

Library Consultation 2012

Highlight Report

This report presents the findings from the 2012 Library Consultation. A total of 1601 surveys were completed:

- 1340 by postal survey in library
- 84 by online survey
- 177 from children/young people

Of these there were 1340 responses from adults (83%) and 177 from children. It was not possible to categorise the 84 online responses.

The Business Intelligence Team project managed the survey and the fieldwork was carried out during November by an independent market research agency.

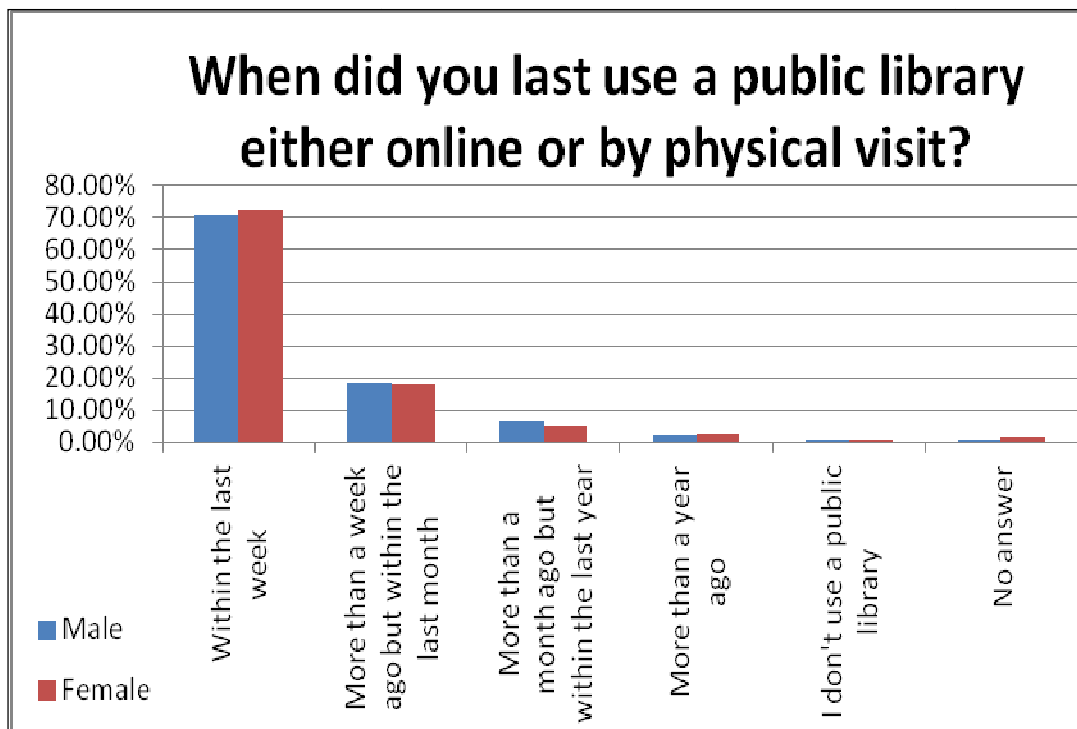
Of those who answered any equalities questions 946 people (65%) of adults disclosed their gender – 69% were female and 31% male.

Age grouping was disclosed by 64%, the majority who answered this question were in the over 55 age group (63%), other groups were 45-54 (15%), 35 -44 (12%), 25 -34 (8%), 16 -24 (2%).

However there is a need to be cautious with some of this data as over a third of those who completed the questionnaire did not give gender or age information. In terms of any other equalities profiling the numbers are too small to be useful.

Q 1 Public library usage

72% of respondents had used a library within the last week, 19% within the last month and 6% within the last year. Children and online respondents stated a slightly lower percentage in terms of use in last week but almost 30% of children had used a library within the last month.

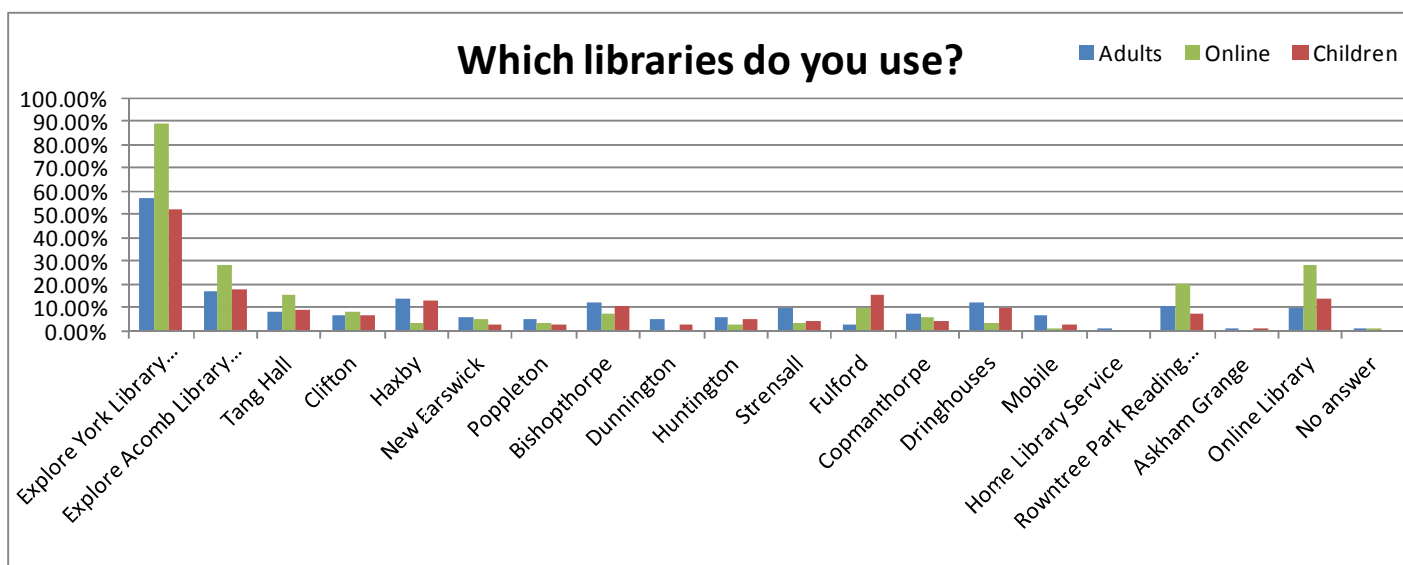


Q2 Which libraries used

Explore York and Explore Acomb were the most used by all groups

Explore York by 58% and Explore Acomb by 17%.

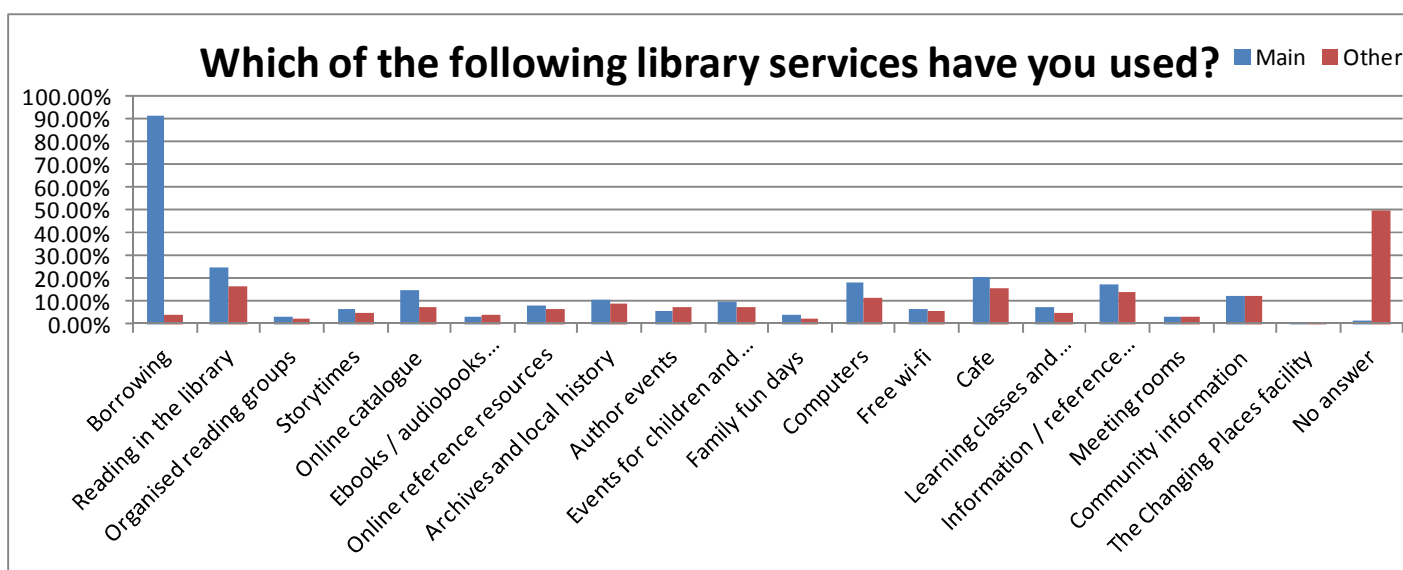
Other libraries with more than 10% of responses were Haxby 13%, Bishopthorpe 12%, Dringhouses 11%, Rowntree Reading cafe 10.5% and online 11%. Of those that made an online response around 29% used online library.



Q3 Services used

We asked adults and online survey respondents what services they used. Borrowing was the most common answer with over 90% listing this as the main service, around 25% mentioned reading, 21% the cafe, 18% using computers, 17% reference materials, 11% archives and local history, 15% using the online catalogue, almost 10% events for families, and 12% for community information.

When asked to list other services used the response were fewer but still highlighted reading in the library, cafe, reference usage, and computer usage and community information.



Q4 What would make people more likely to use library service if they don't currently use.

Over 80% of people did not answer the question. Better range of books and convenient opening hours were the most mentioned but still in quite small numbers, less than 10%

Q5 what types of information would you like to find

Looking at the adults and online responses the four most frequently mentioned were community information 52%, information about books and authors 49%, travel information 42%, learning/education opportunities 40%. Health information was mentioned by 30%, information about the council 26%, tourist information 25% jobs/careers information by 19%, national government services 10%.

Many respondents ticked several of these which indicate how libraries may be able to continue to develop to become more of a community hub in future.

Around 17% of people did not answer the question.

Q5b Linked question where do you get information from

Adults and online respondents highlighted libraries as a place where they get information 76%, Internet 69% - (although less among the over 55 group), local newspapers 58%, other local media 36%, council Publication 35%, Local radio 28%, Council website 28%, social networking sites 11%.

Again people may have responded to more than one option.

As a question on information was also asked in the recent Big York Survey some comparison is discussed later in the report.

Q6. Would any of the following encourage you to borrow more?

Around a quarter made no response. Adults and online views were; lots of copies of bestsellers and prize-winners 34%, staff or public recommendations 33%, easier renewal methods 27%, flexible loan periods 25%, themed displays 20% and no fines 15%.

Q7 Adult learning – what would you like to see

28% made no answer.

Those that answered highlighted: availability of books and other materials to support learning 46%, being able to sign up for courses 40%, specific study space in larger libraries 28%, full range of leisure based courses 28%, space where people can come together to learn from each other 21%, specific areas where you can get a wide range of information 18 %, support for making online applications and web searching 14%, course to help you prepare for work 11%.

Future

Q8 Where would you like to find in library/learning service

The majority of people selected the in current buildings option with 81% doing so. All the other options were far lower, the next most popular was in a community building e.g. community centre 28%. Online was selected by 14%, in building with other public services such as doctors surgeries 11% and In other building that you use such as supermarkets 7%.

This would indicate very strong support for the current buildings but combined with earlier questions would mean there is potential for expanding what is available in libraries. Options of having library services in new locations would need to be tested further to gauge support – for example among those who do not currently use libraries.

Q9 Which would you most like to see in the future (ranking question diff of interpretation)

Many people did not actually rank this and lots several people did not answer. The highest number of answers were to:

- Keeping the library opening hours at current levels - very important 72 %
- Keeping all the current libraries - very important 69%
- Buying more books - very important 55%
- Children's activities - very important 23%
- More weekend opening - very important 24%
- Running more adult education courses - very important 17%
- Providing more computers/other technology - very important 15%
- Having more events in libraries - very important 14%, - not important 25%
- Creating new places to access library services -very important less than 10% with over 30% saying not important
- Improving cafe/refreshment facilities very important less than 10% - with 42% saying - not important

Q10 Willingness to get involved in development of services

Less than 1% reported that they already volunteered and 16% did not answer this question. While only 35% wanted to be involved as a user or customer. 9% would consider serving on a committee to help make major decisions about the future of the services and 24% would attend a meeting at local library to help make decisions on local opening hours, books to be bought or how the community uses the building. In addition 23% would consider volunteering to help with an event, read to children, or deliver books to housebound. A further 9% would join a Friends Group.

This does indicate a core of people who would be interested in getting involved – in some cases in more than one way.

Q10 a How much time would you be prepared to give (check number of answers linked to Q10)

33% did not answer and 21% said not at all.

Answers did not quite tie up with previous question as few highlighted a weekly commitment with only 8% saying they would consider a weekly commitment during the day and 4% a weekly commitment at evening/weekends.

More would consider a monthly commitment or specific times for a one off event both 15%. 19% would consider involvement on an occasional basis.

Q11. Volunteering opportunities

People ticked more than one option sometimes – not clear if they would take up more than one opportunity also 73% of people did not answer this question so it is difficult to gauge how much support is available.

Answers were; helping older people to get online - 7%, helping to archive - 11%, helping to run an event - 8%, reading stories to young children 12%.

Q12 Any roles you'd like to see set up

95% of people did not answer. The few that did, suggested reading to children or elderly or delivering books.

Q13 How could we use library buildings better

70 % gave no answer. Suggestions included range of events, better use by community groups, mother and toddler or children's groups, book clubs, longer opening hours, renting out space.

This suggests people may not be aware of all the events or opportunities offered by current libraries

Q14 Any other services you'd like to see delivered through local library

86% gave no answer. Suggestions included Citizens Advice, council service pay point, local information but all were very small numbers.

Children's Responses

177 responses from children were received, although we need to be cautious due to numbers as not really enough to base any decisions on. In the main children used the library for borrowing 92%, reading in the library 50% and 47% had taken part in the summer reading challenge.

The major factor that would make them use the library more would be a better range of books which just over 50% suggested. Around half did not answer what they'd like to see to help with homework but top answers were History, Maths and Science.

Children said they would like to see more information on books and authors, information on history, travel and buses, jobs and careers but these were small numbers.

64% said they got information from libraries, 73% from the Internet, 30% from newspapers, 20% from social networking, and 15% from Shine. Several answered with more than one response.

They could be encouraged to borrow more with better displays, lots of copies of bestsellers and prizewinning books, being able to return books when you want, no fines.

No enough answered about volunteering to use the information.

Commentary

The survey has had a good response rate with the majority of responses being collected from libraries. There is a possible issue about non-library users and whether they have been involved enough for us to find out why they don't use libraries and what would encourage them to do so.

There are concerns about the low level of equalities data which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about level of use for particular groups. The only group we can draw enough on is age profile of 55+ due to numbers but over a third did not give us and such information so it is difficult to generalise.

Comparison with Big York Survey - Summer 2012.

The survey which had 1117 respondents (equality profiled) asked a question about library usage and found that 20% had never used a public library, 22% had used it within the last year, around 16% within the last month and a similar percentage within the last week.

In asking why people did not use the library the majority of those responding said it was because they did not need the services (57%), other response included opening hours (12%) or lack of transport (13%)

The survey also asked a question on volunteering just over half had done no volunteering in the last year but 16% volunteered at least once a week and 10% at least once a month. The main reasons given were not enough time two thirds or never thought about it 19%.

In terms of how people get information the BYS found that for the 55+ age group less than 4% used social media. Overall one in three people used the council website to find information and three in five used local newspapers. The evidence from library users does suggest that although the 55+ plus group do not use online or internet as much as other groups they are using at a level way above what was suggested by the Big York Survey. As library users they may well be more sophisticated users.

Recommendation - need to get a view from groups that may have not responded/been excluded?

Some people have given us postcodes we could possibly look at these to see which libraries people use which might flag up where people use one of the explore libraries as well as their local library.

We could run any of the questions against the 55+ age profile

In future in order to encourage more people to fill in the equalities questions the sheet need to be attached to the questionnaire in some way as frequently gets lost from the main questionnaire which has reduced our data here.