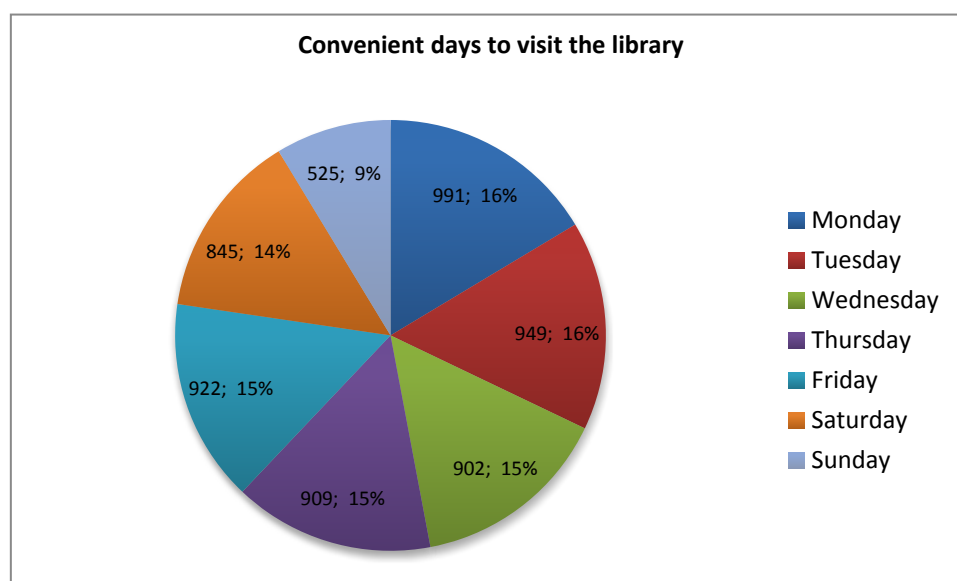


Figure 14

Figure 14 demonstrates that respondents generally find Monday to Saturday equally convenient to visit the library. Sunday appears to be significantly less convenient for library users.

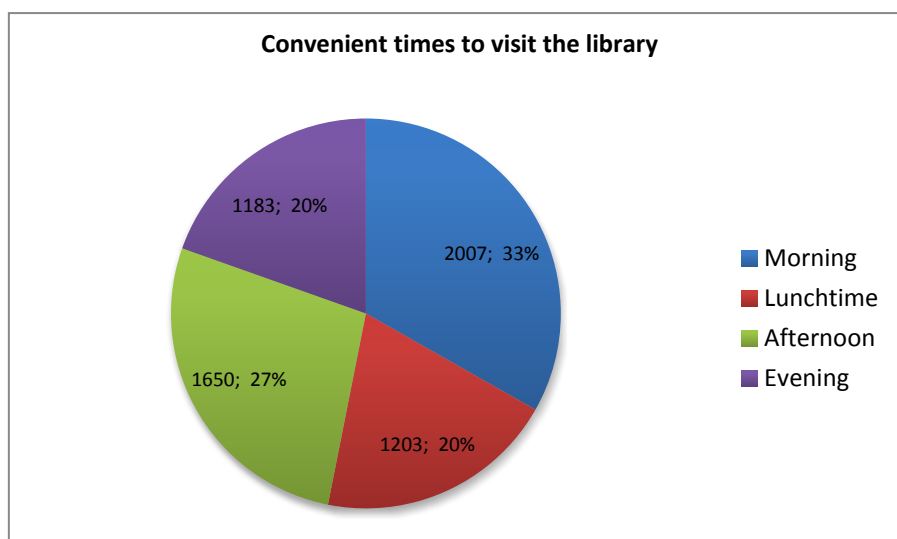


Figure 15

Figure 15 shows that respondents consider mornings to be the most convenient time to visit the library with **2007** selections constituting **33%** of the total selections, although there is a fairly even split between the four options.

## Library priorities

Respondents were presented with a list of criteria in making decisions about the future of libraries and were asked to rank these in order of importance.

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important	Total
Maintaining access to books and borrowing	250	117	70	<b>437</b>
Meeting community need	110	118	139	<b>367</b>
Maintaining access to a community facility that is free to use	72	152	104	<b>328</b>
Location and transport	81	98	115	<b>294</b>
Ability to work with other organisations to deliver services	65	25	54	<b>144</b>
No response	18	47	77	<b>142</b>
Affordability and value	38	53	39	<b>130</b>
Usage of services	16	36	45	<b>97</b>
Patterns of demand	2	15	14	<b>31</b>
Don't know	10	3	7	<b>20</b>
Other	3	1	1	<b>5</b>

Table 4

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the options that were selected as the most important, second most important and third most important. Maintaining access to a community facility that is free to use was considered the second most important criteria by **152** respondents, while meeting community need was considered the third most important with **139** selections. The response rate decreased gradually as demonstrated by figure 16 (below), showing that not all of the respondents ranked all of the given options.

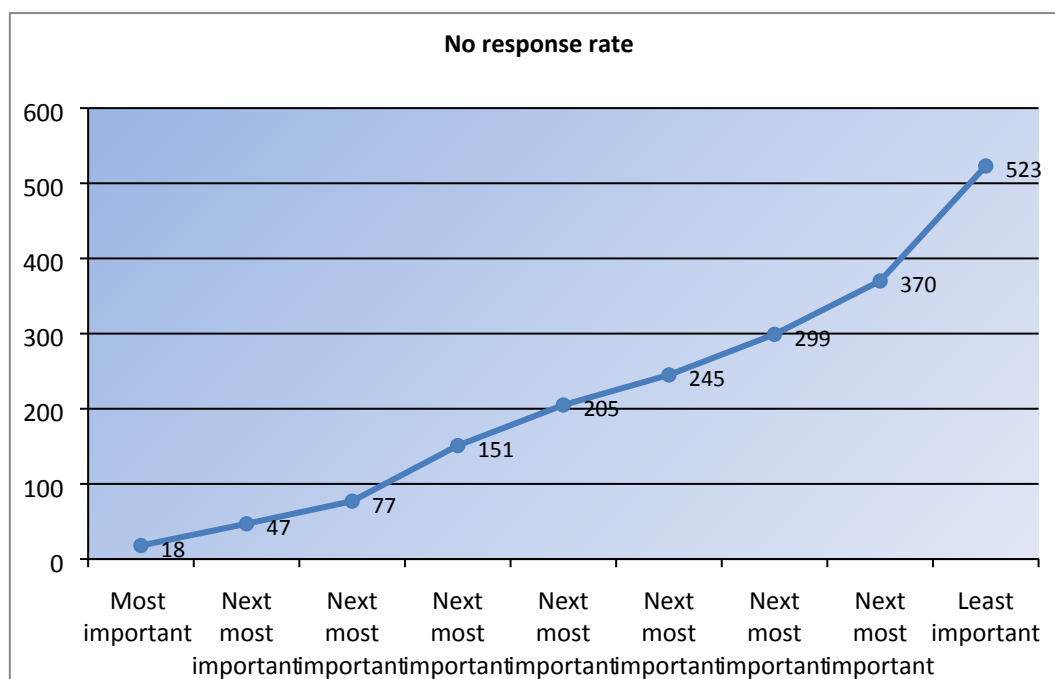


Figure 16

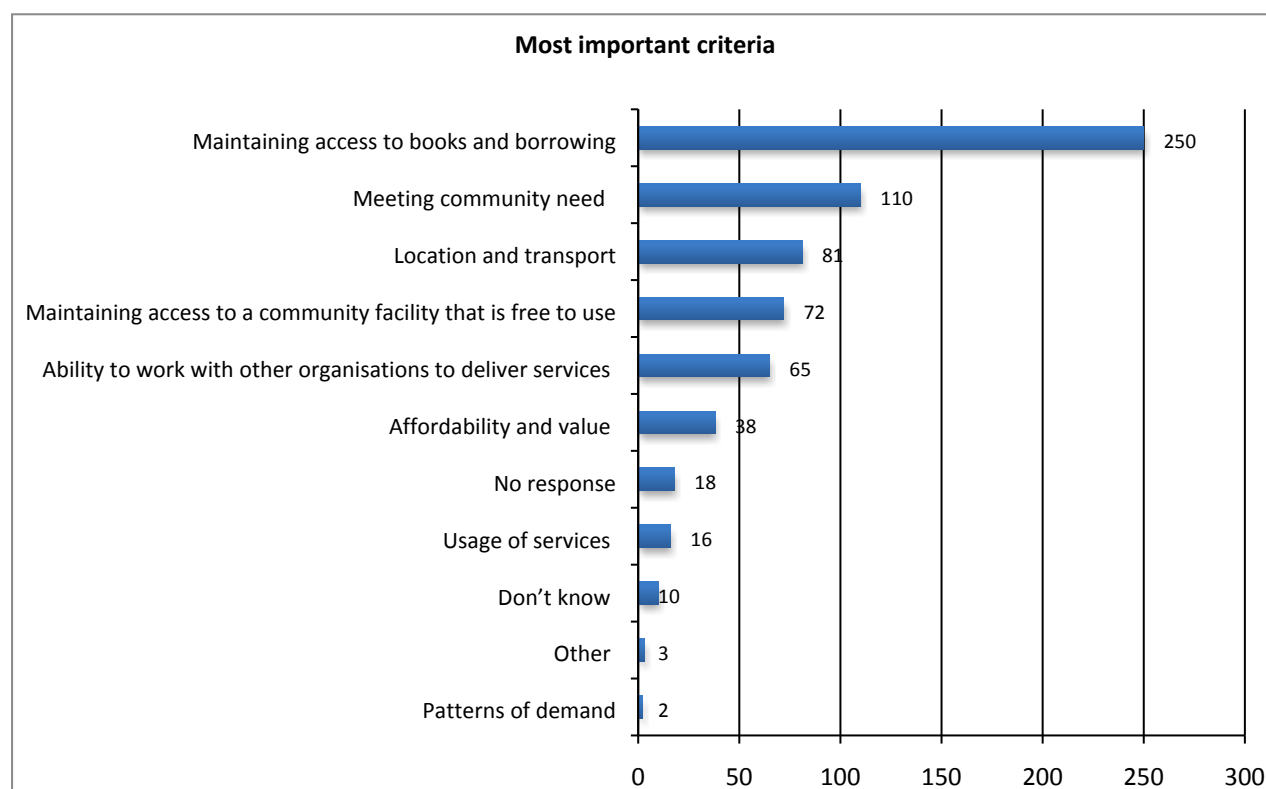


Figure 17

Figure 17 shows that of the 665 respondents, **250** believe that maintaining access to books and borrowing is the most important criteria when making decisions about the future of the library. Only **2** of the 665 respondent believe that patterns of demand are most important criteria.

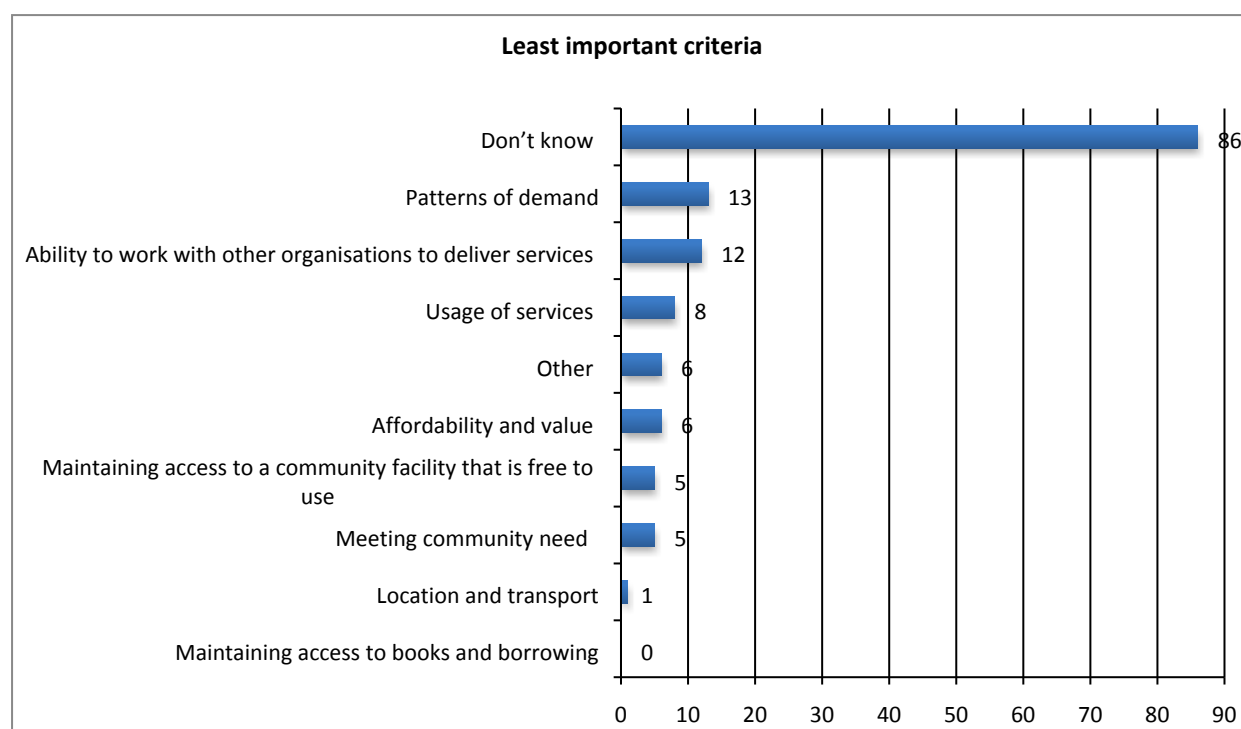


Figure 18

Figure 18 shows the options that were selected as the least important.

Respondents were also able to suggest their own criteria. **33** comments were made. **6** comments mentioned the need for knowledgeable and trained staff, while **5** comments talked about the importance of engaging with the community. **2** comments discussed the importance of libraries as places for children to study and meet, and another **2** mentioned availability of parking is important.

## Key themes analysis

A free text section queried what would improve the building or facilities of their preferred libraries. For this question, **339** comments were recorded and several key themes emerged. While many respondents were happy with their current library provision, some improvements were suggested. These are as follows:

- **Books** – 54 comments were recorded stating that they would prefer more books or a better rotation of books, including audiobooks and non-fiction books. Comments included:
  - ‘More books. A number seem to have been removed and not many replaced’
  - ‘More new books’
- **Parking** – 30 comments referred to either ‘better’, ‘more’ or ‘free’ parking. Comments included:
  - ‘More parking places because of disability’
  - ‘Easier free parking’
  - ‘short term parking would be nice so I could drop off books or ask others to do so’
- **Computers** – 20 comments mentioned computers, with many asking for more computers and updating the existing computers, as well as making them more private. 2 of these comments suggested removing some computers in favour of more stock. Comments included:
  - ‘Computers functioning more reliably’
  - ‘Separate area for computer users’
  - ‘More updated computers’
- **Opening hours** – 19 comments requested improved opening times. Comments included:
  - ‘Later opening hours Monday to Friday’
  - ‘Sunday opening for people who work’
- **Toilets** – 22 comments related to providing and improving toilets, such as:
  - ‘Toilets could be updated’
  - ‘Have public toilets available’
- **Building** – 20 comments mentioned improving or moving to a new building, including:
  - ‘better/more modern building/space’

- ‘Putting it in a building that was designed for that purpose rather shoehorning it in Riverside like an afterthought.’
- **Refreshments** – 20 comments referred to refreshments, food and drink, or a café. These included:
  - ‘refreshments available i.e. drinks tea, coffee, water’
  - ‘Cafe or drinks machine’

Another free text section was included in which respondents could make any other suggestions for developing the future library service. In response to this, **288** suggestions were made, with key themes becoming evident.

- **Book** – 83 comments mentioned books. Many of these related to a wider selection of books, including new releases, academic titles, and in particular, online books. There are also several mentions of book clubs.
  - ‘More recent/up to date books throughout the different genres’
  - ‘Organising book clubs could further promote library use’
- **Staff** – 54 comments mentioned staff, many of which suggested employing more helpful and knowledgeable staff, and keeping a good staff presence:
  - ‘investing in paid motivated well-informed staff’
  - ‘Keeping the staff, they are knowledgeable and able to help with council services and borrowing books’
  - ‘You need to maintain your very experienced staff that are fully trained staff to deliver these services. Providing services with volunteers does not and cannot provide that level of expertise.’
- **Open** – This was mentioned in 30 comments. Many of these state a preference for improved opening hours, particularly evenings though it should be noted that one comment suggested reduced evening opening times due to a lack of usage. Other comments simply ask that the libraries remain open. Comments included:
  - ‘Just keep libraries open and keep book reading alive!’
  - ‘Better opening times as lots of people work long hours and can’t access 9 – 5’
- **Children** – Children were mentioned by 25 respondents, many of which referred to libraries as a valuable service or hub for children and would like to see activities, groups and events for them:
  - ‘More activities for children and clubs’
  - ‘Would love the libraries to stay but would like to use it more for events for adults and children’
  - ‘Children’s section play centre then can relate play to stories’

- **Computer** – 21 comments mentioned computers and tended to focus on the provision of more new computers. However, several respondents commented on the need to keep the computers and books in separate spaces. Comments included:
  - ‘More computers, seating areas or maybe some quiet zones’
  - ‘Have a small room for quiet study and computer use’
  - ‘Computer facilities would be a great venue for helping older people learn computer skills’
  
- **Volunteer** – 17 comments referred to volunteering. These offered mixed opinions, with several comments suggesting that volunteers do not offer the knowledge, commitment and expertise that paid staff have, or that volunteers should be paid. Another respondent suggested that volunteers could allow the service to remain open longer, and another that senior children could volunteer:
  - ‘I think it is unfair to rely on the goodwill of volunteers. They should be paid for the work they do’
  - ‘You cannot use volunteers to prop up a library service that is underfunded. This only leads to a dilution of skills that people think are not important and seem to be overlooked’
  - ‘More flexible opening times in smaller libraries so that people don't have to travel to the town centre to use facilities. This will then give more opportunities to casual staff as well as full time staff and volunteers’



## Equality and diversity analysis

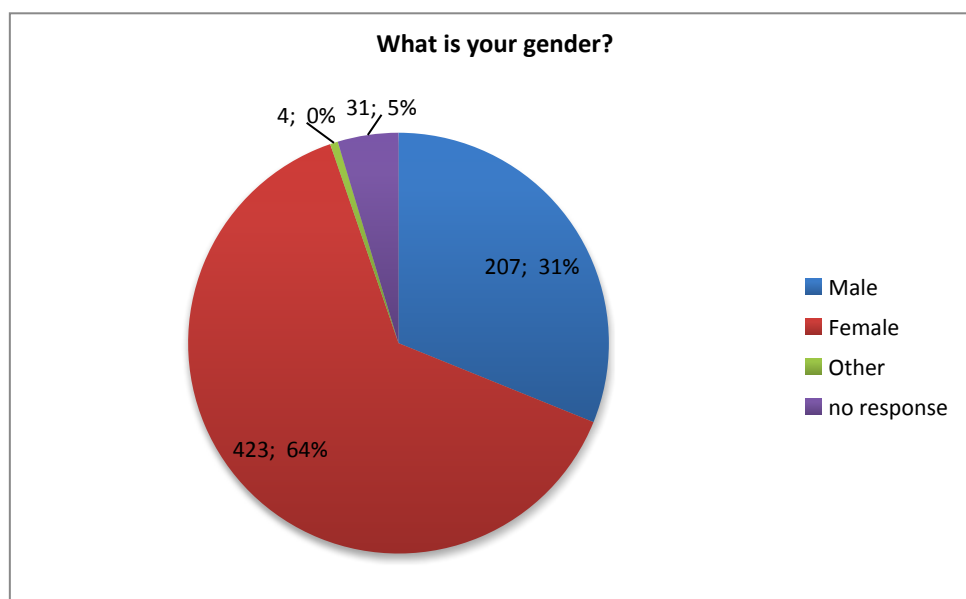


Figure 19

Figure 19 shows that **64%** of the respondents were female (**423**), while **31%** were male (**207**). **31 (5%)** declined to answer and **4** stated 'other'.

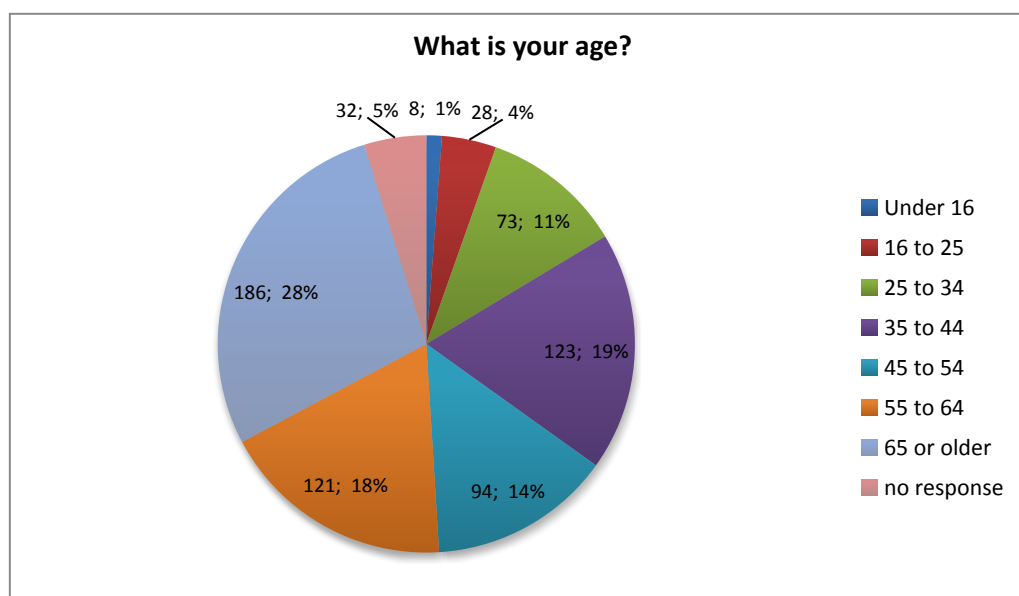


Figure 20

Figure 20 represents the mixture of ages of those who responded to the online survey. The largest age group of respondents were the 65 or older (**186, or 28%**). The lowest rate of response was within the younger respondents, in particular those under the age of 16 (**8, or 1%**). **32 people (5%)** provided no response.

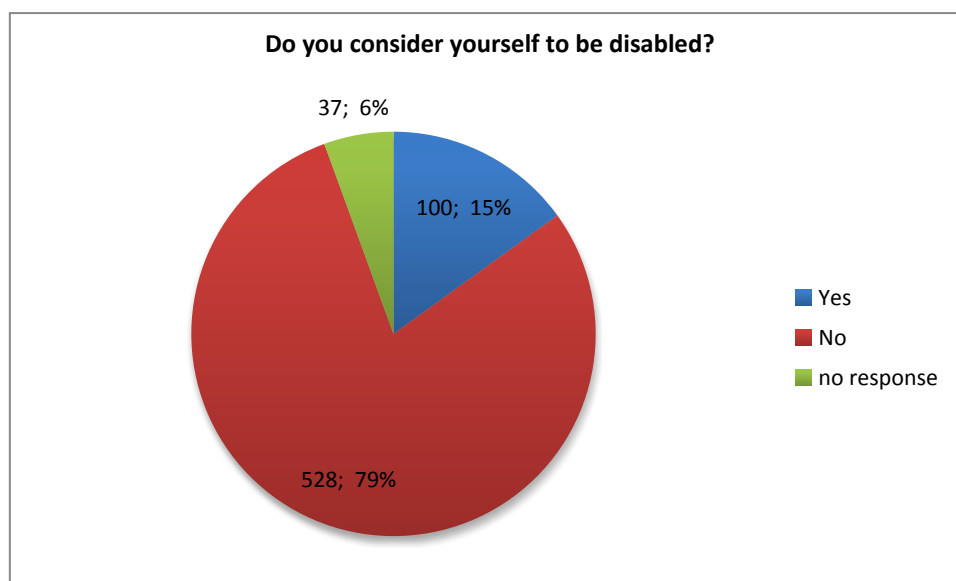


Figure 21

Figure 21 shows that **100** respondents (**15%**) consider themselves to be disabled, while **37** (**6%**) gave no response. **528** respondents (**79%**) did not consider themselves to be disabled.

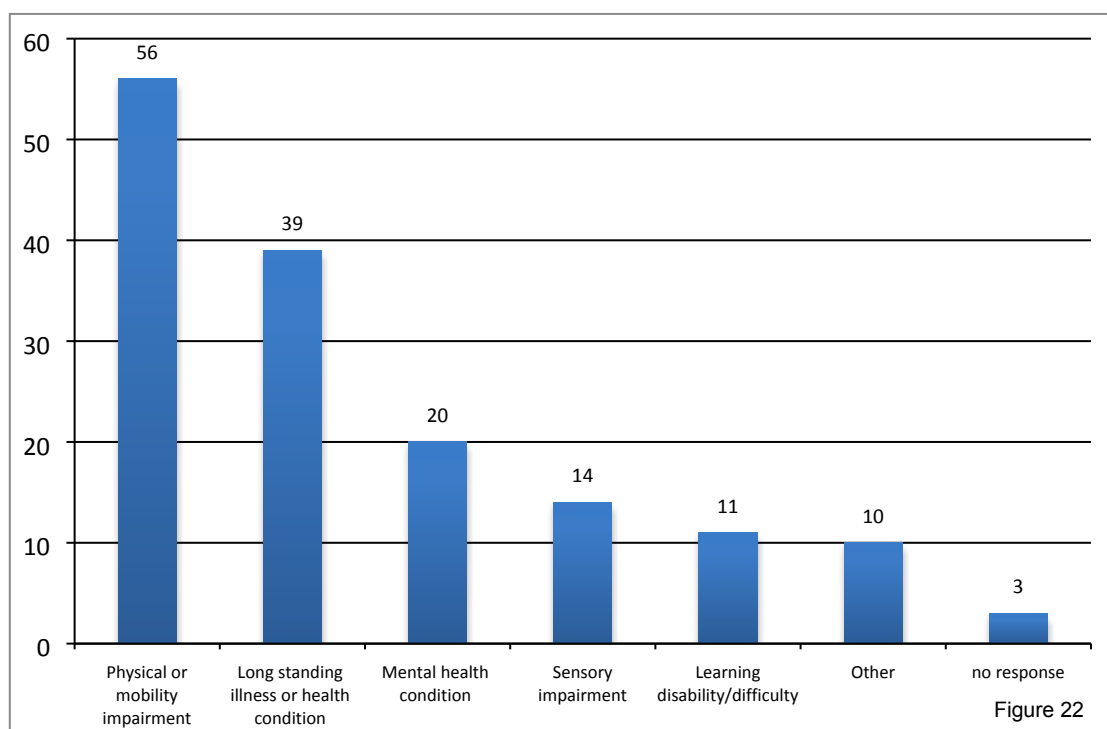


Figure 22

The above chart (figure 22) shows the range of disabilities reported by the respondents. In total, **153** responses were recorded. This response rate is a result of the respondents being provided with the option of selecting multiple answers and demonstrates that the respondents may consider themselves to have had more than one disability.

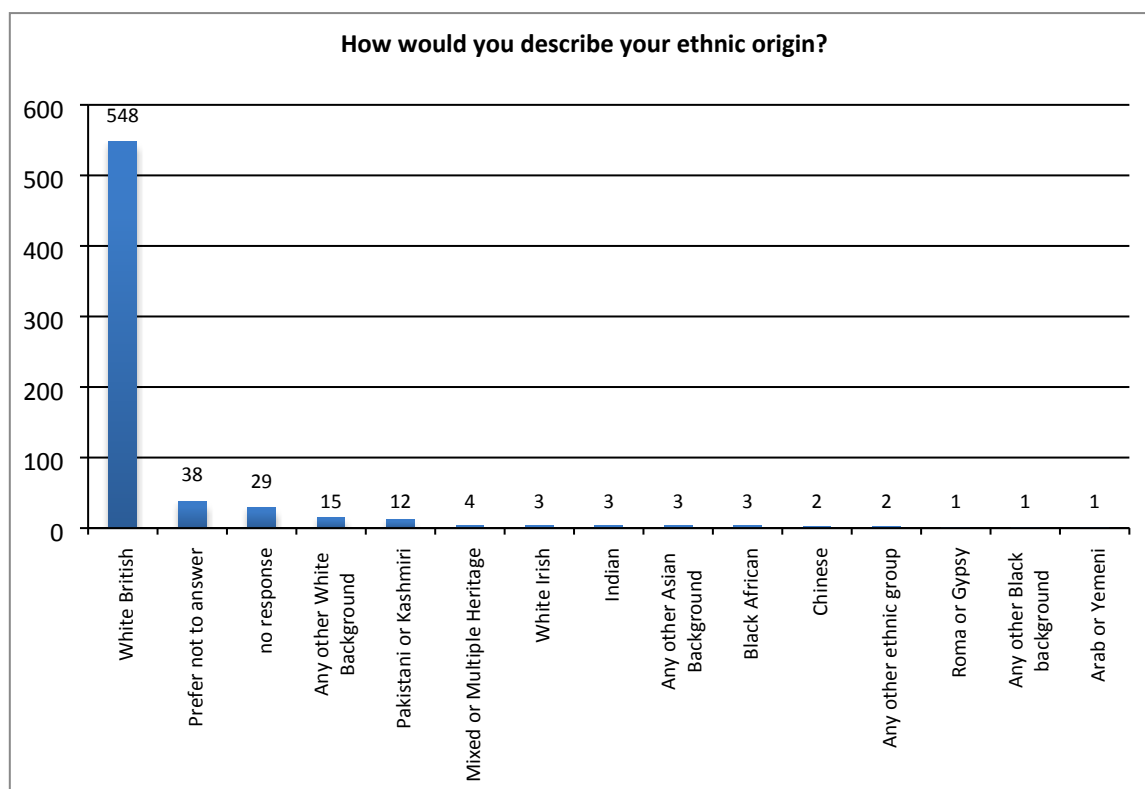


Figure 23

Figure 23 shows how the respondents reported their ethnic origins. The majority reported themselves as White British (**548, or 82%**).

## Other findings

The drop-in sessions held across the 15 libraries in Rotherham revealed that customer wanted the number and range of books available to be improved, this was not specific to any particular libraries. This is reflective of the online survey, which demonstrated that a good range of books and stock rotation is a high priority for most library users.

Rotherham Opportunities College attended one of these drop-in sessions at Riverside library, where the students commented that they liked the friendly and helpful people, good selection of books and the relaxed atmosphere. They would like to see more displays, as well as activities and books for people with additional needs. The tutors were keen to partner up with the Library service and have regular visits, so that the students could develop their independence in the library and were interested in developing volunteering opportunities for the students for work experience.

At the library staff drop-in sessions several suggestions were made, these included the need to have arts and heritage as part of the library offer, pockets of I.T. scattered around the library instead of one specific area, the need for meeting rooms within the central library provision. Staff questioned whether the use of volunteers is going to be promoted, and how digital services are going to be enhanced.

On receiving notification of this consultation, Brinsworth Parish Council responded advising that they consider a library provision to be a central factor in community life, offering a wide range of services including books of various formats, internet and a space to simply sit and relax. For this reason, they state that the current Brinsworth library, which is no longer fit for purpose and welcomed the move to a position adjacent to the new community hub in the area. The Parish Council is keen to support the implementation of this and envisage a library with additional space to allow activities, groups and a children's' area. At a drop-in session at Brinsworth library, a knitting group said that they welcomed the new library in Brinsworth.

Sessions were carried out targeting non-library users. Those who had not visited a library within the past 12 months were asked to provide the reason why, with almost a third advising that it does not offer any service that they wish to use. Respondents also spoke of a lack of need, due to them buying their own books or accessing online information at home. Others referred to a poor choice of books. Some respondents said that they are unsure what services are available, or that they don't know what's on offer.

When asked what would encourage them to use the library, some respondents said that the library should be moved to a more convenient location, while others wanted more events and activities for adults and children. Some said a better selection of

books could convince them to use the library, while others said different opening times or improved parking would be helpful.

In addition to the drop-in sessions and meetings attended by Managers and Team Leaders, over 350 additional conversations took place whereby the details of the consultation and the future of the library service were discussed. These conversations were between staff within the Library and Neighbourhood Hubs service, other RMBC services such as Housing and Licensing, partnering services such as the Police, Library customers who did not complete a questionnaire but who were interested in the consultation and schools from across the borough.

The children and young people's survey has been summarised in a separate report.