



LIBRARY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

November 2024

Research and Consultation Team

Executive Summary

1.1 Use of the library service

Two surveys were undertaken:

- **Open survey** with both online and paper options available.
- **Sample survey** of BCP residents, representative by age and sex.
- **9 out of 10 open survey** respondents had used a BCP library in the past 6 months compared to **fewer than half of sample survey** respondents.

Top 3 reasons NOT to use the library: (based on respondents who haven't used the library in the past 2 years)

- Don't need to (**Open survey 32%**, **Sample survey 58%**)
- Don't know what is available (**Open survey 23%**, **Sample survey 17%**)
- Other (**Open survey 29%**, **Sample survey 25%**)
- 'Other' reasons include being able to find information on the internet, preference for e-books, preference to purchase books, changing habits.

1.2 Library users

- **50% open survey** and **73% sample survey** library users access services in person only.
- **48% open survey** and **26% sample survey** library users access services both online and in person
- **2% open survey** and **1% sample survey** library users access services online only.

1.2.1 Top 3 libraries used:

- Bournemouth (**29% open survey**, **28% sample survey**)
- Poole (**28% open survey**, **20% sample survey**)
- Christchurch (**17% open survey**, **16% sample survey**)

1.2.2 Top 3 main libraries (library visited most often)

- Open survey
 - Broadstone **10%**
 - Poole **8%**
 - Christchurch **7%**
- Sample survey
 - Bournemouth **11%**
 - Christchurch **10%**
 - Poole **9%**

- More than three quarters (**77%**) of library users in both surveys because it is closest to their home.
- **93% of open survey** library users and **91% of sample survey** library users are satisfied with their main library

1.2.3 Visiting the library

- **84% of open survey** library users visit their main library at least once a month compared to **45% of sample survey** library users.
- **77% of open survey** library users and **86% of sample survey** library users visit on an ad-hoc basis rather than at regular days / times
- Around two thirds of respondents in both surveys say that they walk to their main library, although more than 4 out of 10 respondents in both surveys use a motor vehicle to travel to the library
- The main reason to visit the library is to borrow / browse books and other items (**93% open survey**, **81% sample survey**)
- Other common reasons to visit include attending activities / events, research, use printers / copiers, use computers, and seeking general information / advice / support

1.2.4 Satisfaction with main library

Library users in both surveys were asked how satisfied they are with various services and facilities at their main library.

The five aspects library users are most satisfied with are:

- Overall condition of library building (**94% open survey**, **92% sample survey**)
- Temperature in the library (**89%** both surveys)
- Printing, scanning and photocopying facilities (**87% open survey**, **82% sample survey**)
- Range and choice of stock (**87% open survey**, **80% sample survey**)
- Noise level (**84% open survey**, **88% sample survey**)

Library users were least satisfied with

- Refreshments (**44% open survey**, **43% sample survey**)
- Secure storage for bikes, scooters, etc. (**50% open survey**, **44% sample survey**)

1.2.5 Activities and events

- In the **open survey**, **54% of library users** had not attended any events in the past 12 months compared to **68% of the sample survey**.
- Open survey respondents were more likely to have attended activities for adults only (**22% open survey**, **5% sample survey**)
- Sample survey respondents were more likely to have attended activities for children only (**18% sample survey**, **13% open survey**)
- Most popular adult activities in the **open survey** are author and other talks (40%), reading groups (34%) and coffee mornings (32%)

- Most popular adult activities in the [sample survey](#) are reading groups (31%), exhibitions (23%) and author talks (18%)
- Most popular children's activities in the [open survey](#) are school holiday activities (54%), Wriggle & Rhyme (45%) and crafts (34%)
- Most popular children's activities in the [sample survey](#) are Wriggle & Rhyme (54%), school holiday activities (36%) and Toddler Time (29%)
- Library users in both surveys are more likely to borrow print books than any other items.
- Print fiction is the most popular ([76% open survey](#), [54% sample survey](#)), followed by non-fiction for pleasure ([55% open survey](#), [32% sample survey](#)) and non-fiction for research / guidance ([47% open survey](#), [29% sample survey](#))
- Most library users had not borrowed any items online ([71% open survey](#), [88% sample survey](#)). E-books and e-audio books are the most commonly borrowed online items
- [81% of open survey](#) respondents prefer paper books to e-books, compared to [70% of sample survey](#) respondents

1.3 All respondents

1.3.1 Importance of the library service

All respondents were asked how important the library service is to themselves, their family and their community.

- [94% of open survey](#) respondents said that it was very important (81%) or quite important (13%) to them
- [51% of sample survey](#) respondents said that it was very important (31%) or quite important (20%) to them
- [80% of open survey](#) respondents said that it was very important (62%) or quite important (18%) to their family
- [55% of sample survey](#) respondents said that it was very important (31%) or quite important (24%) to their family
- [88% of open survey](#) respondents said that it was very important (80%) or quite important (8%) to their community
- [79% of sample survey](#) respondents said that it was very important (56%) or quite important (23%) to their community

Respondents were asked to describe in their own words what impact the library service has had on them.

- Libraries are **community hubs** providing space for clubs and activities as well as being a source of information about groups and services in the community.
- Libraries provide **access to a wide range of resources**, alleviating the financial burden for low-income families, students and the elderly.

- Libraries significantly **enhance quality of life and wellbeing** by offering entertainment, quiet spaces for relaxation, and social opportunities that help to reduce isolation.
- Libraries are appreciated for **family and children’s activities**; they are seen as a clean and friendly place for families to enjoy time together and for children to explore books and participate in activities.
- Many see the library as a **valuable educational resource**, providing access to a wide range of books and information for all ages.
- A small number of respondents were less positive, seeing libraries as **outdated or unnecessary**, with some citing negative experiences such as noise and disruptions from activities.

All respondents were asked what would encourage them to use the library more in the future. The top three answers were:

- Improved range and choice of physical stock (**54% open survey**, **30% sample survey**)
- A café or refreshments in the library (**44% open survey**, **41% sample survey**)
- Activities or events (**35% open survey**, **28% sample survey**)
- **19% of sample survey** respondents said nothing would encourage them to use the library (**3% open survey**)
- There was a high number of ‘other’ responses to this question. The main themes identified were:
 - Improve the facilities and amenities of the library
 - Increase the variety and availability of the library stock
 - Expand the opening hours and days of the library
 - Promote and advertise the library services and events
 - Organise more activities and events
 - Enhance the online services and platforms
 - Collaborate with other local organisations and agencies
 - Make the library more inclusive and accessible
 - Maintain or restore the existing services and staff

1.3.2 Future library service

- **92% open survey** respondents and **55% sample survey** respondents said that they would use / continue to use the library service if libraries were open at a convenient time.

We asked respondents for their preferred opening times / days for libraries.

- **76% open survey** respondents and **64% sample survey** respondents selected times on both weekdays (Mon-Fri) and weekends.
- **21% open survey** respondents and **27% sample survey** respondents selected times on weekdays only
- **3% open survey** respondents and **9% sample survey** respondents selected times on weekends only

- Each individual weekday (Mon – Fri) was selected by a similar number of respondents: between 86% - 89% of open survey respondents and 79% - 82% of sample survey respondents.
- Saturdays were chosen by slightly fewer respondents (78% open survey, 71% sample survey) while Sundays were a considerably less popular choice (33% open survey, 51% sample survey)
- On weekdays, open survey respondents have a strong preference for morning and afternoon time slots while sample survey respondents are slightly more likely to choose the evening time slot than morning or afternoon.
- On Saturdays, mornings are preferred by 63% open survey respondents and 40% sample survey respondents. Afternoons are slightly less popular: 47% open survey respondents and 38% sample survey respondents
- Sundays are less popular than other days with preference spread fairly evenly throughout the day.

1.3.3 Future focus

All respondents were asked what they thought the future focus of the library service should be.

- The three most popular choices were selected by more than half of respondents in both surveys. These were:
 - Promoting reading for pleasure (85% open survey, 72% sample survey)
 - Supporting children to develop reading and social skills (81% open survey, 89% sample survey)
 - Supporting literacy (72% open survey, 70% sample survey)

1.3.4 Managing costs

All respondents were asked if they support or oppose certain approaches that could be taken by the library service to manage costs

- On balance, respondents in both surveys were more positive about:
 - using volunteers to extend hours
 - using volunteers to run events
 - relocating other facilities / council services into library buildings
- Respondents in both surveys, on balance, were more negative about:
 - reducing the amount of money spent on books
 - relocating libraries into other community buildings
 - reducing the number of libraries based on user numbers
 - reducing the number of libraries based on transport options to other libraries
- Respondents in the open survey were negative about using technology for unstaffed opening (sample survey was neutral) and about moving library services from costly buildings (sample survey was positive)

We asked which other services respondents would find useful if located in library buildings.

- Both surveys showed strong support for Citizens Advice (**67% open survey**, **62% sample survey**).
- The **open survey** showed little support for other services, with the next highest being Adult Health & Social Care (43%)
- More than half of **sample survey** respondents selected Adult Health and Social Care (52%) and Children's Education and Social Care (55%), and almost half selected Employment, skills and training support (49%)

We also asked what types of venues might be acceptable if we were to relocate library services

- Both surveys chose empty shop units (**50% open survey**, **57% sample survey**) and community centres (**48% open survey**, **56% sample survey**) as their top choices.
- The sample survey showed more support for all of the suggestions compared to the open survey.

Respondents were asked to describe in their own words what their ideal library service would be like.

The main themes from the **open survey** were:

- **Satisfaction with the current service**
- **Community provision and support** – supporting vulnerable groups, providing space for activities, reducing isolation and potentially providing space for other support services
- **Library environment** – libraries should be welcoming, spacious and well organised, while remaining quiet spaces for relaxation
- **Accessibility** - in terms of location and opening hours
- **Collection and resources** – provide up-to-date and diverse collections, both in paper and digital format
- **Facilities** - such as cafes, study areas, up-to-date IT equipment, and comfortable reading spaces. Respondents also want meeting rooms, dedicated event, activity and exhibition spaces, as well as essential amenities such as toilets and baby changing facilities
- **Staff and support** - knowledgeable and friendly staff. Adequate staffing levels and the use of volunteers who support qualified, paid library staff with the provision of activities
- **Promotion and outreach** - better promotion of library services and outreach activities to increase community engagement and support literacy

The main themes from the **sample survey** were similar:

- **Community and Social Hub** - a point of contact for community groups and volunteering opportunities, providing a friendly and warm space for people to engage with the community
- **Access to Information and Resources** – importance of maintaining access to a wide range of books and information

- **Support for Education and Personal Development** – a life-long resource for learning and enhancing skills
- **Child Development and Family Activities** - activities like Wriggle and Rhyme to encourage reading from a young age as well as offering a safe and social environment for babies and new parents.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing** - a place of peace and calm, improving health and wellbeing for its visitors.

Respondents were asked for examples of good libraries they had visited and what they liked about them. The themes emerging from both surveys were very similar.

A good range of up-to date stock, interesting architecture, good layout, refreshments, comfortable seating and a wide variety of events for adults and children are the most common themes.

Contents

Executive Summary	ii
1 Introduction and background.....	1
1.1 Methodology	1
2 Analysis and results	2
2.1 Current library use	2
2.2 Main library	8
2.2.1 Visiting the library	11
2.2.2 Travel to Libraries	13
2.2.3 Reasons for using the library	16
2.2.4 Satisfaction with library services	18
2.3 Activities and events	21
2.4 Stock and resources	23
2.5 Importance of the library service	25
2.6 Future library service	32
2.6.1 Future focus.....	35
2.6.2 Future choices	36
2.6.3 Ideal library service	41
2.6.4 Examples of good libraries.....	43

2 Introduction and background

In 2024 BCP Council began to develop a strategy for the future of its Library Service. The new strategy seeks to meet the needs of current and future library users as well as managing costs to remain financially sustainable.

To inform the development of this strategy, a consultation exercise was carried out, to establish the needs of library users and non-users and to better understand what changes, if any, could be considered to help manage costs.

2.1 Methodology

Open survey

Library users and non-users were asked to complete a survey online or a paper version about their current use/non-use of the library service, their views on the service and what they would like to see in the future.

The engagement was open for six weeks from **Tuesday 7 May to Tuesday 18 June 2024**. A total of **2710 responses** were received (714 paper copies and 1996 online submissions).

The survey was promoted in libraries, social media, e newsletters, engagement hq newsletter, stakeholder register, press release and through councillors.

Sample Survey

We decided to conduct a sample survey as we knew it would be difficult to reach people who currently don't use the library service and wanted to gather the views of a representative sample of residents. We asked a research company to carry out the fieldwork on our behalf. We used a 'drop and collect' method. This method uses teams of trained staff who call on residents' door-to-door and ask for help with the survey. The member of staff gives the resident the questionnaire, offers support to complete it, and stays with the respondent where this is needed, but otherwise moves on and then returns to collect the completed questionnaire later. This allows those, for example, with sight loss or lower literacy to be supported to engage with the survey.

A stratified random sample of lower super output areas was used to select fieldwork points for the survey. The sample of LSOAs was stratified by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This means the survey will have good geographical coverage and include residents from the more deprived area of BCP. 11% of LSOAs in BCP are in the most deprived 20% of LSOAs and this approach ensures residents from these areas are included. Using quotas the sample was also representative by age group and sex, and we ensured every ward had some surveys undertaken in it. In total we received a **sample of 1068**. The data was weighted by sex and age group.

The open survey provides a good indication as to current library users needs and desires for a library service whilst the sample survey provides a good indication of all residents' needs and desires for the library service.

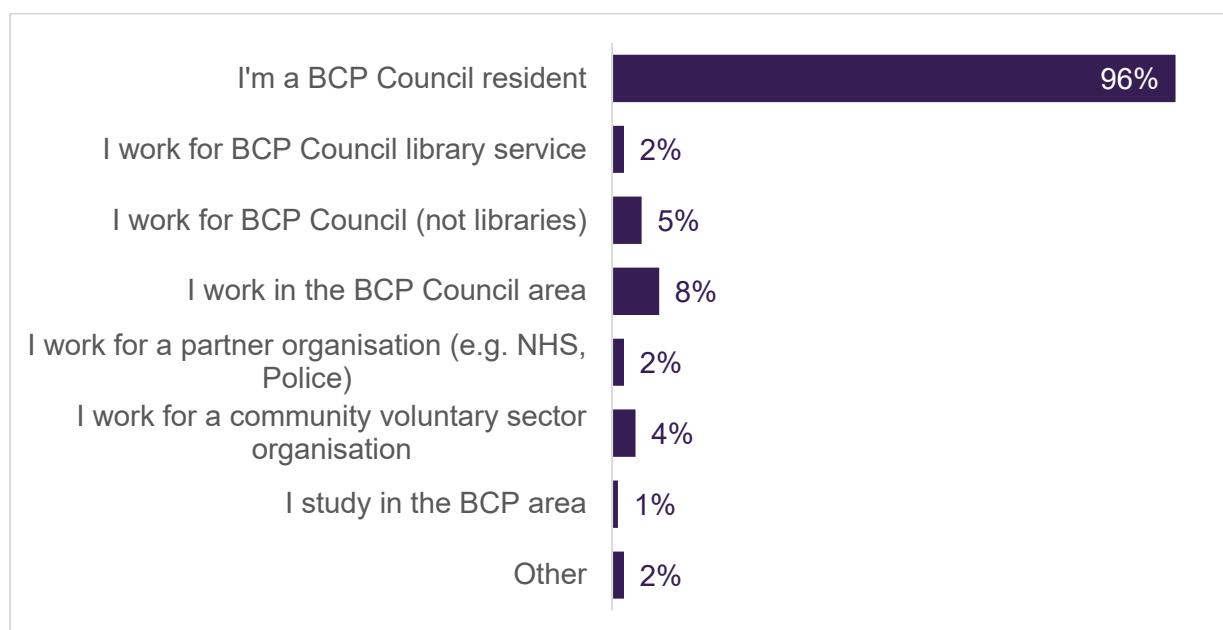
3 Analysis and results

The following analysis compares the results from the open survey and the sample survey, where the same questions were used.

The open survey began with a question to determine the respondents' link to the area. Most respondents are residents of the BCP area with a much smaller percentage saying that they work, volunteer or study in the BCP area. Respondents could select more than one option.

This question was not included in the sample survey, as all of the respondents were residents of the BCP area.

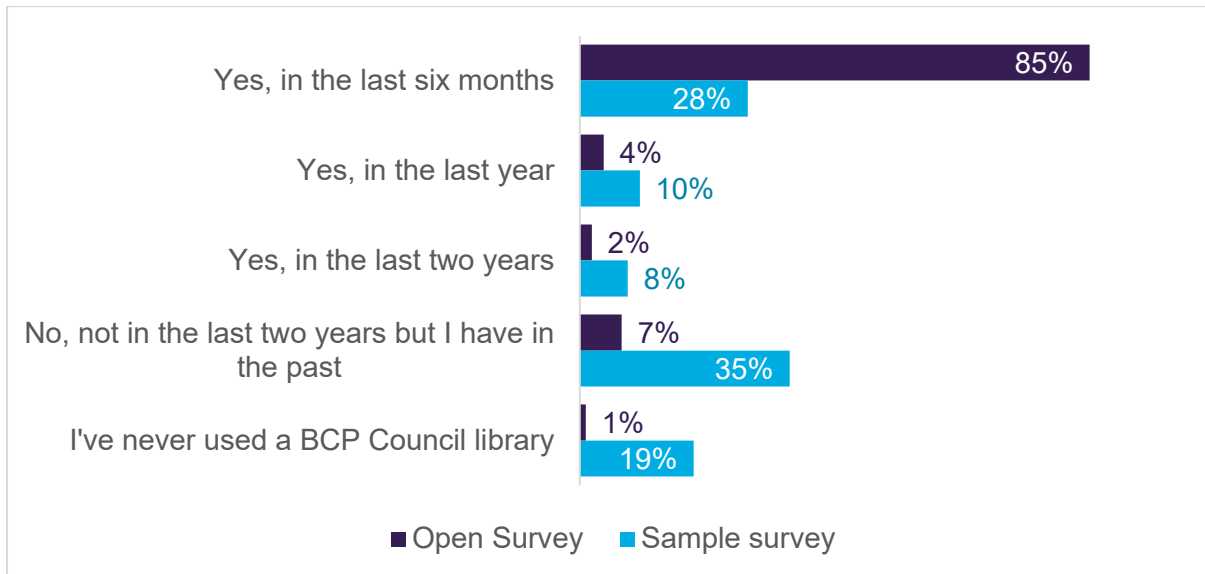
Figure 1: Respondent type



3.1 Current library use

The first section of both surveys asked about respondents' current use of the library service.

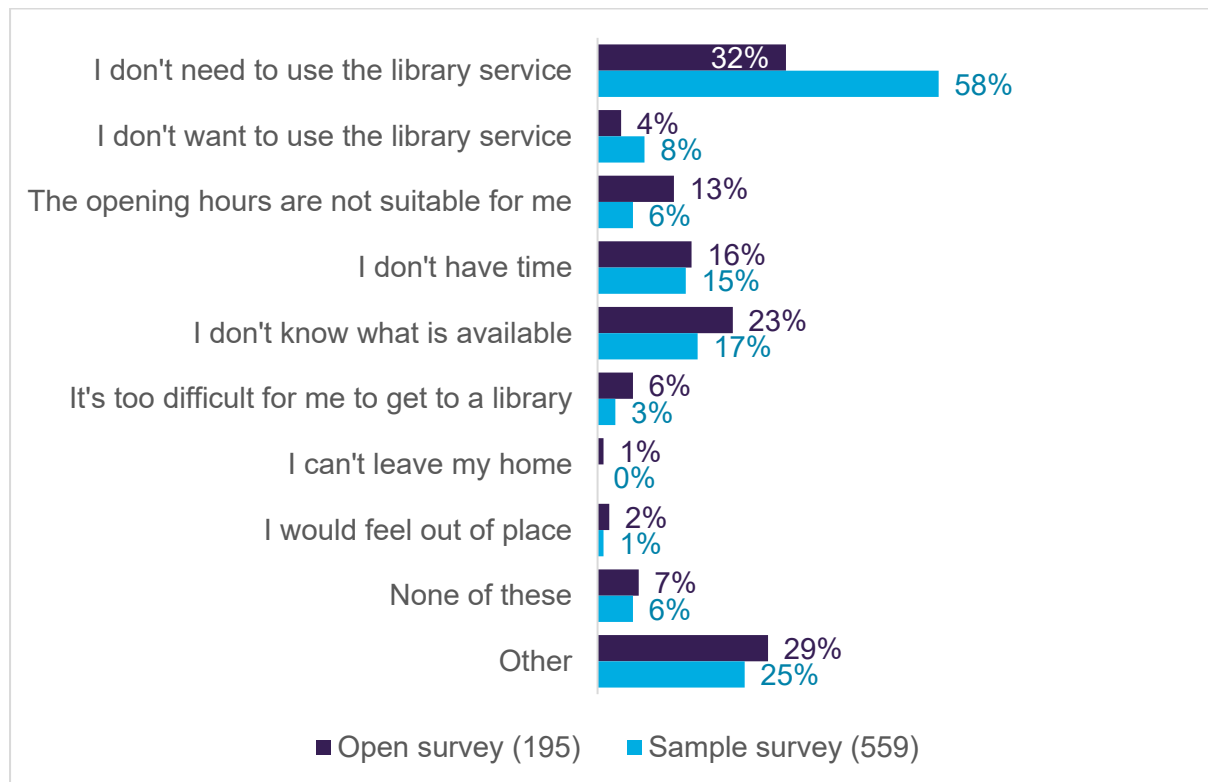
Figure 2: Have you used any of BCP Council's library services, either in person or online?



The open survey was of great interest to regular library users, and this is clearly shown in the chart above where 85% of respondents to the open survey said that they have used a BCP library in the past six months, compared to only 28% of the sample survey respondents. In total, more than nine out of ten open survey respondents (91%) had used a BCP library in the past two years.

The sample survey used a random sample of BCP residents and is therefore more likely to represent the area's population, rather than those that have a particular interest in libraries. More than half (54%) of the sample survey respondents had not used a BCP library in the past two years or at all.

Figure 3: Why do you not use the library service?



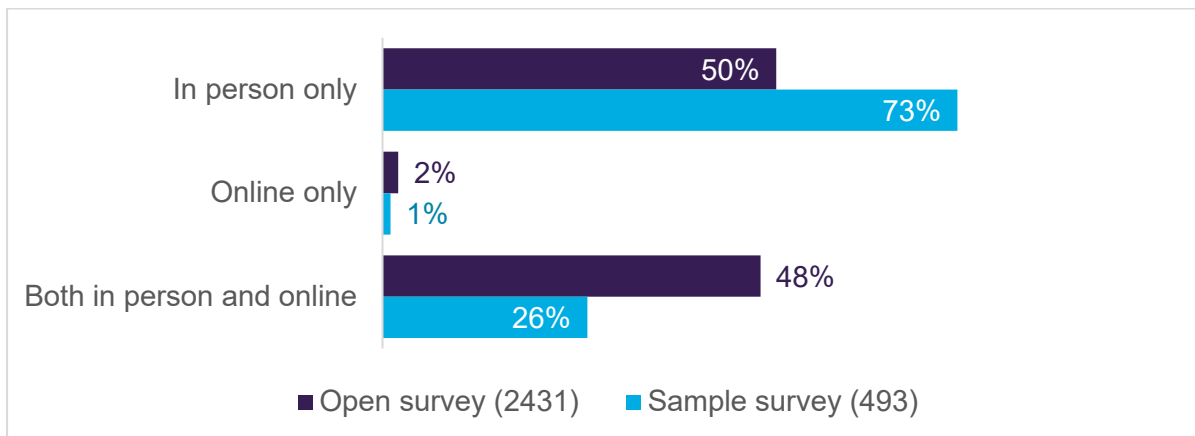
Respondents who had not used a BCP Library in the past two years were asked why not.

Although the percentages differ for some of the options, in both surveys the most common reason for not using a library is that the respondents don't need to. This reason was cited by 32% of respondents in the open survey and 58% in the sample survey. This equates to 30% of all respondents in the sample survey which is representative of the wider BCP population. Lack of knowledge of what is available, and lack of time are the next most common responses for both surveys.

'Other' reasons given include use of the internet or e-books, changed habits (several commented that they got out of the habit during covid lockdowns or that they used to go when children were younger), prefer to buy own books (several prefer to buy from charity shops and donate back) and dissatisfaction with aspects of the library service, particularly range & quality of stock and complication of using online services.

Respondents who said that they have used the BCP library service in the past two years were asked how they access library services.

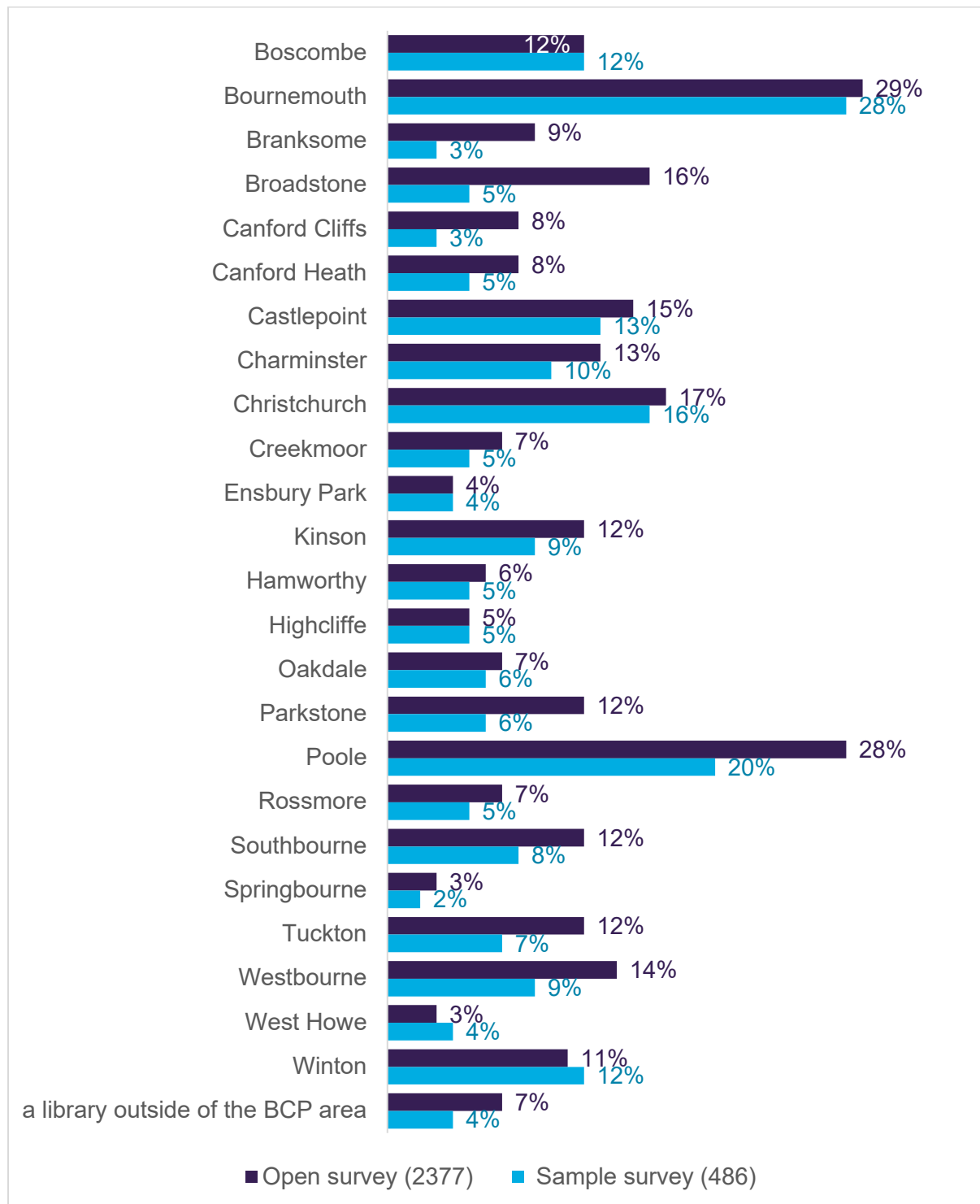
Figure 4: Do you visit the library in person, access library services online, or both?



Respondents in the open survey were quite evenly split between in person only (50%) and a mix of in person and online (48%). Only 2% accessed library services online only. While a similarly small number of sample survey respondents (1%) use online library services only, nearly three quarters (73%) used libraries in person only while 26% use a mix of in person and online.

Respondents were asked which libraries they use and were able to select all those that they have used in the past two years.

Figure 5: Which library / libraries have you used in the last 2 years?



Almost all libraries had a higher percentage of users in the open survey compared to the sample survey, suggesting that open survey respondents were more likely to have selected multiple libraries.

Although the percentages differ between the two surveys, the pattern is similar, with Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch libraries making up the top three across both surveys.

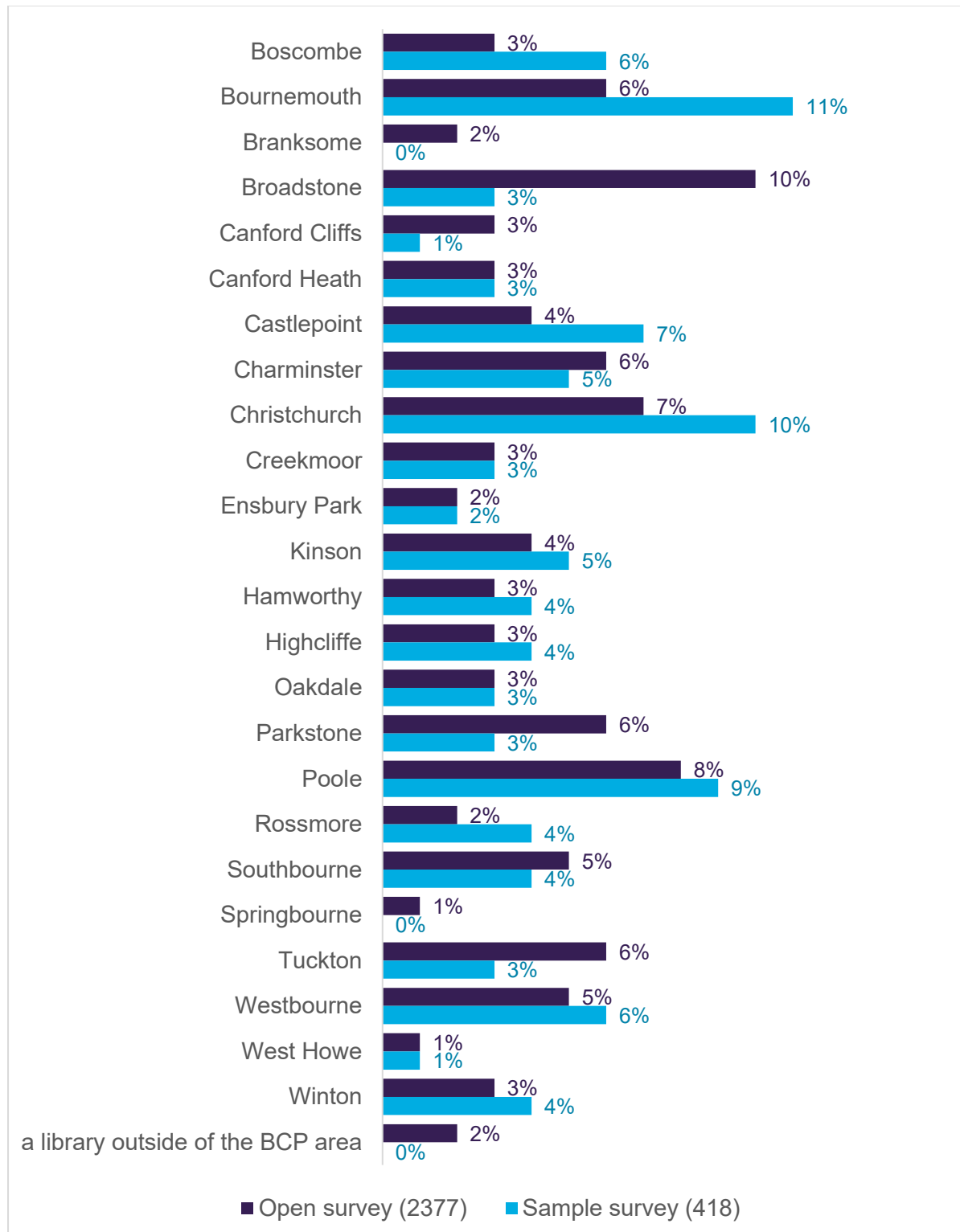
Figure 6: Which library / libraries have you used (top 10)

Open survey		Sample survey	
Bournemouth	29%	Bournemouth	28%
Poole	28%	Poole	20%
Christchurch	17%	Christchurch	16%
Broadstone	16%	Castlepoint	13%
Castlepoint	15%	Winton	12%
Westbourne	14%	Boscombe	12%
Charminster	13%	Charminster	10%
Southbourne	12%	Westbourne	9%
Boscombe	12%	Kinson	9%
Tuckton	12%	Southbourne	8%

Respondents were then asked, of the libraries selected, which one they visit most often. Several of the following questions relate to users' experiences at this library which throughout the report will be referred to as the main library.

3.2 Main library

Figure 7: Of those you use, which library do you visit most often?



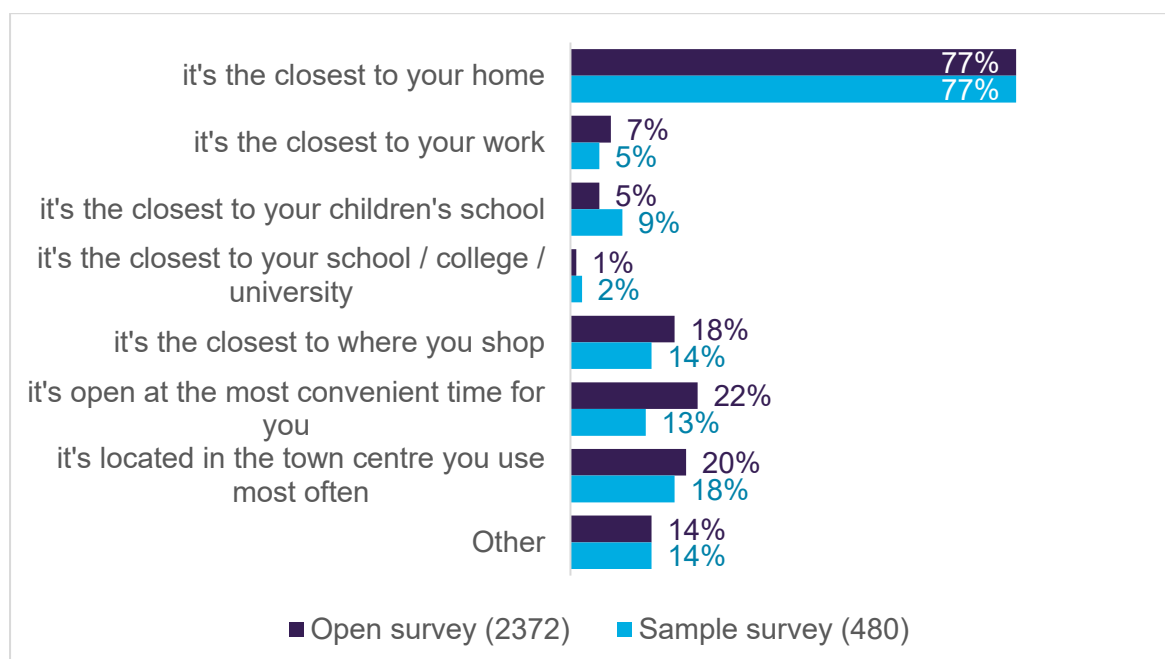
Choosing just one library gives a more even distribution across each of the surveys with no single library chosen by more than 10% of respondents. While the three town centre libraries in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole still have the largest share of respondents in the sample survey, the open survey shows Broadstone as having the largest share of open survey respondents with Bournemouth library in fourth place.

Figure 8: Which library do you visit most often? (Top 10)

Open survey		Sample survey	
Broadstone	10%	Bournemouth	11%
Poole	8%	Christchurch	10%
Christchurch	7%	Poole	9%
Bournemouth	6%	Castlepoint	7%
Charminster	6%	Westbourne	6%
Parkstone	6%	Boscombe	6%
Tuckton	6%	Charminster	5%
Westbourne	5%	Kinson	5%
Southbourne	5%	Highcliffe	4%
Kinson	4%	Hamworthy	4%

Thinking about their main library, respondents were asked why they visit that library most often.

Figure 9: Thinking again about [your main] library, is the reason you use that library the most because:

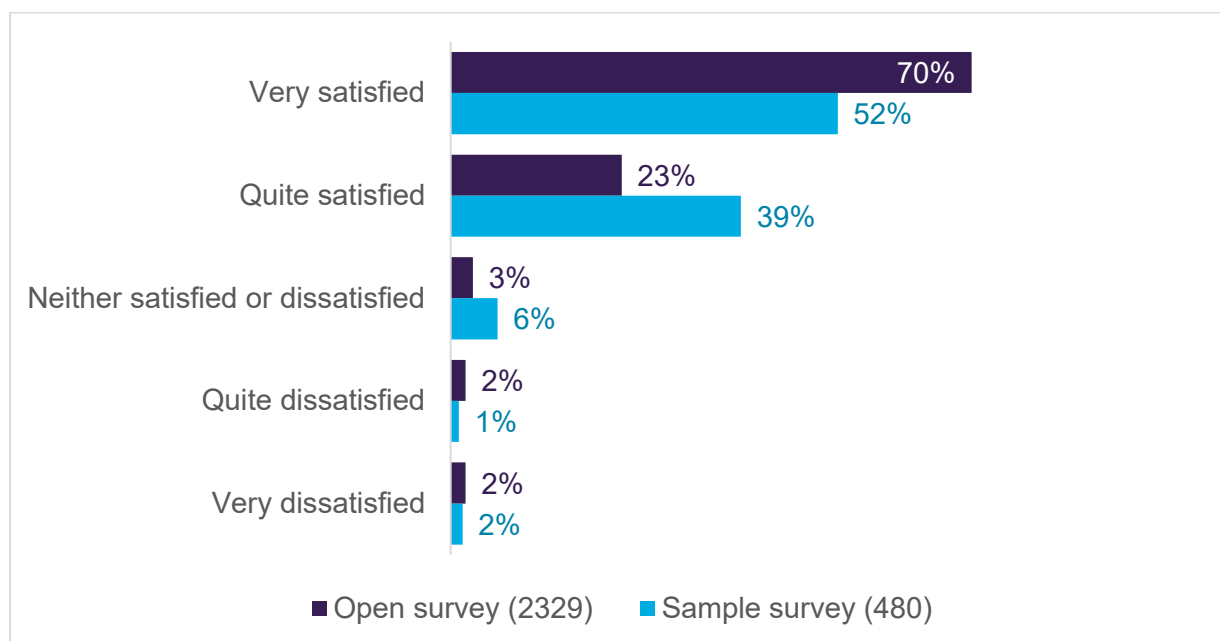


Both surveys produced similar results for this question, with by far the most respondents (77% of both surveys) saying that their main library is the closest to their home.

While a range of 'other' reasons were given, five broad themes emerged:¹

- **Accessibility:** Many statements mention the ease of parking and the library's proximity as significant factors for their frequent visits. This includes references to free parking, easy parking, and being close to home or other locations like a playground, family member's home or gym.
- **Children's Services:** A notable number of statements highlight the quality and availability of children's groups, activities, and play areas as reasons for choosing the library. This encompasses baby playgroups, children's areas, and specific sessions like Wriggle and Rhyme.
- **Facilities and Services:** Respondents appreciate the library for its facilities and services, including a good selection of books, helpful staff, study spaces, and other available services.
- **Community and Social Aspects:** Some statements reflect the social aspect of the library, where people go to meet friends, attend groups like book clubs or Knit and Natter, or interact with politicians and council members.
- **Atmosphere and Experience:** The library's atmosphere and overall experience are also mentioned, with terms like "lovely," "super space," "beautiful building," and "pleasure to visit" indicating a positive environment.

Figure 10: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [your main] library?



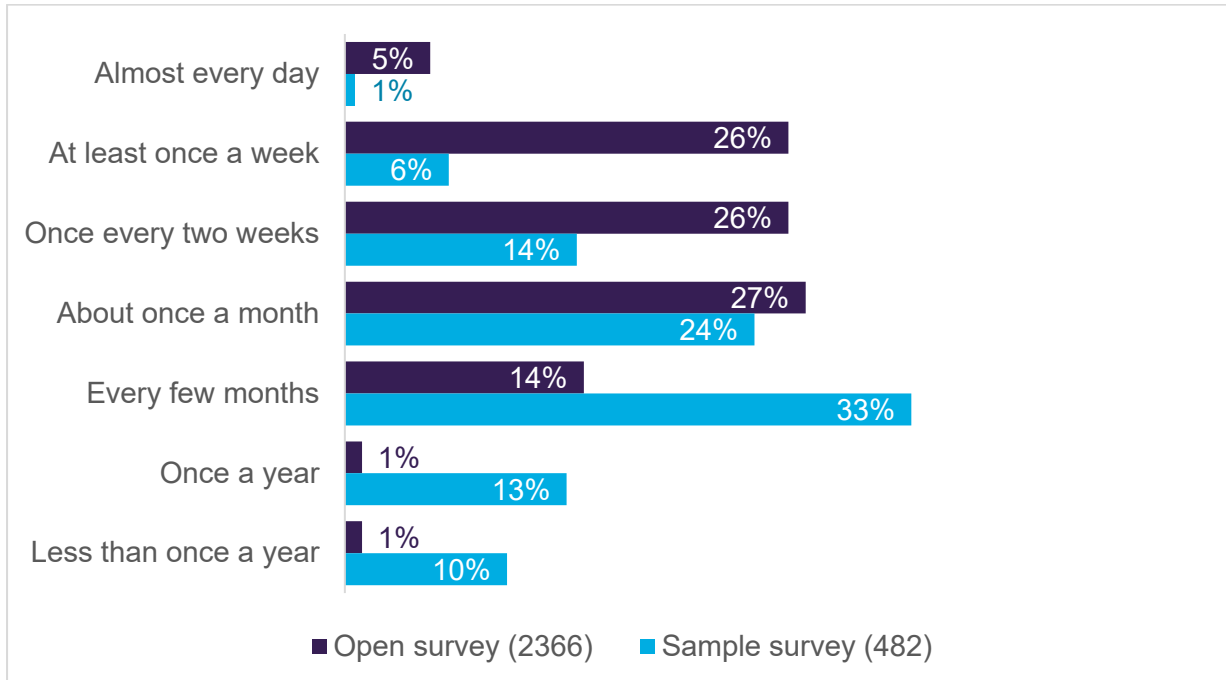
Respondents in the open survey were more strongly satisfied with their main library than those in the sample survey with 70% of open survey respondents saying that they are very satisfied compared to 52% in the sample survey. Overall, 93% of open

¹ Comments from both surveys were combined and themes identified using AI

survey respondents and 91% of open survey respondents are satisfied with their main library.

3.2.1 Visiting the library

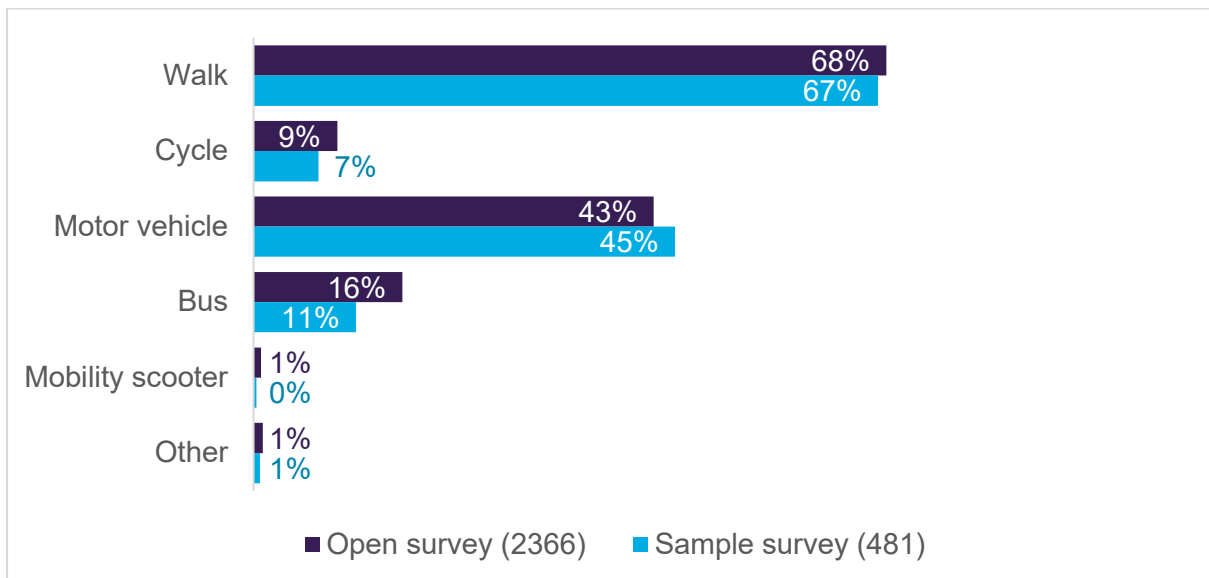
Figure 11: On average, how often do you visit [your main] library?



Open survey respondents were more frequent library visitors than sample survey respondents. In total, 84% of open survey respondents visit their main library at least once a month compared to 45% of sample survey respondents.

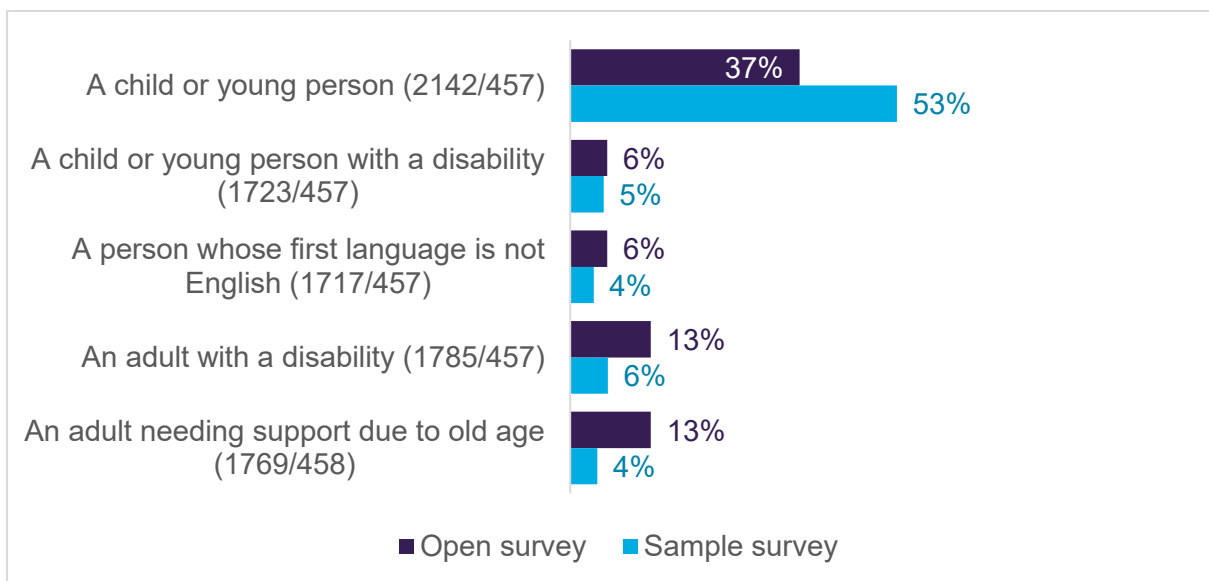
Respondents in both surveys were more likely to visit the library on an ad-hoc basis rather than on specific days / times, with 77% of open survey respondents and 86% of sample survey respondents visiting ad-hoc.

Figure 12: How do you travel to [your main] library?



Around two thirds of respondents in both surveys say that they walk to their main library, although more than 4 out of 10 respondents in both surveys use a motor vehicle to travel to the library.

Figure 13: Have you visited the library with...



Bases shown in brackets (Open survey / Sample survey)

Respondents in the sample survey are more likely to have visited the library with a child or young person while the open survey respondents were more likely to have visited with an adult with a disability or an adult needing support due to old age. This is probably reflective of the older age profile of open survey respondents.

3.2.2 Travel to Libraries

Respondents were asked which was their main library and their method of travel to their main library. Using mapping software (QGIS) and postcodes provided by respondents it was possible to map residents by their main library. These maps are available in the appendix. It was also possible to look at which libraries were used by ward respondents as well as which wards respondents lived in compared with the main library used. as well It was also possible to calculate travel times by mode of transport from the postcode centroid as a proxy for a home address to the main library used.

In most cases the library used is the nearest local library with the other popular libraries being neighbouring libraries or one of the larger libraries of Bournemouth Central, Christchurch and Poole.

Figure 14: The three most popular main libraries used by respondents by ward

Top three main libraries visited by the ward of the respondent							
Ward	Number of respondents by ward	Most Popular		Second		Third	
Alderney & Bourne Valley	62	Rossmore	37%	Poole	13%	Branksome	11%
Bearwood & Merley	45	Broadstone	36%	Kinson	33%	a library outside of the BCP area	13%
Boscombe East & Pokesdown	57	Southbourne	54%	Boscombe	33%	Bournemouth	7%
Boscombe West	36	Boscombe	78%	Bournemouth	14%	Southbourne	6%
Bournemouth Central	40	Bournemouth	70%	Boscombe	8%	Charminster	8%
Broadstone	149	Broadstone	93%	Canford Heath	2%	Poole	2%
Burton & Grange	20	Christchurch	100%				
Canford Cliffs	76	Canford Cliffs	45%	Westbourne	32%	Parkstone	11%
Canford Heath	64	Canford Heath	70%	Broadstone	20%	Bournemouth & Oakdale (each)	3%
Christchurch Town	46	Christchurch	91%	Tuckton	4%	Bournemouth & Castlepoint	2%
Commons	30	Christchurch	87%	Tuckton	7%	Castlepoint & Southbourne (each)	3%
Creekmoor	72	Creekmoor	58%	Broadstone	35%	Poole	4%
East Cliff & Springbourne	43	Bournemouth	35%	Springbourne	26%	Boscombe	16%
East Southbourne & Tuckton	130	Tuckton	80%	Christchurch	12%	Southbourne	5%
Hamworthy	73	Hamworthy	81%	Poole	12%	a library outside of the BCP area, Branksome, Canford Heath, Creekmoor & Rossmore	1%
Highcliffe & Walkford	56	Highcliffe	89%	Christchurch	11%		
Kinson	59	Kinson	61%	West Howe	17%	Bournemouth	8%
Littledown & Iford	49	Southbourne	39%	Castlepoint	27%	Tuckton	16%
Moordown	60	Charminster	47%	Winton	30%	Castlepoint	12%

Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe	49	Christchurch	69%	Highcliffe	29%	Poole	2%
Muscliff & Strouden Park	67	Castlepoint	58%	Charminster	22%	Kinson	6%
Newtown & Heatherlands	74	Rossmore	28%	Branksome	22%	Poole	19%
Oakdale	79	Oakdale	58%	Poole	16%	Canford Heath	14%
Parkstone	104	Parkstone	71%	Poole	18%	Oakdale & Rossmore (each)	2%
Penn Hill	78	Parkstone	32%	Branksome	21%	Canford Cliffs & Poole (each)	15%
Poole Town	78	Poole	76%	Oakdale	8%	Parkstone	8%
Queen's Park	81	Charminster	70%	Castlepoint	11%	Springbourne	9%
Redhill & Northbourne	44	Ensbury Park	36%	Kinson	30%	Castlepoint	9%
Talbot & Branksome Woods	58	Westbourne	40%	Bournemouth	22%	Winton	19%
Wallisdown & Winton West	61	Winton	36%	Ensbury Park	31%	Kinson	8%
West Southbourne	61	Southbourne	64%	Tuckton	15%	Christchurch	13%
Westbourne & West Cliff	63	Westbourne	73%	Bournemouth	22%	Poole	3%
Winton East	34	Charminster	47%	Winton	38%	Ensbury Park, Kinson, Southbourne, Springbourne, Westbourne (each)	3%

Figure 15: Main libraries visited by the main three wards

Main Libraries by top three wards							
Library	Total number of respondents with mapped postcodes in BCP	Ward One		Ward Two		Ward Three	
Boscombe	75	Boscombe West	37%	Boscombe East & Pokesdown	25%	East Cliff & Springbourne & Littledown & Iford (each)	9%
Bournemouth	126	Bournemouth Central	22%	East Cliff & Springbourne	12%	Westbourne & West Cliff	11%
Branksome	44	Newtown & Heatherlands	36%	Penn Hill	36%	Aldnerney & Bourne Valley	16%
Broadstone	202	Broadstone	69%	Creekmoor	12%	Bearwood & Merley	8%
Canford Cliffs	59	Canford Cliffs	58%	Penn Hill	20%	Poole Town	7%
Canford Heath	65	Canford Heath	69%	Oakdale	17%	Broadstone	5%
Castlepoint	83	Muscliff & Strouden Park	47%	Littledown & Iford	16%	Queen's Park	11%
Charminster	132	Queen's Park	43%	Moordown	21%	Winton East	12%
Christchurch	155	Christchurch Town	27%	Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe	22%	Commons	17%
Creekmoor	52	Creekmoor	81%	Oakdale	6%	Hamworthy	2%
Ensbury Park	37	Wallisdown & Winton West	51%	Redhill & Northbourne	43%	Kinson & Winton East (each)	3%
Hamworthy	61	Hamworthy	97%	Oakdale	2%	Poole Town	2%

Highcliffe	64	Highcliffe & Walkford	78%	Mudeford, Stanpit & West Highcliffe	22%		
Kinson	83	Kinson	43%	Bearwood & Merley	18%	Redhill & Northbourne	16%
Oakdale	64	Oakdale	72%	Newtown & Heatherlands	11%	Poole Town	9%
Parkstone	123	Parkstone	60%	Penn Hill	20%	Canford Cliffs	7%
Poole	154	Poole Town	38%	Parkstone	12%	Newtown & Heatherlands	9%
Rossmore	51	Alderney & Bourne Valley	45%	Newtown & Heatherlands	41%	Parkstone & Talbot & Branksome Woods (each)	4%
Southbourne	110	West Southbourne	35%	Boscombe East & Pokesdown	28%	Littledown & Iford	17%
Springbourne	20	East Cliff & Springbourne	55%	Queen's Park	35%	Muscliff & Strouden Park & Winton East (each)	5%
Tuckton	126	East Southbourne & Tuckton	83%	West Southbourne	7%	Littledown & Iford	6%
West Howe	16	Kinson	63%	Wallsdown & Winton West	25%	Bearwood & Merley & Redhill & Northbourne (each)	6%
Westbourne	115	Westbourne & West Cliff	40%	Canford Cliffs	21%	Talbot & Branksome Woods	20%
Winton	70	Wallisdown & Winton West	31%	Moordown	26%	Winton East	19%

The table below has average travel time of the respondents who provided a postcode by the mode of transport to their main library. As might be expected those who drove to their main library generally travelled a longer distance than those walking. Most driving trips are over a mile with trips to the main libraries of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole generally generating a longer trip than other libraries. Those driving to Ensbury Park recorded the shortest average distance travelled of 0.7 miles with the average distance travelled by car to Bournemouth library recording the longest average distance travelled of 3.8 miles. For those who said they walked to their main library the average distance walked was less than a mile. The exceptions were the larger libraries of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole where the average distance walked was just over a mile. Those travelling to Castlepoint also on average walked a mile. Travel walking times were less than 15 minutes to most libraries with four libraries with average walking times of between a quarter of an hour and 20 minutes. The larger libraries had walking times of between 20 and 25 minutes.

Figure 16: Average travel times by mode of transport to libraries

Library	Walking			Driving		
	Minutes	Miles	Number of respondents plotted	Minutes	Miles	Number of respondents plotted
Boscombe	11.8	0.6	60	5.8	1.7	23
Bournemouth	23.1	1.2	72	11.0	3.8	39
Branksome	10.9	0.6	35	6.3	2.1	17
Broadstone	16.5	0.9	154	6.2	1.8	104
Canford Cliffs	17.6	0.9	33	6.5	2.4	36
Canford Heath	14.0	0.7	46	5.3	1.5	35
Castlepoint	19.8	1.0	46	7.5	2.4	45

Charminster	10.7	0.6	93	3.3	1.1	72
Christchurch	21.2	1.1	72	6.4	2.3	91
Creekmoor	14.8	0.8	40	5.0	1.4	24
Ensbury Park	7.9	0.4	32	2.5	0.7	12
Hamworthy	14.4	0.7	56	4.9	1.1	26
Highcliffe	14.3	0.7	47	4.9	1.5	26
Kinson	13.6	0.7	32	4.9	1.7	62
Oakdale	9.3	0.5	48	3.2	1.0	26
Parkstone	11.8	0.6	100	4.5	1.4	36
Poole	23.6	1.2	92	10.7	3.7	49
Rossmore	17.6	0.9	31	5.2	1.4	28
Southbourne	14.7	0.8	91	7.6	2.4	25
Springbourne	8.2	0.4	18	4.3	1.3	4
Tuckton	10.4	0.5	101	3.6	1.0	51
West Howe	13.1	0.7	11	3.1	0.9	10
Westbourne	12.7	0.7	88	6.8	2.2	32
Winton	12.7	0.7	62	3.5	1.1	14

Figure 17: Number of different libraries visited in the last two years

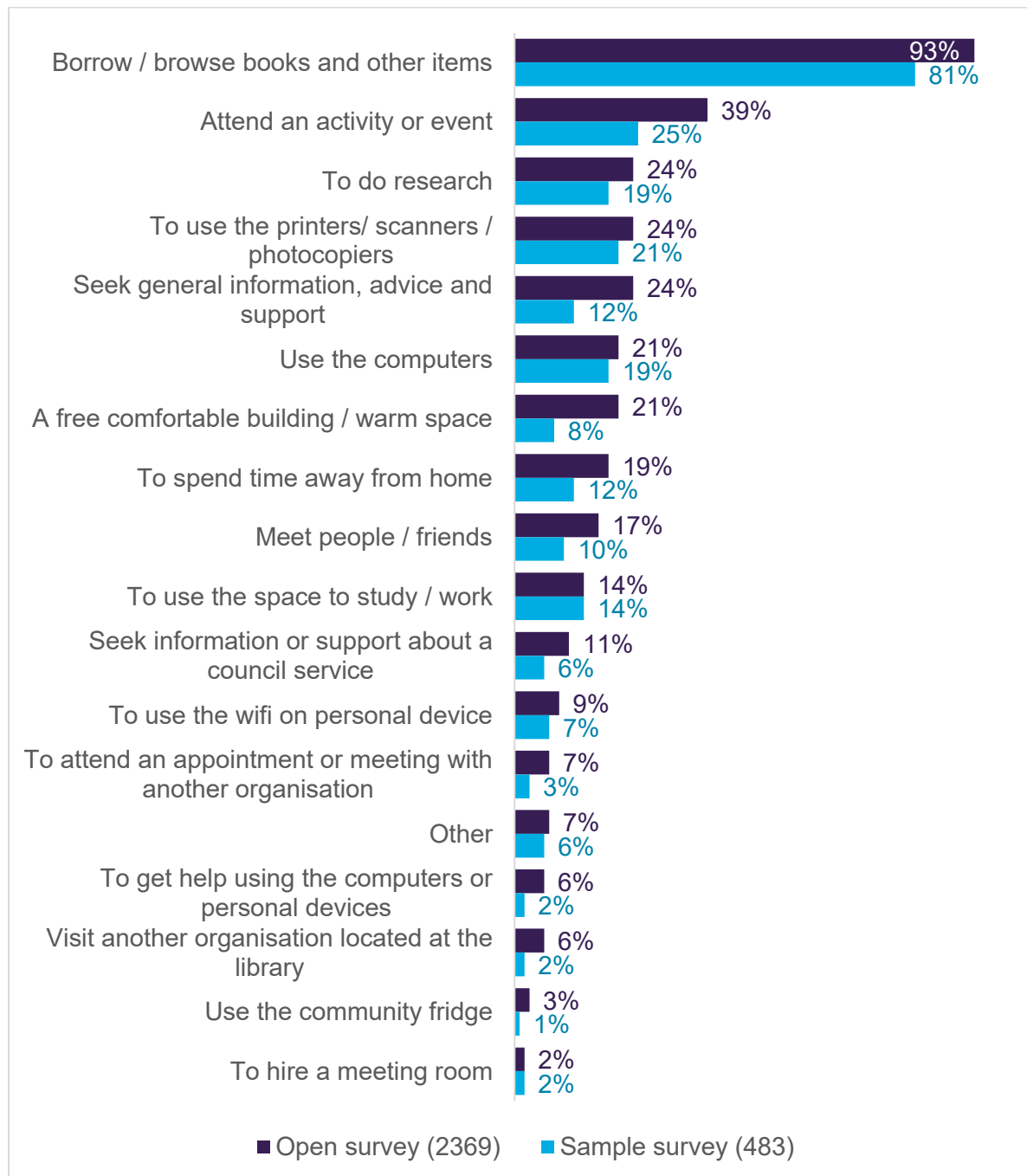
Number of different libraries visited in the last two years	
Number of visits to different libraries	Percentage of respondents
1	31.6
2	26.7
3	16.1
4	10.1
5	5.5
6-10	9.0
11-18	1.1

While respondents were asked about the main library they use in the main, they were also asked about which libraries they had visited in the last two years. Nearly three-quarters of respondents had visited three or less different libraries.

3.2.3 Reasons for using the library

Respondents were asked why they visit the library. As we might expect, the most common reason is to borrow or browse books and other items.

Figure 18: Why do you visit the library?



All options given in this question have a higher percentage of open survey respondents compared to the sample survey, suggesting that open survey respondents were more likely to select multiple options. With a small number of exceptions, the ranking order of the options is very similar across the two surveys.

‘Seek general information advice and support’ and ‘a free comfortable building / warm space’ are ranked much lower on the sample survey compared to the open survey, while ‘to use the space to study / work’ is ranked higher in the sample survey compared to the open survey.

Many of the 'other' responses given are specific examples of the reasons listed in the main body of the question. The key themes identified are:²

- **Educational and Study Purposes:** Individuals use the library for studying, tutoring children who are out of school, and supporting young people with their studies.
- **Recreational Activities:** The library serves as a place for borrowing jigsaws, puzzles, second-hand books, and CDs, as well as attending book sales and reading groups.
- **Community Engagement:** Users participate in volunteering, attending council information displays, charity events, and using the library as a social space.
- **Personal Development:** The library is a venue for personal growth activities such as overcoming loneliness, attending talks of interest, and engaging in arts and crafts.
- **Family and Children's Activities:** It is a place for children's activities, school trips, and enabling children to select books, highlighting the library's role in family engagement.

These themes illustrate the library's multifunctional role as a centre for learning, personal growth, community involvement, and family-oriented activities.

3.2.4 Satisfaction with library services

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a list of facilities at their main library. A don't know / not applicable option was included as not all libraries offer the full range of services / facilities and not everybody will use or have an opinion about some of the facilities (for example, only people visiting with very young children are likely to have an opinion about baby change facilities).

In both surveys, fewer than half of respondents expressed an opinion about 5 of the 16 facilities listed: baby changing facilities; disabled toilets; disabled access; refreshments; and secure storage for bikes, scooters, etc. The proportion of respondents who answered these questions with don't know / not applicable is similar across both surveys except for baby change facilities; 66% of the sample survey answered DK/NA compared to 76% of the open survey.

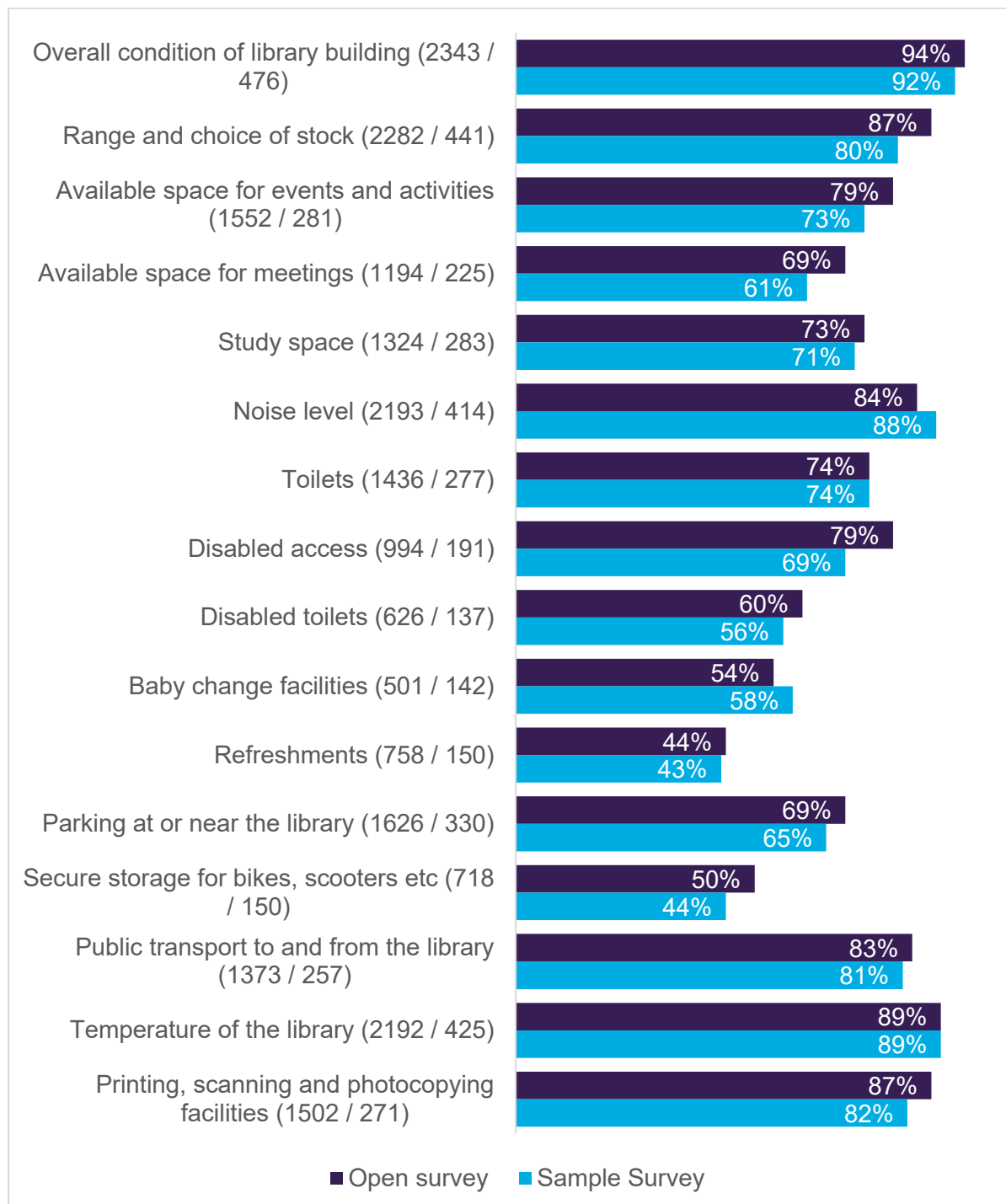
Both surveys also had the same four facilities that more than 90% of respondents gave an opinion about: overall condition of the library building; range and choice of stock; noise level; and temperature of the library.

For the following analysis, the don't know / not applicable responses have been removed to better reflect the views of those who have knowledge of the facilities in question.

² Themes identified using AI

Satisfaction was measured on a 5-point scale from 'very satisfied' to 'very dissatisfied'. The following chart shows the percentage of respondents in each survey that were very satisfied or quite satisfied with each facility.

Figure 19: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following at [your main] library? (% satisfied)



Bases as labelled (open survey / sample survey)

Most facilities scored more than 50% satisfied; the exceptions are refreshments and secure storage for bikes, scooters, etc. For most of the facilities listed, the open survey returned a higher satisfaction rate than the sample survey.

Sample survey respondents were more satisfied than open survey respondents on noise level (88% compared to 84%) and baby change facilities (58% compared to 54%). Both surveys saw the same satisfaction rate for toilets (74%) and temperature (89%).

Respondents who were dissatisfied with aspects of their main library were asked to explain why.

Overall, the reasons why respondents were dissatisfied with the overall condition of the library were because they felt the building needed refurbishment and painting.

Respondents were dissatisfied with the range of choice and stock of books due to a lack of investment in new stock, a lack of turnover of books between libraries and the discontinuation of magazines and newspapers.

Respondents were dissatisfied with the available space for events, activities, meetings and studying due to there not being a dedicated space within libraries for these, resulting in noise and disruption to other library users.

Respondents were dissatisfied with the noise levels in libraries due to noise from events and activities, as well as other library users talking loudly and on their mobile phones.

Respondents were dissatisfied with the toilets, including disabled toilets due to a lack of availability within libraries, and those that were available were dirty. Respondents were also dissatisfied at a lack of baby changing facilities.

Respondents were dissatisfied due to a lack of disabled parking at the library or library services being located on floors that did not provide disabled access.

Respondents were dissatisfied with a lack of refreshments available in libraries, particularly when they have been removed or closed.

Respondents were dissatisfied with a lack of parking at or near the library, including on-street parking or having to pay expensive parking charges.

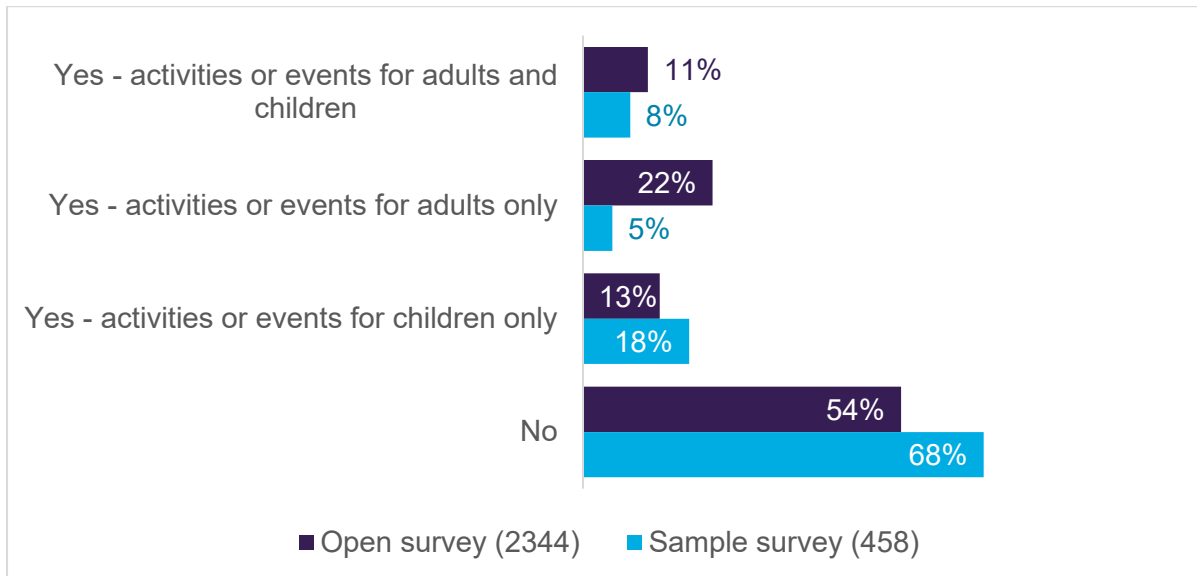
Respondents commented on a lack of secure storage for bikes and scooters close to libraries.

Respondents commented on a lack of affordable public transport, that either did not travel past libraries or the service was infrequent.

Respondents commented that libraries had a lack of ventilation, resulting in fluctuations in temperature, either being too hot or too cold.

3.3 Activities and events

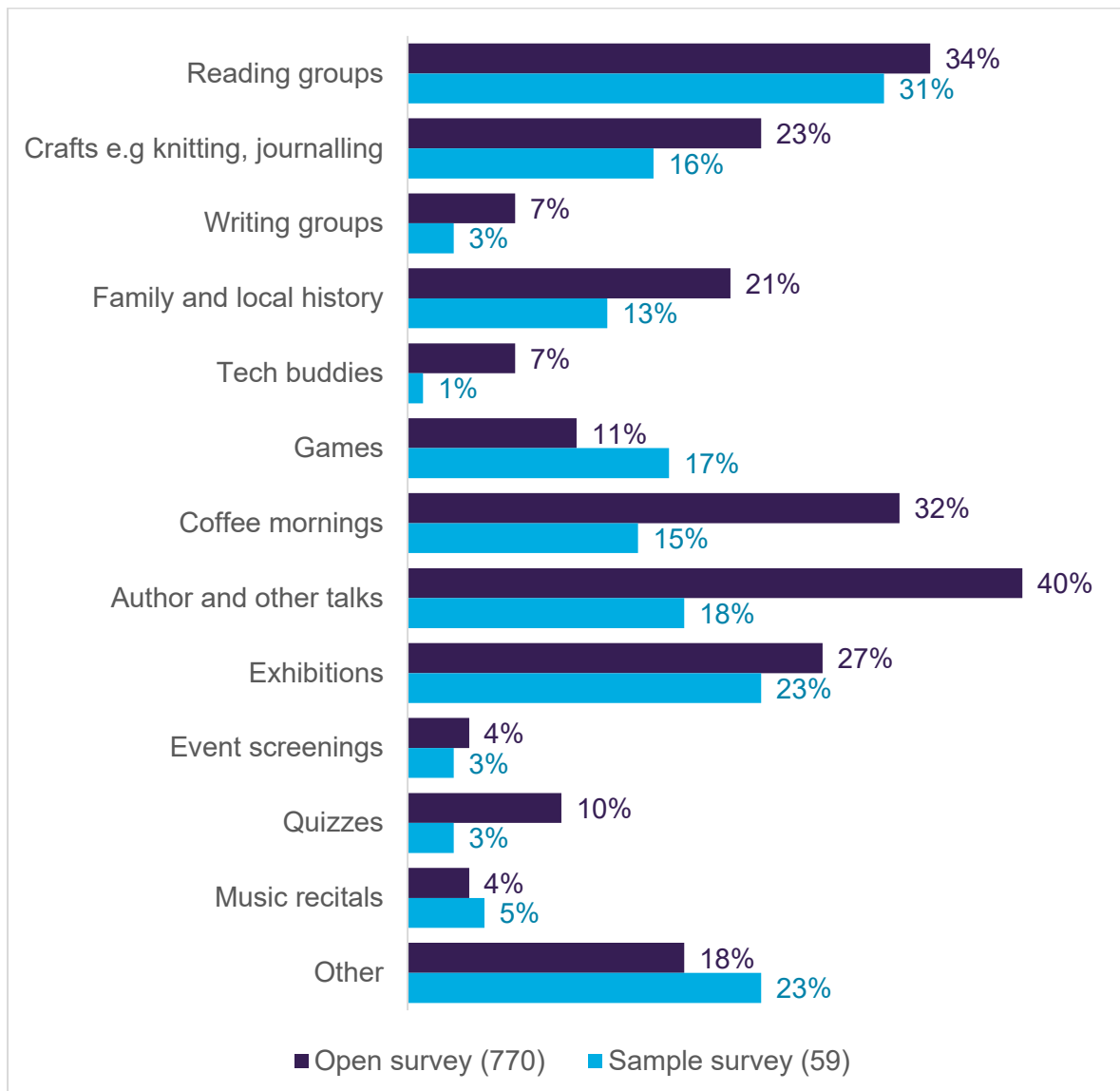
This section of the survey asked about activities and events that respondents (or someone they care for) may have attended at any BCP library.



In the open survey, 54% of respondents had not attended any events in the past 12 months compared to 68% of the sample survey.

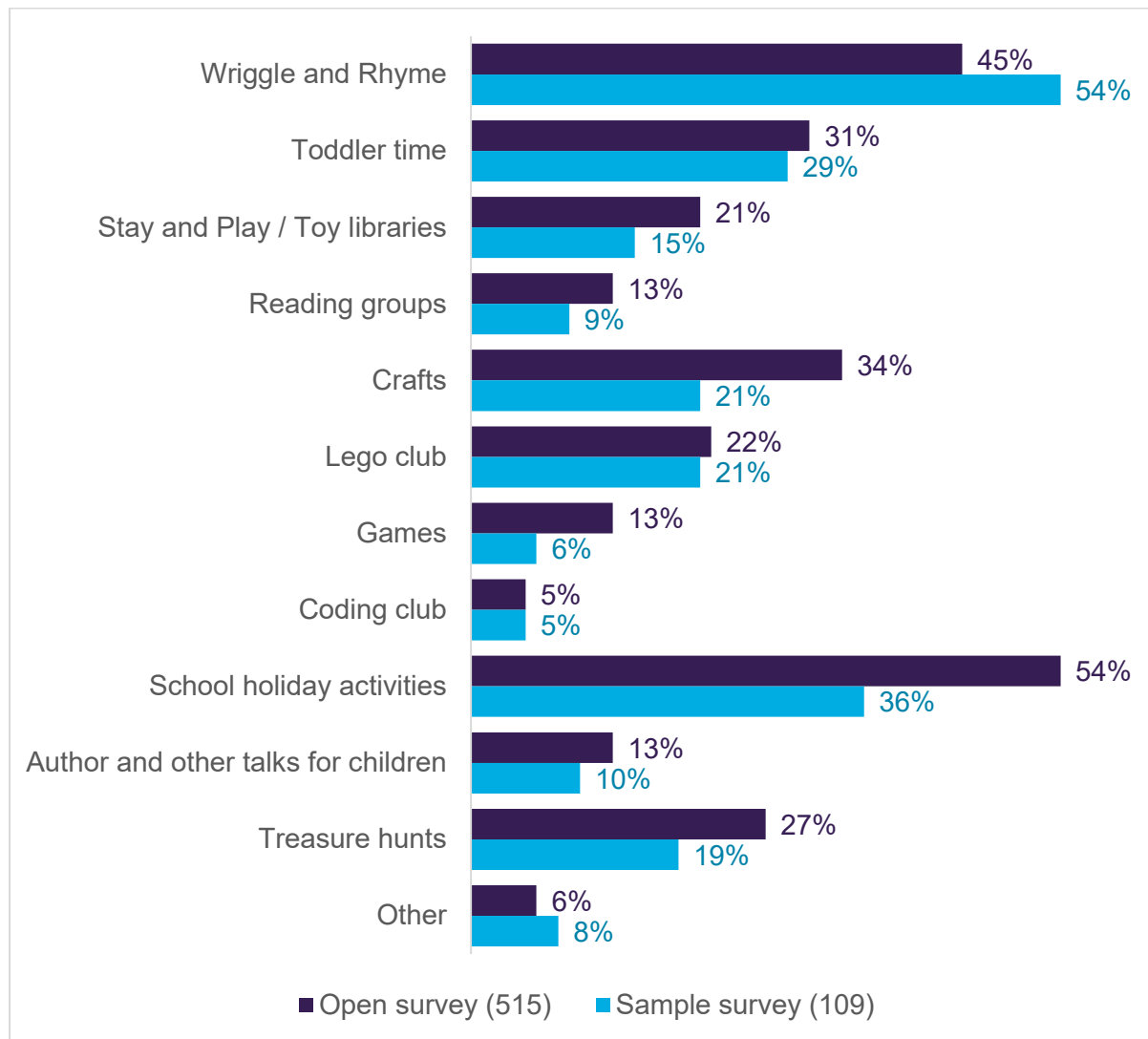
Respondents in the open survey were more likely to have attended activities for adults. A third of open survey respondents had attended adult activities (22% adult only and 11% adult and children) compared to 13% of those in the sample survey (5% adult only and 8% adult and children). Sample survey respondents are more likely to have attended children's activities than open survey respondents.

Figure 20: Which activities or events for adults do you attend?



Most kinds of activities / events are more popular with open survey respondents than those in the sample survey, suggesting that open survey respondents are likely to have selected multiple options. Open survey respondents are more than twice as likely to have attended author and other talks, or coffee mornings compared to sample survey respondents. Games and music recitals are the only event types that are more popular with sample survey respondents than the open survey respondents.

Figure 21: Which children's activities or events do you / your children attend?

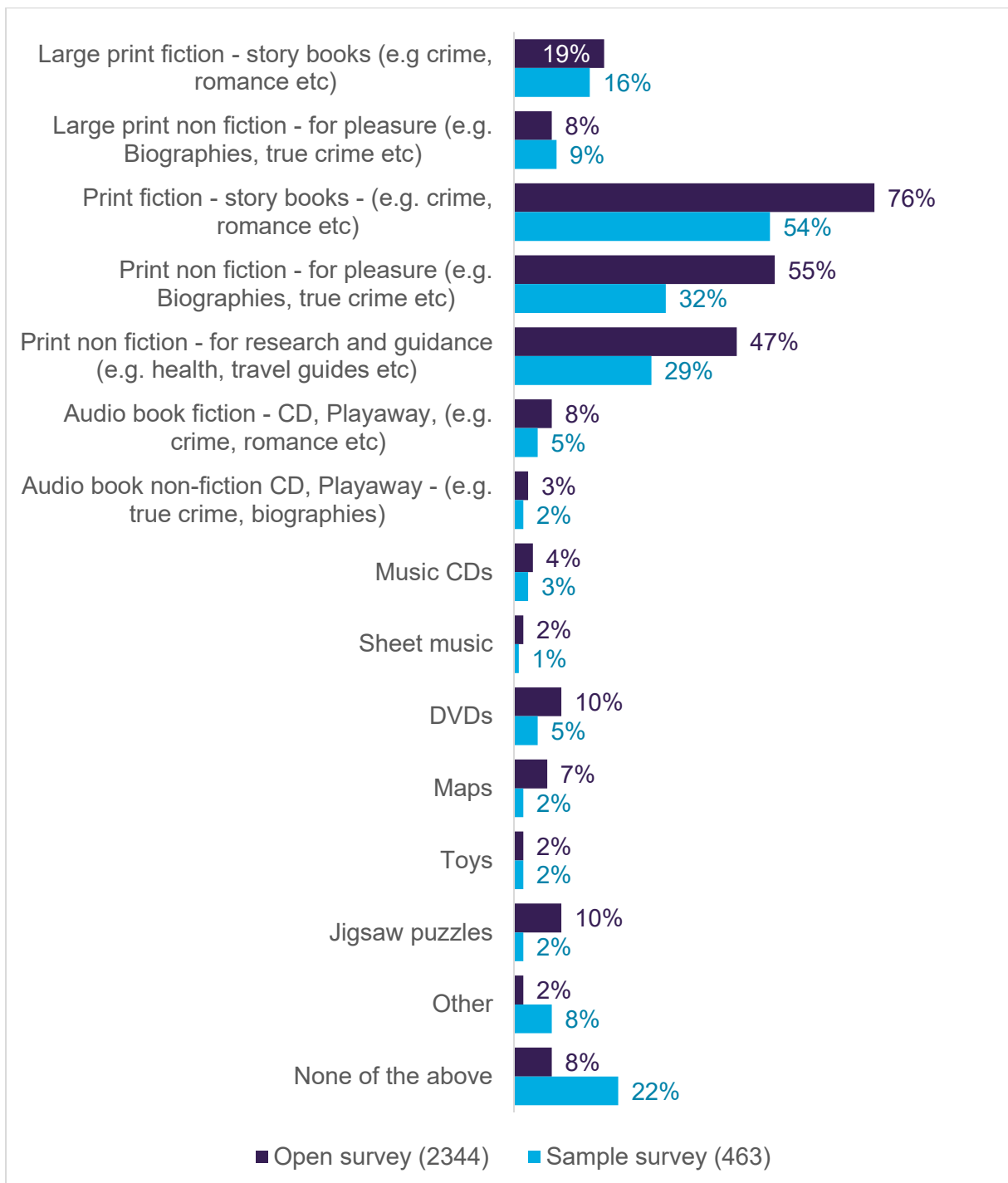


Sample survey respondents were more likely to have attended Wriggle & Rhyme with their children compared to open survey respondents. All other activities were more popular with open survey respondents, suggesting that they are more likely to attend multiple activities.

3.4 Stock and resources

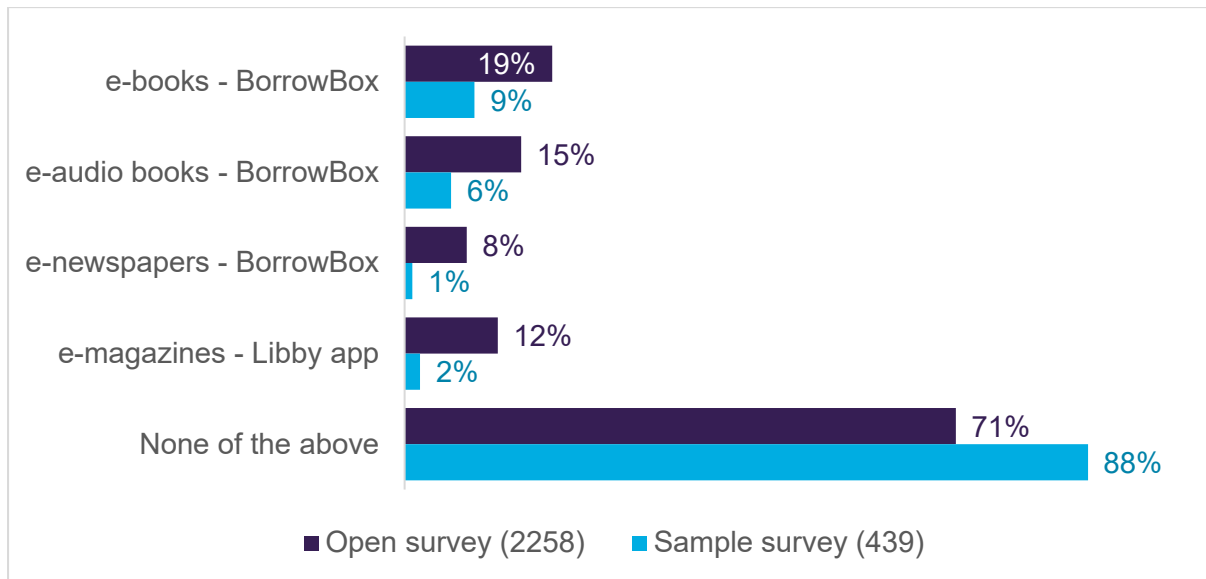
Respondents who had used the library service were asked if they had physically borrowed (i.e. not online) any of the items from a list.

Figure 22: Which of the following have you physically borrowed from any library over the last 2 years?



Respondents in the open survey were more likely to have borrowed all the listed items than those in the sample survey. The pattern is very similar across both surveys, with print fiction, print non-fiction for pleasure and print non-fiction for research and guidance being the most popular items.

Respondents were then asked which items they had borrowed online.



Most respondents in both surveys had not borrowed any items online. In both surveys, e-books were the most borrowed online items, followed by e-audio books.

Respondents were asked if they preferred to read a paper book or to read online. Eight out of ten open survey respondents (81%) said that they prefer a paper book while 16% like both equally and only 2% prefer online. Seven out of ten (70%) sample survey respondents prefer a paper book while around a quarter (24%) like both equally and 3% prefer online.

3.5 Importance of the library service

The following questions were asked of all respondents, not just those that have used the library service.

Figure 23: How important is the library service to you, your family and your community? (Open survey)

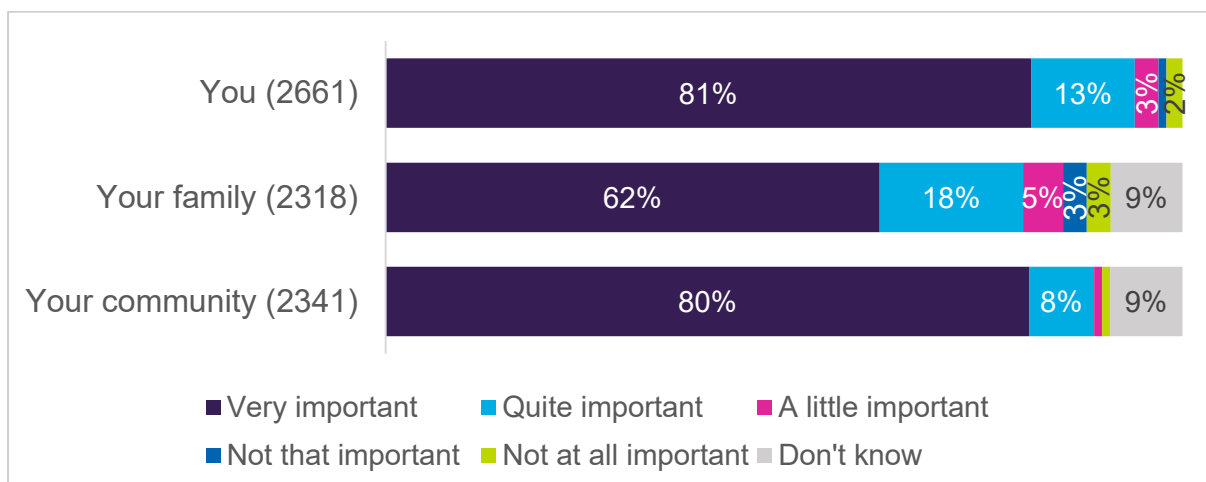
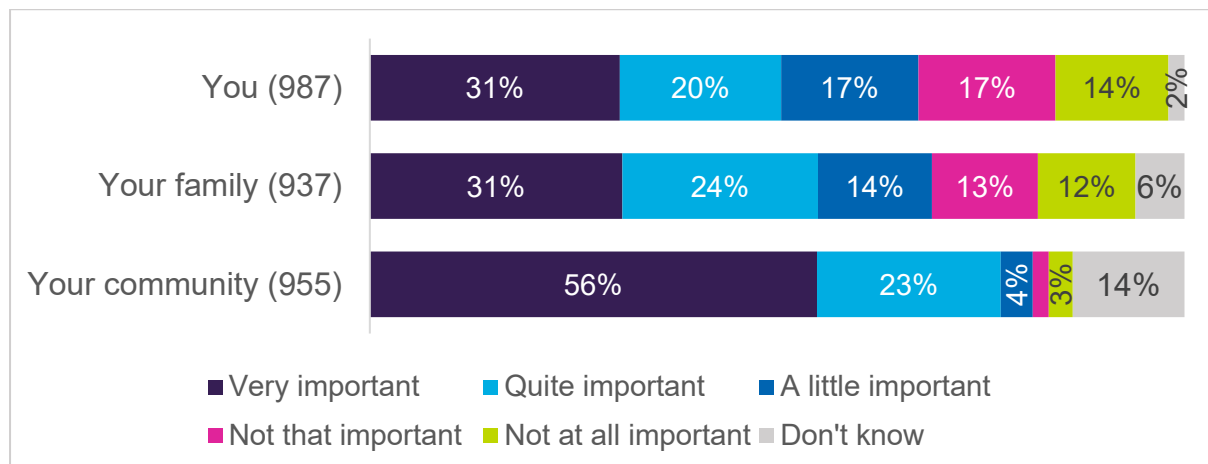


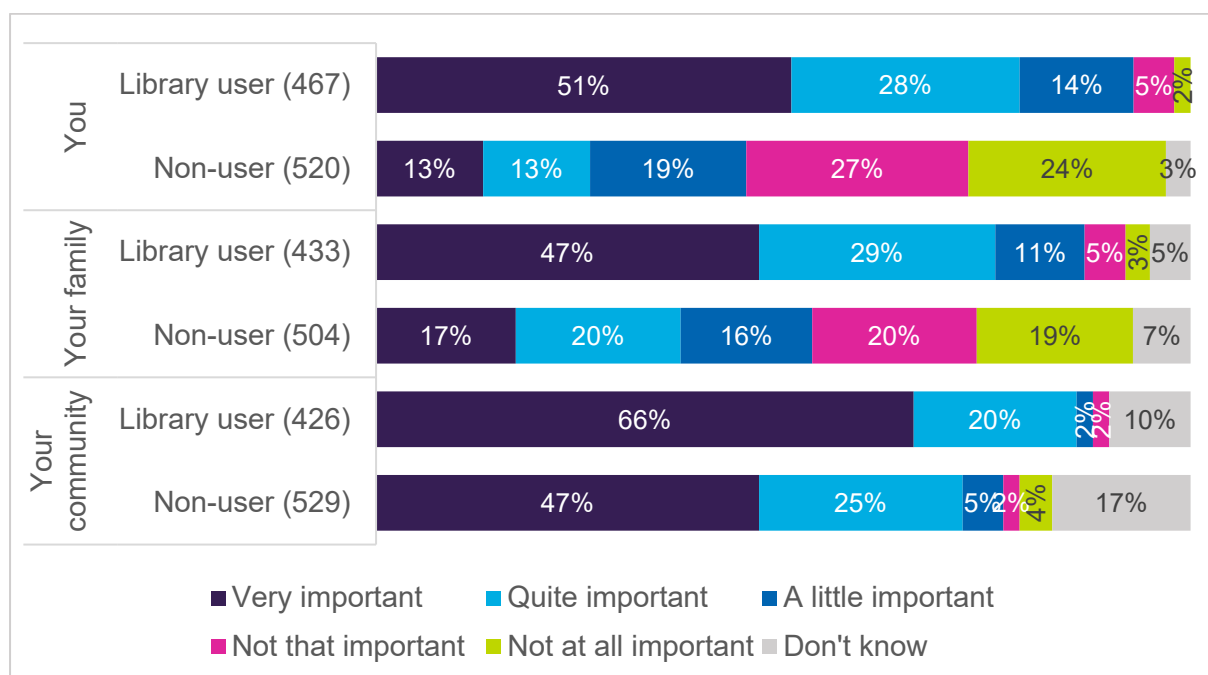
Figure 24: How important is the library service to you, your family and your community? (Sample survey)



Respondents in the open survey were much more likely to say that the library service is very important to themselves (81%) than those in the sample survey (31%). Open survey respondents rated the importance of the library service to themselves higher than to their family or community. Sample survey respondents were much more likely to rate the service as important to their community than to themselves or their family.

Much of this difference can be explained by the higher proportion of sample survey respondents who do not use the library service. Comparing library users and non-users in the sample survey shows that library users consider the service to be much more important, especially to themselves and their families, compared to non-users.

Figure 25: How important is the library service to you, your family and your community? (Sample survey, comparing library users and non-users)



Respondents were asked to describe in their own words the impact that the library service has had on their life (if any).

Open survey

In the open survey, 1,777 respondents provided feedback to this question. Responses were coded into six key themes: essential service, non-essential service/negative experiences, accessibility, support services, community impact, and life enhancement. The findings illustrate the diverse and significant roles that libraries play in the community.

Libraries are considered vital by many, serving as **lifelong resources** for both themselves and family members. Respondents commented that they love libraries and that they are a vital service that need to continue to be provided within local communities. Libraries are a public service that are available for everyone, and they cannot imagine life without access to libraries. Respondents also frequently commented how libraries help to foster a lifelong love of reading.

However, a minority of respondents view libraries as **outdated or unnecessary**, with some citing negative experiences such as noise and disruptions from activities.

The **accessibility of a wide range of resources**, including books, digital media, and online services, was a major positive theme. Libraries' role in offering free resources alleviates financial burdens, especially for low-income families, seniors, and students. **Physical accessibility** to libraries that are based in each community, alongside the provision of digital services are also highly valued. Libraries also provide access and **support for a wide range of vulnerable groups**, including the homeless, elderly and those with a disability.

Libraries are **appreciated for their welcoming environments** and helpful staff. They provide critical support, including digital literacy assistance, access to technology, and community information. Libraries also offer educational support and a variety of community resources.

Libraries act as community hubs, offering safe and warm spaces, fostering a sense of community, and host various events and activities. They are especially important for children, providing educational resources and social interaction opportunities.

Libraries significantly enhance quality of life by offering entertainment, quiet spaces for relaxation, and social opportunities that help to reduce isolation. They play a crucial role in supporting the mental health and well-being of local residents, particularly during challenging times like the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sample survey

In the sample survey there were 662 responses to this question. The top 5 themes are listed below.³

³ Themes were identified using AI

Community and Social Hub: The library serves as a central point for community engagement, offering a space for groups to meet and individuals to participate in community activities. Examples of statements include:

- "It offers a point of contact to find out about community groups and volunteering opportunities."
- "A friendly, warm space to engage with the community."
- "A really important hub for the community."

Educational Resource: Many see the library as a valuable educational resource, providing access to a wide range of books and information for all ages. Examples of statements include:

- "A big influence. Used regularly from school, university and working life."
- "A great introduction to books/learning etc. to the children when they were young."
- "A great place for research and fiction books, which we do not necessarily wish to purchase."

Family and Children's Activities: The library is highlighted as a clean and friendly place for families to enjoy time together and for children to explore books and participate in activities. Examples of statements include:

- "A clean friendly place to take the family, enjoy the groups and get out lots of books to read to the kids."
- "A great place to take our children from a young age in Wriggle and Rhyme and then in later years to encourage reading."
- "Able to borrow audio books for personal use without costs. Children's books for grandchildren have been really useful."

Access to Information and Books: The library is seen as a source of information and books, especially as books can be expensive to buy. Examples of statements include:

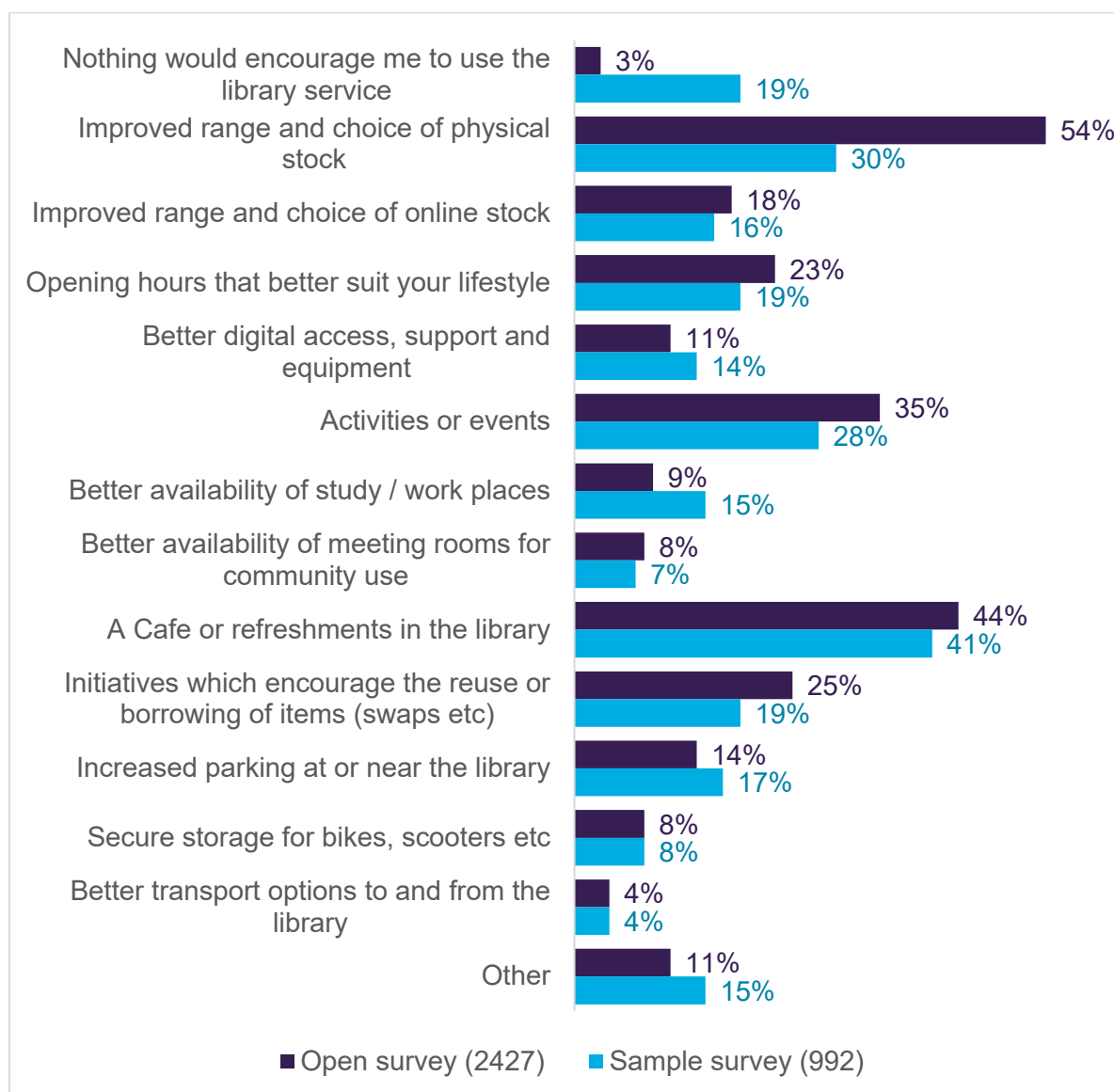
- "A good source of information and books. Now books are expensive to buy and 2nd hand don't offer a wide selection."
- "A wide variety of easy to access books, especially as they are expensive to buy."
- "Access to books has enabled me to enjoy my love of reading."

Personal Development and Wellbeing: The library contributes to personal development and mental health, offering a peaceful environment for reading and relaxation. Examples of statements include:

- "A constant and reliable place to gain information. provides a community and cultural space."
- "A pleasant, warm and peaceful space in which to browse the shelves and sit down with a selection of books."
- "A library is a very important part of the community. It is the hub to find out information, access reading books, open up opportunities."

All respondents were asked what would encourage them to use the library more in the future.

Figure 26: What would encourage you to use the library service more in the future



For open survey respondents, an improved range and choice of physical stock (54%) is the thing that would encourage the most respondents to use the library or to use it more. A café or refreshments in the library (44%) and activities or events (35%) are the next most popular choices. These three options are also the top three for sample survey respondents. For this group, café / refreshments were the top choice (41%), improved range / choice of stock (30%) was the second most popular with activities and events (28%) in third place.

Almost one in five sample survey respondents (19%) said that there is nothing that would encourage them to use the library or to use it more compared to only 3% of open survey respondents. Open survey respondents were more likely to have selected most of the options than sample survey respondents, but increased parking

(17%) better study / workspaces (15%) and better digital access (14%) were more popular among sample survey respondents.

There was a high number of 'other' responses to this question, with 382 open survey respondents and 154 sample survey respondents suggesting things that would encourage them to use the library. The main themes are shown below.⁴

- **Improve the facilities and amenities of the library**, such as toilets, parking, cafe, seating, lighting, cleanliness, heating, security, etc. For example:

- "A toilet would help"
- "Free parking in town"
- "Better toilet facilities"
- "Turn the heating down"
- "Better security"

- **Increase the variety and availability of the library stock**, both physical and digital, such as books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks, ebooks, CDs, DVDs, games, etc. For example:

- "More variety in the non-fiction section"
- "I listen to a lot of audiobooks so an easy-to-use app with Bluetooth capability would be brilliant"
- "Bring back CDs to Poole and Broadstone"
- "More large print books"
- "More Chinese books"

- **Expand the opening hours and days of the library**, especially on weekends, evenings, and holidays. For example:

- "More days/times for baby/toddler sessions"
- "Longer opening hours"
- "Sunday opening would be a boon"
- "Open at 9 o'clock would be useful"
- "Open all days except Sundays".

- **Promote and advertise the library services and events** more effectively, using social media, leaflets, newsletters, screens, etc. For example:

- "Clearer advertising of available services"
- "More publicity about events that run"
- "Better promotion of events and clubs online"
- "Occasional leaflet to be delivered by BCP about library service"
- "Make it more accessible to those who need it to learn to read and write as an adult".

⁴ Themes identified using AI

- **Organise more activities and events** for different age groups and interests, such as clubs, groups, talks, workshops, courses, festivals, etc. For example:

- "A Dungeons and Dragons club, board games and other community hub"
- "Film nights"
- "Language lessons please"
- "More craft, themed activities for children in the holidays and at weekends"
- "More activities for the retired".

- **Enhance the online services and platforms**, such as BorrowBox, Libby, Libraries West, etc. and provide more support and training for users to access them. For example:

- "Knowing that online is available and how to access"
- "Ability to read online books through Kindle device"
- "Online borrowing would be great"
- "A reliable, accessible and well supported platform to access ebooks on"
- "Tuition on digital devices".

- **Collaborate with other local organisations and agencies**, such as schools, charities, businesses, art and culture groups, etc. to provide more opportunities and resources for the community. For example:

- "Link up with theatres, language providers, schools, dance and music groups"
- "Libraries hosting more advice and support organisations on drop in and appointment basis for public to access easily"
- "A place for foodbank drop offs"
- "Partnering with other local organisations like art and photo clubs, yoga, pilates, etc."
- "Running a repair café at one of your busier spaces on a trial basis".

- **Make the library more inclusive and accessible** for people with different needs and abilities, such as disabilities, learning difficulties, neurodivergence, etc. For example:

- "More books and puzzles especially for people with learning disabilities such as dyslexia and visual difficulties"
- "Group for SEND children"
- "Quiet times/days for those with Neural Divergence"
- "Comfortable seating for dementia sufferers near the book areas"
- "Accessibility to lower shelves".

- **Maintain or restore the existing services and staff** that are valued by the users, such as inter-library loans, newspapers, tech buddies, librarians, etc. For example:

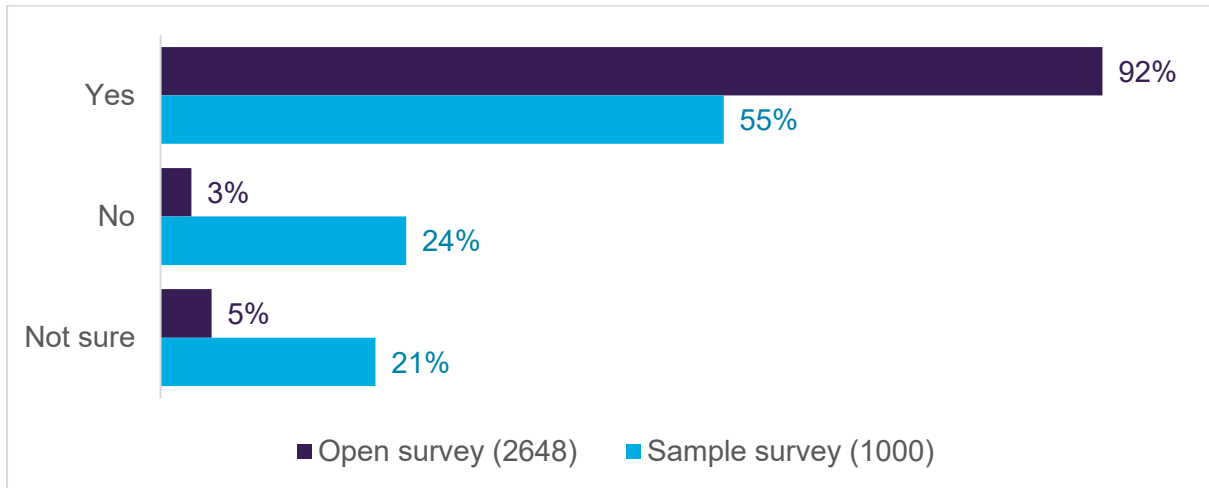
- "Being able to order books from other libraries without incurring a fee"
- "Keep the newspapers and magazines available in library"
- "getting a new tech buddy as there isn't one at Boscombe at the moment"

- "staff training to encourage links with other remote BCP services"
- "More staff".

3.6 Future library service

We asked all respondents if they would use the library service if libraries were open at a convenient time.

Figure 27: If libraries were open at a convenient time for you, do you think you'll use / continue to use the library service within the next 3 years?

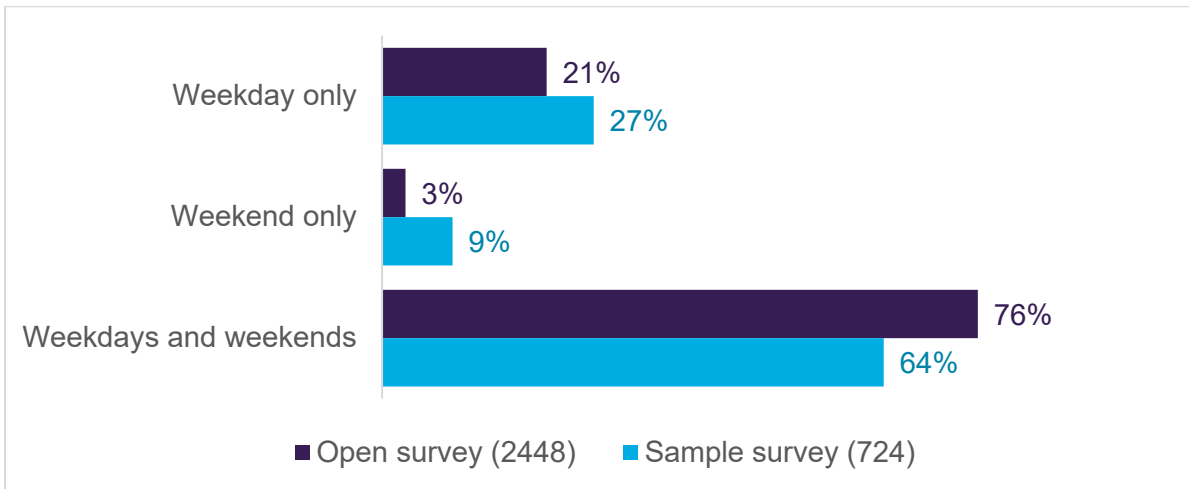


More than nine out of ten (92%) of open survey respondents said yes compared to 55% of sample survey respondents. A further 5% of open survey and 21% of sample survey respondents said they were not sure. Almost a quarter of sample survey respondents (24%) said no, compared to just 3% of open survey respondents.

We then asked what days and times would be preferred by respondents to visit the library. Respondents who had replied 'no' to the previous questions were not included.

The question divided each day of the week into six time slots and respondents could choose all that they find convenient, meaning that they could give any combination of 42 options. For simplicity, these have been grouped together in different ways to compare days and times.

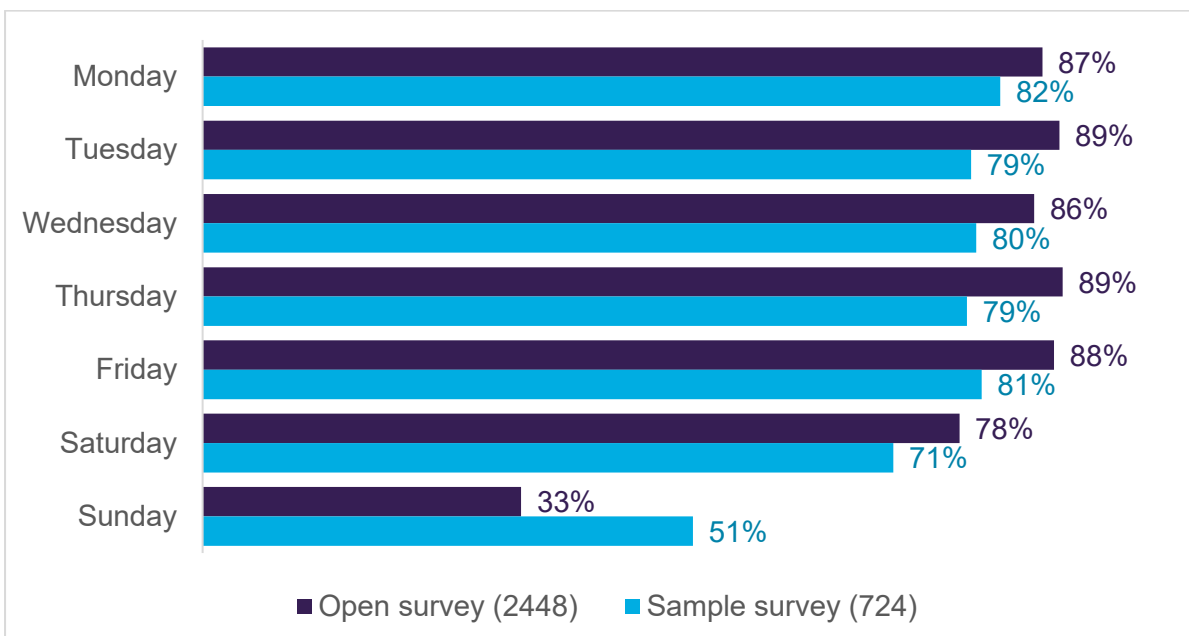
Figure 28: Which days and times would you prefer to use the library service? (Preferred weekdays / weekends)



In the open survey, almost all respondents (97%) indicated time slots during the week (Mon-Fri) and 73% indicated weekend time slots. Around a fifth (21%) of respondents preferred weekdays only and 3% preferred weekends only with 76% indicating timeslots throughout the week.

In the sample survey, just under two thirds of respondents (64%) indicated timeslots throughout the week, with 27% preferring weekdays only and 9% preferring weekends only.

Figure 29: Which days and times would you prefer to use the library service? (Preference for each day)

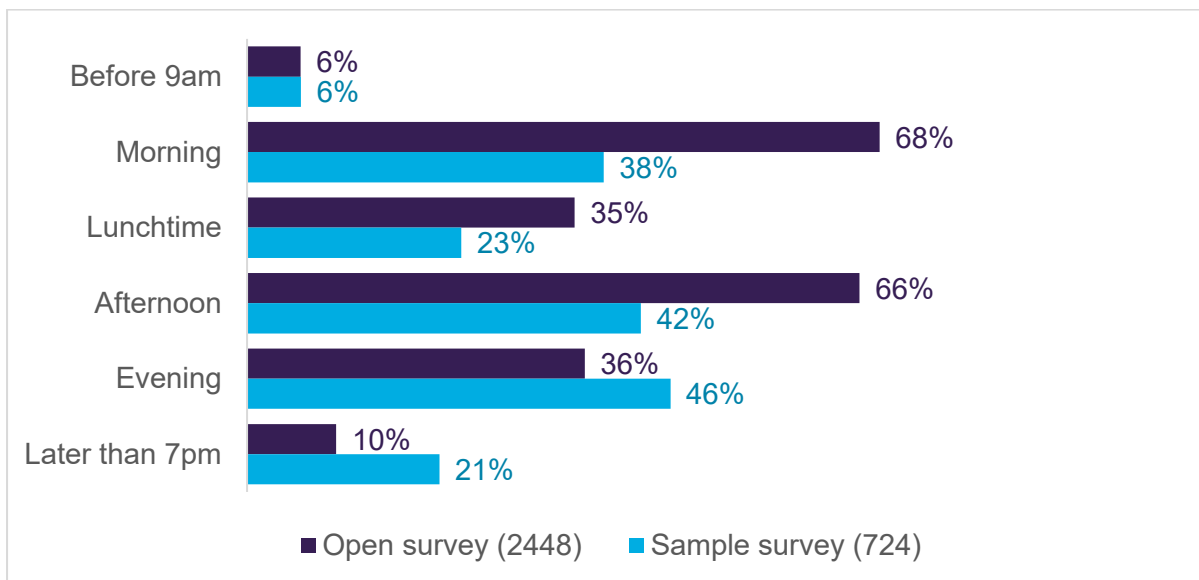


Differences between days of the week are small with Tuesdays and Thursdays preferred by slightly more respondents in the open survey and Mondays and Fridays being the more popular choice for sample survey respondents. Sunday is the only

day of the week with a higher proportion of sample survey respondents than open survey respondents but is the least popular day in both surveys.

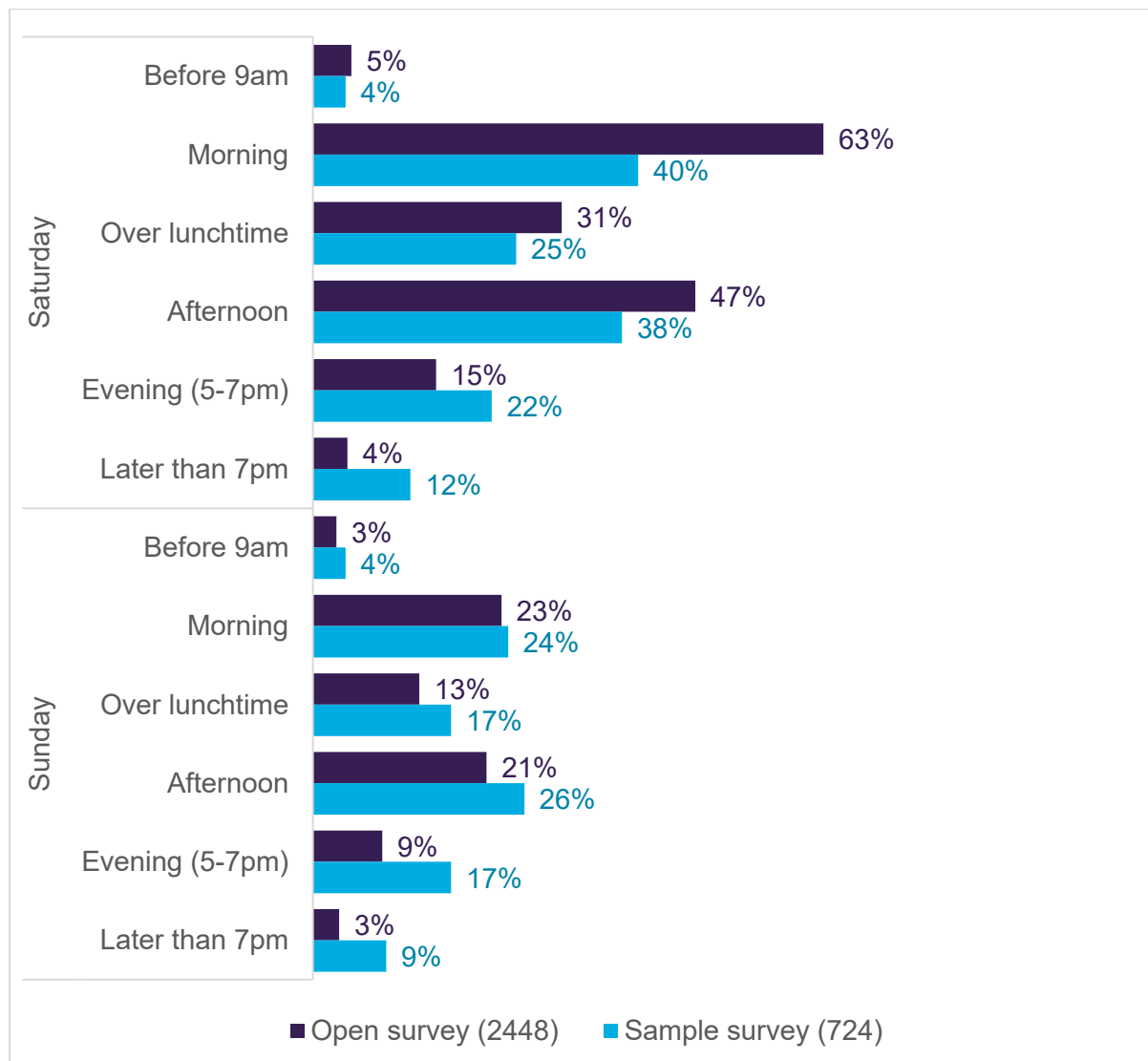
The pattern of time slots chosen on Monday to Friday are very similar while Saturdays and Sundays are different. For ease of comparison between the two surveys, responses for Monday – Friday have been combined.

Figure 30: Which days and times would you prefer to use the library service? (Monday – Friday time slots)



Respondents in the open survey have a strong preference for morning and afternoon slots while sample survey respondents prefer early evening. A fifth of sample survey respondents chose a late evening time slot, twice as many as in the open survey (10%).

Figure 31: Which days and times would you prefer to use the library service? (Saturday and Sunday)

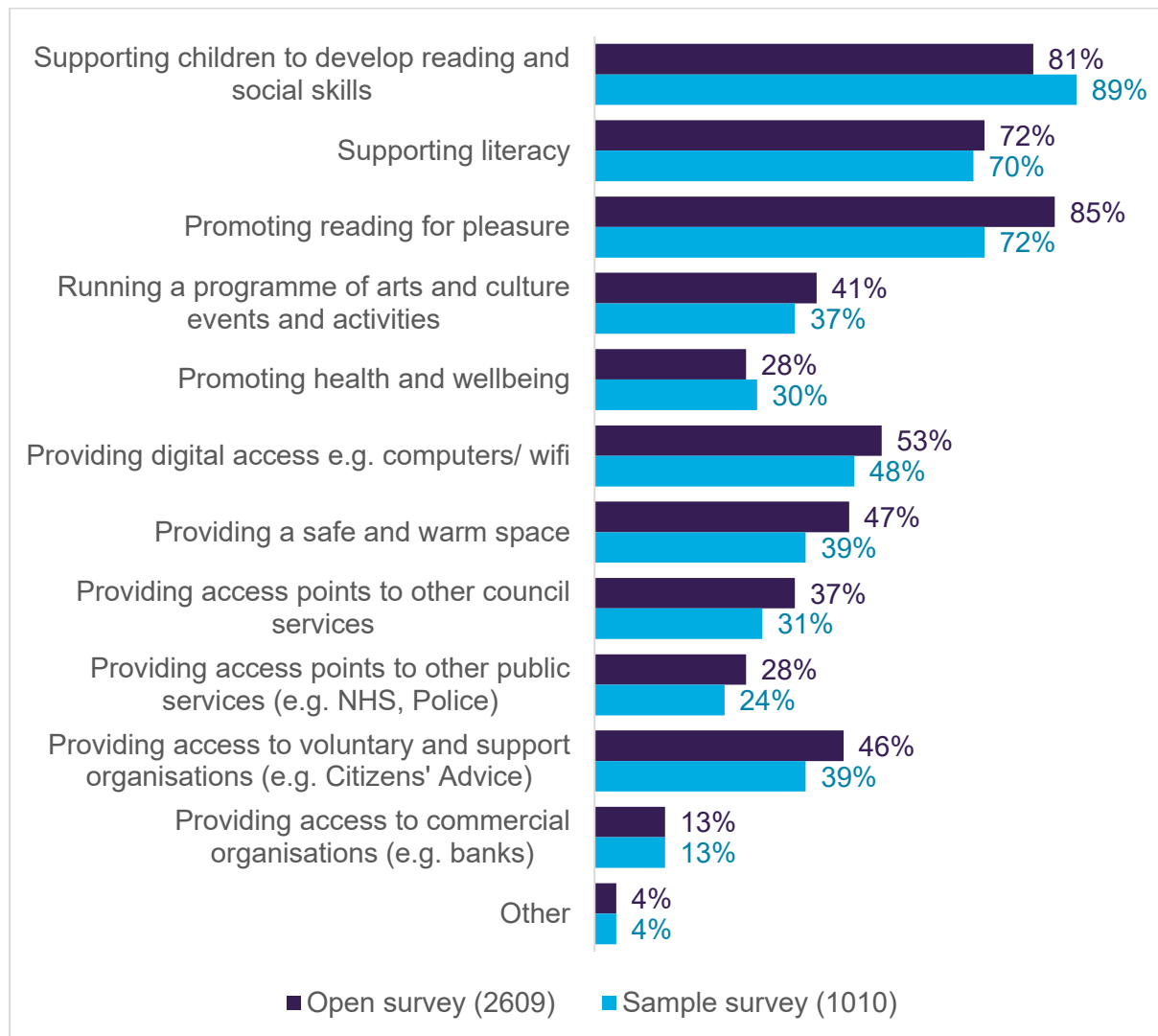


On Saturdays, open survey respondents prefer the morning time slot (63%) over afternoon (47%) while the sample survey respondents are more evenly split between morning (40%) and afternoon (38%). As with weekdays, more sample survey respondents than open survey respondents chose the evening time slots. All time slots on Sundays are preferred by more sample survey respondents than open survey respondents and both surveys are evenly distributed between morning and afternoon.

3.6.1 Future focus

All respondents were asked what they thought the future focus of the library service should be.

Figure 32: What do you think should be the focus of the library service?



Promoting reading for pleasure, supporting children to develop reading and social skills and supporting literacy are the three most common choices across both surveys. Priorities differ slightly, with the open survey choosing reading for pleasure (85%) above supporting children (81%) while the sample survey respondents chose supporting children (89%) above reading for pleasure (72%).

3.6.2 Future choices

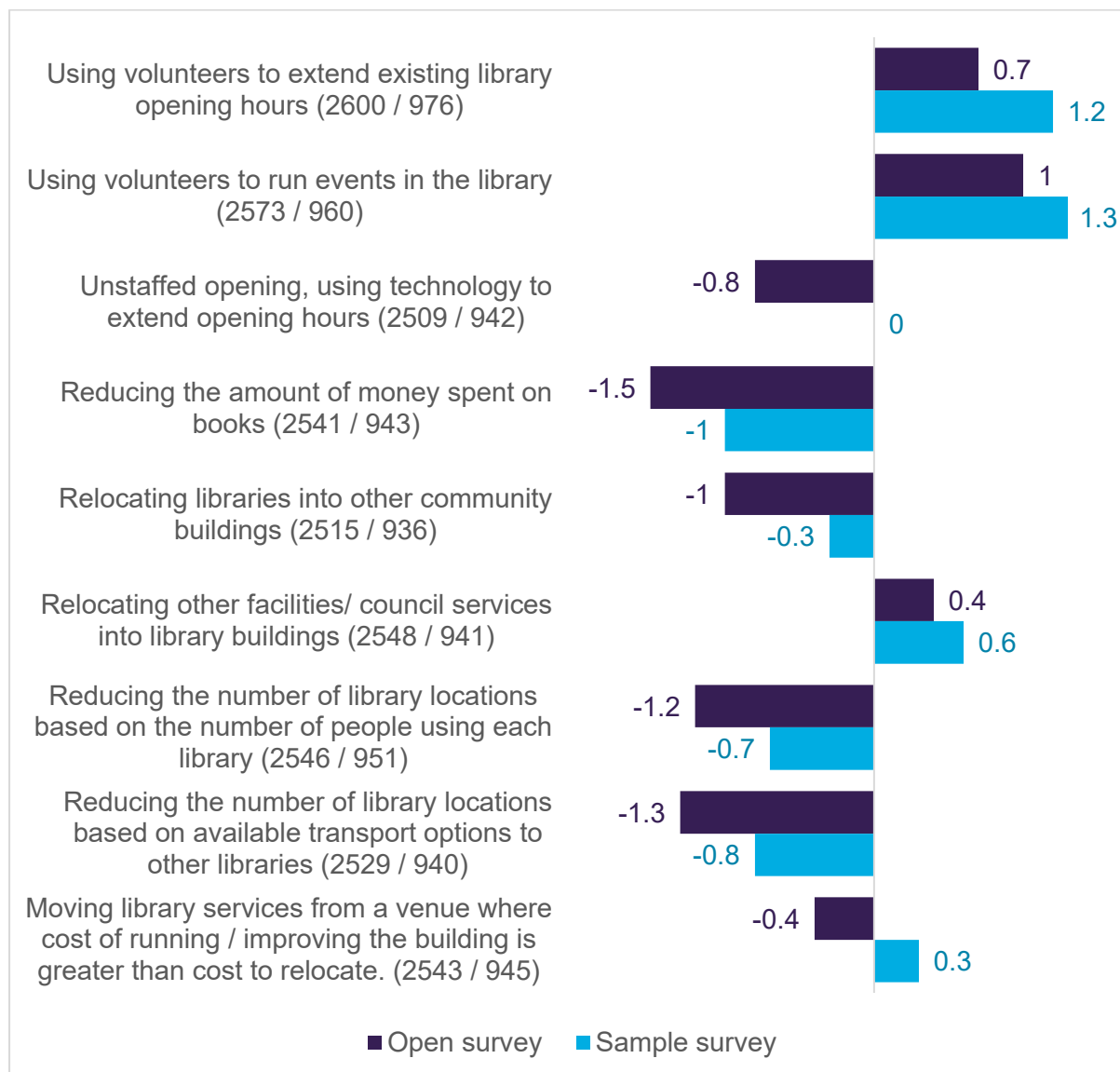
In light of the financial challenges faced by councils across the country, the library strategy needs to ensure that the library service is sustainable and meets the needs of our communities. All respondents were asked if they support or oppose certain approaches that could be taken by the library service to manage costs.

The chart below uses a scoring system to show the degree of support or opposition to each suggestion. Responses were scored as follows:

Strongly support	2
Tend to support	1
Tend to oppose	-1
Strongly oppose	-2

This means that a score of more than zero shows that support outweighs opposition while a negative score (less than zero) shows that opposition outweighs support. A score of more than one or less than minus one shows that support / opposition is strong.

Figure 33: To what extent do you support or oppose the following approaches to managing costs? (Mean scores)



Bases as labelled (Open survey / Sample survey)

For most of the approaches, survey respondents agree about whether they support or oppose the suggestions. Respondents in the sample survey are generally more positive / less negative than the open survey respondents. The final suggestion of moving library services from a venue where the cost of running and/or improving the building is greater than the cost to relocate the service is the only point of disagreement between the surveys. Respondents in the sample survey were, on balance, more supportive of this suggestion while the open survey respondents were more opposed.

Figure 34: % supportive of approaches to managing costs

	% Support	
	Open survey	Sample survey
Using volunteers to extend existing library opening hours	74%	92%
Using volunteers to run events in the library	87%	94%
Unstaffed opening, using technology to extend opening hours	27%	52%
Reducing the amount of money spent on books	7%	19%
Relocating libraries into other community buildings	22%	43%
Relocating other facilities/ council services into library buildings	69%	76%
Reducing the number of library locations based on the number of people using each library	15%	29%
Reducing the number of library locations based on available transport options to other libraries	13%	26%
Moving library services from a venue where cost of running / improving the building is greater than cost to relocate.	41%	63%

The table above shows the % of respondents in each survey who strongly support or tend to support each of the suggested approaches to managing the costs associated with providing a library service. The results are broadly reflective of the mean scores shown in the chart, with most respondents supportive of the suggestions which had a positive mean score and a minority supporting those with a negative means score.

Within the sample survey, there are some significant differences between library users and non-users.

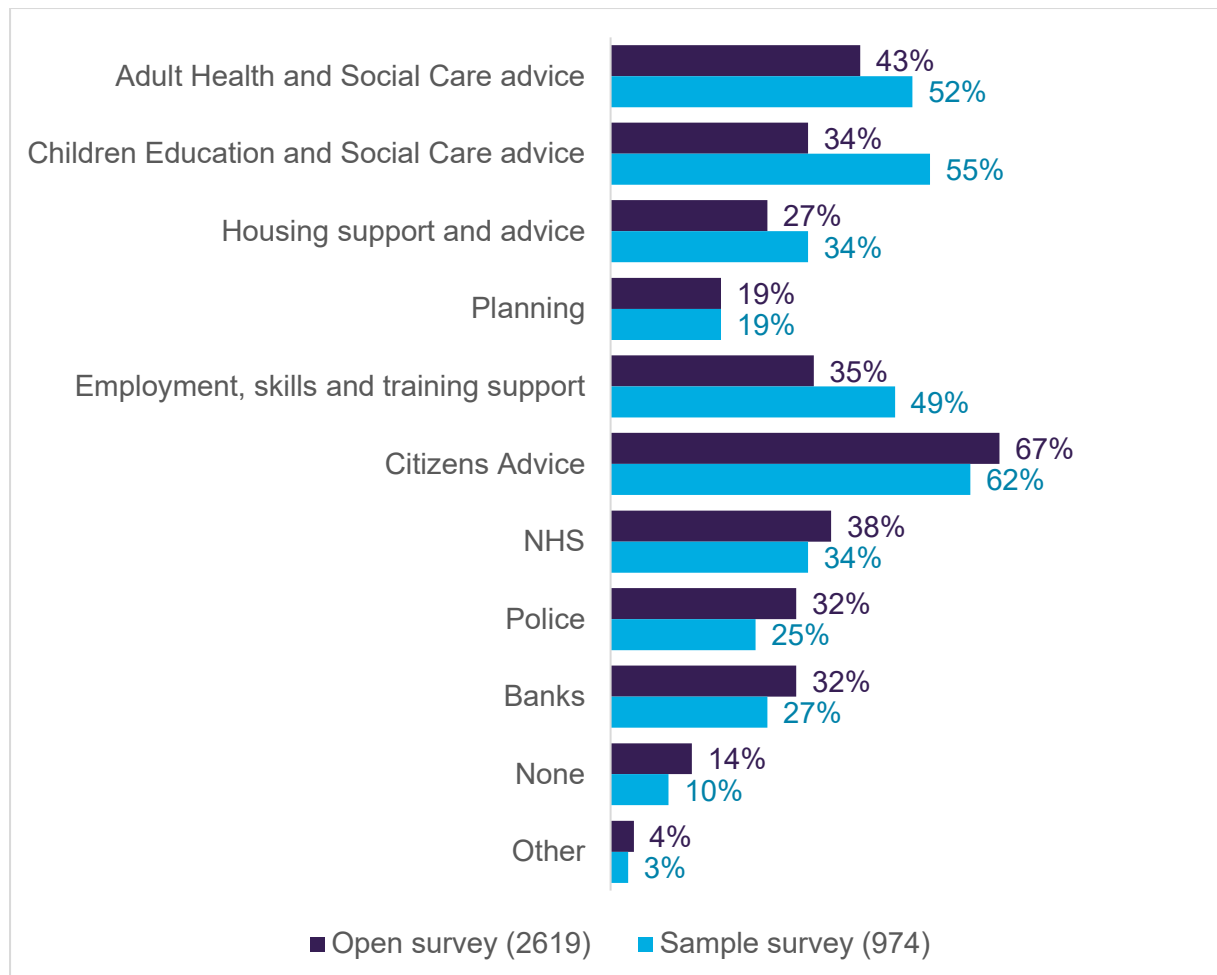
Figure 35: % supportive of approaches to managing costs (Sample survey, comparing library users and non-users)

% Support	Library users	Non-users
Using volunteers to extend existing library opening hours (455 / 521)	90%	93%
Using volunteers to run events in the library (441 / 518)	94%	94%
Unstaffed opening, using technology to extend opening hours (435 / 507)	49%	55%
Reducing the amount of money spent on books (438 / 505)	15%	22%
Relocating libraries into other community buildings (433 / 502)	32%	54%
Relocating other facilities/ council services into library buildings (439 / 502)	70%	81%
Reducing the number of library locations based on the number of people using each library (441 / 510)	24%	35%
Reducing the number of library locations based on available transport options to other libraries (438 / 502)	22%	29%
Moving library services from a venue where cost of running / improving is greater than cost to relocate. (440 / 505)	54%	71%

While the two groups were broadly in agreement on the first three approaches, there were significant differences on the other suggestions with the widest differences on relocating libraries into other community buildings and moving library services from buildings where the cost of running or improving the building is higher than the cost of relocating.

We asked respondents which services it might be useful to relocate into library buildings.

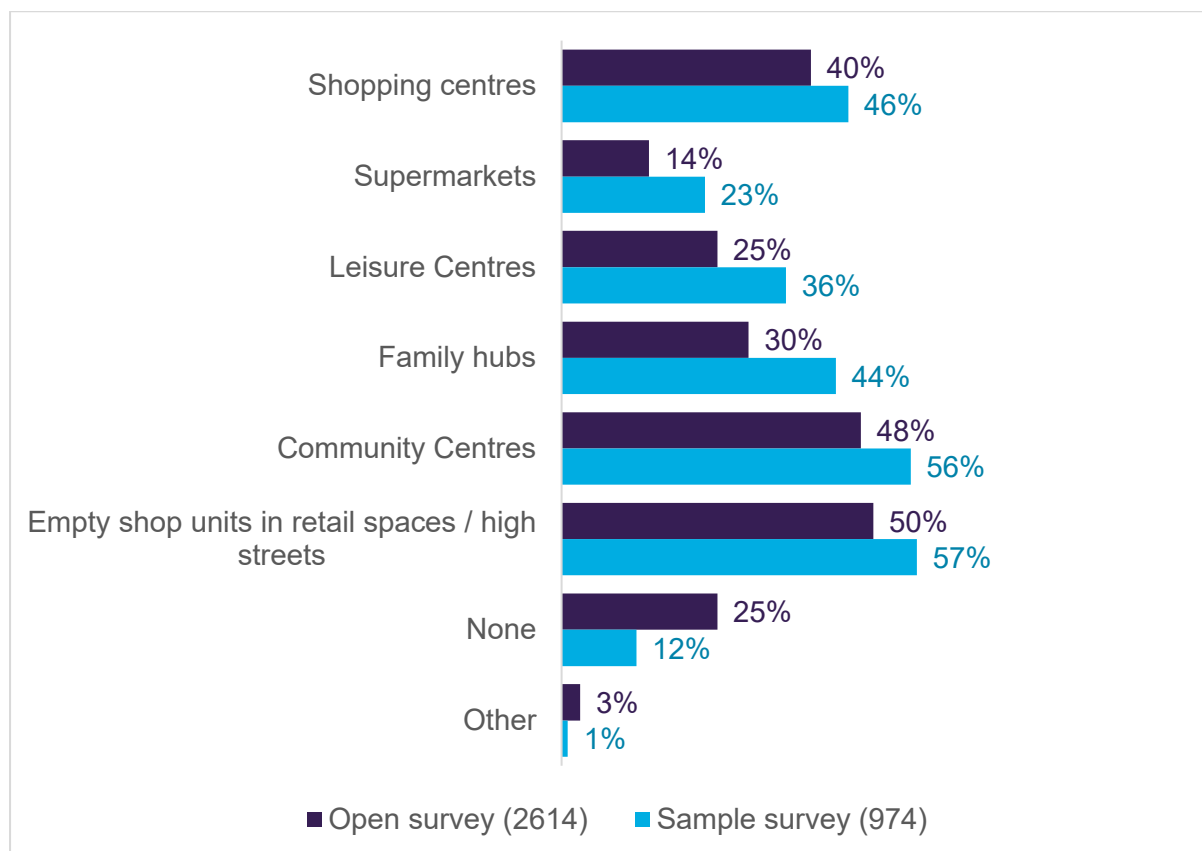
Figure 36: If we were looking to relocate other services into library buildings, which of the following do you feel would be useful to you?



Citizens Advice was the top choice of respondents from both surveys. Sample survey respondents were more likely to choose council services (adult social care, education and children’s social care, housing) as well as employment and skills support compared to the open survey, while open survey respondents were more likely to choose other services (NHS, police, banks) than sample survey respondents.

We then asked respondents if we were looking at relocating libraries into other types of venues, what would be acceptable.

Figure 37: If we were looking to relocate libraries into other types of venues, which of the following do you feel would be acceptable?



Respondents in the sample survey were more accepting of all kinds of venues than those in the open survey. While the numbers differ, the order of preference is the same across both surveys with empty shop units, community centres and shopping centres being the top choices.

3.6.3 Ideal library service

Open survey

Respondents were asked to describe their ideal library service. 1,532 respondents in the open survey provided feedback to this question. Responses have been coded into eight key themes: satisfaction, community provision and support, library environment, accessibility, collection and resources, facilities, staff and support, and promotion and outreach.

Several respondents expressed their satisfaction with the current library service and that the council should provide sufficient funding to enable the service to continue as it is.

Comments highlighted the role of libraries as community hubs, offering safe, warm spaces and a variety of events and activities, including dedicated areas for children’s resources and group activities. Respondents emphasised the importance of libraries in supporting vulnerable groups, reducing isolation and providing spaces for community engagement and additional support services, including council support

services, healthcare, citizens advice, police, banking, food banks and a community fridge. However, other respondents commented that libraries should prioritise the provision of traditional library services and were opposed to other services being located within them.

Respondents commented that their ideal library service would be welcoming, well-lit and inviting. Libraries should be spacious, clean and tidy, well organised, while books should be easy to find on good displays and accessible shelving. Libraries should also remain as quiet spaces for relaxation and browsing.

Several comments emphasised the need for libraries to be easily accessible, both in terms of location and opening hours. Respondents commented on a need for extended and predictable opening hours, libraries to remain within communities and be local and accessible for all. Respondents also expressed a desire for the continuation of services such as mobile and home libraries.

There was a strong demand for libraries to stock up-to-date and diverse collections, both in paper and digital format. It is also important that libraries have a regular turnover and circulation of stock. Respondents also valued free access to library services and suggested improvements in the reservation and loan systems.

Respondents also indicated a desire for improved facilities, such as cafes, study areas, up-to-date IT equipment, and comfortable reading spaces. Respondents also want meeting rooms, dedicated event, activity and exhibition spaces, as well as essential amenities such as toilets and baby changing facilities.

Respondents commented on the importance of knowledgeable and friendly staff. Adequate staffing levels and the use of volunteers who support qualified, paid library staff with the provision of activities were also discussed.

Respondents also commented on the need for better promotion of library services and outreach activities to increase community engagement and support literacy.

Sample survey

The same question was answered by 517 respondents in the sample survey. They told us that an ideal library is a multifaceted community hub that serves as a reliable source of information, a cultural space, and a place for social engagement. Key themes that emerge from the responses include:⁵

- **Community and Social Hub:** The library is seen as a vital point of contact for community groups and volunteering opportunities, providing a friendly and warm space for people to engage with the community. It is a place where families can enjoy groups and activities together, and retirees can take part in community groups like reading groups.
- **Access to Information and Resources:** Libraries offer free access to a wide range of books and information, which is particularly valuable as books can be

⁵ Themes identified using AI

expensive to buy. They are also a great place for research and accessing free websites, and they provide a valuable service for reading different genres.

- **Support for Education and Personal Development:** Libraries have been influential from school through to working life, serving as a gateway to learning and knowledge development. They enable people to study for academic qualifications and enhance their knowledge in various subjects.
- **Child Development and Family Activities:** Libraries are a great place for children to meet and socialize, with activities like Wriggle and Rhyme encouraging reading from a young age. They also offer a safe and pleasant environment for babies and new parents.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** The use of library services has been highlighted as having a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. The library is also described as a place of peace and calm, improving health and wellbeing for its visitors.

These themes underscore the library's role as a cornerstone of the community, offering educational, social, and cultural benefits to people of all ages. The statements from the table provide a clear testament to the library's enduring value in society.

3.6.4 Examples of good libraries

Respondents were asked to state any library elsewhere in the UK or another country that they thought was really good, and the reasons why.

Open survey

In the open survey, 437 respondents mentioned at least one example of a library that they thought was really good. Respondents provided good examples of libraries from across the UK, including within the BCP area, wider Dorset, London and elsewhere in the UK, as well as several libraries that are overseas.

Reasons why libraries were considered good examples included the quality of collection, those that are well stocked and have a wide selection of books that include recent publications, books in different languages and academic and reference material. Access to a wide range of other items to loan was also considered important.

Respondents also commented on the facilities and infrastructure of other libraries, including the use of both historical and modern buildings and architecture, while it is important that the interior layout has been well designed, is spacious, open plan and incorporate nature and outdoor spaces. It is important that libraries provide traditional services and facilities, including toilets, comfortable seating and are clean and tidy. The provision of refreshments was also often cited by respondents as being in good examples of other libraries. Respondents liked libraries that provided separate study, reading and meeting spaces, as well as computers, printers and internet access.

Libraries that are accessible, conveniently located and have good opening hours were also praised. It is important that libraries are welcoming, friendly and have a pleasant, quiet, warm and safe atmosphere.

Respondents commented that they like libraries that have helpful, knowledgeable and trained staff who offer support to library users of all ages and backgrounds.

Respondents commented that they like libraries that had dedicated space to hold a wide range of events, activities, exhibitions and displays. In addition, respondents like being able to play games and jigsaws in the library. Respondents also explained that they like libraries that act as a community hub that also offered additional support services, as well as libraries that focused on the history, arts and culture of the local area.

Some respondents commented that they like libraries that offer a range of child/toddler groups, events and activities, as well as provide play equipment and games consoles that children and teenagers would like to use. These respondents also praised libraries that had separate child sections/areas or were solely libraries for children.

Sample survey

In the sample survey, 112 respondents gave examples of good libraries they had visited.

Many of the examples and reasons echoed those of the open survey. A good range of up-to date stock, interesting architecture, good layout, refreshments, comfortable seating and a wide variety of events for adults and children are the most common themes.

4 Respondent profile

Two surveys were undertaken for adults; an open survey which could be completed by anyone and a sample survey which targeted a cross section of the local population with quotas for age groups and gender. Where quotas were not met, data has been weighted to match the required profile.

The open survey appealed largely to those who use libraries and is useful in helping us to understand the opinions of current library users. The sample survey is more representative of the BCP population as a whole and is useful in helping us to understand more about the wider population, including both library users and non-users.

The following shows a comparison of the personal characteristics of respondents to each of the surveys.

4.1 Location

Respondents were asked to provide their home postcode. Separate analysis has been carried out using this data to calculate travel time / distance to libraries. The maps below show the spread of respondents across the area, with the numbers indicating the number of respondents in each postcode sector.

Figure 38: Open survey respondents by postcode sector

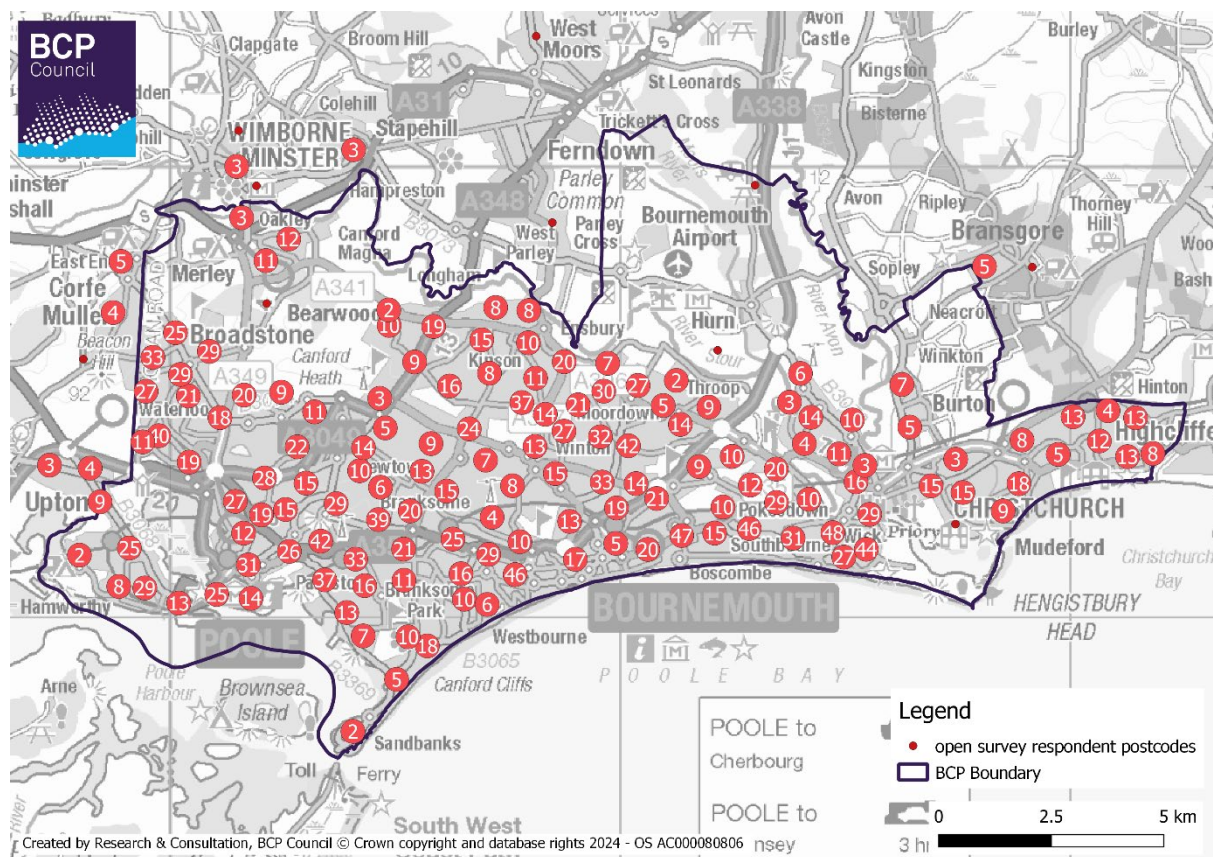
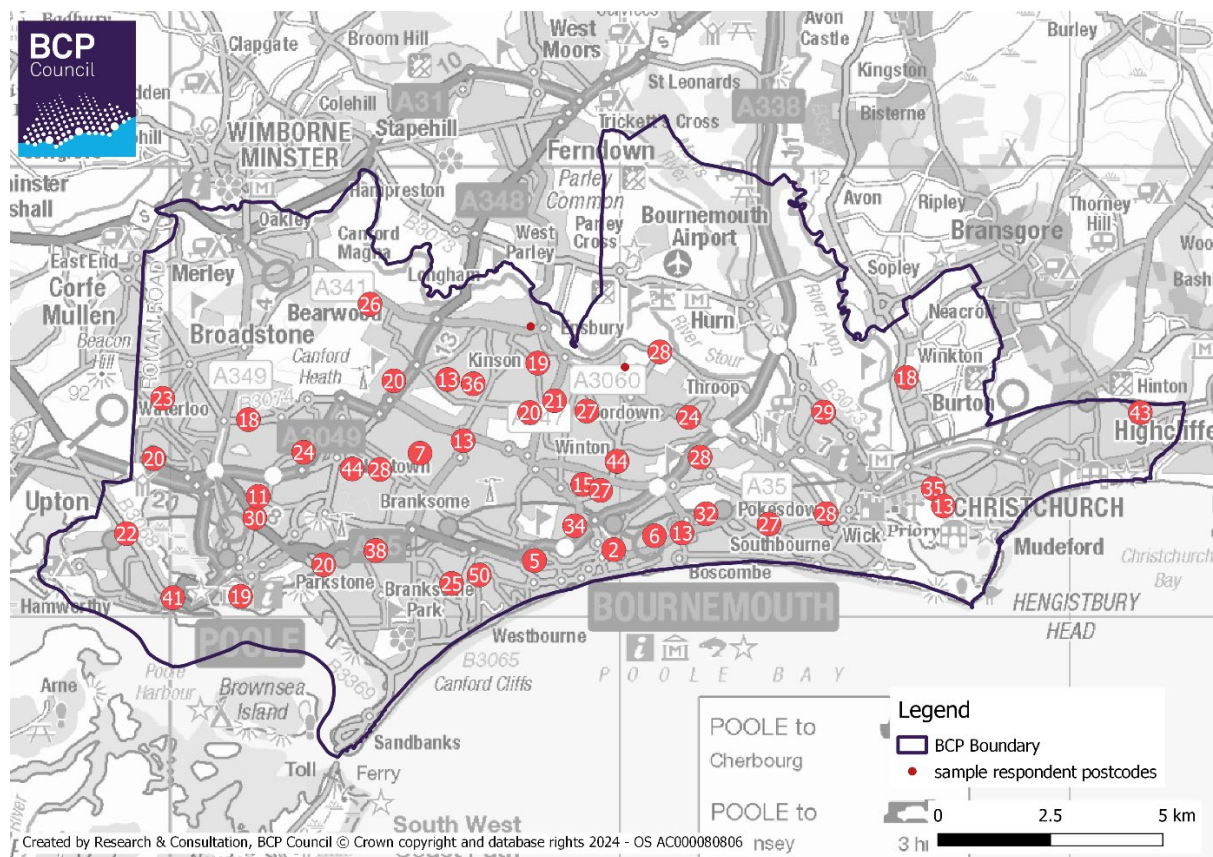


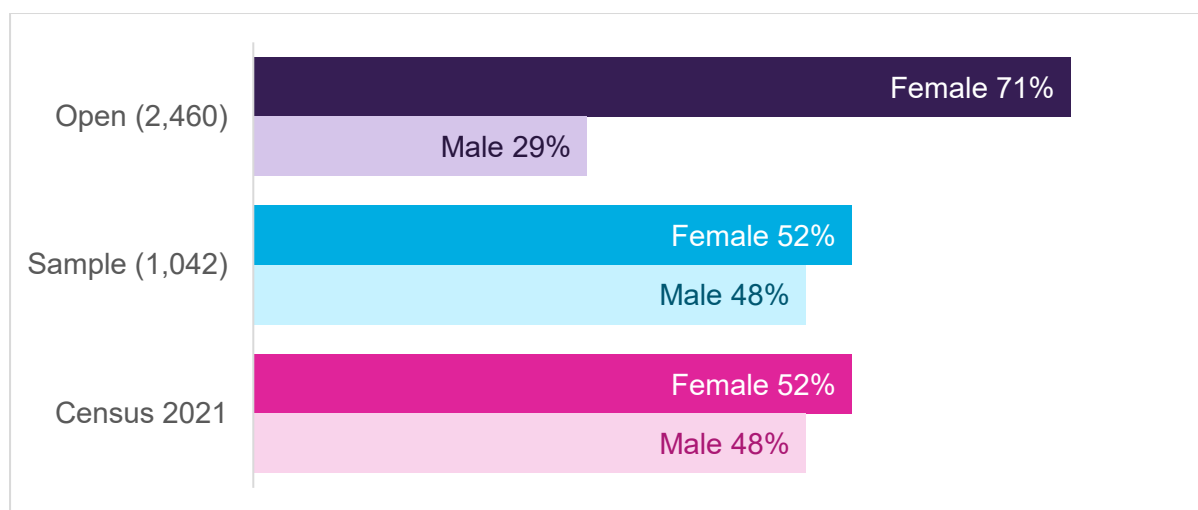
Figure 39: Sample survey respondents by postcode



4.2 Sex and gender

Both surveys asked respondents what their sex at birth was.

Figure 40: Sex at birth



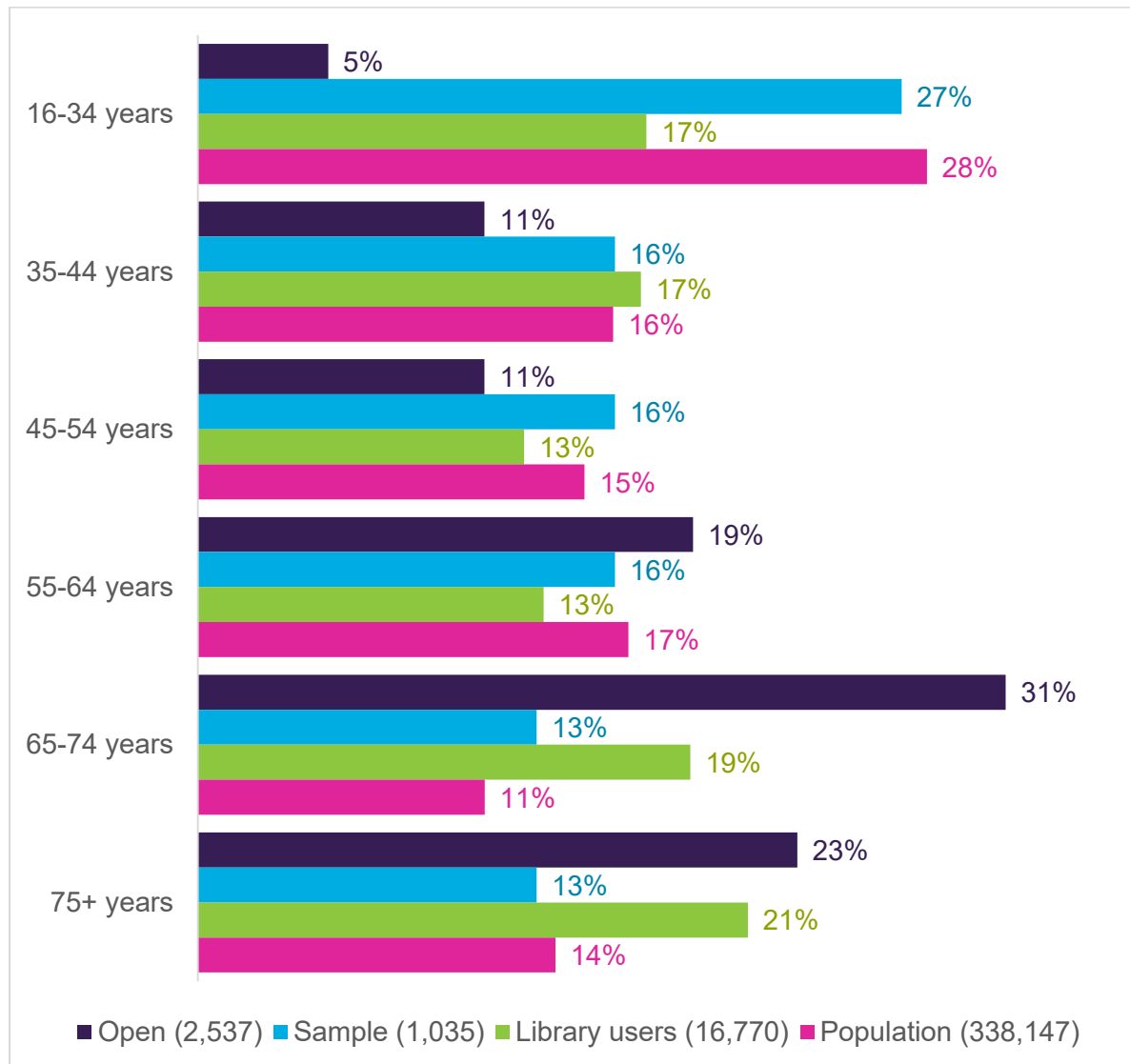
Bases as labelled

Census 2021: BCP residents, age 15+

As this was one of the quota demographics for the sample survey, the profile is very similar to that of the population. Females are over-represented in the open survey responses. Only 10 respondents in the open survey indicated that their gender identity is different to their sex at birth – no further analysis has been done for this characteristic to protect anonymity. The question of gender identity was not included in the sample survey.

4.3 Age

Figure 41: Age groups



Bases as labelled
 Population from 2023 ONS Mid Year Estimates

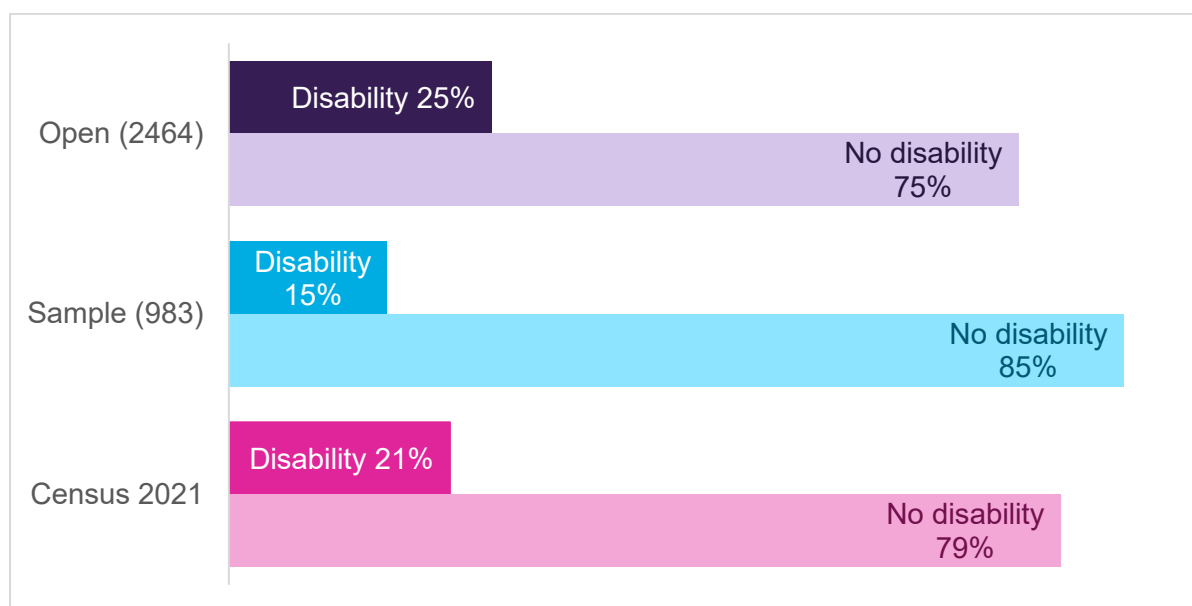
The open survey has a much older age profile than the sample survey, with all age groups over 55 years of age being over-represented in the open survey compared to the sample survey and those aged under 35 being particularly under-represented.

The sample survey age profile is close to that of the BCP population (2023 Mid-Year Population Estimates) while the open survey is closer to the profile of active library users (2023-24) although older age groups (particularly ages 65-74) are still over-represented in the survey with under-35s being the most under-represented group.

4.4 Disability

Respondents were asked if they have any disability or long-term health condition that limits their day-to-day activities.

Figure 42: Disability or limiting long-term health condition



Bases as labelled

Census 2021: BCP residents, age 15+

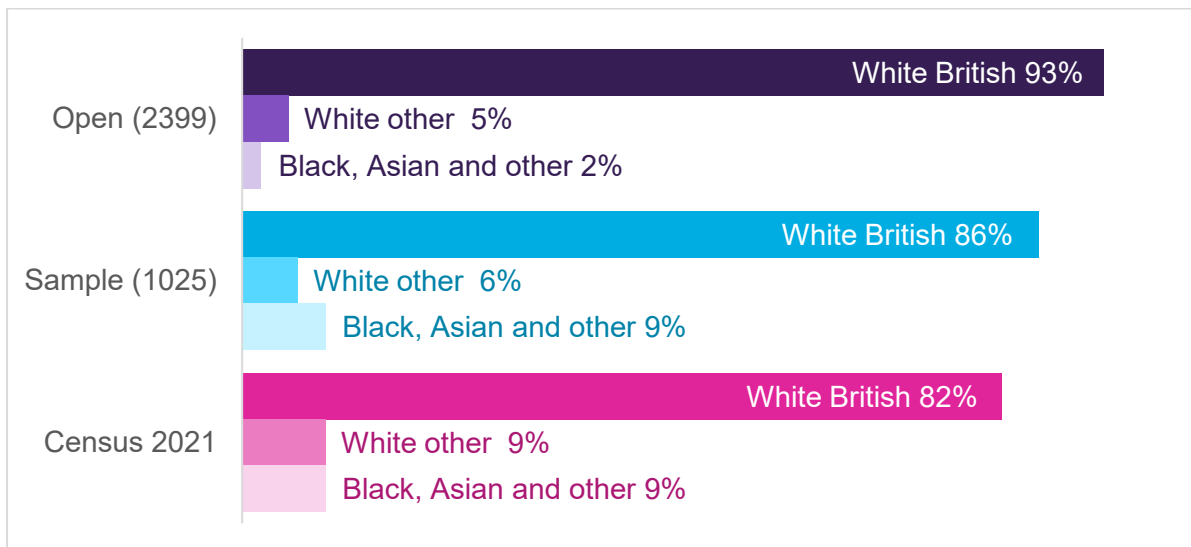
Disability is strongly correlated with age. The open survey, which has an older age profile, has a higher proportion of respondents reporting a disability or long-term health condition compared to the sample survey and to the local population.

Despite having a representative age profile, people with a disability are under-represented in the sample survey compared to the overall BCP population.

4.5 Ethnicity

Respondents were asked about their ethnic background. The ethnicity question mirrors that used in the Census.2021. In both surveys, the numbers of respondents in each individual ethnic group (other than White British) is too small for analysis. Ethnic groups have been categorised into white British, other white (including Irish, Roma, Gypsy or Irish Traveller and other white backgrounds) and all other ethnic backgrounds (including Mixed, Asian / Asian British, Black / Black British and all other minority ethnic groups).

Figure 43: Ethnic groups



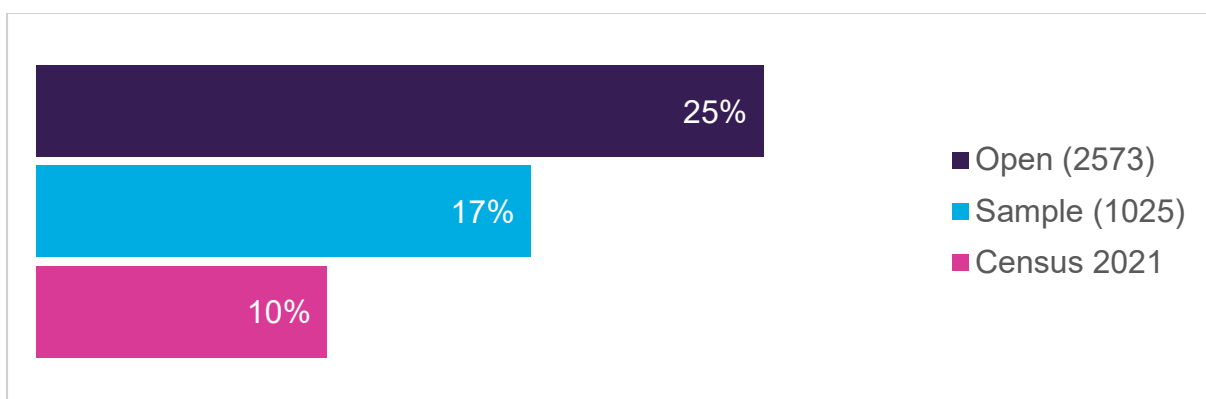
Bases as labelled

Census 2021: All BCP residents

Both surveys under-represent the ‘other’ white ethnic group. The black, Asian and other ethnic group is under-represented in the open survey while the sample survey matches the Census population for this group.

4.6 Unpaid carers

Figure 44: Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age? (% Yes)



Bases as labelled

Census 2021: BCP residents, age 18+

The survey asked “Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?” and respondents were asked not to include anything they do as part of their paid employment. This question matches that used in the 2021 Census,

with the only difference being that the Census asked carers to specify the number of hours per week while our surveys asked for a simple Yes / No response.

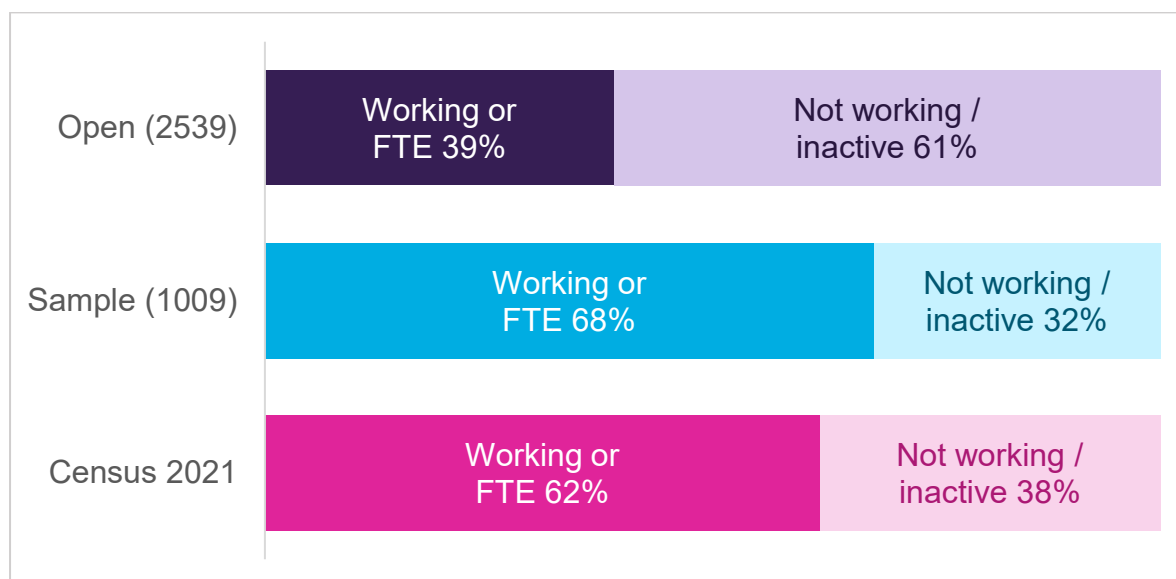
Both surveys show a much higher proportion of people with carer responsibilities than we might expect based on the Census.

4.7 Economic activity

Economic activity is usually asked to determine whether or not someone is an active participant in the labour market. Economically active includes full-time and part-time employees, self-employed and unemployed (if seeking work and available for work). Economically inactive includes full-time students (if not also working), retired, looking after the home / family and disabled / long-term sick.

For the purposes of the Library Strategy we have grouped these categories slightly differently to reflect those more likely to be able to use the library during the day and those more likely to access it during the evening / weekend. For this purpose we have grouped those in full-time education (FTE) together with those in employment, and grouped unemployed with the remaining inactive categories.

Figure 45: Economic activity



Bases as labelled

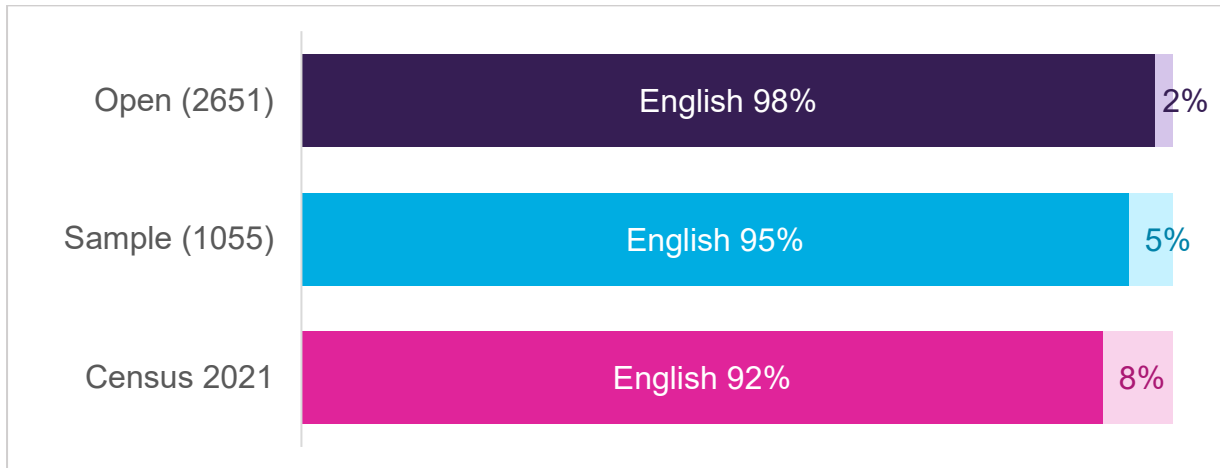
Census 2021: BCP residents, age 16+

The sample survey most closely represents the population profile from the Census, although the working / FTE group is slightly over-represented. The profile of respondents in the open survey is almost the reverse of the Census profile with the not working / inactive group very strongly over-represented; this is most likely due to the open survey's higher proportion of older age groups who are more likely to be retired.

4.8 Language

The survey asked respondents what is their first language. This question is similar to that in the 2021 Census but with 'English' or 'any other language' as the only two options.

Figure 46: What is your first or preferred language?



Bases as labelled

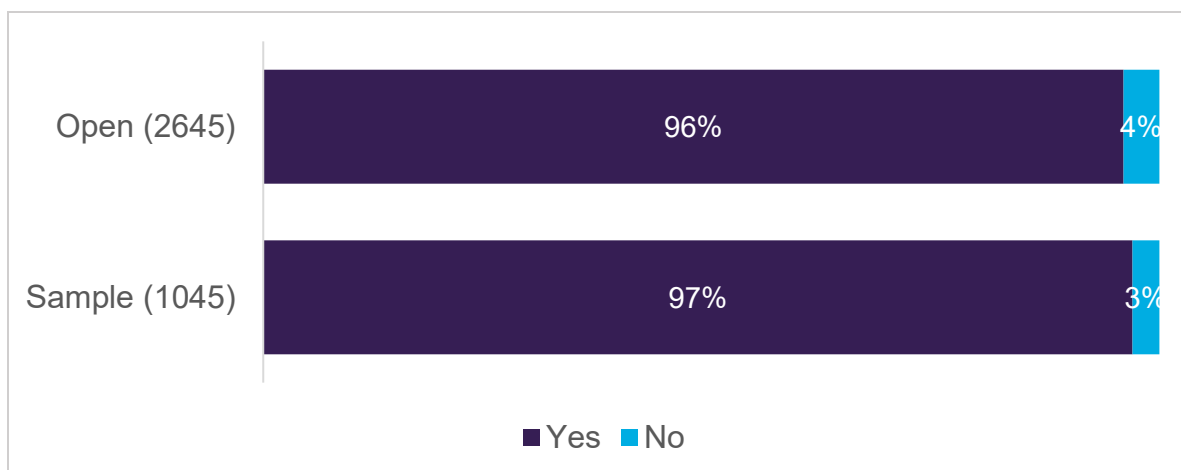
Census 2021: all BCP residents

Both surveys under-represent those whose preferred language is not English, with the biggest difference from the Census in the open survey.

4.9 Internet access

The survey finally asked about internet access.

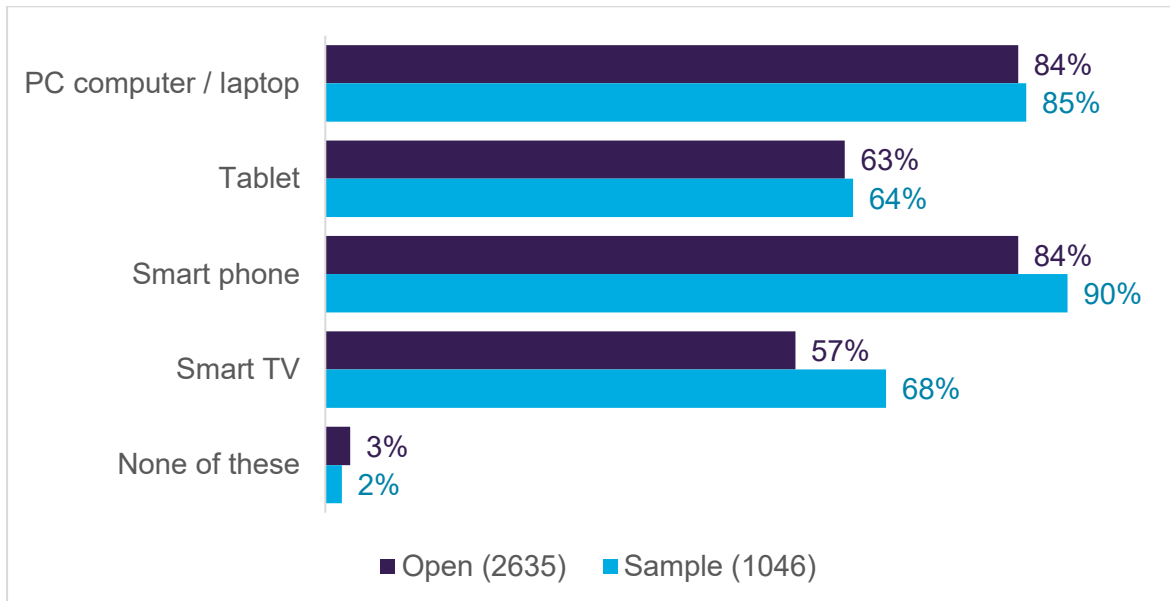
Figure 47: Do you have access to the internet at home?



Bases as labelled

Almost all respondents in both surveys have access to the internet at home, with fewer than one in twenty saying that they do not.

Figure 48: Which of the following do you have at home?



Bases as labelled

Most respondents in both surveys have devices that can be used to access the internet at home. Smart phones and PC computer / laptop are the most common devices.