Edinburgh Future Libraries

2024 - 2029

Engagement Report

Contents

Section 1 – Overview

01 – Introduction

In December 2023, the Council's Culture and Communities Committee agreed to develop a new strategy and vision for Edinburgh's public and high school libraries to provide the framework for service delivery and development over the next five years. The Committee also agreed that the strategy must be fully informed by citizens, stakeholders and colleagues using an engagement process, followed by a formal consultation.

The engagement process was undertaken to understand satisfaction levels with the current service provision and to help identify local needs and aspirations. This has informed the development of a draft strategy for 2024 – 2029 for formal consultation, alongside any identified options for change. Following Council Committee approval of the strategy, an implementation plan will be developed which will detail the actions that will be undertaken to meet the high-level aims outlined in the strategy.

This report provides the findings from the Future Libraries engagement activity with residents, library users and non-users, partners, organisations, and schools.

The key engagement methods provided quantitative and qualitative returns:

- Public Citizen Questionnaire (Online and paper formats)
- Stakeholders Questionnaire
- Library Colleague Questionnaire
- High School (Stakeholders) Questionnaire
- HMP Edinburgh (Saughton) Library Questionnaire

The report will also provide details from engagement activities involving young people and children including:
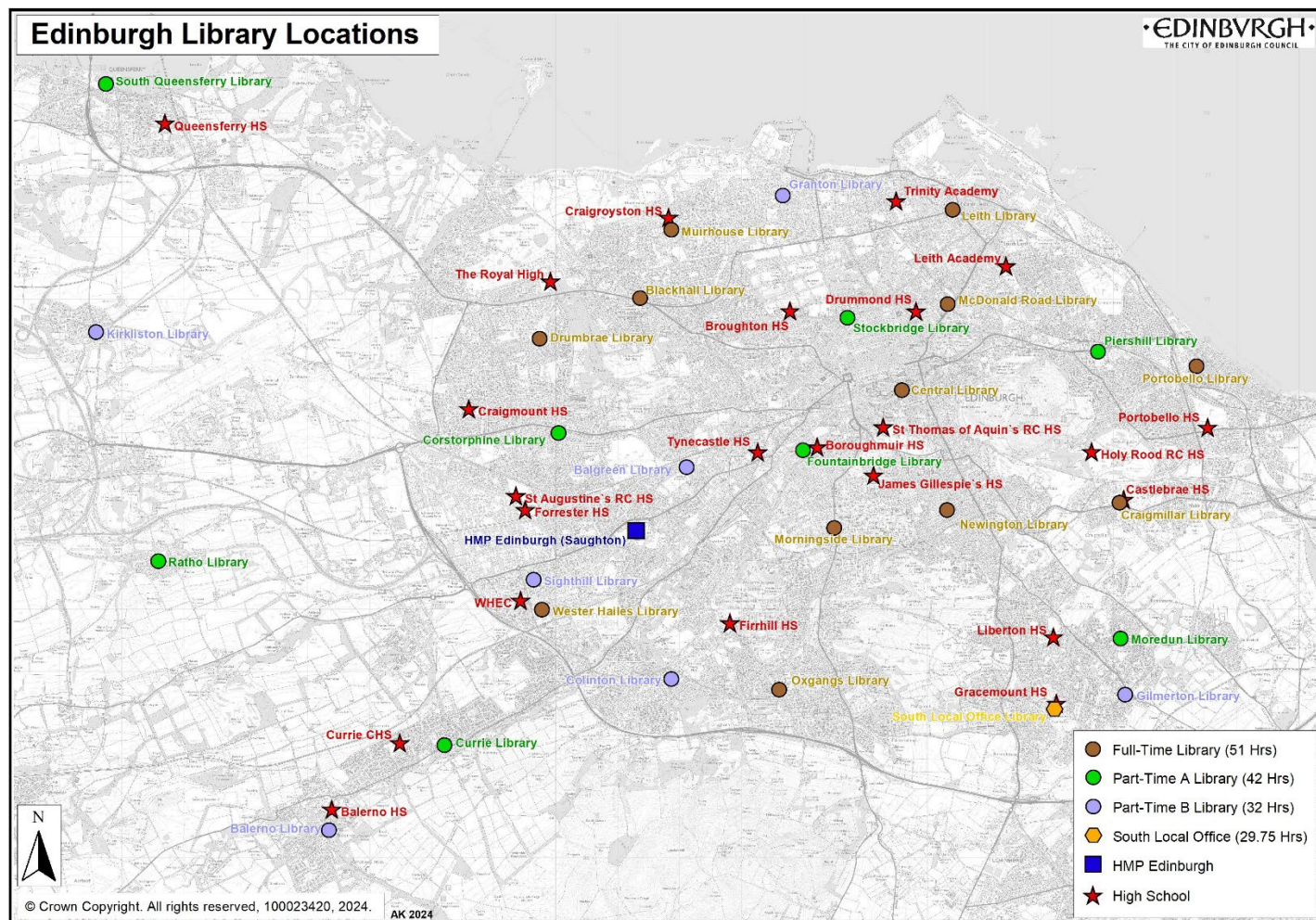
- High school and public library focus groups with young people – S1 – S6
- Primary school interactive discussion activity with children P4 – P7

02 - Background

The Council operates 27 community (public) library buildings, the Central Library, 23 high school libraries, HMP Edinburgh (Saughton) Library, and mobile libraries.

The feedback collected through the engagement process will help the service to shape the draft Future Libraries Strategy 2024–2029 for consultation. Following consultation, the final agreed strategy will outline strategic aims, priorities and measurable actions, ensuring greater accountability. The information will help the service to develop an improved understanding of current library use and future aspirations for development.

This report marks the completion of the first stage in the strategy development process, providing the findings of the engagement activity. The subsequent phase will integrate the insights gained from the engagement to publish a draft libraries strategy and present any options for future service change for formal consultation.

03 – Engagement objectives

a) To identify a deeper understanding of the use of the library service both in public and high school libraries, the importance of specific aspects of service delivery and the impact this has on individual service users, groups and other stakeholders.

b) To identify key strategic themes and goals.

c) To inform the development of a draft Future Libraries Strategy – 2024 – 2029

04 – Methodology & Data analysis

A variety of approaches were used to ensure engagement with individuals and key groups from all backgrounds. This included service users, non-service users, general service stakeholders, and key service stakeholders, such as high schools.

The Future Libraries engagement sought views on:
a) How, when and why people use / engage with the library service
b) What aspects of the service work well / could be improved
c) What might the service offer look like over the next five years

The online questionnaire on the Council's Consultation Hub was the primary engagement method. A bespoke questionnaire was also created to engage with customers using the HMP Edinburgh (Saughton) Library. This used the same approach as the citizen questionnaire and any associated references or comments are included within the report. Discussion groups have also been held and a creative poster design activity for children. Total numbers of participants include:

Activity	Numbers Involved
Citizen Online Questionnaire	5,315
Citizen Paper Copy Questionnaire	585
General Stakeholders Questionnaire	73
Colleague Questionnaire (to inform operational aspects)	180
High School Stakeholder Questionnaire	118
High school and public library focus groups with young people	1,200
Primary school interactive discussion activity with children P4 – P7	4,941
Primary school-based activity undertaken in public libraries	362
Primary school poster competition (Your Future Library)	1,282
HMP Edinburgh (Saughton) Library	30
Total	**14,086**

Each questionnaire and in person activity gathered both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure that the draft Future Libraries Strategy will be developed using an evidence-based approach.

A secondary source of feedback data has been used from the Edinburgh Libraries No Going Back project which engaged 2,010 young people aged 11-18 years in 2022-2023.

Coding of Feedback & AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Whilst the engagement questionnaire asked predominantly closed-ended questions, a range of open-ended questions were also included allowing respondents to answer in open-text format.

Analysis of free text responses was completed in three steps:
1. An initial word extraction and the creation of word clouds to help identify recurring themes.
2. Coding where each individual response was then categorised under multiple broad headings.
3. In addition to coding, Generative AI analysis using Adobe AI Assistant v24.2.2068.0 (11/05/24) was used, due to the large volume of data gathered. In cases of large data volume, coding was also completed based on a sample size to validate the AI use.

05 - Equalities

The engagement activity was carried out for a 12-week period with the primary goal to gain a comprehensive understanding of how individuals and organisations engage with and use the library service, or how they might do so in the future.

Data Collection Methods with a Focus on Equality and Representation:

- Digital and paper citizen questionnaires were used to collect service feedback and equality-based data
- Deliberative dialogue methods were adopted to allow deeper discussion and insight

Weekly analysis of the data returns was conducted to monitor participation levels, particularly focusing on protected characteristics and geographic and SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) metrics. This was to ensure that those at higher risk of inequality were adequately represented.

Review and Assessment:

The engagement process was guided by equalities-based approaches, with an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) reviewed at multiple stages: before the engagement began, during a mid-point review, and prior to the closing date. Continuous assessment of the data helped identify any gaps e.g. under-representation and allowed for adjustments to be made to improve inclusivity. The structured approach, underpinned by equality principles aimed to ensure that the engagement activity was thorough, inclusive, and capable of identifying potential disparities in service access and use among different population groups.

The Consultation Manager did not receive any complaints or concerns from individuals or groups about any specific barriers that may have prevented participation throughout the engagement activity.

Demographic Information

Appendix 1 - Data Set – Citizen Questionnaire Demographics provides details of those individuals involved in completing the citizen questionnaire. To ensure the engagement was as representative as possible, it was necessary to capture demographic information. This assisted to identify any key gaps in participation, especially for underrepresented groups/individuals. No personal identifiers were requested therefore no inputs could be used to attribute any specific views to an individual.

Whilst children and young people were welcome to participate via the citizen questionnaire, it was not as easily accessible for them. Bespoke arrangements were therefore introduced to support the involvement of children and young people. To ensure children and young people did not encounter any barriers to participate, it was agreed not to collect demographic information.

As Stakeholders and High School Stakeholders are likely to be providing a response on behalf of a group, department or organisation no demographic information was requested. Similarly, HMP Edinburgh (Saughton), no demographic information has been included.

Library staff were not asked to include demographic information.

06 - Communications

A communications plan was developed to guide the process and helped to ensure adequate resources were committed. Prior to creating the plan, stakeholder mapping took place at a strategic and local level to help determine appropriate methods for different audiences. A communications team met weekly throughout the engagement activity and included representatives from the Council's Communications Service and the Library Service.

The communications plan included the following key points:

<u>Developing key messages</u>

- Specific messages to different audiences with the intention of creating appropriate, relevant, and proportionate information
- Ensuring that messages were balanced with a focus on encouraging participation in the process but without using overly positive or negative tones
- Ensuring the key message of 'developing future libraries' was prominent across all methods

<u>Direct messaging</u>

- Using the stakeholder mapping to make direct email contact with key groups and organisations
- Sending out reminder messages to stakeholders before the end of the engagement process
- Working with Education colleagues to determine the most appropriate communications path to support school stakeholders to participate
- Working with established links internally and with the third sector to promote the activity through existing distribution networks

<u>Campaign</u>

Provision of publicity materials with clear and consistent messaging:
- Pull up banners in each public library
- Lamppost wraps located across the city
- Posters placed in local shops, community centres, leisure centres, GP surgeries, chemists, café's, opticians, care home and dentists
- 7000 postcards made available in a range of community locations
- City wide and localised social media campaigns

Section Two – Engagement findings summary
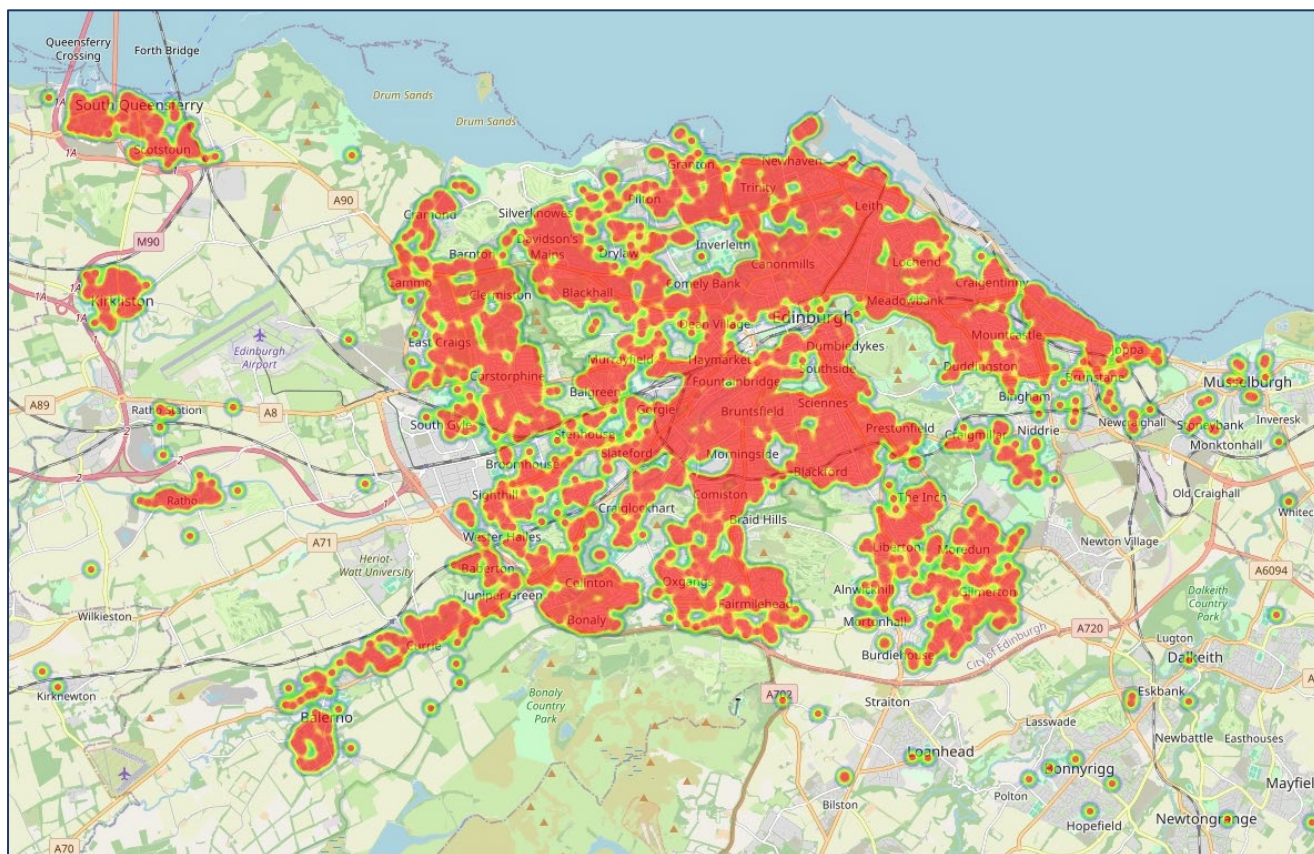
01 - Participation

Overview

Overall, 14,086 groups and individuals participated in the engagement activity.

The following heat map provides a visual representation of participation by geography and is based on postcode information provided by 5,856 individual responses from the citizen questionnaire.

Almost half (44) of Edinburgh's Primary Schools participated in the engagement activity involving children from Primary 4 – 7 classes – 4,941 children. Printed resources were made available to support teachers to ask children a series of questions about their use of public libraries. The children used coloured dots or pens to place their view on the provided posters.

All 23 High Schools supported workshops involving 1,200 pupils (approximately 5.6% of the high school student population). This involved students from year groups S1-2, S3-4, and S5-6 in small groups who were asked a series of service-related questions which students then ranked according to importance. 118 High School senior managers, teachers and other support staff also provided their views of the library service.

Stakeholders who provided feedback through the stakeholder questionnaire included elected members, community and voluntary organisations as well as other Council services and statutory partners such as Police Scotland. National organisations also provided responses. In total, 73 stakeholder questionnaires were completed.

General Service Use

94.6% of citizen questionnaire respondents indicated that they are library members, 5.4% indicated they were not library members. 71% of members indicated that they have been a member for over 5 years. 43.6% of members indicated that they access the service weekly with 36.1% indicating they access the service monthly.

5,723 respondents provided information about the library they visit most. As expected, Central Library had the highest number of respondents due to its central location and specialised services. Central Library attracts customers from across the city.
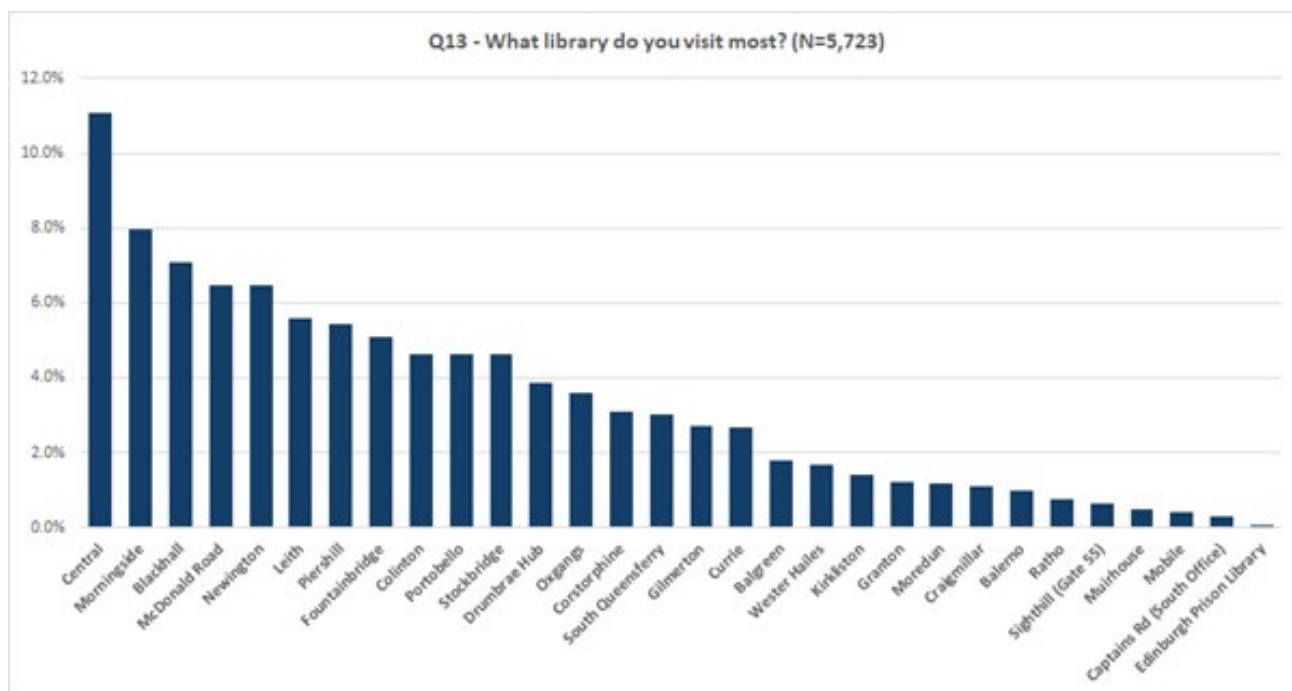
Chart 1

Please note: "N= number" is the total number of respondents who expressed an opinion for each question/statement and does not include participants who chose not to answer the question. This approach has been adopted in order to minimise any assumptions in the analysis as it is unclear what the individual respondent's motivation for electing not to answer the question is (e.g. not applicable or relevant to them, have no opinion, unsure of what is being asked, incorrect choice). Stakeholder questionnaire respondents indicated a spread of use across the city with only five indicating they do not use/work with any libraries.

Of the 5295 responses received from Primary School children, 76% said they use the library, although only 38% use it more than once a month. 24% reported that they never used the library.

Of those that responded from HMP Edinburgh (Saughton), 18 indicated they access the service weekly with 6 indicating daily access.

"No Going Back" data (1,802 participants) from 2023 indicated that 15% of young people access a public library once or more each week, and 44% indicated they access a High School library once or more each week.

Non-Service Use

Of the 125 citizen questionnaire respondents who provided feedback on why they do not regularly use the service, 19% indicated that this is because they purchase their own books, 14% indicated they use libraries elsewhere and a further 14% indicated that they fell out of the habit and had previously used the service, identifying issues such as COVID-19. However, 12% did indicate they intend to return in the future. Other comments included a lack of resources, lack of time and the service costs too much when the Council needs to save money.

Non-service user respondents to the citizen's questionnaire identified the public library nearest to where they live, with some choosing to identify more than one location.

Q7 - What library is nearest to where you live? (N=176)
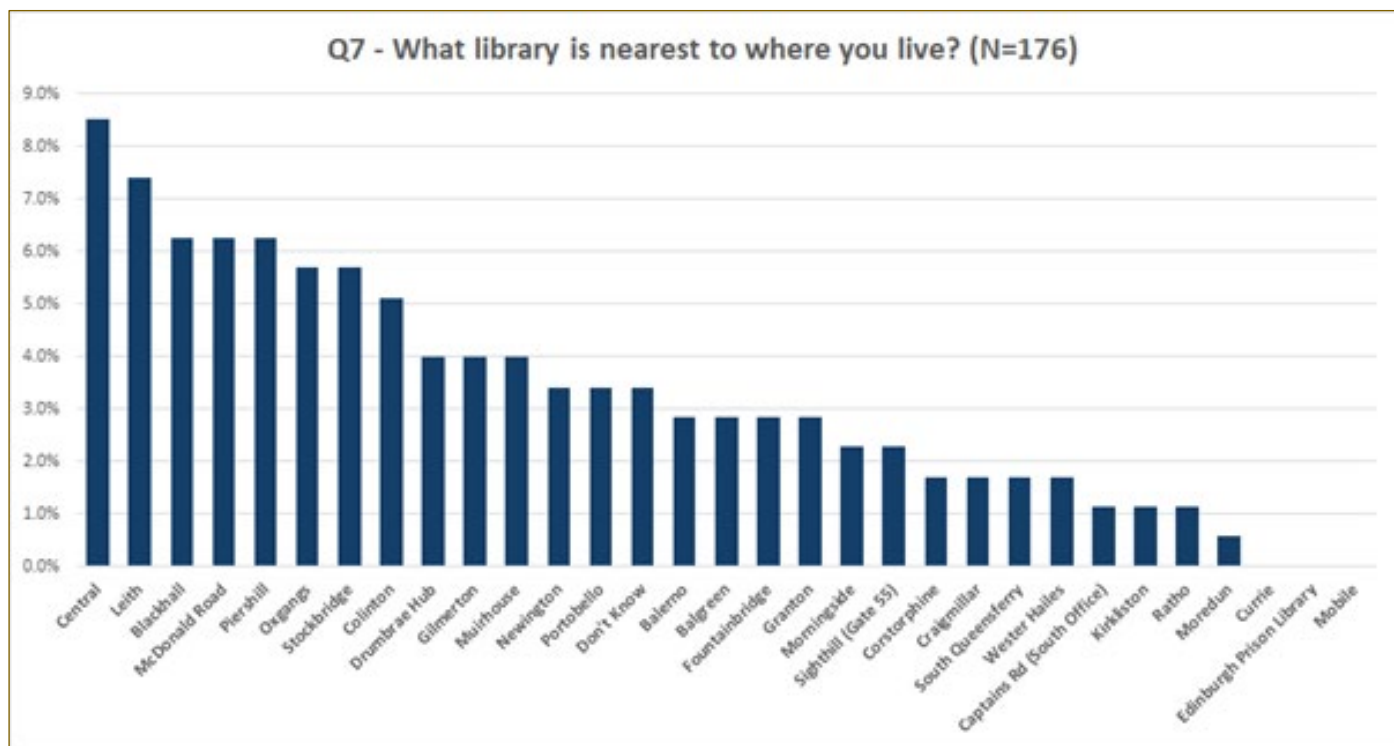
Chart 2

Of the 176 non-service users responding to this question, almost all library locations are identified. Six respondents indicated they did not know where their nearest library was.

Library Locations

The citizen and stakeholder questionnaires asked respondents to indicate if they felt the library they visit most is situated in the right place for the community.

From the citizen responses, 84.3% of non-service users and 95.7% of service users suggested the libraries are situated in the correct location for their community. 58 of 69 Edinburgh Libraries stakeholders also indicated that they felt the libraries were in the right location.

Whilst most respondents considered the library to be in the right location for their needs, those suggesting they are not identified issues such as the library site being close to or on a busy road, lacking adequate parking, or being difficult to reach by public transport. Additionally, there are suggestions for new libraries or relocations to better serve specific areas with growing populations.

Stakeholders indicated that when they are supporting some groups such as children and older people, the location could be easier to reach with families not having access to private transport.

Getting to the Library

A key service value is contribution to the city's ambition of Net Zero Climate Ready by 2030 through improved environmentally sustainable approaches. As a service that engages over 90,000 active members each year with the potential to create a large carbon footprint, it is important to understand the modes of transport our citizens use to access libraries. The questionnaire asked respondents how they travelled to the library.

67% of citizen respondents indicated that they walk to the library, 13.8% use public transport, 13.6% use a car or motorbike whilst 0.9% make use of electric vehicle / electric cycles.

From an understanding of how people travel to their library, it appears that the service functions as a key contributor to the 20-minute neighbourhood model with a small carbon footprint, also contributing to the Council's Net Zero 2030 ambitions.

02 – When and why the service is used

When the Service is Used- Times and Frequency

Library opening times were explored across all service areas including High School libraries to consider the views of all participants. When considering service opening hours, it's important to note that High School libraries opening times do not align with public libraries. The school libraries service availability varies between schools within the opening hours 08:00 – 16:00 with some services open during breaks and lunch, before and after school.

The public library service currently operates four different sets of opening times as follows:

Day / Location	Full Time (51 hrs)	Part Time A (42 hrs)	Part Time B (32 hrs)	Part Time C (29.75 hrs)
	Blackhall, Central, Craigmillar, Drumbrae, Leith, McDonald Road, Morningside, Muirhouse, Newington, Oxgangs, Portobello, Wester Hailes	Corstorphine, Currie, Fountainbridge, Moredun, Piershill, Ratho, South Queensferry, Stockbridge	Balerno, Balgreen, Colinton, Gilmerton, Granton, Kirkliston, Sighthill	Captains Road (South Office)
Monday	10:00 – 20:00	13:00 – 20:00	13:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 16:00
Tuesday	10:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 16:00
Wednesday	10:00 – 20:00	13:00 – 20:00	13:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 16:00
Thursday	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	Closed	10:00 – 16:00
Friday	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 15:00
Saturday	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 14:00	Closed

Citizens were asked to indicate the most frequent day and time periods they visit libraries. Of the 5,723 citizen questionnaire respondents, 44% indicated a preference for afternoons (1pm-5pm), followed by 34% indicating the morning (10am-1pm) and 22% the evening (5pm-8pm).

Saturday is identified as the most popular day of the week.

Whilst there was no significant difference for full time and part time library users when considering time periods of most frequent use, there was a difference when considering age groups, especially between younger and older people. For example,
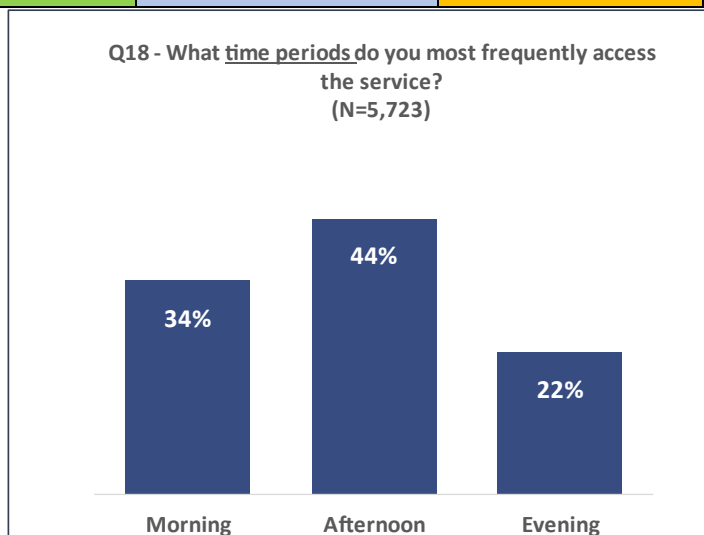
Q18 - What time periods do you most frequently access the service?
(N=5,723)

Morning: 34%
Afternoon: 44%
Evening: 22%

Chart 3

33% of young people (age 12-24) indicated a preference for the evening, 46% the afternoon and 21% the morning, whilst for respondents aged 65 and over this was 11% evening, 48% afternoon and 41% morning.

1,259 (22%) respondents indicated that there may be other days/times more convenient to them. Similarly, 14% of non-service users indicated that opening times were not suitable to them.

The responses reveal a demand for extended opening hours and weekend access to public libraries in Edinburgh. It is evident that participants focused on the library they used most, for example, library users who primarily use full time libraries expressed a desire for libraries to be open on Sundays and have more evening openings, particularly on weekdays. Whilst those who use part time libraries, stated a desire for consistent opening hours across all libraries and earlier opening times in the morning, especially Monday's and Wednesdays.

Whilst 53% of public library staff (N=162) respondents felt that the current opening times adequately meet the needs of customers, 47% indicated that the opening hours could be improved. Various perspectives and suggestions were presented by library staff with an overall desire to review and potentially adjust library opening hours to better align with customer demand, optimise staff resources, and enhance the overall effectiveness of library services.

Of the 69 stakeholders responding, 21 indicated that they/their service use the library weekly with 19 indicating monthly and 13 less than once a month. There is an almost even spread of stated use preference between mornings and afternoons with 36% – 37% respectively which reduces to 26% of use in the evening.

1,162 of 1,200 High School student respondents highlighted the importance of having the school library available outside school core hours i.e. before and after school. 860 (72%) of those respondents indicated this was very important or important. This was higher amongst S3-S4 students with 80% of students in these year groups indicating it was important/very important, followed by 78% in years S5-S6, and 67% in year groups S1-S2. A total of 66 across all year groups indicated this wasn't important, with 75% of those indicating it was not important being in year groups S1-S2

When asked if current opening times or times the service is available adequately meets your needs or the needs of students, of the 117 High School stakeholders (school staff, teachers and school support staff) that responded, 95% indicated yes.

Some key points raised around opening hours include:

- 'Many libraries experience low footfall and minimal customer usage during the evenings, indicating that late opening hours may not be necessary' (Library staff questionnaire)
- 'Opening earlier in the morning, such as at 9am, could better serve parents dropping off children at school and commuters'. (Library staff questionnaire)
- 'We have delivered workshops in many different time slots, but for families with under 5's mornings work best, for primary children afterschool works best' (Stakeholder questionnaire)
- Some students suggest extending the library's opening hours, 'as many people do not have a quiet space to study at home' (High School students focus groups)
- Ensuring the library is open for longer hours, including before and after school, to accommodate different schedules (High School students focus groups)
- Users' express disappointment with some libraries being closed on Monday mornings and Wednesday mornings. (Citizens questionnaire)
- Some users mention the inconvenience of inconsistent opening hours across different libraries. (Citizens questionnaire)
- Some users express the desire for earlier opening times, such as 9am, to allow for visits before work or school (Citizens questionnaire)

- Standardising opening hours across libraries could help avoid confusion among customers (Library staff questionnaire)
- Work-life balance for staff should be considered, with suggestions to reduce 6-day work weeks and provide more consistent shift patterns. (Library staff questionnaire)
- 'Very recently the school have locked access to pupils at break and at lunchtimes. This now means pupils can't freely come into the library at these times which I feel is unfair and detrimental to the varied needs at these times for young people'. (High School stakeholders' questionnaire)
- 'The library is such an amazing resource. I would obviously love to have our library open later after school or even open at the weekend' (High School stakeholder questionnaire)
- 'Students have mentioned to me on multiple occasions that the [school] library is not open often' (High School stakeholder questionnaire)

Why the Service is Used- Purpose of Use

Citizens When asked to identify what they use the library for, of the 5,723 that responded, 92% indicated borrowing books, 34% to access or borrow digital resources, 34.6% to apply for or renew travel cards, 28% to socialise with others whilst 26% use the service to access information, and 22% to attend pre-school activities. E.g. Bookbug sessions. The least popular use was 2.2% musical instrument lending (note- this service is currently only available in 6 libraries) and 2.7% teen activities.

This largely reflects the age groups of respondents where 2% are aged 17 years and under. The No Going Back activity (previous engagement with young people) highlighted that of the 1,802 that participated with that activity, 63% indicated book selection was the best thing about the library they use followed by 39% indicating a place to socialise and hang out.

Non-service users (N=177) were provided with the same list of options offered to service users and were asked to identify awareness of the services and whether or not they might be interested in accessing resources in the future – 29% indicated they would like to access or borrow digital resources, 25% would like to socialise and 24% (combined) would like to attend book groups, apply for or renew bus passes, attend film club screenings and attend learning based programmes.

Q17 - What do you use the library for? (N=5,723)

Borrow Books 92.0%

Bus pass application/ renewal 34.6%

Access/borrow digital resources (e.g. e-books, e-audio) 34.0%

Socialise 28.1%

Information/Find out things 26.4%

Pre-school activities 22.0%

Use Wi-Fi 15.4%

Use PC 15.4%

Access research materials 14.2%

Printing/Photocopy 20.6%

Specialist services / resources 13.5%

Attend Bookgroups/ Writing groups 11.6%

Free period products 9.7%

Adult activities 9.7%

Replacement hearing aid batteries 8.5%

Attend learning programmes 6.7%

Film Club Screen... 4.8%

Attend counci... surger... 4.3%

Childrens activities 20.6%

Borrow other items 12.4%

Attend meetings 7.8%

Personal Welfare 6.7%

Health and Well... (e.g. Mac...

Teen activitie...

Musical Instrumen...

Chart 4

Other examples of use identified included:

- Free play in the children's area where my toddler can play safely
- A quiet place (usually) to browse, to read, to be out of the rain/in the warm, not needing to spend money to justify sitting down when I need to, finding new stimulating fiction and old favourites
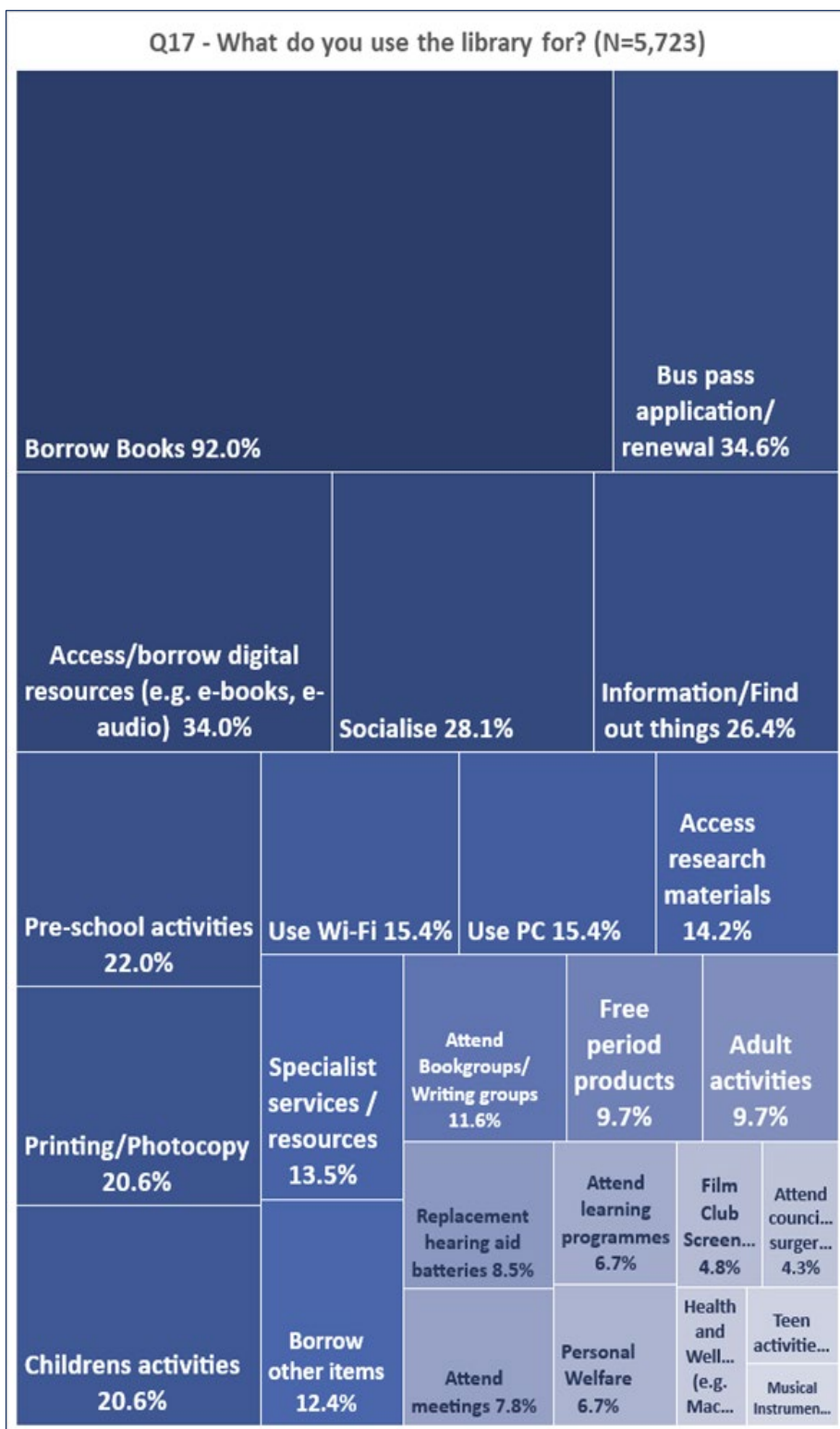
- I like the jigsaw puzzle and magazine swaps
- To enjoy the ambience, libraries are inspiring and soothing
- Work space when I can't work from home
- I pick up period products for my daughter and grandchildren. I sometimes search the catalogue from the library, and sometimes from home. I want to learn how to access digital e.books (but haven't yet), and I want to follow up an interest in the history of my flat (through census records) but I haven't yet. (Citizens questionnaire)
- Looking at artwork on display, enjoying watching children enjoying being there, enjoying seeing dogs on Dog-Friendly Thursdays. Collecting brochures about adult education courses and theatre. (Citizens questionnaire)

HMP Edinburgh (Saughton)

The most popular activities amongst the 30 respondents (in order of highest response) are to borrow DVDs, then borrow books and then CDs. Borrowing games and socialising were the least popular activity.

High School Stakeholders

High School stakeholder respondents included school leadership team members, teaching and support staff and other support staff operating from a high school setting e.g. Skills Development Scotland.

It is evident from those that responded to the question (N=119), opportunities to discuss curricular use with school library staff alongside the promotion and delivery of reading for enjoyment and information are core priority areas of activity. Just under half of those responding seek support with resource/book lists and project boxes and to undertake delivery of class activities in the library.

Activities associated with information literacy and research skills or extra curricular clubs or groups are not used as much / delivered by school stakeholders.

Q7 - What do you use the library for? (%)
(N=119)

Category	%
DISCUSS WITH LIBRARY STAFF RE: CURRICULAR USE	60%
PROMOTE/DELIVER READING FOR ENJOYMENT	53%
PROMOTE/DELIVER READING FOR INFORMATION	50%
FOR SUPPORT WITH RESOURCE/BOOKS LISTS AND PROJECT BOXES	47%
DELIVER CLASS ACTIVITIES IN THE LIBRARY (E.G. EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES)	46%
SEND CLASS, GROUP OR INDIVIDUALS TO BORROW OR RETURN BOOKS	42%
TO WORK ON SUBJECT SPECIFIC RESEARCH THAT YOU HAVE DISCUSSED WITH LIBRARY STAFF	41%
SUPPORT PERSONALISATION AND CHOICE IN READING FOR ENJOYMENT	40%
EXTRA CURRICULAR CLUBS/GROUPS	39%
TO DEVELOP INFORMATION AND RESEARCH SKILLS AS PART OF YOUR SUBJECT AREA	38%
TO DEVELOP INFORMATION AND RESEARCH SKILLS AS A STAND ALONE	36%
DELIVER INFORMATION LITERACY LESSONS/ACTIVITIES	35%
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY BELOW)	17%

Chart 5

Other examples of school library use identified include:

- Our School Librarian has come to speak with my S5 & S6 class, at my request, to help inspire them to read and use the library service.
- Staff library to support professional learning. Quiet space for small group or 1-1 interventions. Literacy interventions.
- As a quiet space for pupils to use during breaktime and lunchtime
- Printing facility, space to work with small pupils on language work for ESOL
- Particularly in music technology when pupils can elect to do an audio project
- Is a safe space for pupils or a supported place where pupils can complete course work or applications with the help of the librarian.
- To encourage pupils to use the careers resources and as a space to have careers interviews with pupils
- Interview in the library also offer small groups, complete college and training applications

Public Library Stakeholders

Public Library stakeholder respondents included a wide range of organisations, community groups, projects and elected members who use the libraries for a variety of reasons. The majority deliver services in partnership with the library service.

Other uses identified included:

- Councillor surgeries
- Meetings, exhibitions, research, and study
- Provide signposting and social prescription for patients
- To work with young people

- The library provides a meeting room. To engage with the users, mainly youths. To provide a presence and support for staff.

Q11 - How does your service use the building? - (as % of respondents) (N=69)

Category	%
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LIBRARY	48%
DIRECT DELIVERY (DEDICATED SPACE)	29%
OTHER	26%
PROMOTE SERVICES	25%
DIRECT DELIVERY (MAIN LIBRARY)	19%
PROMOTE/DELIVER PUBLIC CONSUTATIONS/ELECTIONS/SURGERIES	13%
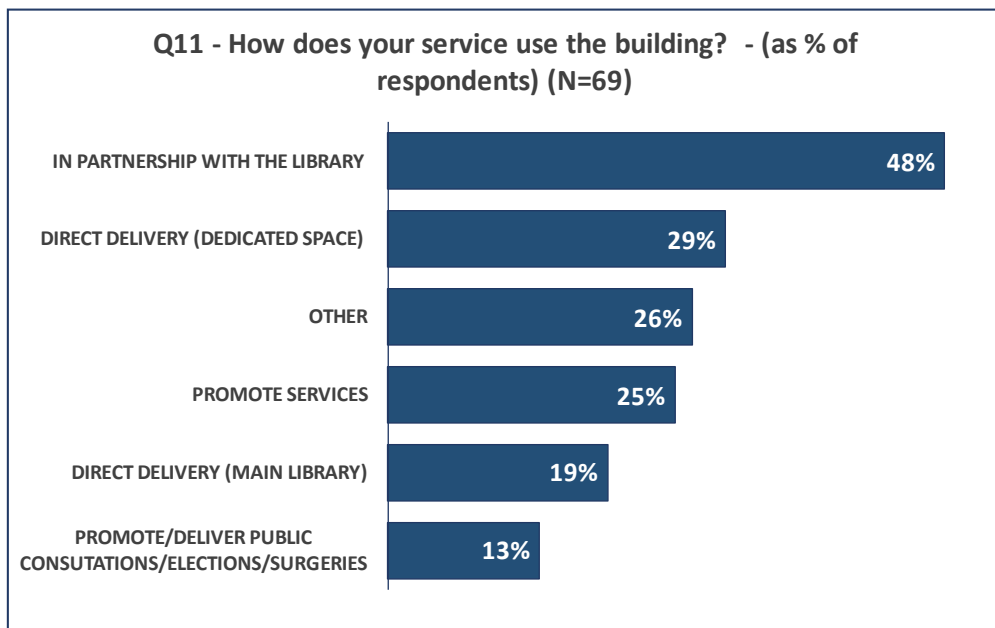
Chart 6

Children

5,377 Children aged P4 – P7 provided their thoughts on what they like to use the library for with 76% saying they liked to either borrow or read books followed by 29% saying they liked to play games. Access to activities was relatively low at 13% with access to E-Books at 11%.

Q2 - At my local library, I like to… (%) N=5,337

Category	%
Borrow books	49%
Read Books	27%
Attend Activities	13%
Use Computers	19%
Get help	11%
Play games	29%
Access Ebooks	11%

Chart 7

Of the 4,651 that responded, 54% indicated that their local library has books they would want to read, 17% suggested they didn't and 29% didn't know.

Of the 4,293 that responded, 29% indicated that their local library provided activities they would want to attend, 33% indicated that they didn't have activities they would want to attend with 37% indicating they didn't know.
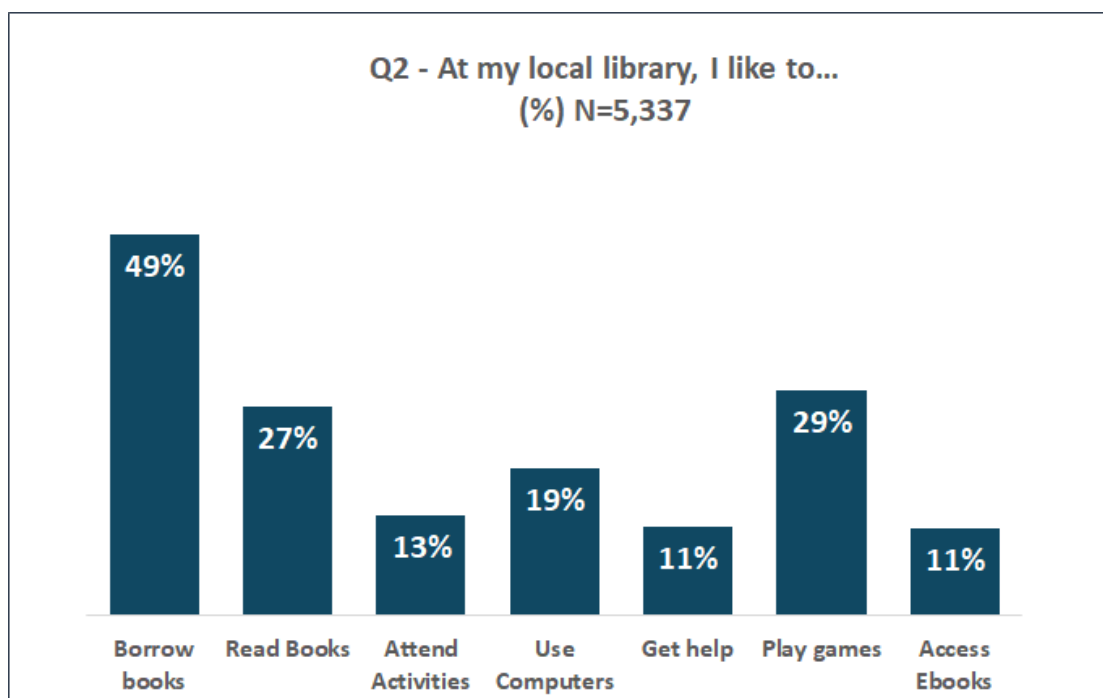
The high percentages of children saying that they either didn't know whether their local library has books they want to read and 37% who say they didn't know if the library had activities that they want to attend suggests that libraries need to do more targeted promotional work to better inform children of what's available.

03- Impact and value

Range & quality of service

Citizens

When asked how they would rate the range and quality of service Edinburgh Libraries currently offer, of the 5672 respondents indicated - excellent 48%, very good 40%, good 9%, satisfactory 2%, with 0.7% indicating unsatisfactory or poor

Stakeholders

When asked how they would rate the range and quality of service, 69 stakeholders completed the return with 27 (39%) indicating excellent, 30 (43%) very good and 7 (10%) good. 3 (4%) indicated satisfactory or poor, and 2 (3%) indicating don't know.

Children

When asked what they think of their local library, of the 4,724 that responded, 28% of children indicated that it was amazing, 33% good, 27% ok with 12% indicating it was rubbish. When asked if their local library helps with learning and reading – of the 4,071 **children** that responded, 40% indicated yes, 29% no and 31% don't know.

Young People

1,200 **young people** were asked what the key benefits were of the school library through High School based focus groups. Using free text responses, analysis identified that they view the key benefits as being able to access a quiet and focussed environment to study, alongside academic support and a wide range of resources.

The school library is also seen as a safe and inclusive space where students feel welcomed and accepted. There are also references to social interaction helping foster friendships and activities, clubs and events creating a sense of community. Other key references included supporting mental well-being and emotional support, access to resources and technology and supporting personal growth and a love of reading.

Importance of Service

Citizens (Overall)

When asked to rate the overall importance of the library service to them and their families, 73% of 5900 citizen respondents indicated the service was very important, with a further 21% rating the service as important. 0.6% indicated the service was not important. 6% either didn't know, indicated not applicable or didn't respond.

Respondents from HMP Edinburgh (Saughton) - 28 of 30 (93%) indicated that overall, the library was important / very important to them.

Citizens, stakeholders and public library staff were asked how important each aspect of the library service was to them or their users.

Where options were the same across all three questionnaires, these are provided below. Variations are included within the appendices. The responses provided below relate to the important / very important responses.

Item / Participant	Citizens Important / Very Important) (N=5,900)	Stakeholders Important / Very Important) (N=69	Public Library Staff Very Important (N=163)
Overall importance of the library service	99% (N=5,565)	97% (N=66)	N/A
Borrowing books	98% (N=5,598)	79% (N=66)	96% (N=163)
Access to information	91% (N=4,681)	78% (N=64)	81% (N=160)
Reserve or borrow an item in one location and collect / return to another	90% (N=4,810)	63% (N=63)	78% (N=163)
Children's services	84% (N=2,483)	62% (N=63)	86% (N=160)
Reference / research	81% (N=4,161)	65% (N=65)	56% (N=161)
Access to scanner / photocopier / printing	75% (N=3,846)	58% (N=64)	79% (N=160)
Community meeting rooms	75% (N=3,249)	75% (N=64)	53% (N=162)
Study space	72% (N=3,260)	53% (N=62)	74% (N=163)
Programmed activity	72% (N=3,527)	71% (N=66)	71% (N=161)
Computers and printers	67% (N=3,643)	62.5% (N=64)	81% (N=162)
Get Online (learn digital skills)	58% (N=2,563)	58% (N=62)	73% (N=160)
Access to housebound services	52% (N=1,801)	42% (N=60)	80% (N=160)

Note: Staff responses are based on 'Very Important' only as the responses are likely to be as a result of heightened expectations of service from staff i.e. all responses for 'Important/Very Important' were equal to 100%. The use of 'Very Important' responses only for library staff allows a more reflective comparison across all three respondent groups.

In some instances, the weight of importance changes. This may be related to experience, purpose of use or from a service provider perspective, understanding the value of a specific activity and its potential impact.

When analysing the number of responses from citizens and stakeholders, it is clear that the role of the service is regarded very highly in terms of its importance. It is also evident across citizens, stakeholders and library staff responses that the provision of book borrowing continues to be viewed as the key service provided by libraries which is closely followed by access to information.

72% of citizens, 71% of stakeholders and 71% of library staff who provided a response rated programmed activity (e.g. organised events and activities) as being important/ very important. These consistently high levels across all respondent groups show the relatively high value that people place on access to community and cultural experiences, and on viewing the library as a social space which offers a range of opportunities to participate. Citizens and stakeholders also place a high value on access to meeting rooms with public library staff viewing them as of slightly lesser importance. The value of accessing support to develop digital skills is

again consistent amongst citizens and stakeholders with library staff placing the importance of this activity slightly higher. This is similar for access to computers and printers.

There is also a difference of value placed on the Get Online service with 73% of staff respondents indicating this very important and both citizens and stakeholders placing a combined very important/important value of 58%. This is similar to computers and printers with citizens and stakeholders indicating less importance than staff.

Children's services are highly valued across citizen and library staff responses (with 84% and 86% rated as important/ very important respectively), however this % was based on a lower level of citizen responses to this question which may be due to higher numbers of older age group participating. Similarly, stakeholders who rated children's services at a lower level of importance may be linked to the role they have and the age of the client group they engage with.

High School Stakeholders, School Librarians and Students were also asked to rate the importance of aspects of service delivered within the school setting. The questions were adapted slightly to support workshop activity with students.

High School S = High School Stakeholders

Q12 - How important is each of the following library services to you/your organisation/your service users?	High School S (%) Number Very Important	School Library staff (%) Number Very Important	Students (%) Number Important/ Very Important
Contribute to the delivery of curriculum outcomes	97% (N=116)	76% (N=17)	98% (N=1.163)
School library is a safe space for potentially vulnerable students	95% (N=119)	100% (N=17)	98% (N=1,165)
Support the development of digital literacy	61% (N=113)	59% (N=17)	67% (N=1,159)
Support critical thinking amongst students	70% (N=115)	76% (N=17)	67% (N=1,156)
Promote reading for pleasure and the benefits	97% (N=119)	100% (N=17)	91% (N=1,158)
Support students to link with the public library service	62% (N=117)	18% (N=17)	72% (N=1,140)
School library is available pre and post school core hours	69% (N=108)	47% (N=17)	74% (N=1,162)
Signpost students to other services and support networks	69% (N=116)	35% (N=17)	84% (N=1,159)
Develop and deliver recreational activity (E.g. Chess clubs, D&D)	75% (N=116)	59% (N=17)	72% (N=1,145)
Identify joint working opportunities between school and public libraries	61% (N=111)	N/A	N/A
Provision of a dedicated space to deliver library services	84% (N=118)	100% (N=17)	89% (N=1,164)
Support for study e.g. exams	80% (N=119)	71% (N=17)	96% (N=1,163)

When considering respondents feedback on the importance of library services most respondents agreed that the school library as a safe space was very important. This was followed by the library's role in promoting reading for pleasure. Library staff and school staff agree on the importance of the library's role in supporting the

development of digital literacy and supporting critical thinking amongst students. There are some slight differences of opinion between library and school staff on the provision of the library as a dedicated space, and in providing support for study, but both are seen by most staff as very important.

Where views start to differ slightly between library and school staff and young people themselves is on the importance of the school library availability pre and post school core hours and even more so when considering the importance of signposting students to other services and support networks. The biggest difference of opinion is seen when considering the importance of supporting students to link with the public library service with school staff and students identifying that as being much more important than library staff.

When considering the views of young people, the top two priorities appear to largely match the professional views of library and school staff with the school library as a safe space considered very important (study space is joint top for importance for young people), promoting reading for pleasure and provision of a dedicated space rated as the top three.

Provision and Contribution

Citizens, **Stakeholders** and **Library Staff** were asked to rate aspects of service provision using the same set of questions to allow direct comparisons. The following shows the percentage responses of those that agree/strongly agree with 'My library service......'

Item	Citizens (Agree / strongly agree) N=5900	Stakeholders (Agree / strongly agree) N=69	Staff (Agree) N=163
Is a friendly and welcoming space	97% (N=5,639)	95% (N=68)	88% (N=161)
Has book stock that is in good condition	93% (N=5,663)	78% (N=69)	71% (N=163)
Contributes to the health and wellbeing of the community	92% (N=5,551	91% (N=69)	82% (N=158)
Has a wide range of book titles and subjects	90% (N=5,652)	83% (N=69)	67% (N=163)
Supports lifelong learning and personal development	90% (N=5,561)	88% (N=68)	74% (N=158)
Provides adequate and reliable digital and online resources	72% (N=5,488)	60% (N=67)	66% (N=159)
Provides activities, events and cultural experiences that are well organised and cater for the needs of service users	70% (N=5,504)	72% (N=68)	87% (N=158) (Children focussed)
Provides well managed access to public computers and Wi-Fi	67% (N=5,509)	73.5% (N=68)	41% (N=157)
Provides information and access to other Council and Partner services	61% (N=5,464)	N/A	57% (N=153)

Overall, there is general agreement across the different statements, however the library staff group have indicated lower levels of agreement in some areas. This different viewpoint may be explained by the staff group aspirations to provide as high a quality of service as possible and understanding associated challenges of service provision.

There are some differences in the stated levels of agreement for book stock and digital service provision across the respondent groups which may need to be explored further to fully understand any concerns.

High School Students

High School students were provided with a series of statements relating to their school library and asked to rank in order of importance to them. The table below provides a ranked order of all statements based on the percentage of students who indicated 'Important' and 'Very Important'.

Whilst the responses for each year group largely align across all statements in order of importance, there are notable variances on some statements when considering 'Very Important', for example, 'Space for Study', whilst important across all year groups was notably higher in 'Very important' responses for S5/6 students with 89% indicating study space as being very important, compared to 68% for S1/2 students.
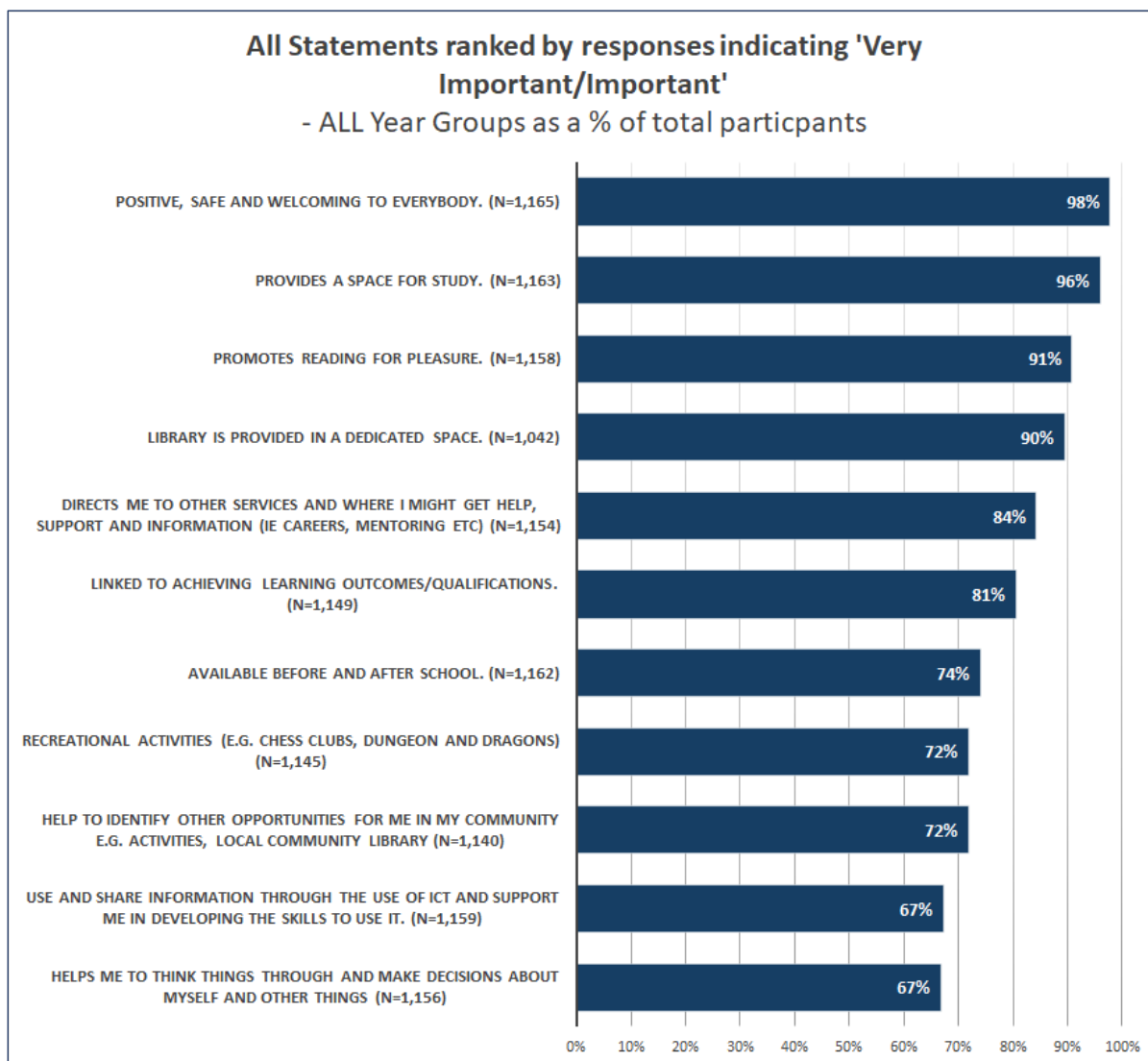
All Statements ranked by responses indicating 'Very Important/Important'
- ALL Year Groups as a % of total particpants

Statement	%
POSITIVE, SAFE AND WELCOMING TO EVERYBODY. (N=1,165)	98%
PROVIDES A SPACE FOR STUDY. (N=1,163)	96%
PROMOTES READING FOR PLEASURE. (N=1,158)	91%
LIBRARY IS PROVIDED IN A DEDICATED SPACE. (N=1,042)	90%
DIRECTS ME TO OTHER SERVICES AND WHERE I MIGHT GET HELP, SUPPORT AND INFORMATION (IE CAREERS, MENTORING ETC) (N=1,154)	84%
LINKED TO ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES/QUALIFICATIONS. (N=1,149)	81%
AVAILABLE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL. (N=1,162)	74%
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES (E.G. CHESS CLUBS, DUNGEON AND DRAGONS) (N=1,145)	72%
HELP TO IDENTIFY OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ME IN MY COMMUNITY E.G. ACTIVITIES, LOCAL COMMUNITY LIBRARY (N=1,140)	72%
USE AND SHARE INFORMATION THROUGH THE USE OF ICT AND SUPPORT ME IN DEVELOPING THE SKILLS TO USE IT. (N=1,159)	67%
HELPS ME TO THINK THINGS THROUGH AND MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT MYSELF AND OTHER THINGS (N=1,156)	67%

Chart 8

Following the opportunity to rank the statements, students were also provided an opportunity to highlight further thoughts on each statement.

Top 5 recurring points from the free text responses received (Created via AI and verified by Council Officer)

- The library should be a safe and welcoming space
- The library should provide resources and support for studying
- The library should have a variety of books and comfortable furniture
- The library should be a dedicated space
- The library should be open after school

Based on the free text responses, what are the benefits of the school library according to students (Created via AI and verified by Council Officer)

- Study and academic support
- Safe and welcoming space
- Social interaction and community
- Relaxation and mental well-being
- Access to resources and technology
- Personal development and leisure reading
- Exam preparation and study skills
- Emotional support
- Independence and responsibility
- Cultural and intellectual enrichment

It is important to note that these benefits are derived from the responses in the document and may vary based on individual perspectives and experiences.

Access to other services

Citizens, stakeholders and library staff were asked to identify if they might access any other services if they were provided alongside the library service.

Are there other services you might access if they were provided alongside the library service?	Citizens (%) N=5,900	Staff (%) N=163	S/Holder (%) N=69
Housing information services	14.0% (N=824)	44% (N=72)	48% (N=33)
Welfare / debt advice	15.6% (N=919)	51% (N=83)	48% (N=33)
Adult education classes / sessions	62.5% (N=3,690)	62% (N=101)	67% (N=46)
Family based support and advice	19.3% (N=1,139)	50% (N=82)	54% (N=37)
Access to other lendable items e.g. tools and gardening	46.1% (N=2,717)	50% (N=82)	49% (N=34)
Maker space - 3D printing, coding, lend and mend (access to equipment e.g. sewing machines)	42.0% (N=2,479)	52% (N=84)	29% (N=20)
Access to health-based services (E.g. information / cancer support)	32.6% (N=1,924)	45% (N=73)	57% (N=39)
Employment advice and support	18.1% (N=1,069)	49% (N=80)	45% (N=31)
Business start-up	13.4% (N=789)	21% (N=35)	36% (N=25)
More cultural activities - events	48.3% (N=2,852)	64% (N=105)	64% (N=44)
Flexible space for larger community events	26.2% (N=1,548)	42% (N=68)	48% (N=33)

The results indicate that accessing other services alongside library services may be beneficial to different service users, with 62% of citizens selecting adult education classes as a service they might access, 48% saying more cultural activities and 46% identifying access to other lendable items being of interest. It is notable that library staff have consistently rated each service higher than citizens and may have provided their responses based on their experience in supporting customers daily and identifying their needs and associated challenges. It may also be that specific libraries already have relationships with key services and understand the value they bring.

Stakeholders who also rated services as being of more benefit may also view working alongside other services as high value in relation to supporting their own work and client groups. When identifying commonality, adult education classes would appear to be popular across each respondent group at between 62 – 67%. More cultural activities (events) is of high interest at between 48 – 64% and access to other lendable items is also evident across all respondents with between 46 – 50% in support. Maker spaces are identified as a consideration between citizens (42%) and stakeholders (52%) but less important to staff (29%).

Access to more flexible space is supported more by staff and stakeholders rather than citizens, and the same can be seen with housing information, welfare/debt advice. It is interesting to note that the actual number of citizens responding to these suggestions reduces significantly from a base number of 5,900 to 824 (housing information) and 919 (welfare/debt advice). This is similar to the potential for activity to support business start up with a difference of opinion between stakeholders (36%), staff (21%) and the lowest response rate of all from citizens with 789 responding.

04 - Digital

Accessing online services

Q23 - Do you access the library online using... (N=5,723)

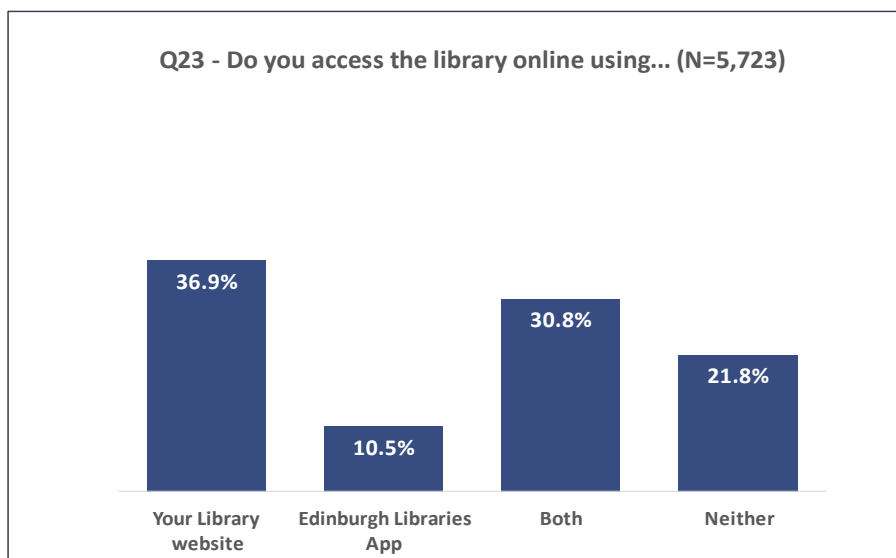| Your Library website	Edinburgh Libraries App	Both	Neither
36.9%	10.5%	30.8%	21.8%

Chart 9

Citizens, stakeholders and library staff were asked their views of online and digital services as a key service offer.

68% of citizens indicated that they access the 'Your Library' website with 41% accessing the Edinburgh Libraries App.

The table opposite provides a more detailed breakdown and highlights that 37% indicated they only use the web based 'Your Library', with 10.5% using the Edinburgh libraries app only, and 31% using both services.

When analysing feedback by age group, 30% of citizens questionnaire respondents who provided their age (N=5,900) were aged 65 and over and represented 30% of the respondents to this question. There was a noteworthy difference in respondents who indicated they use **neither** by age group: aged 24 and under 20%; aged 25 to 64 18%; and aged 65 and over 26%.

Frequency of Access

The table to the right describes how often (on average) individuals access the library web pages with almost 13.3% visiting more than once per week and 20% visiting less than once per month.

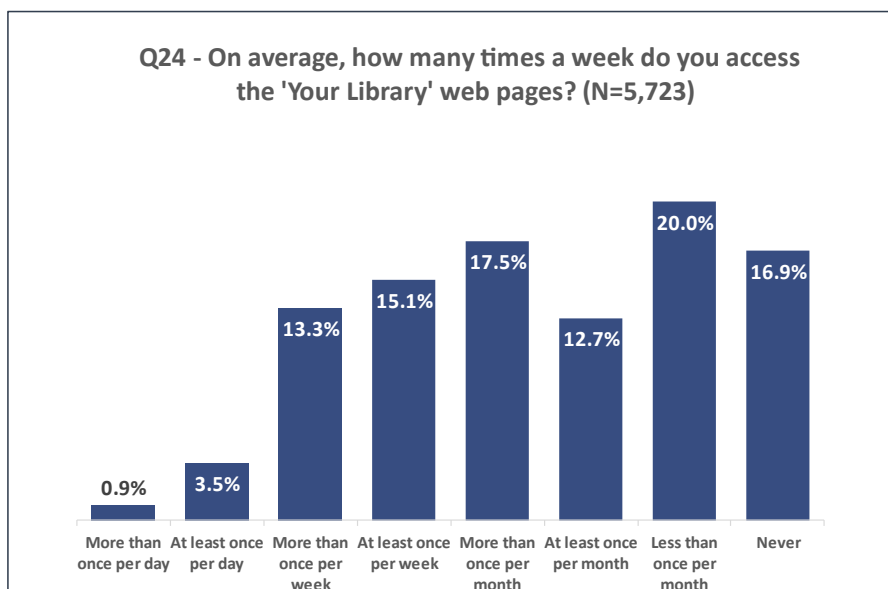There was no notable difference in frequency of access for age groups.

Q24 - On average, how many times a week do you access the 'Your Library' web pages? (N=5,723)

More than once per day	At least once per day	More than once per week	At least once per week	More than once per month	At least once per month	Less than once per month	Never
0.9%	3.5%	13.3%	15.1%	17.5%	12.7%	20.0%	16.9%

Chart 10

Stakeholders – of the 68 that responded, 47% indicated that they do not access the library online services. Of those that do, 25% use the 'Your Library' website, 6% the Edinburgh Libraries App and 22% use both.

Importance of digital services

Q.25 How important are each of the following online services to you?	Citizens (%) Important/ Very Important	Colleague (%) Very Important	S/Holder (%) Important/ Very Important
Library catalogue	93% (N=4,871)	87% (N=163)	64% (N=66)
E-books e.g. Libby	79% (N=4,171)	79% (N=163)	58% (N=64)
Study and research information (E.g. access to research papers)	79% (N=3,389)	55% (N=159)	53% (N=66)
Resources for children such as homework help	75% (N=2,308)	59% (N=158)	69% (N=64)
Access to library collections (E.g. Capital Collections)	74% (N=3,398)	58% (N=160)	53% (N=64)
E-newspapers and magazines (E.g. Pressreader)	71% (N=3,992)	70% (N=162)	57% (N=65)
E-Audio (E.g. Libby)	71% (N=3,736)	80% (N=160)	52% (N=64)
Local and national databases (E.g. Scotsman Digital Archive)	64% (N=3,340)	43% (N=161)	52% (N=65)
Access to resources for tracing your family history (E.g. Ancestry)	53% (N=3,131)	37% (N=160)	38% (N=64)

Citizens

From the citizens questionnaire, the most important digital services are the online catalogue with 93% indicating this as important/ very important followed by E-books with 79% indicating these were important/ very important and then study and research information with 79% indicating this is important/ very important.

E-Newspapers/ E-Magazines and E-Audio indicated as very important to 71% respectively. 53% indicated that access to resources for tracing family history was important/very important

There are some variations of opinion of digital service importance across respondents.

High School Stakeholders

Of the 118 that responded, 70 felt that it was very important to support digital literacy with 43 important and 5 not important.

Children

Of the 5,337 that responded, 19% of children like to access computers at their local library whilst 11% like to access E-Books.

SECTION THREE – The future library service

01 - Overview

All participants were asked about their vision for a future library service and what they would like to change over the next five years.

Citizens

3,882 citizens provided suggestions on the future development of the library service.

AI text analysis (verified by a Council Officer) identified the following ten most recurring themes and suggestions:

- **Increase funding** to ensure a well-stocked library with a wide range of books and resources.
- **Enhance** community engagement by hosting more events, clubs, and workshops for people of all ages and interests.
- **Improve** children's programmes and activities to promote literacy and learning.
- **Collaborate** with schools and educational institutions to provide additional support and resources for students.
- **Expand access** to digital resources, including e-books, audiobooks, and online databases.
- **Upgrade library facilities**, including comfortable seating, clean spaces, and modern technology.
- **Increase promotion** and awareness of library services through better communication and marketing strategies.
- **Offer more diverse resources**, including books in different languages and materials for specific interests or hobbies.
- **Extend library opening hours** to accommodate different schedules and provide more accessibility.
- **Strengthen partnerships** with community organisations to expand the range of services and programmes offered.

High School Stakeholders

When asked – '**Over the next five years, what changes do you think the library service could make to better assist you / your service / service users to meet your aims and ensure our communities can benefit as a result**, the top five recurring themes and suggestions were:

- **Importance of funding and staffing for school libraries:** Many respondents emphasised the need for continued funding and staffing for school libraries to ensure they can provide a wide range of books, resources, and support to students. They highlighted the role of librarians in creating a safe and enriching learning environment.
- **Access to a diverse range of books and resources:** Several respondents mentioned the importance of having a wide variety of books and resources in school libraries, including different genres, cultures, and levels of difficulty. They emphasised the role of libraries in broadening children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- **Extended opening hours and increased accessibility:** Many respondents suggested that school libraries should have longer opening hours, including early mornings and after school, to accommodate student's needs.
- **Integration of digital resources and technology:** Several respondents expressed the need for more digital resources, such as e-books, audiobooks, and online research tools in school libraries. They also mentioned the importance of having access to ICT equipment and Wi-Fi for students to support their learning.
- **Collaboration and partnerships:** Many respondents highlighted the importance of collaboration between school libraries and other libraries to provide a seamless and comprehensive library service. They also mentioned the value of partnerships with authors, community organisations, and other schools to enhance the library experience for students.

Stakeholders

When asked - **Over the next five years, what changes do you think the library service could make to better assist you / your service / service users to meet your aims and ensure our communities can benefit as a result**, the top five recurring themes and suggestions were:

- **Increase funding and staffing:** Many stakeholder respondents mentioned the need for more funding and staffing to improve library services. This includes having consistent and adequately trained staff, longer opening hours, and more resources and collections.
- **Community engagement and events:** Several suggestions focused on making libraries more community orientated. This includes hosting more events, activities, and workshops for children, young people, families, and individuals of all ages.
- **Accessibility and inclusivity:** Respondents emphasised the importance of making libraries accessible and inclusive for all. This includes providing resources and programmes for people with disabilities, improving physical accessibility with features like contrast on steps and good lighting, and incorporating environmentally sustainable practices.
- **Partnership and collaboration:** Many suggestions highlighted the need for libraries to partner with other services, organisations, and community groups. This includes inviting external youth groups to use meeting rooms, collaborating with local authors and artists, and working with charities or cultural groups to create dedicated programmes.
- **Technology and digital resources:** There were mentions of the need for better access to technology, including upgraded computers and reliable consoles. Respondents also expressed a desire for more digital offerings, such as audiobooks and online services, while still valuing the importance of physical books.

Young People

During the workshop sessions with young people in high schools, young people were provided the opportunity to indicate how the service could improve. Free text was analysed by AI and subsequently verified by Council Officers to identify the key findings against questions asked of AI. The following are samples of responses received.

Q – (To AI) - Based on the responses in the document, what are the 10 most important ways that the library helps students with their learning outcomes?

- **Increasing the variety of books:** Respondents expressed a desire for more books in different genres, such as romance, graphic novels, adventure, and Warhammer books. They also suggested having a collection that rivals a good bookshop, with a wide selection of new and popular titles.

- **Enhancing ICT resources:** Many respondents mentioned the need for updated and more accessible ICT resources in the library. This includes having more working computers, better Wi-Fi, and providing support for digital skills and research.

- **Promoting reading for pleasure:** Suggestions for promoting reading for pleasure included organising activities, such as creative posters or other creative ways to engage students and provide access to audiobooks. Creating a welcoming and comfortable environment that encourages relaxation and enjoyment of reading was also mentioned.

- **Improving support for specific needs:** Respondents suggested providing more resources and assistance for students with dyslexia. They also mentioned the importance of having a librarian who is knowledgeable and approachable, particularly for students who may not have such figures in their lives.

- **Increasing class visits and involvement:** Suggestions included having more class visits from various subjects, integrating library activities into class weeks, and involving all students in library activities. This would help students connect their learning with the resources and support available in the library.

- **Upgrading facilities and layout:** Respondents mentioned the need for better chairs, a less cluttered computer area, and a layout that is more conducive to ICT use and study.

- **Providing more study and creative spaces:** Suggestions included offering more time for creative activities and arts and crafts, as well as creating breakout spaces for individual and group study.

- **Expanding resources and materials:** Respondents suggested having more access to revision materials, textbooks related to specific subjects, and study papers. They also mentioned the importance of having up-to-date school textbooks and a wide range of literature and textbooks.

- **Improving communication and information:** Suggestions included providing more information on how to use computers, printers, and other resources in the library. Respondents also mentioned the need for clearer categorisation of books and subjects to make it easier to find specific materials.

- **Addressing noise and space issues:** Respondents mentioned the need for a quieter study space, particularly during lunchtime, and ensuring that the library remains a dedicated space for students rather than being used for staff events.

It is important to note that these suggestions are based on the responses in the document and may vary depending on the specific needs and preferences of the school community.

Q – (To AI) - Based on the responses in the document, list the 5 most recurring suggestions for additions to the library facilities?

The additions to the library's facilities that recur most frequently are:

- **Comfy chairs with footrests/reading nooks:** This suggestion is mentioned multiple times throughout the document, indicating a strong desire for comfortable seating options that allow students to relax and enjoy their reading or studying experience.

- **Café:** The idea of having a café within the library is mentioned numerous times. Students express a desire for a space where they can enjoy snacks, drinks, and even warm up their own food using microwaves and kettles.

- **Beanbags:** The inclusion of beanbags in the library is suggested multiple times. Students see beanbags as a comfortable and casual seating option that would enhance their overall experience in the library.

- **More books:** The desire for a wider range of books and more diverse collections is mentioned repeatedly. Students express a need for a larger selection of books, including different genres, authors, and subjects.

- **More computers:** The need for additional computers in the library is mentioned several times. Students highlight the importance of having reliable and up-to-date computers for research, studying, and completing assignments.

Q – (To AI) - Based on the responses in the document, what are the student suggestions for improving the library environment?

Some suggestions for improving the library environment include:

- More comfortable seating, such as comfier chairs, beanbags, and cushions.
- Better stock management and organisation of books to make them more easily accessible.
- Separate areas for different activities, such as study areas, reading areas, and club areas.
- Updated and faster computers to enhance productivity and efficiency.
- More study resources, such as textbooks and reference materials, to support academic needs.
- Regular book donations and book sales to expand the library's collection.
- Promoting and advertising library events, clubs, and activities to increase student engagement.
- Incorporating technology, such as VR headsets and interactive displays, to enhance the learning experience.
- Encouraging student involvement in the library by allowing them to suggest books and participate in book clubs.
- Ensuring the library is open for longer hours, including before and after school, to accommodate different schedules.
- Providing access to Wi-Fi and charging stations for electronic devices.
- Incorporating sensory elements, such as fidget toys and sensory boxes, to support students with sensory needs.
- Offering a variety of recreational games, such as board games and puzzles, for students to enjoy during breaks.

It is important to note that these proposed additions may vary in feasibility and depend on factors such as budget, space availability, and school policies.

The No Going Back project which took place during 2022 – 2023 involved 2097 young people where they were asked their views around potential change in public libraries. Some of the suggestions are similar to those promoted for the school environment:

- A separate area for children with books, games and activities suitable for them would allow parents to feel more comfortable bringing their children to read.
- According to the interests of readers or research needs, recommend corresponding books or materials, or provide one-to-one consultation services

- Build closer community partnerships. Link up with local community organisations, schools and universities etc. to create collaborative projects and events to facilitate knowledge exchange and sharing.
- Change the interior of the library to make it more cool and nice to look at its not the 19th century anymore which is what it feels like sometimes
- I believe that the libraries are at a high quality and they encourage children to read but I think children should be using libraries more they should use events and community activities to encourage to reading books.
- More lgbtqia+ books especially lesbian and trans as theres alot of male gay books in comparison. And making a display of queer books for pride month/all year if possible
- More things about ADHD and Autsim

Children

Over 1,282 children participated in a library poster competition where they designed a library of the future to provide a visual representation of their thoughts. During the primary school workshop activities, children were also asked to provide their views of what the service should provide in the future. When analysis of free text responses was undertaken, the following ten recurring suggestions were identified for the service to consider.

- **More books:** Many suggestions included requests for more books, including specific requests for certain authors or genres.
- **Comfier seating:** Several suggestions mentioned the need for more comfortable seating options, such as bean bags or cushions.
- **More activities and clubs:** Many children suggested adding more activities and clubs for different ages, including art, gaming, and book clubs.
- **Better organisation:** Suggestions included clearer signage, separate sections for different age groups, and books organised by author or genre.
- **More technology:** Some suggestions mentioned the desire for more computers, iPads, or gaming consoles in the library.
- **Outdoor spaces:** A few suggestions mentioned the idea of having outdoor reading areas or gardens.
- **Cafes or snack areas:** Several suggestions mentioned the desire for a cafe or snack area within the library.
- **More accessibility:** Suggestions included having books in different languages, dyslexia-friendly books, and resources for children with special needs.
- **More staff presence:** Some suggestions mentioned the need for more staff in the library to assist with finding books and organising activities.
- **Better promotion and communication:** Suggestions included better promotion of library activities, and gathering feedback from children on the books they want to see in the library.

02 – Emerging themes

Reading, learning and culture

It is evident from the Future Libraries engagement feedback, the No Going Back (young people's) engagement data, and the current service usage data that reading for pleasure and learning, with access to good and wide-ranging stock is regarded as the most important service provided by libraries. There are suggestions that this can continue to improve with areas for investment identified in High Schools and public libraries across different age groups as well as suggestions for more investment in collections and other supporting resources. It is also suggested that improvements can be made to support requests for specific authors or genres.

Irrespective of age or background of the engagement respondents, libraries are viewed as reliable and trusted resources to support individual and group learning. Further development opportunities should be explored to continue to build on this service either through dedicated library provision or working alongside other trusted partners or in simply providing space for other providers to support learning-based opportunities. It is also suggested that these types of activities can help to grow positive community values, and to enrich and foster positive relationships.

Supporting and enhancing improved community cohesion and learning can also be achieved through the provision of access to a wide range of cultural experiences including events-based activity, group settings and through stock and collection development.

Digital resources and opportunities

The engagement activity has identified that there is clear demand for the service to invest and develop digital resources alongside continued access to reliable consoles for children and young people and Wi-Fi for all in public library spaces.

There is a continued need and interest in the service continuing to support access to digital infrastructure, but also to build on the unique position that libraries have in offering those resources in a supported community environment serving to bridge the digital divide. Libraries are stigma free with individuals in every community able to access free resources, all with different needs and knowledge. There is a need to ensure that what is offered remains dependable and accessible whilst building library staff IT skills to allow them to provide support to those who would most benefit from the available technology.

There is evidence that the provision of these new and emerging technologies is highly valued by many library customers and are now viewed as a core service offer in our modern and evolving technological world with suggestions for opportunities to develop greater access to new resources seen as a key aspect of future delivery.

Additionally, children and young people when asked about the digital service often mention access to good gaming consoles. This can be linked to progressive learning opportunities supporting STEM (Science, Technology, English and Maths) development in schools. Whilst not solely associated with technology, Maker Spaces are also highlighted as key opportunities to establish and support customer engagement and develop new initiatives with appropriate supports based in a single location.

Healthy and inclusive communities

Large numbers of respondents have acknowledged the role of libraries in supporting the development of healthy and inclusive communities. Suggestions include building on current experience to create more collaborative approaches to develop and expand access to a wider range of services. Additionally, the interest expressed in accessing other services alongside the library also supports the exploration of future opportunities for co-location of services.

Some health specific approaches to consider include further developing resources associated with reading stock to support dyslexia friendly resources, and support for children and young people with special needs

Furthermore, it's suggested that inclusive approaches can include widening access to books and resources in different languages, recognising the diverse population of the city. Libraries have also played a key role in supporting communities and individuals at times of need and building on partnership activities such as 'A Warm Welcome which will continue to ensure many of our most vulnerable citizens can access critical services at times they need them most.

Additional resources and programmes for individuals with physical disabilities would also be welcomed. This also links with comments and suggestions on the physical library estate and a need to identify improvements

across a range of resources including seating, layouts, lighting and general comfort levels. These improvements were identified by many as being essential to encourage increased use of service and improve the customer experience across all age ranges and communities.

Children and young people

When combining the Future Libraries engagement activity with the recent 'No Going Back' engagement with S1-S6 students, over 7,000 children and young people have provided their views of the service and potential areas for further development.

Children and young people highly value the role of libraries when providing safe and welcoming spaces whether in school or in public library settings. This helps foster learning, supporting and developing friendships and relationships and creativity. Opportunities to build on this approach and in line with previously agreed No Going Back actions should be explored further.

It is evident that creative activity and opportunities to learn through play are important not only to children and young people but also parents and other stakeholders. Further opportunities to build on this important aspect would be welcomed.

Literacy and learning have also been highlighted as a key consideration with more opportunities to support this through increased events and activities. Children also highlighted that more arts and crafts-based activities would also be welcome with staff on hand to help with selection of resources.

Listen, learn and evolve

The significant number of participants who provided feedback through the engagement process evidences a clear desire for service users, non-service users and stakeholders to have a say in the library service and future delivery aims. For many, opportunities to continue to have a say would be welcomed and whilst undertaking activity frequently on the scale of the 2024 engagement phase would be challenging, opportunities will exist to undertake more bespoke and service specific engagement activity to ensure libraries remain fit for purpose throughout the lifetime of the new strategy.

It has been suggested that improvements can be made in terms of how the service promotes itself, provides information about events and activities and engages with wider communities and other service providers. Some participants, especially children and young people, indicated that they were unaware of key areas of activity and delivery. Alongside continued opportunities to engage and listen, the service would benefit from improved promotion and marketing.

Opening hours

Several comments and suggestions were received in respect of the library opening hours. When analysed, these centred on potential changes which were specific to the library nearest to the respondent and included extending opening hours to accommodate the needs and preferences of library users, including weekday evenings and Sundays. In some cases, very specific ideas about opening and closing times were suggested to meet individual preferences.

Whilst no intention was promoted to alter opening times, the number of respondents indicating that potential changes could be beneficial would suggest that other options may be a consideration that could be explored further.

SECTION FOUR - Conclusions

01 – Questionnaire satisfaction

The citizen's questionnaire was the main method used to gather feedback on the library service. The questionnaire was designed to be as clear and accessible as possible to successfully capture the views of a wide range of citizens to ensure that the new library strategy is fully informed.

There were 5,315 completed questionnaire responses with respondents expressing high levels of satisfaction with the process. 90% (N=4,990) of respondents stated that they were given the opportunity to have their say, 85% (N=5,037) told us that they were given the information they needed to have their say and 92% (N=5,009) said that the engagement activity was clear and easy to understand.

02 - Conclusions

The engagement activity has provided the Edinburgh Library Service with an unprecedented level of understanding of how citizens and key stakeholders view the service, what the service means to them, how they access and use the service and its role in serving them and the city in the future.

A broad range of data sets, including vital demographic information will assist the service to ensure that as we progress to develop a fitting strategic plan, the following actions and activity will be fully informed with opportunities to continue to evolve and create a more in-depth understanding of the true impact of the service provision. To support this, the service will build on the data to establish appropriate frameworks that will assist in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the service to create a more transparent and accountable model.

It is evident from the engagement that most of the activities and services offered are highly valued and in turn, assist to create positive impact. Traditional library activity remains at the core of the service, acting as the underpinning factor on which to build other services, support and learning-based activities and to provide a unique cultural space at the heart of local communities.

Whilst access to lending remains a high priority, it is evident that there is room for improvement across the service. This was evident across all age groups and ensures that going forward, management of this activity must include identifying opportunities to create feedback to improve wherever possible.

Children have indicated that whilst they value the library service, of those that responded, almost 40% indicated that the service needed improving. This would suggest that whilst children are viewed as a key audience, the service should review specific aspects to ensure key developments such as informal learning and activities best meet needs. Alongside the highly valued primary school class visits to local libraries, the service could benefit from identifying other opportunities to grow the involvement of this age group and into the transition phase to high school.

Libraries must also continue to be safe and welcoming spaces, providing innovative opportunities for individuals and groups of all ages to learn and grow and access relevant and timely support opportunities to overcome challenges that affect day-to-day life. Libraries are well-positioned to support the health and wellbeing of our communities alongside helping to tackle poverty and support sustainability. To further support this, it's clear that citizens and stakeholders are keen to access or work with other services and resources alongside the library offer, helping create community hubs - taking services to people, where they need them most.

School-based delivery remains a key priority which supports our young people to develop and improve their life chances. School stakeholders have indicated that their interactions with school libraries are mainly learning focussed but also suggests opportunities to support young people in other ways such as extra-curricular and recreational activity, digital literacy, signposting to other services and supporting students to link with the public library service. School specific service may benefit from more in-depth dialogue as part of any future consultation.

03 - Recommendations

When considering the development of the Future Libraries Strategy, it is recommended that the core themes should :

Inclusive

Ensuring that all aspects of future service delivery continue to recognise every individual and group without stigma. This should be demonstrated across the provision of resources, lending stock, design of space, accessibility and delivery of activities and events. That the library service maintains its unique position in that it welcomes individuals from every community and every age and ability and that it continues to celebrate diversity.

Health & Wellbeing

The service recognises its role and potential to support and enhance people's health and wellbeing through the provision of accurate information, access to safe, warm, and welcome spaces and opportunities to tackle social isolation. The engagement has identified opportunities to build on and enhance partnership opportunities to create more access for citizens to vital resources and support staff.

Poverty and Inequality

Libraries are perfectly placed to support opportunities and help close poverty related attainment gap through improved access to employability and skills-based activity and providers and assisting people to learn and develop new skills associated with personal growth and development.

Cultural Development

It is evident that libraries are regarded as key community spaces to celebrate a wide range of cultural opportunities and create vibrant event-based opportunities. This can also help to support growth and development of cultural practitioners, groups and organisations to practice in the heart of communities.

Community Hubs

Citizens and stakeholders would welcome opportunities to access a range of services alongside their library provision. Learning and development appears to be a key theme alongside other key supports such as the development of access to other lending items that will support an improved circular economy.

Physical Spaces

People of all ages have identified that some library spaces both public and schools can feel dated and in need of refurbishment. Opportunities to make improvements to the physical space and furnishings must be explored to support modernisation of libraries and allow transformation into the thriving, accessible and inclusive service that can best meet community needs.

Digital Connections

Digital resources are at the core of library service delivery and opportunities to increase access to new and improved resources would be welcome. This includes the creation of a management system that can support every area of delivery, creation of maker spaces with digital alongside other resources, improving opportunities for self service operations and supporting library service colleagues to become digitally aware and confident to support others to overcome digital poverty and online safety issues.

Children & Young People

Ensure the library service continues to contribute to the learning and development of children through the provision of cultural, literacy, play and educational based opportunities. Other activity should include building on the positive work with local primary schools to increase the popularity of the library service and what it can offer children (and parents). High schools value the role of the school-based library service, and it may be beneficial to consider the identification of key measures that create an agreed baseline for delivery to ensure that contribution towards key strategic outcomes are measurable e.g. closing the attainment gap. The library service should also consider the different transitional stages in a child and young person's life and the role it can play to support these.

Continued Learning and Involvement

The high level of response to the engagement activity and readiness of people to contribute their views has demonstrated the importance of the service providing meaningful opportunities for feedback and future involvement. The service should build on this experience and continue to learn from and involve those who do and don't currently access libraries in the design and development of future service. Alongside customer engagement, there is a need to build on the use and analysis of performance data to ensure that development and change is evidence-based, and success is measured against a new monitoring and evaluation framework put in place to give our libraries the best chance of future success.

> *Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.*
>
> – R. David Lankes

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Appendix 1

Data Set – Citizen Questionnaire Demographics

Edinburgh Future Libraries

Citizens Questionnaire Demographic Data

September 2024

Total N=5,900

Q2 - What is your age group?

	Number	(%)	Edinburgh
11 and under	45	1%	10.9%
12 to 17	66	1%	6.3%
18 to 24	117	2%	11.8%
25 to 34	705	12%	17.0%
35 to 44	1313	22%	14.3%
45 to 54	938	16%	12.2%
55 to 64	943	16%	11.6%
65 and over	1772	30%	16.0%
Not Answered	1	0.0%	
	5900	**100%**	

Source: Scottish Census 2022

Scotland's Census 2022 - National Records of Scotland

Table UV102b - Age (20) by sex

All people

Q32 - What is your employment status?

			Edinburgh
FT Education (at School)	100	1.7%	
FT Education or Training	105	1.8%	18.2%
FT Employment	1989	33.7%	37.8%
PT Employment	1141	19.3%	10.1%
Long-term sick or disabled	105	1.8%	3.6%
FT Carer	77	1.3%	
Retired	1912	32.4%	18.4%
Other (see below)	*266*		
Prefer not to say	118	2.0%	
Not answered	87	1.5%	

Other

Unemployed/Looking for work	44	0.7%	1.6%
Say at home parent/Maternity	51	0.9%	2.8%
Part Time Student	22	0.4%	
Self-employed/Freelance	96	1.6%	7.8%

Other (Not stated)	53	0.9%	
	5900		

Source: Scottish Census 2022

Scotland's Census 2022 - National Records of Scotland

Table UV601 - Economic activity

All people aged 16 and over

Q33 - What is your sex?

			Edinburgh
Female	4215	71.4%	51.6%
Male	1379	23.4%	48.4%
Prefer not to say	230	3.9%	
Not answered	76	1.3%	
	5900		

Q34 - Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have trans history?

			Edinburgh
No	5215	88.4%	93.3%
Yes	122	2.1%	0.8%
Prefer not to say	271	4.6%	
Not answered	292	4.9%	6%
	5900		

Q35 - Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

			Edinburgh
Straight/Heterosexual	4387	74.4%	84.0%
Gay/Lesbian	198	3.4%	3.0%
Bisexual	275	4.7%	3.6%
Other sexual orientation	81	1.4%	1.0%
Prefer not to say	685	11.6%	
Not answered	274	4.6%	
	5900		

		Edinburgh
LGBO	9.4%	7.6%

Source: Scottish Census 2022

Scotland's Census 2022 - National Records of Scotland -
Table UV904 - Sexual orientation
All people aged 16 and over

Scotland's Census 2022 - National Records of Scotland
Table UV903b - Trans status or history by age
All people aged 16 and over

Q36 - What is your ethnic group?

			Edinburgh
A - White	**5298**	**93.2%**	**84.5%**
1. Scottish	3265	57.5%	57.3%
2. Other British	1242	21.9%	13.6%
3, Irish	157	2.8%	2%
4. Polish	80	1.4%	3.2%
5. Gypsy/Traveller	1	0.02%	0.05%
6. Roma	0	0.0%	
7. Showman/Show woman	3	0.1%	
8. Another white ethnic group	550	9.7%	8.3%

			Edinburgh
B - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	**105**	**1.8%**	**2.6%**
9. Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups	105	1.8%	

			Edinburgh
C - Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	**185**	**3.3%**	**8.8%**
10. Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani	33	0.6%	1.5%
11. Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian	66	1.2%	2.5%
12. Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi	6	0.1%	0.5%
13. Chinese, Scottish Chines or British Chinese	55	1.0%	3.0%
14. Other Asian	25	0.4%	1.3%

			Edinburgh
D. African, Scottish African or British African	**18**	**0.3%**	**0.2%**
15. African, Scottish African or British African	18	0.3%	

			Edinburgh
E. Caribbean or Black	**7**	**0.1%**	**0.3%**
15. Caribbean or Black	7	0.1%	

			Edinburgh
F. Other ethnic Group	**26**	**0.5%**	**2%**
17. Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab	10	0.2%	0.8%
18. Another ethnic group	16	0.3%	1.2%

G.		
19. Prefer not to say	217	3.8%
	5856	

Source: Scottish Census 2022

Scotland's Census 2022 - National Records of Scotland

Table UV201 - Ethnic group

All people

Q37 - Do you have physical or mental health or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?

Yes	1478	25%
No	3897	66%
Prefer not to say	374	6%
Not Answered	151	3%
	5900	

If answer yes to Q37, do any of these conditions or illnesses effect you in the following areas?

		as % of those who answered yes to Q37	as % of all respondents
Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)	193	13%	3%
Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)	437	30%	7%
Mobility	471	32%	8%
Dexterity (e.g. lifting or carrying objects, using a keyboard)	148	10%	3%
Learning or understanding or concentrating	198	13%	3%
Memory	205	14%	3%
Mental health	589	40%	10%
Stamina or breathing or fatigue	332	22%	6%
Socially or behaviourally (e.g. ASD, ADHD)	307	21%	5%
Other	125	8%	2%
Prefer not to say	368	25%	6%
	3373		

Avg. number of conditions/illnesses that effect respondents who answered yes to Q37 — **2.0**

Q38 - Does your condition or illness/do any of your condition or illnesses reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

		as % of those who answered yes to Q37	as % of all respondents
Yes, a lot	301	20%	5%
Yes, a little	969	66%	16%
Not at all	744	50%	13%
Prefer not to say	370	25%	6%
Not answered / n/a	3516	238%	60%
	5900		