

**Cumberland
Council**

Public Library Service Strategic Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

Cumberland Council, as a newly established unitary authority, has undertaken a Strategic Needs Assessment of its public library service to ensure it remains fit for the future. This review considers statutory obligations, the needs of residents, and the Council's strategic priorities within a rapidly changing socio-cultural environment.

The assessment highlights significant demographic and socio-economic challenges, including an ageing population with higher health risks, pockets of severe deprivation affecting around 28,800 residents, below-average educational attainment, high levels of child poverty, and rurality impacting access to services. While the library service is well-regarded (the majority of survey respondents (84.7%) rated its services as either very good or excellent, covered in detail below), issues such as staffing pressures, building suitability, and low awareness of services among residents require attention. The Council's Strategic priorities (2025–2030) positions libraries as key partners in promoting health, wellbeing, and early intervention.

Feedback from residents, staff, and stakeholders identifies a number of priority areas for development:

1. Maintain satisfaction with core services (of provision of books and information, IT and PC access, activities and events in and out of library settings), while investing in library buildings.
2. Address low awareness of services among both users and non-users by improving marketing and promotion beyond reliance on social media.
3. Expand engagement with the digital offer.
4. Make libraries more appealing to young people through events and study spaces.
5. Enhance staff training to broaden service delivery and digital support.
6. Strengthen collaboration to deliver tailored services and improve access for vulnerable and rural residents.
7. Review the nature, timing, and location of events to match community expectations.
8. Explore how to make better use of library buildings, including hiring out space for business and community use.
9. Address concerns about service quality in library links and volunteer knowledge.
10. Extend services to those unable to access library buildings through mobile and outreach provision.

In conclusion, Cumberland Libraries must evolve to become dynamic, inclusive hubs that meet diverse community needs. This will require improved marketing, investment in welcoming spaces, expanded health and wellbeing support, targeted outreach to deprived areas, a stronger digital offer, and innovative service delivery models. Building partnerships and securing external funding will be critical to achieving these ambitions and ensuring libraries remain central to community life.

Introduction

Cumberland Council's library service operates a public library network comprising 3 main libraries and 12 branch libraries, all provided with staffing. It also works in partnership with community settings to operate 8 library links. There is also a digital library service, offering free access to e-books, audio books, newspapers and magazines to all library members, and a home delivery service delivering books to residents unable to leave their homes due to health conditions and who have no one who can collect reading material for them.

In addition to the public library service, Cumberland Council also operates a prison library and a school library service covering the county of Cumbria. A shared service agreement, with Westmorland and Furness Council, underpins the delivery of the public library service, providing shared access to the stock of library resources as well as staffing expertise for back-office functions and logistics. This document focuses solely on the public library service.

This library provision serves a population in Cumberland of 273,300 (Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021).

Cumberland Council is a relatively new unitary authority formed in April 2023, and its library service was created from part of that formerly operated by Cumbria County Council across a wider county footprint.

Cumberland Council takes a fresh approach to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by its residents and communities. Linking the design and delivery of the library service with identifiable local needs, and basing this on an evidence-based approach, is supported by Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The Cumberland Council Plan 2023 to 2027 sets out the ambitions for the Council in five strategic themes, all of which the library service has a role to support in terms of an offer to residents and local communities:

- Improving health and wellbeing
- Addressing inequalities
- Local economies that work for local people
- Environmental resilience and climate emergency
- Delivering excellent public service

Cumberland Council has initiated a programme of work, 'Libraries Fit for the Future', to evaluate its current library services and identify ways it can support the overarching Council themes by looking to:

- Continue to deliver good library services that are welcoming and accessible to all
- Offer residents convenient, local access to library and council services that empower them to achieve positive health and wellbeing and economic outcomes
- Deliver services in an effective and efficient way that guarantees long-term financial sustainability

Cumberland Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7).

There is no definition in the Act of what constitutes a "comprehensive and efficient service". The DCMS is responsible for superintendence and promoting the improvement of libraries across England but does not seek to prescribe how councils discharge their statutory duty nor to defend the status quo just by virtue of it being the current provision. Cumberland Council considers that its operation of the public library service discharges this duty as described by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

The detail of delivery of a comprehensive and efficient service varies among councils, depending on the unique needs of their areas. Local councillors and officials are responsible for deciding library budgets and how services are managed and delivered. The DCMS advises this must be carried out:

- In consultation with their communities
- Based on evidence of local needs
- In compliance with their statutory obligations
- While considering the available resources for delivering their public library service.

A strategic needs assessment (SNA) is a component of this, gathering and analysing information about the population, along with library usage, to provide a description of the current and future library needs of a local population.

This document includes:

- Analysis of feedback from stakeholders: these are Cumberland library staff, local residents, whether library users or non-users, Council members and officers, and community and third sector groups in the authority area.
- Data to understand current and future demographics to develop an understanding of current and possible usage patterns of libraries
- Current performance within Cumberland's libraries
- Cumberland Council's strategic priorities and what this means for library provision.

The SNA will enable the council to identify where it may need to focus its resources to ensure it delivers its statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and to provide services delivering both library outcomes and broader council priorities. This information will be used to inform proposals on how Cumberland develops its library service in the medium term.

Cumberland Geographic and Demographic Information

This section summarises demographic information relating to the local authority area of Cumberland. The base data was provided by the Census of 2021, and was supplemented by Mid-2023 Population Estimates, both published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Following the general population information, data is then provided which relates to Life Expectations and Deprivation, both of which impact on life chances.

Where appropriate and to provide context, data sets have been compared to national statistics.

Geography

Cumberland covers an area of 3,012 square km. With a resident population of 273,300 persons at Census Day 2021, the average population density of Cumberland is 91 people per square km. Cumberland is much less densely populated than the national average (England and Wales 395 people per square km²). Population density varies considerably across the former districts ranging from 77 people per square km in the Allerdale area to 106 people per square km in the Carlisle area. Variation is even greater across Cumberland's wards; ranging from 13 people per square km in the Bothel and Wharrels ward to 4,497 people per square km in the Upperby ward. Over half of Cumberland's residents live in rural areas (53%) compared to 18% across England.

Demography

Age

There are an estimated 276,876 people living in Cumberland. Compared to England, Cumberland has an older population; there are fewer children (0-18years) 19.7% (54,537 children). This compares to 22.0% nationally. There are fewer children and young people aged 0-25 years, 26.0% (72,123) compared to 30.4% nationally. There are also fewer working age people (16-64 years), 59.6% (164,974 people) compared to 62.9% nationally. However, there are higher proportions of older people (65+yrs) living in Cumberland, 23.8% (66,028 people) compared to 18.7% nationally. (Source: **Mid-2023 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics**).



Population age profile



Source: Mid-2023 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics

Over the last 10 years, Cumberland's overall population has increased by just 1%, this compares to 7% nationally. During that time, numbers of children aged 0-15 years have fallen slightly by -0.5%; numbers of working-age people have fallen further by -3.6%; while numbers of those aged 65 and over have increased by +16.1%. The increase in older people reflects the national picture. However, nationally, the population has increased across all age groups.

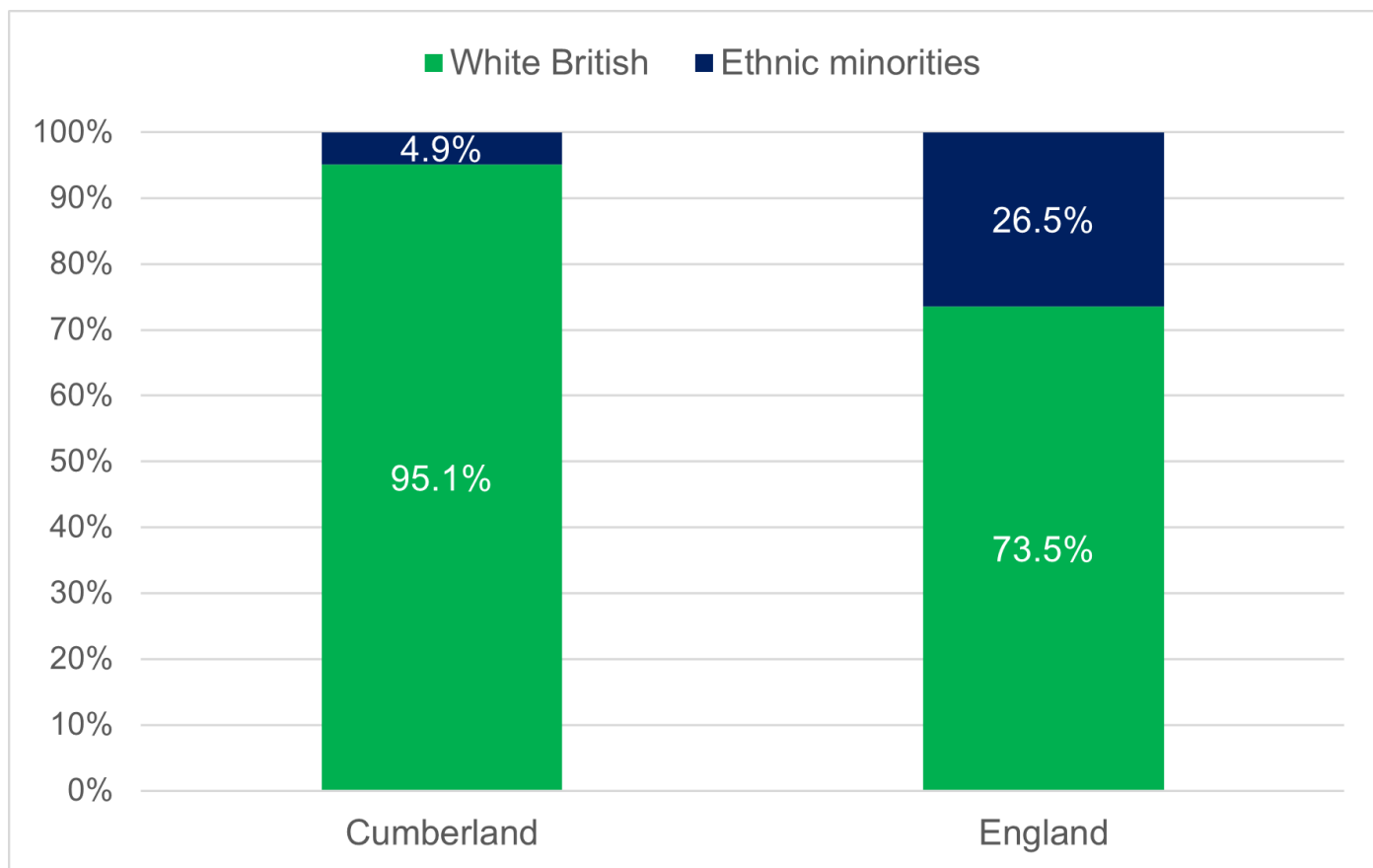
Cumberland's population is an ageing population with the number of children and young people (0-15 years) and working-age people (16-64 years) projected to decrease by 2032 while the number of older people (65+yrs) is projected to increase. By 2032, the number of children aged 0-15 years is projected to decrease by -12.7% (-5,800). The population aged 16-64 is projected to decrease by -2.5% (-2,400) by 2032 which is in contrast to projected growth of 5.5% nationally but is an improved situation compared to the previous ONS projections which projected a fall of over 9,500. When the rising State Pension Age is taken into account, the broader working age population is projected to increase by +1.5% by 2032 (+2,450). The population aged 65+ is projected to increase by 21.6% by 2032 (+14,000) which is a slightly higher increase than nationally (+20.9%). (Source: **Office for National Statistics – Population and Migration**)

Ethnicity

Cumberland's population is not as ethnically diverse as the rest of England with low proportions of residents from ethnic minority groups. 95.1% of Cumberland's residents identified their ethnic group as 'White British' this compares to 74.4% nationally. Just 4.9% of residents in Cumberland identified as ethnic minority backgrounds, this compares to 26.5% in England. Despite this, there is some variation across Cumberland's wards from just 1.7% in Seaton ward in the West to 17.6% in Castle ward in the North. Although proportions of ethnic

minority residents have increased in Cumberland over the last two censuses, it has been at a much slower rate than the rest of England. (Source: 2021 Census)

Population by Ethnicity; Cumberland vs England



Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

Migration

The ONS estimate that between mid-2010 and mid-2020, 85,900 people moved into Cumberland from other parts of the UK and 83,300 people moved out from Cumberland to other parts of the UK (net increase of 2,600 persons). Furthermore, the ONS estimated that 6,400 people moved into Cumberland from overseas and 5,800 people moved out from Cumberland to overseas (net increase of 600 persons).

The 2021 Census reported that the greatest proportion of Cumberland's usual residents were born in the UK (95.5%). The greatest proportions of Cumberland's residents born in non-UK countries were born in EU14 countries, EU8 countries and the Middle East and Asia (all 1% each). Note: EU14 Countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. EU8 Countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia. EU2 Countries: Bulgaria, Romania.

When compared the national average, Cumberland had a much smaller proportion of residents born in non-UK countries (Cumberland: 4.6%, England & Wales: 16.8%). However, the proportion of residents born in non-UK countries varied considerably across Cumberland's wards; ranging from 1.7% in Aspatria ward to 16.1% in Castle ward.

The greatest numbers of Cumberland's usual residents born in non-UK countries originated from the following individual countries:

- Poland (2,055 persons).
- Other EU Countries (962 persons).
- Germany (928 persons).
- Romania (755 persons).
- Ireland (568 persons).

Visitors

Parts of Cumberland are located in the Lake District National Park which have significant tourism / visitor sectors. The authority has a number of both settlement based and rural attractions that support the visitor economy. It is therefore not just the resident population of Cumberland that impacts on both service demand and provision, but also the number of visitors and tourists to the area, as well as second homeowners.

In 2021 figures an estimated 15.9 million visitors visited Cumberland (pre-pandemic the 2019 figure was 20.7million); however, it is worth noting that some of those visitors may already be existing Cumberland residents.

Furthermore, the 2021 Census reported that in total there were 2,200 people from a different local authority using holiday homes in Cumberland. However, these figures varied considerably across the former districts; with 1,730 people from a different local authority using holiday homes in Allerdale, 140 people from a different local authority using holiday homes in Carlisle, and 505 people from a different local authority using holiday homes in Copeland. Of all LTLAs nationally, Allerdale had the 26th greatest rate of people from a different local authority using holiday homes in the area (18 per 1,000 usual residents); this compared to rates of 7.5 and 1.3 per 1,000 usual residents in Copeland and Carlisle respectively.

Finally, the 2021 Census reported that there was a total of 8,725 dwellings located in Cumberland that were used as a second address for any purpose (figures not yet available by number of persons). These second addresses were broken down by type as follows:

- Another parent or guardian's address (3,535 dwellings);
- Student's home address (1,855 dwellings);
- Other (including armed forces) (980 dwellings);
- Holiday home (920 dwellings);
- Partner's address (795 dwellings);
- Address when working away from home (625 dwellings); and
- Student's term time address (15 dwellings).

University Students

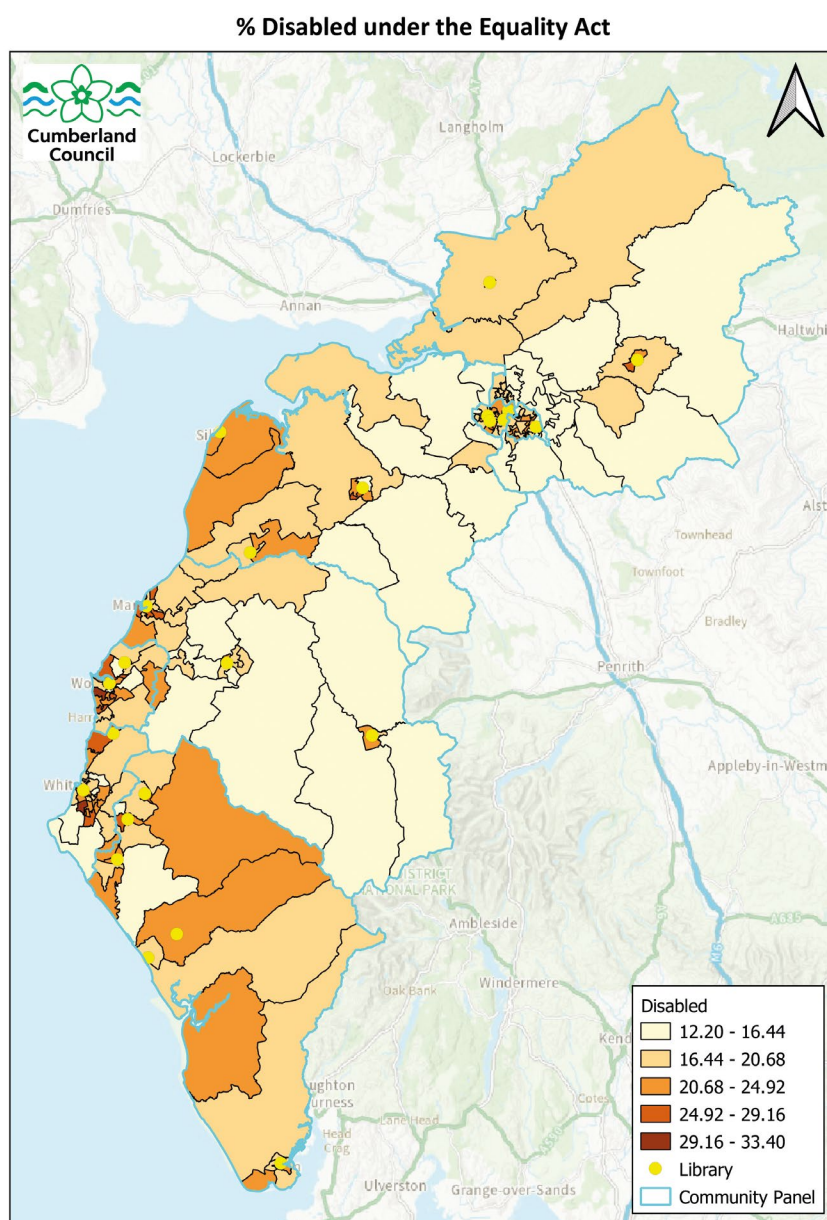
The University of Cumbria has two campuses in Carlisle and one in Workington, and UCLAN has a campus in Whitehaven at Westlakes Campus. The 2021 Census required that students who intended to stay regularly at a term-time address should be recorded as usually resident

at their term-time address, even if because of the coronavirus pandemic they did not stay there as much as planned, so long as they have the right to return on or after Census day (even if only for one night).

The 2021 Census reported that 9,000 usual residents in Cumberland reported that they were full-time students aged 16-24 years (3.3% of all usual residents); this proportion was smaller than the England and Wales average (5.4%). Across Cumberland's wards, Denton Holme had the greatest number of full-time students aged 16-24 years (400 persons, 6%), while Carlisle's Castle and Currock wards had the largest proportions of full-time students aged 16-24 years (both 6.1%).

Disability

As reported in the 2021 Census, there are 52,329 residents in Cumberland who are disabled under the Equality Act (2010), accounting for 19.4%, this is above the national average for England at 16.9%. Across Cumberland, proportions of disabled residents are highest in the former district of Copeland at 20.7% while Carlisle has the lowest 18.4%. There is significant variation across ward areas with Moss Bay and Moorclose ward in Workington (Allerdale) with the highest levels at 24.8% compared to 14.6% in Dalston and Burgh ward (Carlisle).



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Religion

As reported in the 2021 Census, more than half of all residents in Cumberland are Christian, accounting for 159,882 people; when compared to the national average there are more residents who are Christian at 58.5% compared to 46.3% in England. Just over a third of residents in Cumberland have no religion accounting for 34.5%, this compares to 37.4% nationally. 1,383 residents are Muslim accounting for 0.5%, this compares to 6.7% nationally.

Gender Identity

As reported in the 2021 Census, 94.9% of residents aged 16 years and over in Cumberland identify as the same gender they were registered at birth, this is slightly above the national average of 93.5%. Just 0.2% of residents have a different gender to the gender registered at birth, while there are even smaller proportions of residents who are Trans women (0.1%), Trans men (0.1%) and any other gender identities (0.1%). One in twenty residents (4.8%) did not answer this question in the Census, similar to the national picture.

Sexual Orientation

As reported in the 2021 Census, 91.3% of residents aged 16 years and over in Cumberland are straight or heterosexual, this is slightly above the national average of 89.4%. Just 2.4% of residents reported their sexual orientation as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Other (LGB+), just below the national average of 3.2%; while 6.3% did not answer, this compares to 7.5% nationally.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

As reported in the 2021 Census, 47.0% of residents aged 16 years and over in Cumberland are married or in a registered civil partnership, this is slightly above the national average at 44.7%. One third of residents (33.7%) have never married and never registered a civil partnership, this is below the national average of 37.9%. One in ten residents (9.8%) have divorced or dissolved a civil partnership; 2.1% are separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership; and 7.5% are widowed or a surviving civil partnership partner.

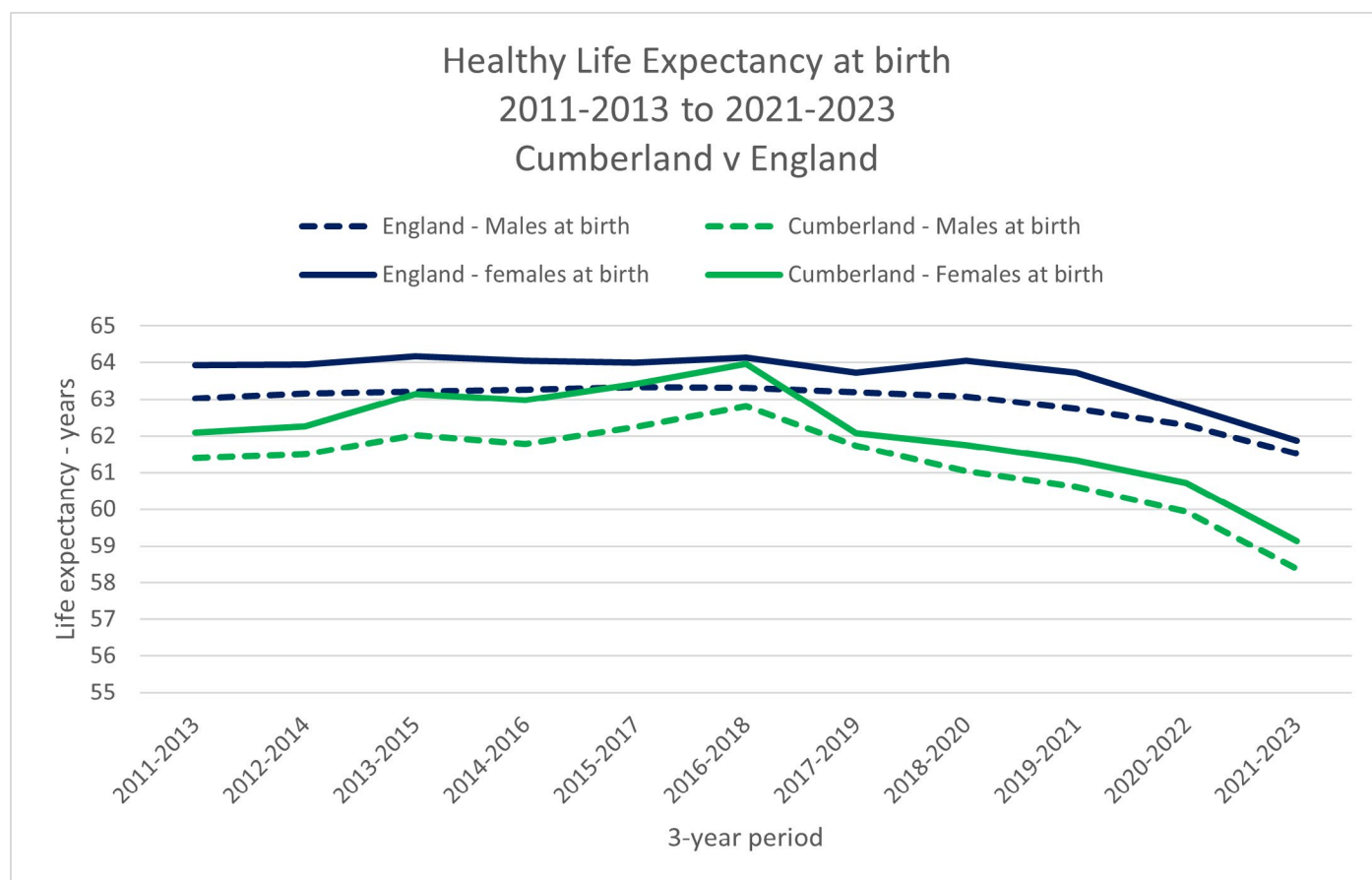
Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy

Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are key measures of health which allow us to monitor inequalities across different areas as well as changes over time in order to identify whether health and inequalities are improving or getting worse. Wider determinants including socio-economic factors such as income and employment, education, lifestyle including physical activity and smoking can all impact on health outcomes and life expectancy.

Life expectancy is a measure of the average number of years people will live beyond their current age (estimated length of life). In 2021-23, a male born in Cumberland could expect to live 77.4 years and a female could expect to live to 81.5 years, both are below the national averages of 79.1 years and 83.0 years respectively.

Life expectancy for both males and females have increased in Cumberland over the last 20 years, however, they have remained below the England average throughout that time; furthermore, the rate of improvement has been slower than England. The COVID pandemic had a notable impact on life expectancy both nationally and locally, life expectancy for both males and females haven't yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, however, this is more apparent in Cumberland.

Life Expectancy (at birth) for males and females; Cumberland v England; 2001-03 to 2021-23

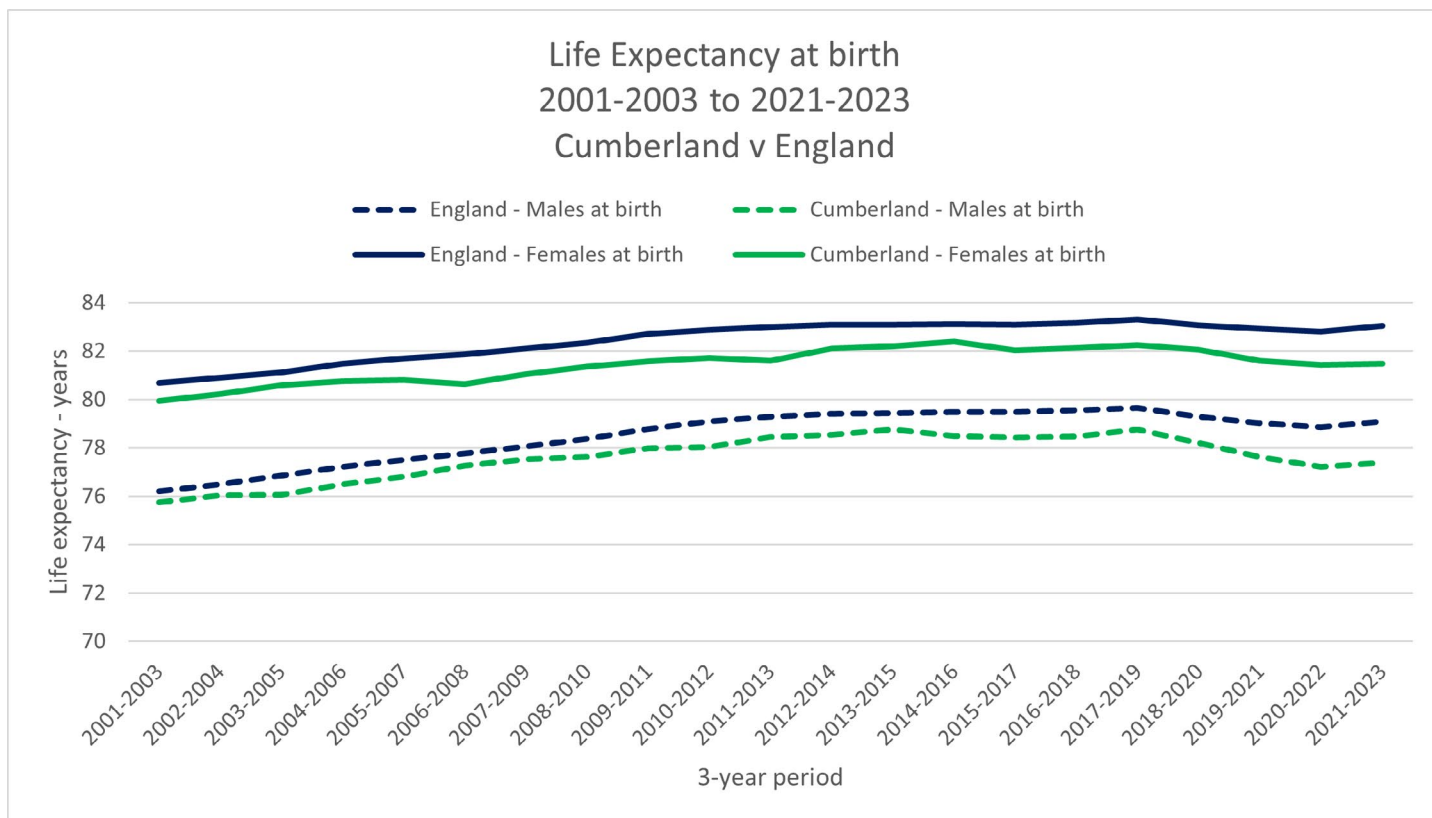


Source: Office for National Statistics

Healthy life expectancy is a measure of the average number of years a person would expect to live in good health (based on contemporary mortality rates and prevalence of self-reported good health'). A male born in Cumberland can expect to spend 58.4 years of their life in good health, for females this increases to 59.1 years; both are below the national averages of 61.5 years and 61.9 years respectively. In Cumberland, a male can expect to live 19 years of their life in ill-health; while females can expect to live 22.4 years in ill health; both males and females in Cumberland can expect to live more years in ill health compared to England.

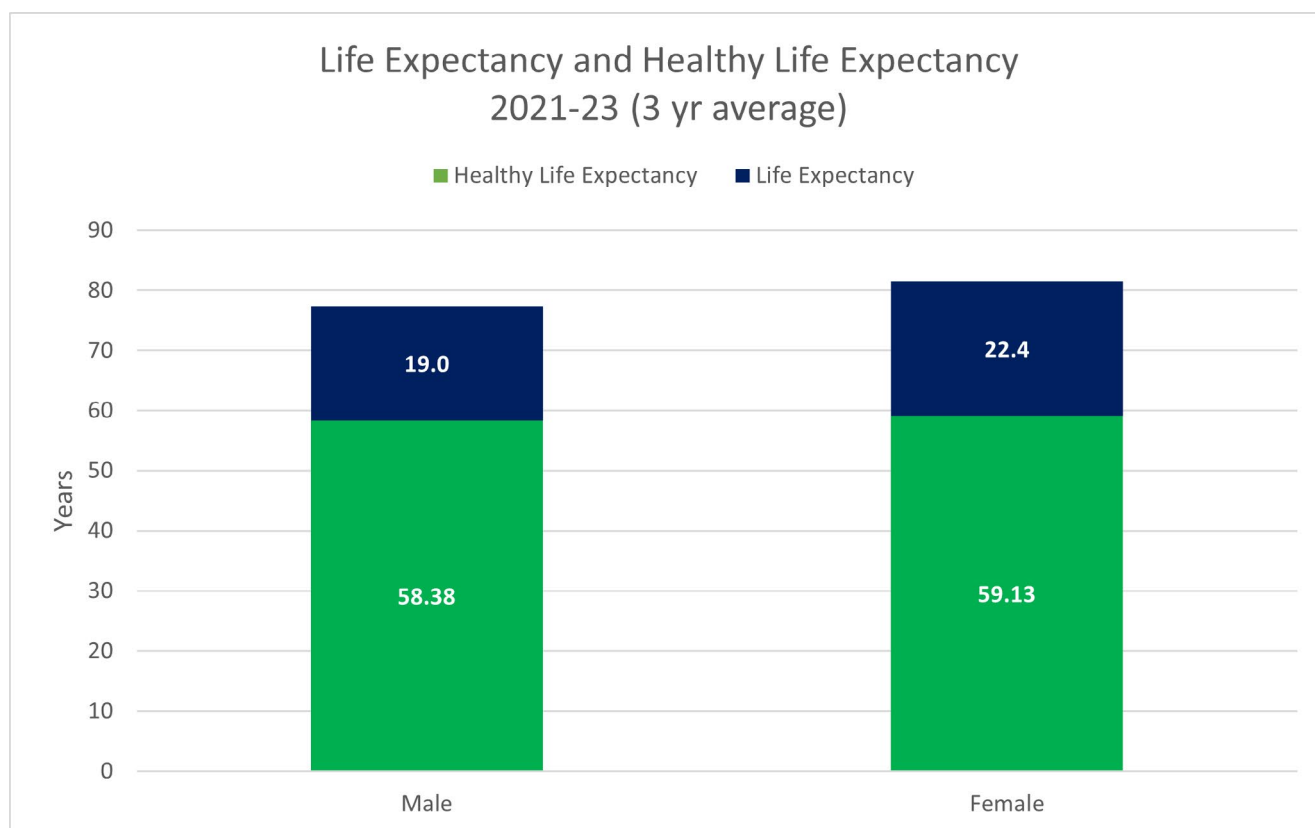
Although life expectancy has increased over the years, the number of years of people living in good health has fallen in both males and females in Cumberland; although this reflects the national picture the decline has been greater in Cumberland. Healthy life expectancy for both males and females in Cumberland has been below national averages since 2011.

Healthy Life Expectancy (at birth) Males and Females; Cumberland v England; 2011-03 to 2021-23



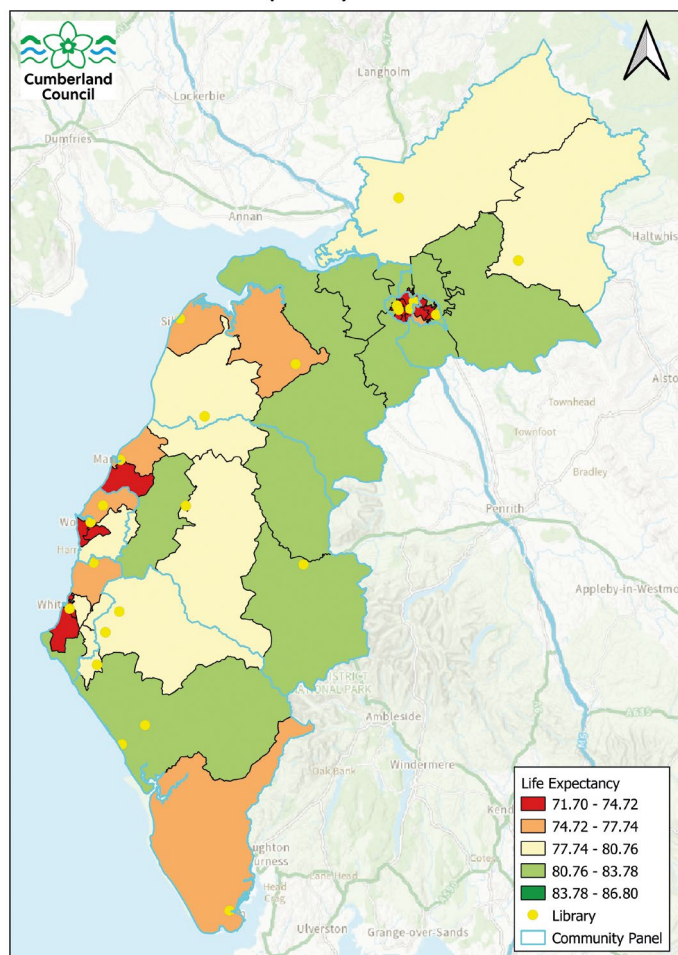
Source: Office for National Statistics

Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy, Cumberland, 2021-23 (3-year average)

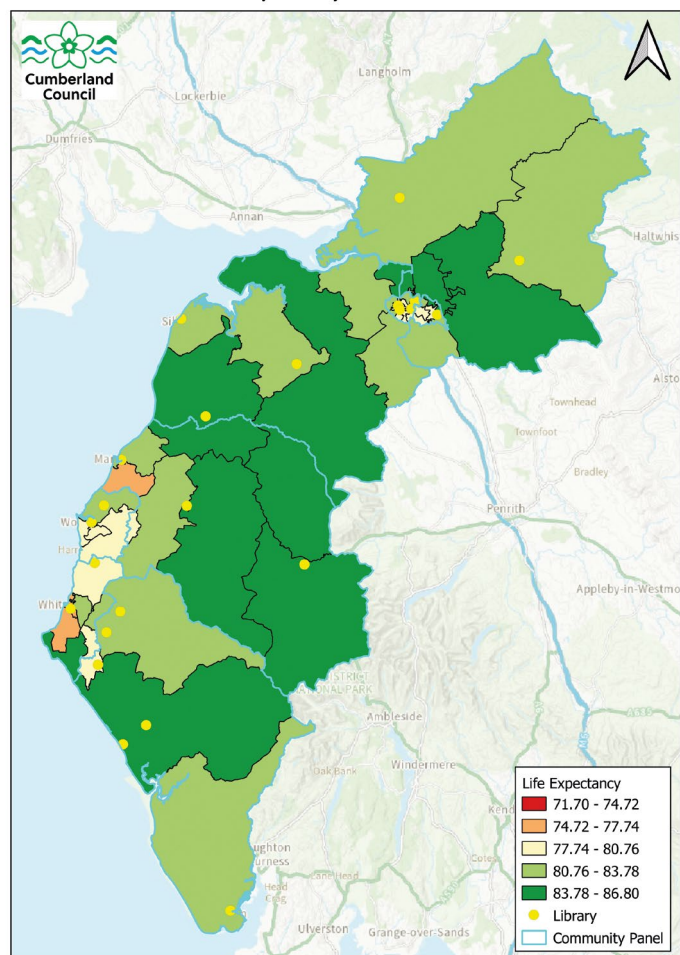


Source: Office for National Statistics

Life Expectancy at Birth: Male



Life Expectancy at Birth: Female



Deprivation

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Around 28,800 of Cumberland's residents (10.3%) are living in some of the most deprived communities in England, in terms of overall deprivation. These most challenged communities are located in Cumberland's more urban areas and in particular along the west coast. A total of 18 communities (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)) in Cumberland fall within the 10% most deprived in England. These communities are spread across the former district areas as follows: Allerdale (8 LSOAs), Carlisle (5 LSOAs) and Copeland (5 LSOAs). It is generally in these deprived areas where there are high levels of child poverty and low educational attainment; household income tends to be low; unemployment rates are often high; and overall health outcomes are poor. Cumberland has significantly more LSOAs in the 10% most deprived for health (36 LSOAs) and living environment (36 LSOAs) and also has more than average in the education (23 LSOAs) and barriers to housing and services (23 LSOAs) domains. There is one LSOA that sits within the 1% most deprived communities in England, ranking 241 out of 33,755 LSOAs (where 1 is most deprived). This LSOA is located within the Kells and Sandwith ward in the Whitehaven and Coastal Community Panel area and covers the Greenbank and Woodhouse estates.

In contrast, there are seven communities across Cumberland classed as among the 10% least deprived nationally and 10,900 residents (3.9%) live in these areas. These communities are found within the former district areas of Allerdale (2 LSOAs), Carlisle (3 LSOAs) and Copeland (2 LSOAs). The least deprived LSOA in Cumberland is located in the Cockermouth South ward in the Lakes to Sea Community Panel area. (Source: **Indices of Deprivation 2025**)

Children in poverty

Children living in low income families

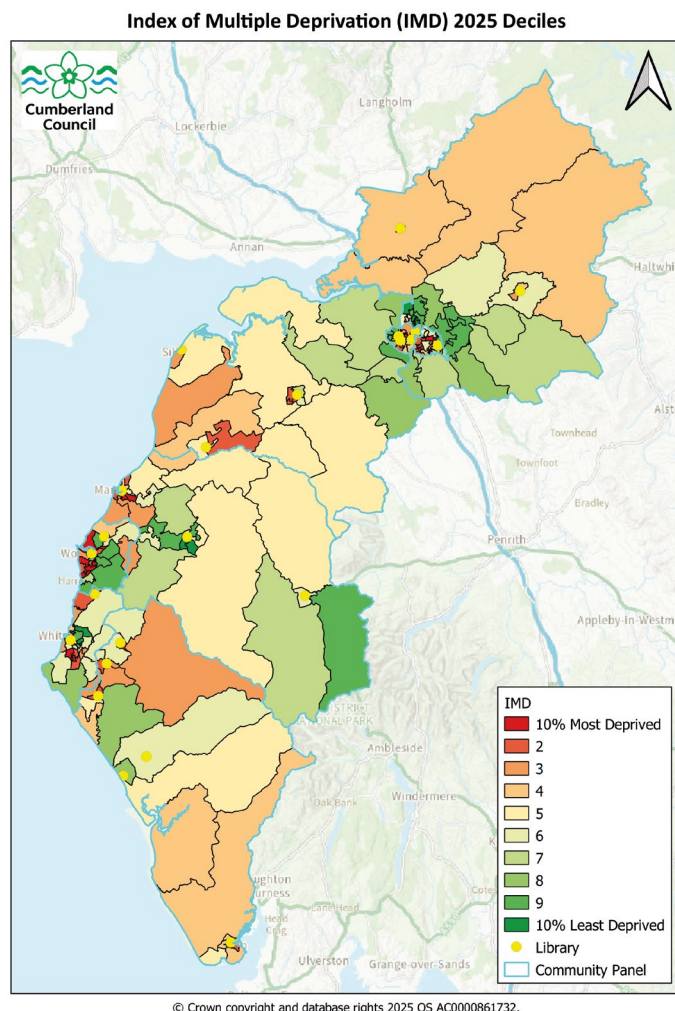
There are significant health and socio-economic risks associated with poverty and, in particular, for children. It can negatively impact learning and education; self-esteem and confidence; there are increased risks of obesity, mental health problems, and a greater risk of chronic ill health in later life. (Source: stateofchildhealth.rcpch.ac.uk).

In 2024, there were 10,077 children (aged 0-15 years) in Cumberland who were living in poverty (relative poverty) accounting for 22.0%, this was similar to the national average of 22.1%. Levels of child poverty have been increasing in Cumberland in recent years, reflecting the national picture.

Across Cumberland, there are areas with significantly high levels of child poverty. Levels are highest in the Moss Bay and Moorclose ward in the West of Cumberland with 40% of children living in poverty; in the North, in Currock ward in Carlisle, more than 1 in 3 children (38.2%) are living in poverty; and in Millom ward in the South, almost 1 in 3 children (31.3%) are living in poverty. (Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2025).

Free School Meals

Around 1 in 5 pupils attending schools in Cumberland are eligible for free school meals, accounting for 8,457 pupils (21.2%), this is below the national average of 24.6%. For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, free school meal eligibility increases to 36.4% (2,631 pupils), this compares to 39.3% nationally. (Source: January 2024 School Census, Department for Education, **Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2024 - GOV.UK**).



Benefit Claimants

In November 2024, 38,013 working age residents in Cumberland were in receipt of one or more DWP benefits which is 23.0% of the working age population, similar to the national rate of 23.1%. This includes claimants who are in work but on a low income, out of work and seeking work, out of work but not available for work. In some wards the claimant rate is well over a third of the working age population – Moss Bay and Moorclose (46.0%), Maryport south (38.6%), St Michael's (35.1%), Kells and Sandwith (34.7%). Amongst the working age DWP claimants in Cumberland, more than half (55.4%) are on a health related benefit which is a higher proportion than nationally (46.0%). (Source: [**DWP Benefit Combinations \(via Stat-Xplore\)**](#)).

Fuel poverty

A household is considered fuel poor if the property has an energy efficiency rating of D, E, F or G and its disposable income would be below the poverty line. In 2023 some 16,783 households in Cumberland were estimated to be in fuel poverty which is 13.0% of all households, higher than the national average of 11.4%. The proportion has fallen since 2019 when it was 15.5%. Within the area, the former district of Allerdale had the highest rate of fuel poverty at 14.0% followed by Copeland at 13.2% and Carlisle at 12.1%. (Source: [**DESNZ Sub-Regional Fuel Poverty 2025 \(2023 data\)**](#)).

Educational attainment

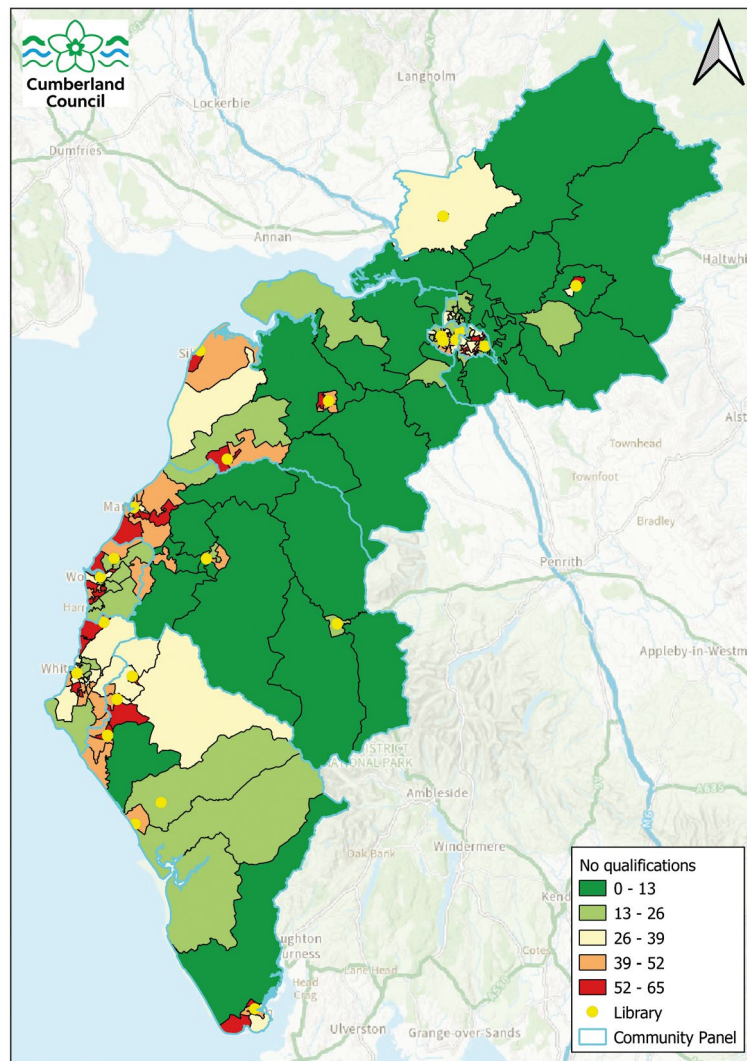
Children and Young People

Children attending school in Cumberland perform below their national peers (England) throughout each stage of school from the Early Years Foundation stage (ages 3-5 years) through to Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16 years). The picture is similar for 'disadvantaged pupils' attending school in Cumberland, with attainment levels also below national averages across all stages. A 'disadvantaged pupil' includes: children who are eligible for Free School Meals (at any point in the last 6 years); and children who are Cared For/Looked After (at any point in the last 12 months). Despite school performance levels being below national averages in Cumberland, there are indications of improvement for disadvantaged pupils between 2022 to 2024 which exceed the rate of improvement in England, so the 'gap' is being narrowed to some extent. This is evident at the Early Years Foundation Stage, Phonics, Key Stage 2 mathematics; and the GCSE Progress 8 measure.

Adult qualifications

The proportion of the working age population with high level qualifications (Regulated Qualifications Framework Level 4+) in Cumberland is substantially lower than nationally at 36% compared to 47% according to the 2024 estimates. The proportion qualified to Level 3 is higher than nationally (30% v 20%) which is reflective of the higher incidence of vocational qualifications in Cumbria which until relatively recently weren't widely available at the higher levels. The proportion of working age residents with no qualifications is in line with the national average (5% v 7%). (Source: [**ONS Annual Population survey \(via Nomis\)**](#))

Estimated % of adult population with Behaviour: No qualifications



Planning Developments

Employment

There are currently no significant employment expansions in Cumberland that are expected to bring new residents into the area. Although land has been unlocked for new nuclear development in West Cumbria, there are no definite plans at the time of writing (August 2025). (Source: Cumberland Council, 2025, <https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/news/2025/land-unlocked-new-nuclear-development-west-cumbria>)

Housing

(Source: Cumberland Council, 2024)

The table below shows that the **estimated maximum number** of additional residents as a result of potential house building between 2024 and 2030. However, **this is unlikely to reflect the actual number of new residents**. There are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration:

- The figures in the table below only look five years ahead. Longer term land allocations will be outlined in the local plan, but this currently lacks detail. There is also no guarantee that those land allocations will necessarily result in additional housing.

- Only developments with planning approval and with the potential to be completed by 2030 are included in the table below. This does not mean that these houses will actually be built.
- Figures do not include the Garden Village (Carlisle) as the expectation is that none of those houses will be built by 2030.
- The estimated maximum number of additional residents has been calculated by multiplying the number of houses expected to be completed by the average household size for Cumberland (2.2 people per household - Data Source: Census, 2021).
- New builds often contribute very little to overall population change. Reports suggest that almost all new builds are occupied by people moving within the local area. This can be whole households moving, sometimes households splitting or young people moving out and setting up on their own. At a local level this may mean a big change in a particular village or neighbourhood, but at a wider geographical level it often evens itself out.

Ward Code	Ward	Houses Expected to be Completed by 2030	Estimated maximum number of additional residents
E05014171	Aspatria	65	143
E05014172	Belah	65	143
E05014173	Belle Vue	30	66
E05014174	Botcherby	15	33
E05014175	Bothel and Wharrels		0
E05014176	Brampton	70	154
E05014177	Bransty	150	330
E05014178	Castle		0
E05014179	Cleator Moor East and Frizington	30	66
E05014180	Cleator Moor West	85	187
E05014181	Cockermouth North	103	227
E05014182	Cockermouth South		0
E05014183	Corby and Hayton		0
E05014184	Currock		0
E05014185	Dalston and Burgh	416	915
E05014186	Dearham and Broughton		0
E05014187	Denton Holme		0
E05014188	Egremont	80	176
E05014189	Egremont North and St Bees	60	132
E05014190	Gosforth	23	51
E05014191	Harraby North	30	66
E05014192	Harraby South	200	440

Ward Code	Ward	Houses Expected to be Completed by 2030	Estimated maximum number of additional residents
E05014193	Harrington	65	143
E05014194	Hillcrest and Hensingham	62	136
E05014195	Houghton and Irthington	45	99
E05014196	Howgate	40	88
E05014197	Kells and Sandwith	190	418
E05014198	Keswick		0
E05014199	Longtown	40	88
E05014200	Maryport North		0
E05014201	Maryport South	190	418
E05014202	Millom	106	233
E05014203	Millom Without	35	77
E05014204	Mirehouse		0
E05014205	Morton		0
E05014206	Moss Bay and Moorclose	340	748
E05014209	Seaton	85	187
E05014210	Solway Coast	30	66
E05014207	St John's and Great Clifton	25	55
E05014208	St Michael's	107	235
E05014211	Stanwix Urban		0
E05014212	Thursby	78	172
E05014213	Upperby		0
E05014214	Wetheral	385	847
E05014215	Wigton	140	308
E05014216	Yewdale	40	88
Cumberland Total		3,425	7,535

Digital Literacy

(Source: Experian, 2024)

While there are no precise recent figures for Cumberland specifically, data for the UK and Cumbria provides a clear picture of digital literacy challenges.

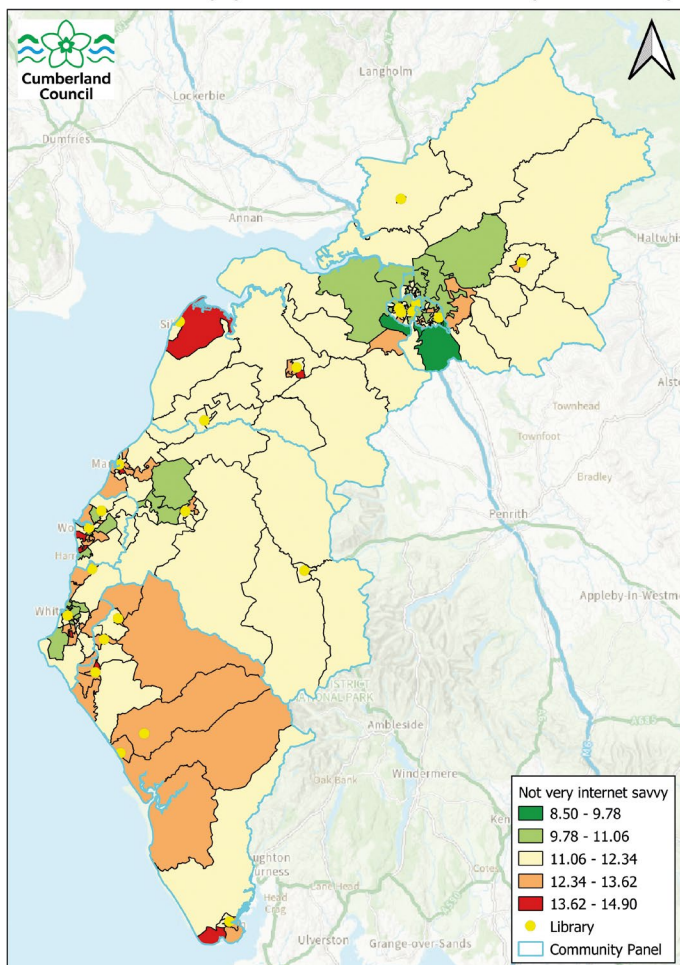
Public health reports and strategic documents from Cumberland Council highlight that digital literacy are a concern for the local area. Not everyone can easily use digital tools, such as the NHS App, which points to a notable portion of the population that is not internet savvy.

Key characteristics that contribute to digital exclusion in Cumberland include:

- **Sparsely Populated Area:** the area is much more sparsely populated than the national average, which can create infrastructure challenges and isolation.
- **Older Demographics:** The presence of an older population is a known driver of lower digital literacy rates.
- **Lower Income:** Median household income in the area has historically been lower than the national average, which can impact access to technology.

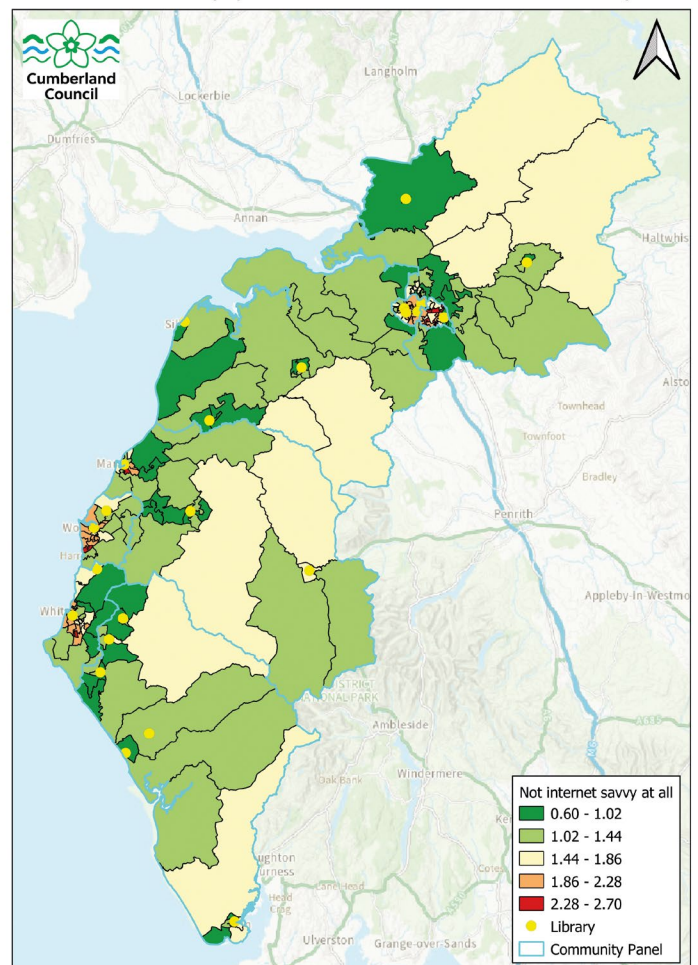
In summary, a significant minority of the Cumberland population faces digital exclusion due to lack of skills, confidence, or access, aligning with the national figures where an estimated 5% have no access, and a larger portion lacks confidence or basic skills.

Estimated % of adult population with Behaviour: Not very internet savvy



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Estimated % of adult population with Behaviour: Not internet savvy at all



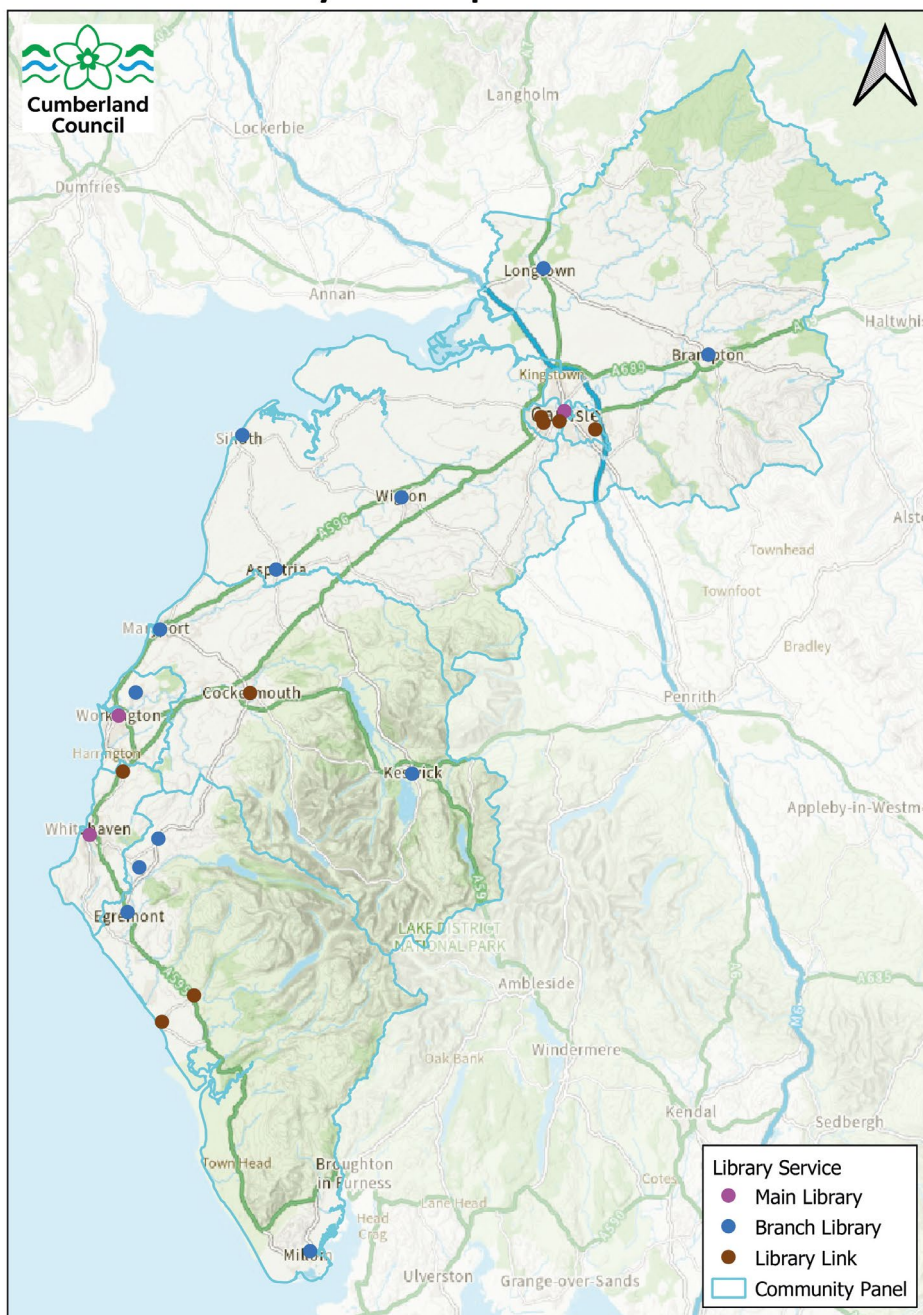
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Cumberland Libraries Public Library Provision

Cumberland Council offers its public library service via library buildings with a range of physical and online resources, services and activities. Its libraries are categorised into three service models: main libraries in the 3 largest places of population, 12 branch libraries in towns across the locality, and 8 library links provided with partners in community buildings in village locations or the outskirts of the city (Carlisle). In Cumberland there are 8.67 libraries per 100,000 population; other comparator Largely Rural authorities' provision can be referenced in the ONS data set **Number of libraries in local areas, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics.**

Where our libraries are

Library service point locations



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Universal Offers in Libraries

Cumberland's Library Service works to reflect the Universal Offers Framework (<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers>) throughout its service offer. Universal Offers were launched by Libraries Connected in 2013 and revised in 2019. Libraries Connected is a charity partly funded by Arts Council England with a membership model made up of every library service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

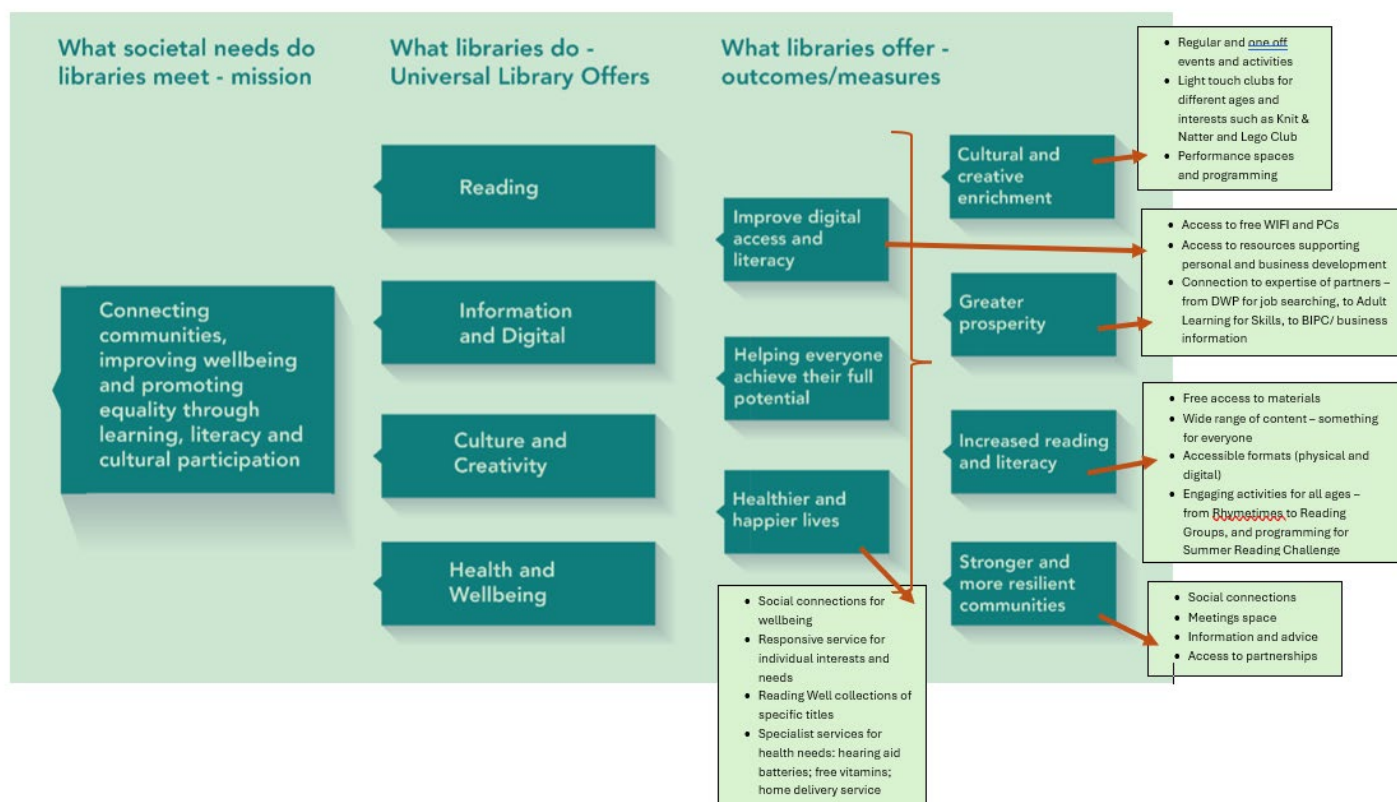
The Universal Offers Framework aims to demonstrate the power of public libraries to enrich the lives of individuals and their communities, and to ensure that all aspects of public library provision are accessible. The Universal Library Offers aim to connect communities, improve wellbeing, and promote equality through learning, literacy, and cultural activity.

Its core strands are:

- Culture and Creativity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Information and Digital
- Reading

The illustration below shows how Cumberland libraries deliver against the Universal Offers.

Cumberland Libraries supporting Universal Offers



Cumberland's Library offer

The level and nature of services available is dependent on library type as described below.

Main Libraries

These are located in the centres of population: Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington.

- Opening hours across 6 days a week, including Saturdays.
- Extensive collection of books for all ages and interests, with item request service from other libraries.
- Family focused story sacks as well as memory and sensory bags for multi-age use in the home.
- Regular programme of library activities for both children and adults as well as special events. These include rhyme time/ story time sessions and LEGO clubs for children, knit and natter or other craft groups for adults, and social environments for non-English speakers to engage in conversational skills in 'English Cafes'.
- Varied spaces for customers: casual seating, study areas, children's zones, and space for events.
- Free access to PCs and Wi-Fi.
- Printing and copying.
- Staff assistance with concessionary bus pass applications and hearing aid batteries.
- Access to Cumberland Council Adult Learning, and Health and Wellbeing Coaches (HAWCs).
- Signposting to Council and other services.

Branch Libraries

These are located in smaller towns, with branch libraries offer scaled services based on premises size. These are: Aspatria, Brampton, Cleator Moor, Cockermouth, Egremont, Frizington, Longtown, Maryport, Millom, Seaton, Silloth, Keswick and Wigton. In 2024 (when the data referred to in this document was collected) Cockermouth was described as a Library Link, before ownership and operational responsibility transferred to Cumberland Council. It operates as a branch library at the time of writing (2025).

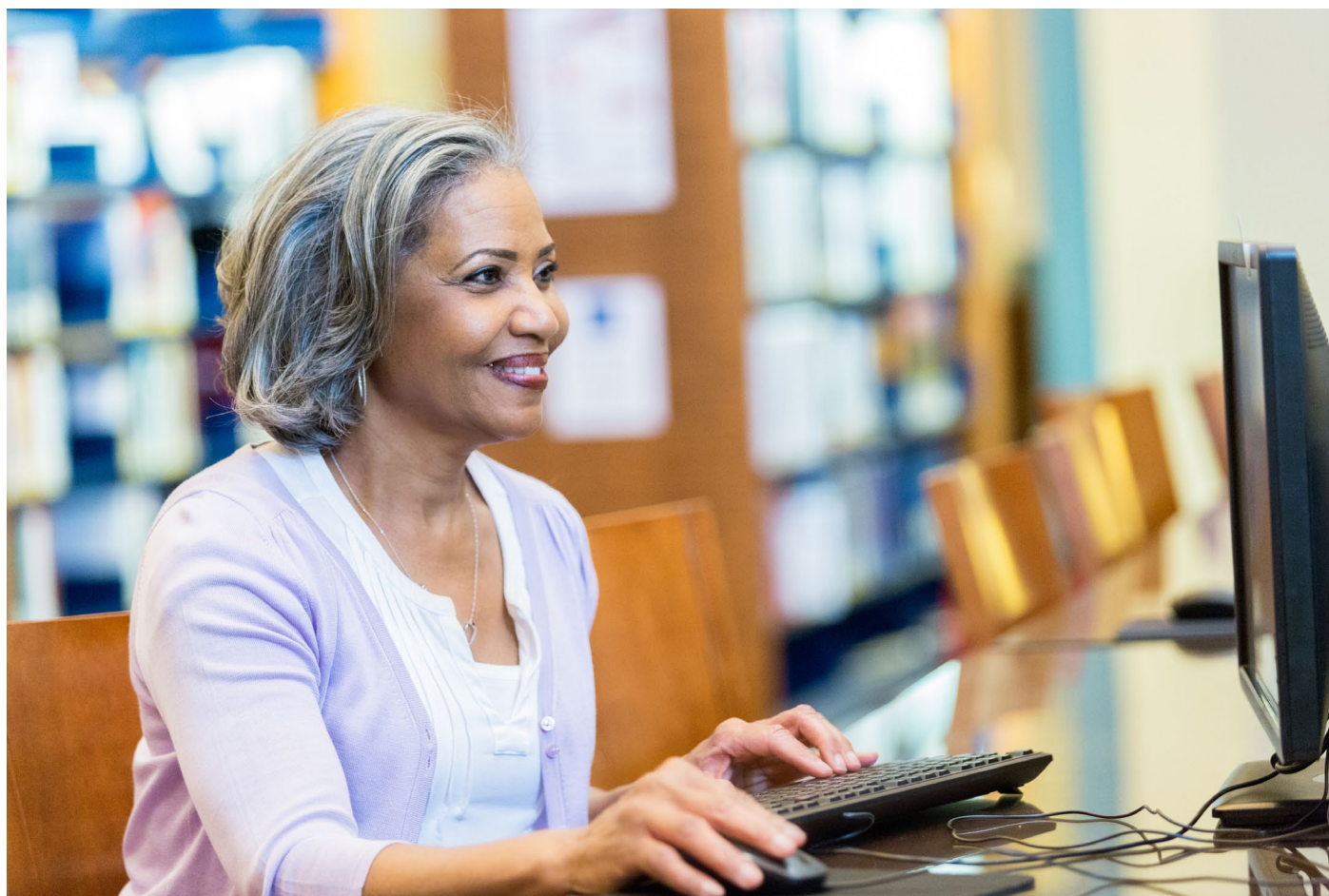
- More condensed opening hours across the week, varying between place and scaled to library size and usage. Larger libraries such as Maryport, Millom, Keswick and Cockermouth are open on 6 days of the week including Saturdays. Brampton, Egremont, and Wigton also offer Saturday opening hours.
- Smaller supply of books and materials for all ages, with access to request items from other libraries.
- Signposting to services and facilities, including hearing aid battery supply by library staff.
- A limited range of events and occasional activities, often in partnership with third sector organisations. Where regular events are programmed these, in their nature, do not require staff input and direction for the session eg Knit and Natter, board games sessions.

- Compact seating areas and dedicated spaces for children.
- Free access to PCs and Wi-Fi.
- Printing and copying.

Library Links

These are located in villages in Distington, Gosforth and Seascale, as well as the environs of Carlisle (Carlisle West, Denton Holme, Harraby and Morton).

- Opening hours depend on local partners and their volunteers' capacity; they have minimal input from library staff. Gosforth, Morton and Seascale Library Links offer some Saturday hours (2025, at the time of writing).
- Run in conjunction with community partners, these offer a smaller book stock to branches and in some cases limited PC offer.
- Hosted in a partner's building, service operates with very limited or no library staff presence, but as a minimum will be provided with deliveries and exchanges of library stock and telephone support from a main library.
- Library members can request items from other libraries for collection at Links.
- Located in large villages or outer Carlisle.
- Compact seating areas and dedicated spaces for children. Partner may offer its own activities on site.
- Wi-Fi; in Carlisle area free PCs.



Location	Services and Activities																
	Library stock & resources				IT and Technology			Health and wellbeing			Community connections				Partner connectivity		
	Books / infor- mation sources	Chil- dren's Library	Local History	Health infor- mation resourc- es	PC access	Printing & copying	Wi-Fi	Conces- sionary bus pass applica- tions	Baby Weigh scales; Healthy Start vitamins	Hearing aid batteries	Regular Library activities & sessions	English Conver- sation Cafés	Café/ Hot drinks machine	Meeting rooms	Capac- ity for ad-hoc partner activities	On site Adult Learning	Registrar
Aspatria	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Brampton	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Carlisle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Carlisle West	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Cleator Moor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
Cocker- mouth	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Denton Holme	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Distington	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Egremont	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Frizington	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Gosforth	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Harraby	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Keswick	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Longtown	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N

Location	Services and Activities																
	Library stock & resources				IT and Technology			Health and wellbeing			Community connections				Partner connectivity		
	Books / information sources	Children's Library	Local History	Health information resources	PC access	Printing & copying	Wi-Fi	Concessionary bus pass applications	Baby Weigh scales; Healthy Start vitamins	Hearing aid batteries	Regular Library activities & sessions	English Conversation Cafés	Café/ Hot drinks machine	Meeting rooms	Capacity for ad-hoc partner activities	On site Adult Learning	Registrar
Millom	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Maryport	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Morton	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Seascale	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Seaton	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Silloth	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Whitehaven	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wigton	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Workington	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Some services can be offered to any person meeting eligibility criteria and is not tied to library location eg access to home delivery and data bank services.																	
Library members at all sites can access materials on Borrowbox.																	
Business & IP Centre is only located in Carlisle Library but advice appointments and some resources are available remotely.																	
Key:	Main library		Branch library		Library Link												

Library opening hours

Opening hours vary by library location with main libraries offering the largest range of opening times, across the greatest number of days. Ten main and branch library sites offer library services on Saturdays, as well as Gosforth, Morton and Seascale Library Links.

No library is open on a Sunday; main libraries had offered Sunday openings from 2004 to expand accessibility and audience reach. However, this ceased in Workington and Whitehaven libraries in 2015, and Carlisle Library in 2023, due to lower usage levels on those days and the need to maximise the use of staffing resource to meet higher demand.

Libraries are sometimes required to close at short notice due to staffing shortages; where issues relating to staffing capacity are known in advance priority is given to concentrating resource in order to maintain service levels in main libraries.

Location	Total Open Hours Per Week	No. of days on which open
Aspatria Library	20.5	4
Brampton Library	17	5
Carlisle Library	45.5	6
Carlisle West Library Link	24	4
Cleator Moor Library	26	4
Cockermouth Library	35	6
Denton Holme Library Link	9	3
Distington Library Link	16	4
Egremont Library	34	5
Frizington Library	8.5	3
Gosforth Village Library Link	5	3
Harraby Library Link	40	6
Keswick Library	35	6
Longtown Library	12	3
Maryport Library	39.5	6
Millom Library	43	6
Morton Library Link	37.5	6
Seascale Library Link	7.5	4
Seaton Library	21	4
Silloth Library	21	4
Whitehaven Library	46	6
Wigton Library	32	5
Workington Library	47	6

Remote Library Services

In addition, library members can access library services without visiting a library. A home delivery service offers books to residents unable to leave their homes due to health conditions and who have no one who can collect reading material for them. Meanwhile, the digital library service can offer 24/7 free access to e-books, audio books, newspapers and magazines to all library members.

BorrowBox and Online Digital Services

Library services provided to library members include a number of digital tools, as follows:

- Free access to e-books, audio books, comics, magazines and daily UK newspapers with library membership via Borrowbox.
- Library app or online account available to manage library account and self-manage renewals, requests, and browse the catalogue.
- Wide range of subscription site memberships available for use on all library PCs eg Ancestry, Find My Past, Which, Driving Theory Pro (licensed to library PCs only).
- Self-service machines in every Main, Branch and Library Link.

Home Delivery Service

A home delivery service, is available for residents who are housebound so cannot visit a library location and who have no one who could collect reading materials on their behalf. The service relies on staff who liaise with individual customers and select books based on their preferences. The delivery and collection of books is undertaken every 3-4 weeks by a library member of staff in the Carlisle area, and in other areas of Cumberland through volunteers. Their availability is limited.

On average just over 120 customers received deliveries each month for the latest year for which figures are available (financial year 23/24, available via Arts Council England publication **English Public Library Activity Dataset for 2023-24.**)



How Libraries are Used

This section provides and examines key data sets that illustrate usage levels of Cumberland Libraries and the services provided. The information covers library membership, book and other stock issues (physical and electronic), PC use, footfall counting people visiting libraries, and events and activities provided in libraries and in community settings.

The information used in this section is for the year 2024, the most recent full year for which data was available at the time of writing (2025). This has allowed a full year of data, representative of a standard year of operation of public libraries, to be analysed.

When considering the data for that year, two site specific factors are relevant to analysis and understanding.

Firstly, during 2024 Aspatria Library was undergoing a refurbishment prior to reopening in that summer, with a very limited pop-up service offered in the interim. This impacts on usage figures referenced in this document. Secondly, prior to its transfer to Cumberland Council Cockermouth's library was provided in conjunction with Cockermouth Town Council as a Library Link and this is reflected on the naming within the data sets for 2024. It now forms part of the library branch network and is referred to as Cockermouth Library in this analysis.



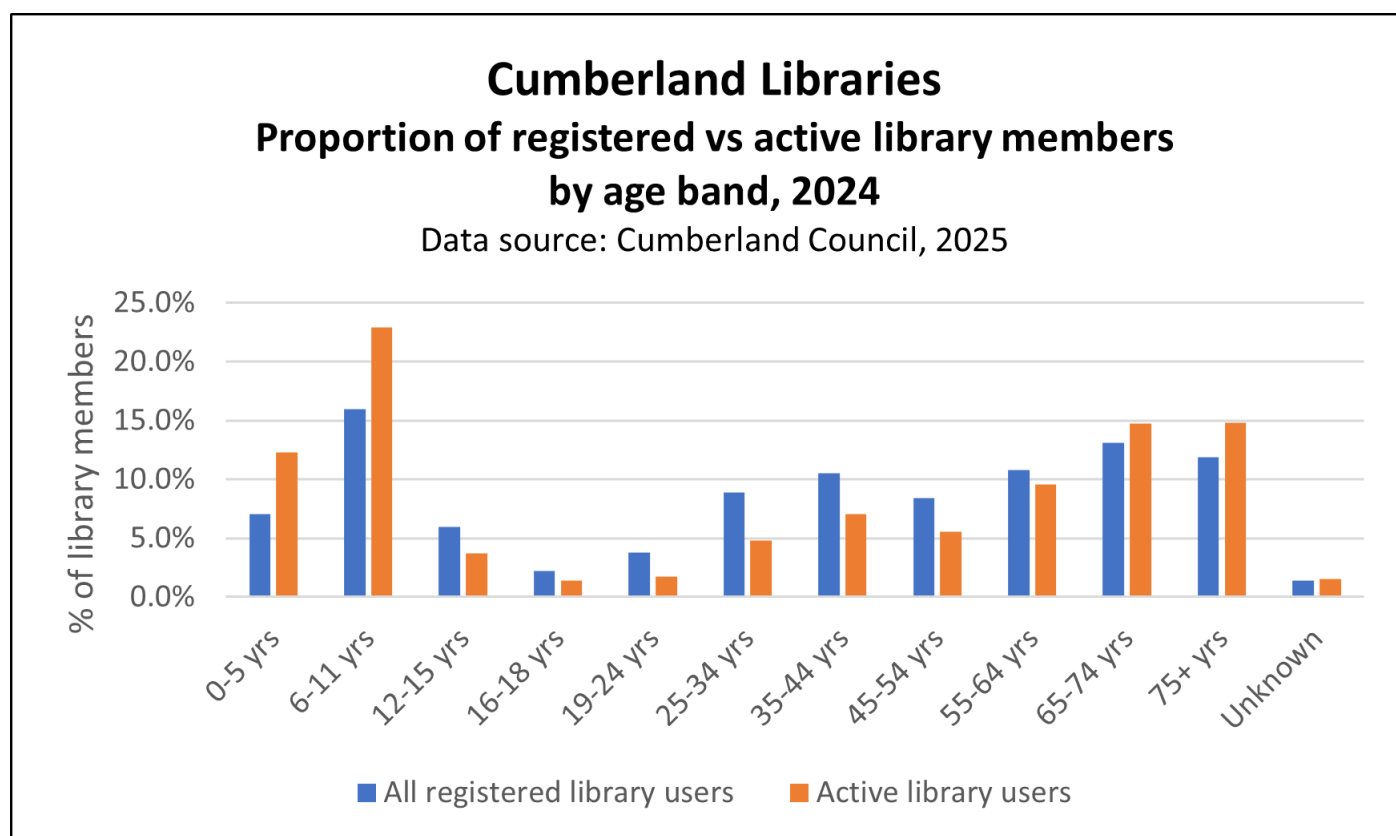
Cumberland Library Membership Profile

The following profile of Cumberland's library users is based on data provided for 44,279 registered library members at 31 December 2024. This number includes 2,451 people who are "digital only" members (ie people who only have access to online services at home via the Borrowbox application) which accounts for 5.5% of the total library membership. It should be noted that library membership is not restricted to those living in Cumberland; membership is available to people who live, work or study in the authority area.

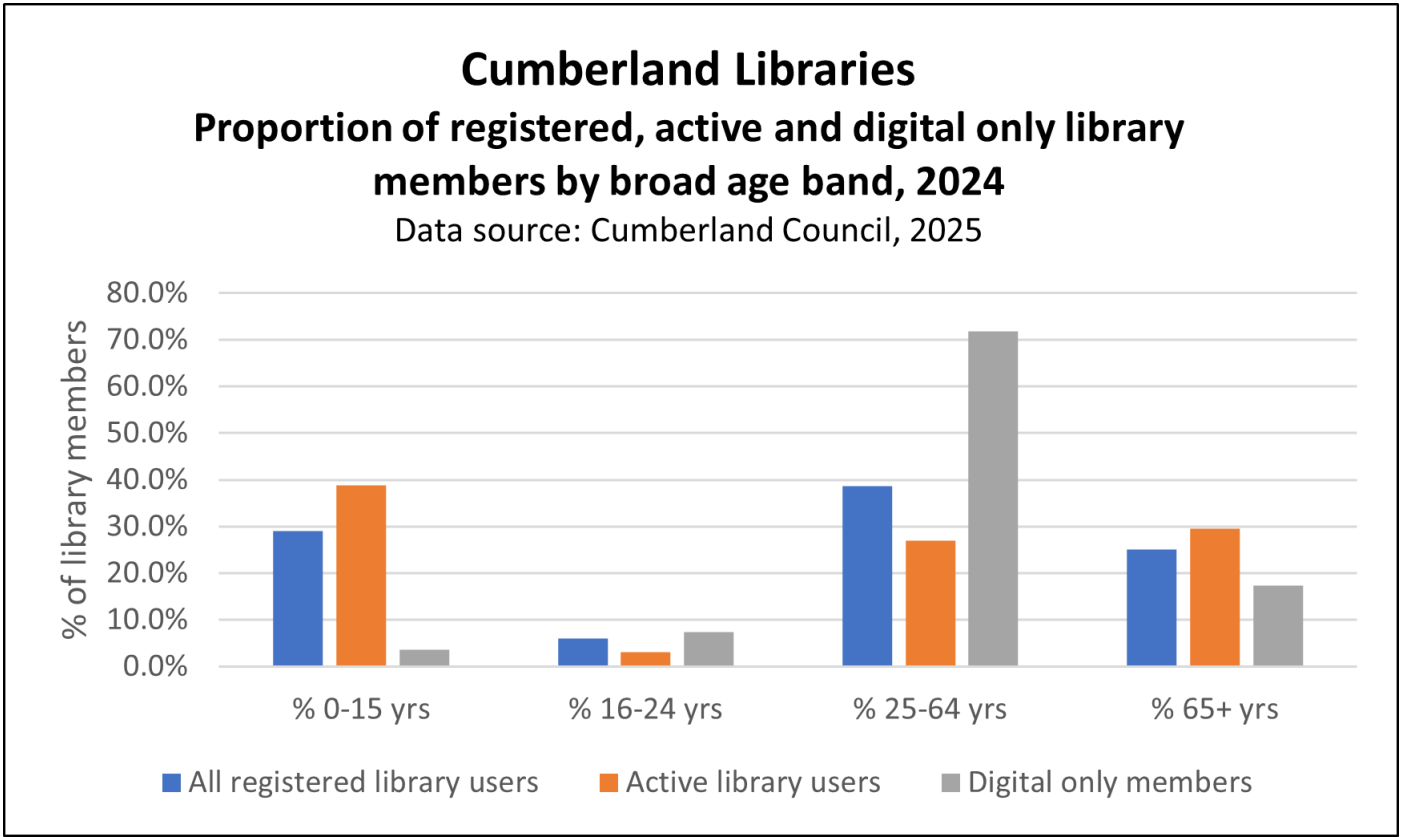
Throughout, reference is made to "active" library members; the definition used in this assessment is a library member who has borrowed at least one physical item from a library, typically a book, within the timeframe under review. Data on whether digital only members were actively borrowing digital resources were not available when the analysis took place.

Age

Almost two fifths of Cumberland's registered library members are aged 25-64 years (38.6%), three in ten are aged 0-15 years (29.0%) and one quarter are aged 65+ years (25.0%). 16-24 year olds make up the smallest proportion of registered members (6.0%) and age is unknown for a small proportion (1.4%). However, proportions of "active" library members are somewhat different. Data for Cumberland libraries indicate that almost two fifths of those aged 0-15 years are active library users (38.9%), compared to just over a quarter of people aged 25-64 years (27.0%) and three in 10 aged 65+ years (29.5%). Libraries are least used by those aged 16-24 years, with this age band accounting for just 3.1% of all active members.



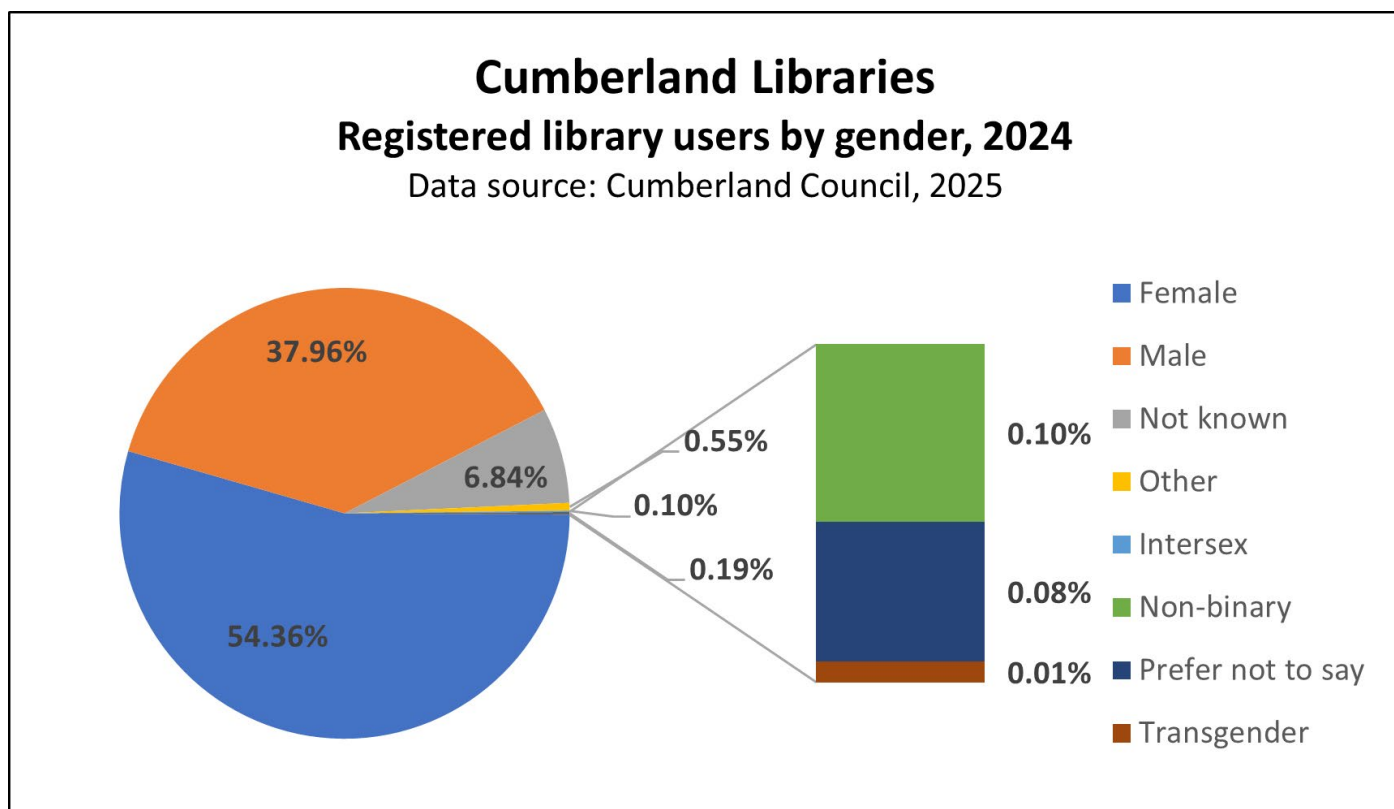
The age profile of digital only members is slightly different. The illustration below shows very few digital only library members in the younger age range; just 3.5% of all digital only members are aged 0-15 years compared to 38.9% of all active library users. Seven in 10 digital only members are aged 25-64 years (71.7%), a much larger proportion than active library users in this age range (27.0%). The lower proportion amongst the younger age group may partly reflect that, although the Borrowbox app has no age restriction and good content for children and young people, parental permission may be required to download applications, and some children will be using their parent or carer’s digital devices for supervised internet use. It could also reflect healthy levels of full membership within this age group, with full membership including access to digital resources.



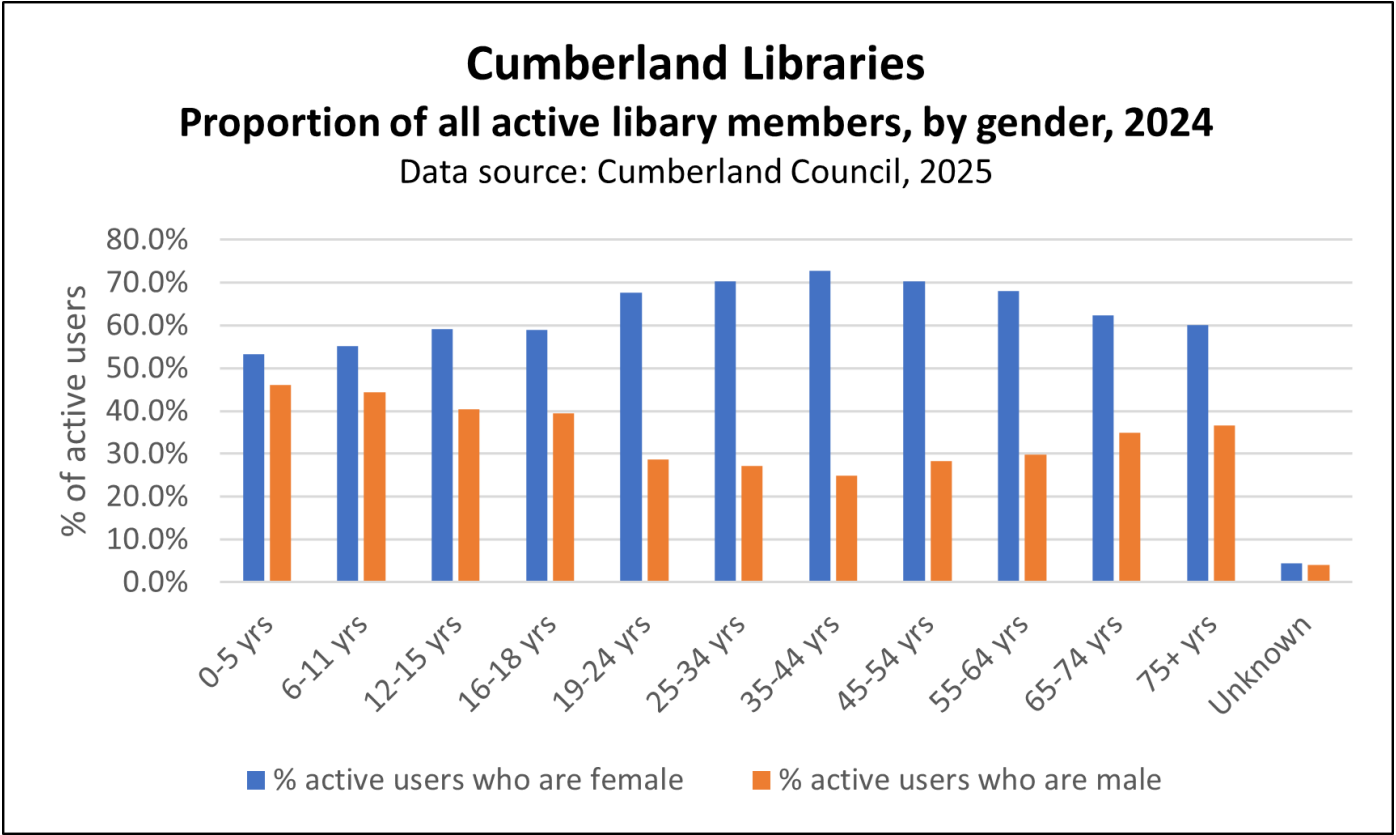
Gender

Over half of all Cumberland's 44,279 registered library members are female (54.4%; 24,071); this is a greater proportion than would be expected, as females make up 50.8% of Cumberland's resident population. Males make up almost two in five (38.0%; 16,807) registered library members; this is a smaller proportion than expected, as males make up 49.2% of Cumberland's resident population.

A small proportion of registered library members identify as transgender (0.01%); this is a smaller proportion than could be expected as data from the 2021 Census shows 0.5% of the population aged 16+ do not identify their gender with the gender registered at birth. There are also small proportions who identify as intersex (0.1%) and non-binary (0.1%). However, gender is not known for 6.8% of registered members, and therefore proportions of these groups could be larger.



Data indicates that females are more likely to be active library members than males at all life stages, and this increases with age. The gap between the proportion of all active library members who are female and male is smallest at 0-5 years (a difference of 7.1 percentage points), but after this the gap between female and male active members increases steadily and is at its largest at 35-44 years (a difference of 47.9 percentage points).



Gender is not known for the majority of digital only members.

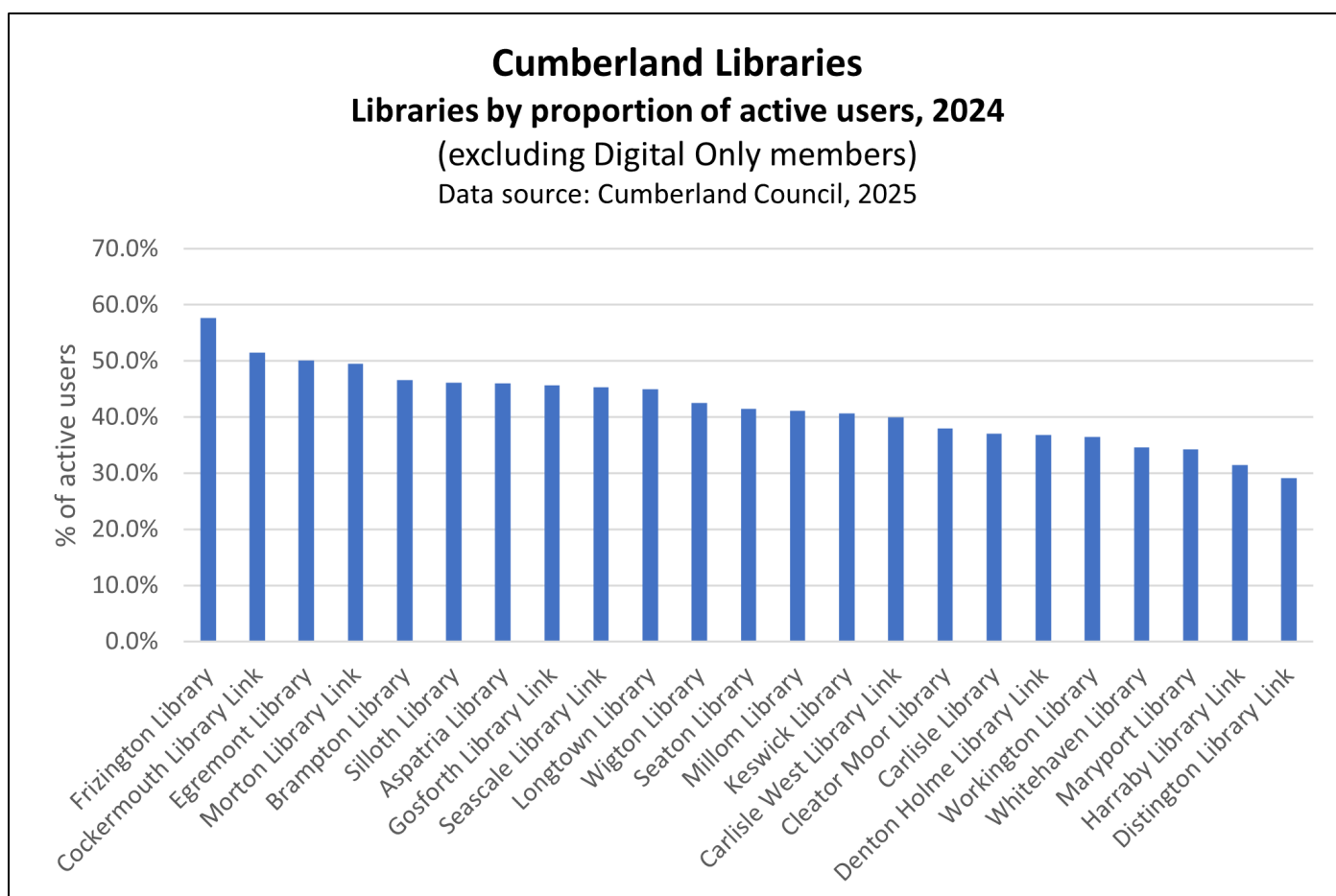


Registered and active members by library

Registered library members are allocated a base library ('home library') upon joining to assist various administrative processes such as the management of membership records and the collection of any requested items. This is usually determined by the place at which they take up membership, but may be where they most regularly borrow books, or nearby their home or workplace. Although this element of analysis can give some insight, it should be noted that many library members use multiple libraries, and continued links with the home library are not guaranteed.

Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington libraries have the greatest proportions of registered and active library members; this is to be expected as these libraries are located in urban, more densely populated areas. Excluding digital only members, Carlisle Library accounts for two fifths of all registered members (38.7%), Whitehaven Library one in eight of all registered members (12.8%) and Workington Library one in nine (11.6%). However, when it comes to the proportion of registered members who are active users, the picture is slightly different, with the top spots occupied by members who have smaller libraries and library links recorded as their home library. For example: Frizington Library, 57.6% of registered members (excluding digital only members) were active users in 2024; Cockermouth Library Link, 51.5%; Egremont Library, 50.1%; Morton Library Link, 49.6%; and Brampton Library, 46.6%). These five smaller libraries between them account for one in eight of all Cumberland's registered members (13.0%) and one in six of all Cumberland's active library users (16.9%).

However, it should be noted that registered members can use any of Cumberland's libraries; it not necessarily the case that active users are regularly using the libraries to which they are registered. More information about this can be seen in the section about physical borrowers.

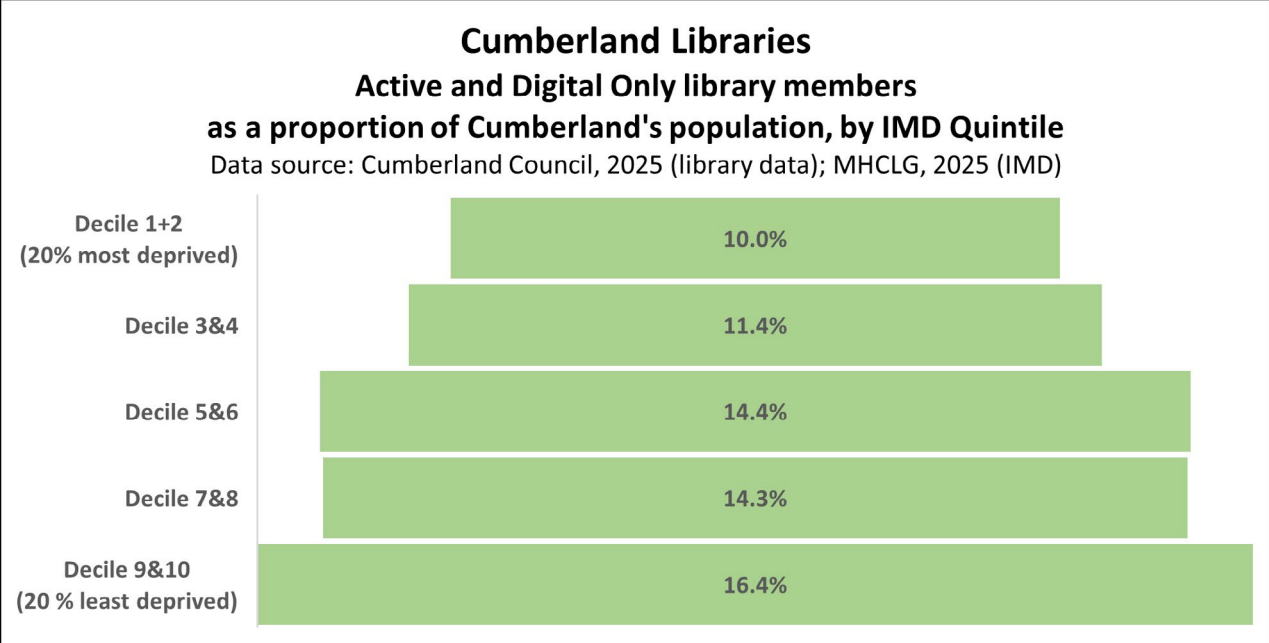


Origin

The majority of Cumberland’s registered members (including digital only) and active library users live in the Cumberland local authority area (94.8% of all registered members; 96.4% of active users and 97.6% of digital only members). A small proportion live in the Westmorland and Furness local authority area (1.9% of all registered library members; 2.1% of active users and 2.1% of digital only users). Of the registered members living outside the wider Cumbria area, the majority are from Scotland, the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions (1.7% of all registered members). A small proportion live outside the UK (0.2% of all registered members).

Deprivation

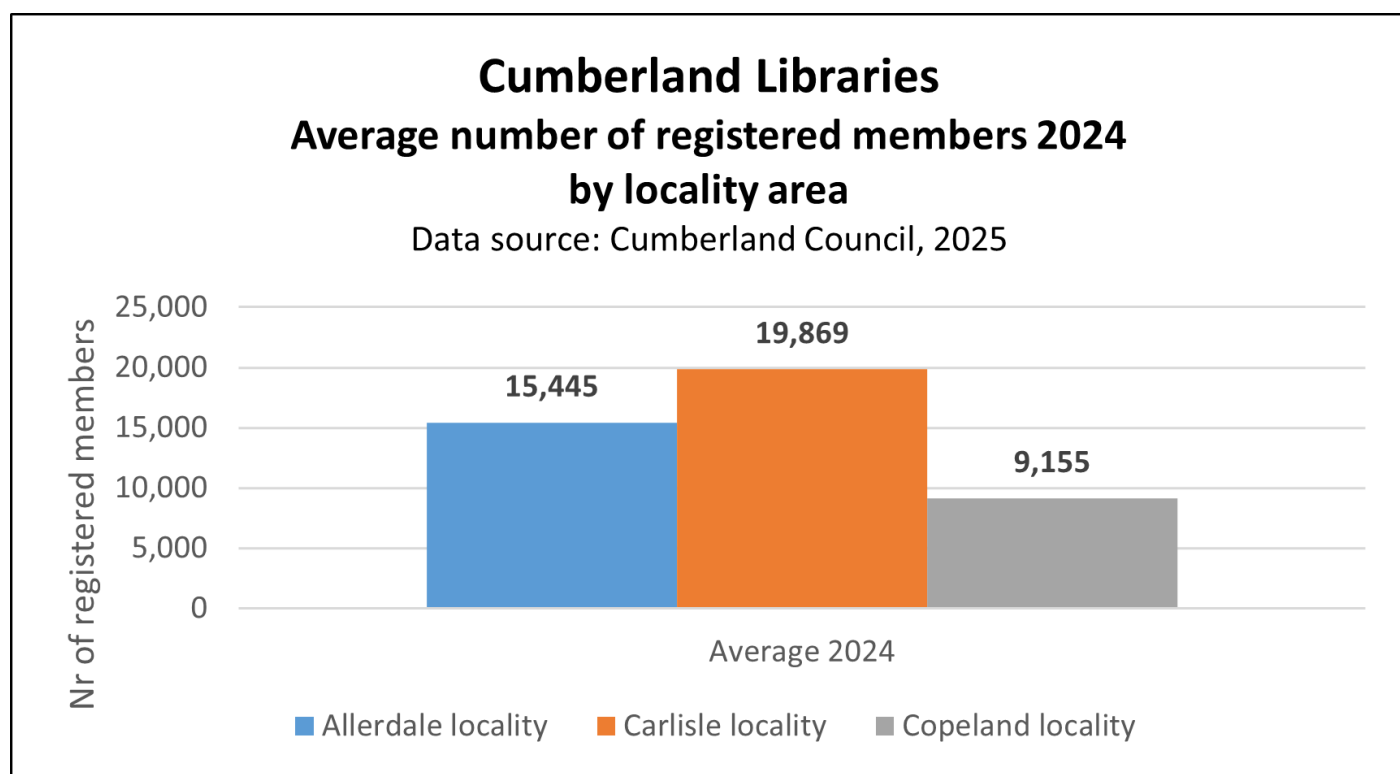
Analysis of Cumberland Council library data indicate that people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are less likely to be active users or digital library members than those living in the least deprived neighbourhoods. One in ten (10.0%) of Cumberland’s resident population living in the 20% most deprived areas were active users or digital only library members in 2024 compared to one in six (16.4%) of Cumberland’s population living in the 20% least deprived areas.



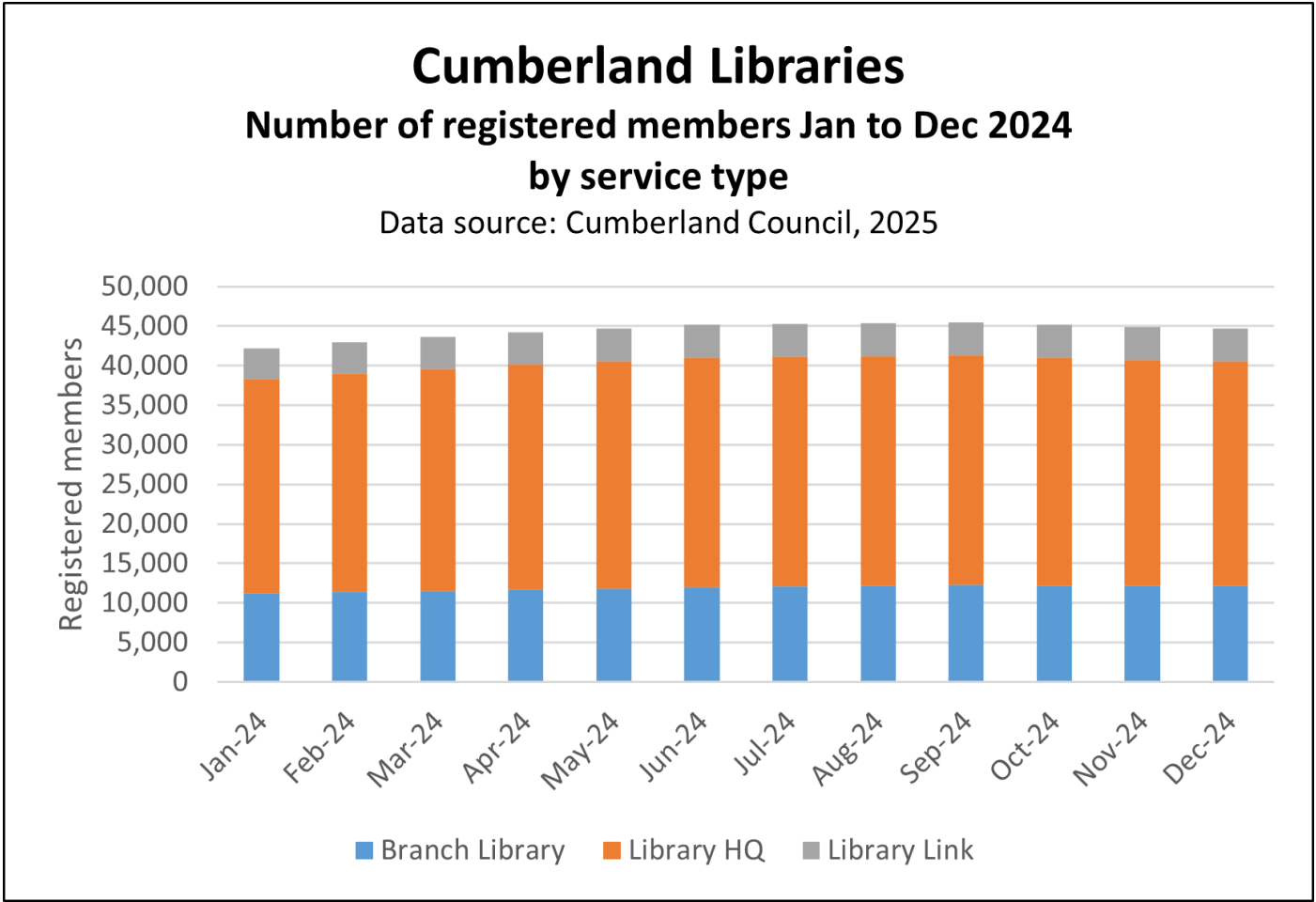
Cumberland Library Usage

Registered Members

Data indicate that the volume of registered library members increased by +5.9% (+2,484 members) across Cumberland by the end of the calendar year compared to the start of the year. This varied from an increase of +8.6% (+1,254 members) in the Allerdale locality to +3.3% (+630 members) in the Carlisle locality area. The increase appears relatively steady across the local authority area from January to September 2024 before tailing off slightly to December 2024. Library membership averaged 19,869 registered members in the Carlisle area in 2024, compared to 15,445 in the Allerdale locality and 9,155 in the Copeland locality. Registered library members are likely to represent around 16.1% of Cumberland's population, ranging from 13.6% of the population in the Copeland area to 17.8% in the Carlisle area. However, it should be noted that library membership is not restricted to those living in Cumberland and therefore the actual proportions are likely to be slightly smaller.



Upon joining library members are assigned to a library for administrative purposes. However, they can elect that this be where they join, live, study or work and it may not be the location they ultimately use. The main libraries (Carlisle Library, Whitehaven Library and Workington Library) account for around two thirds (64.1%) of registered members (28,508 members on average in 2024); this is not surprising given that these libraries are based in more densely populated areas. Branch libraries have just over one quarter (26.7%) of registered members (11,888 registered members) and library links account for just under one in ten registered members (9.2%; 4,072 registered members on average 2024).

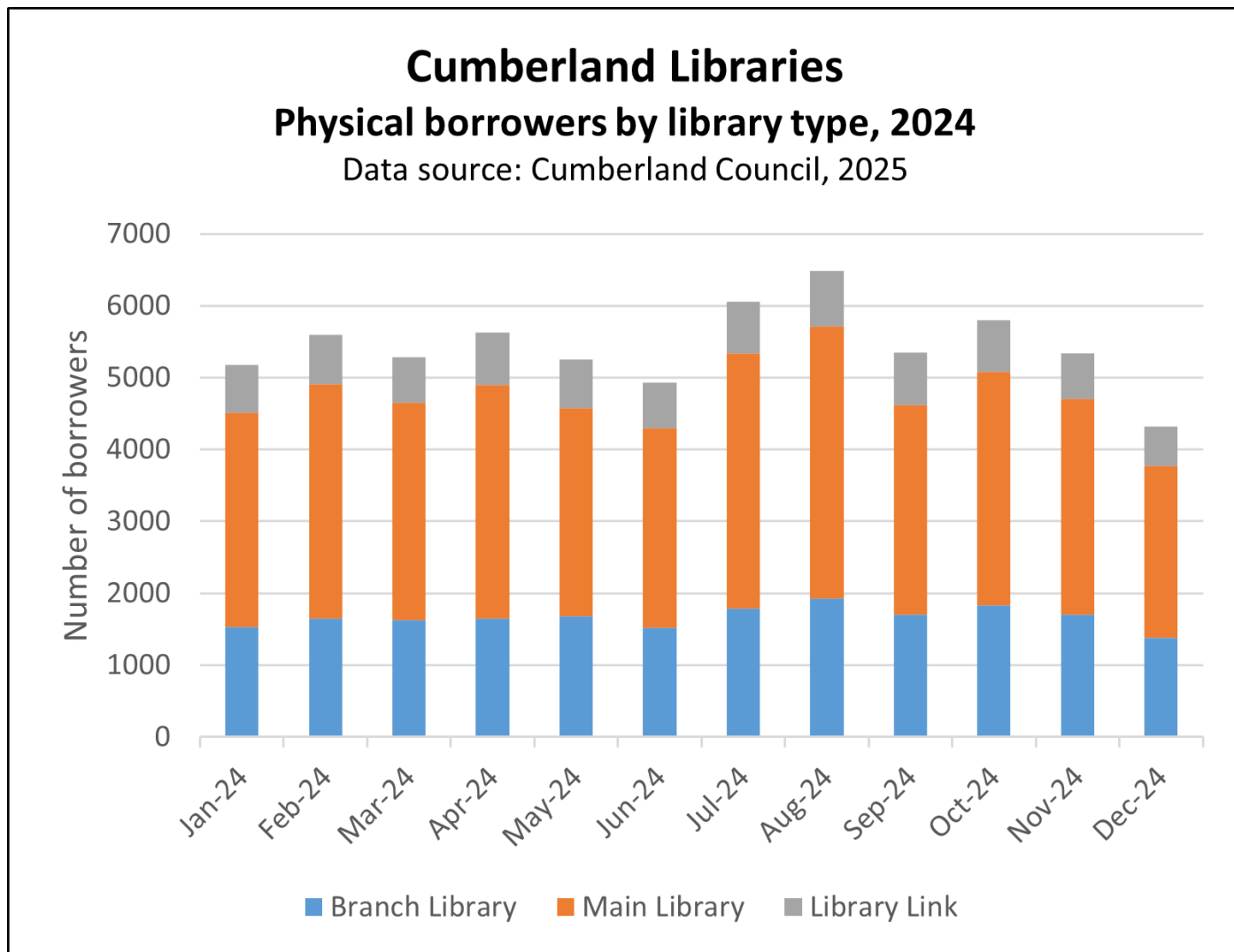


Registered membership varies greatly between libraries. In the main libraries registered membership varies from an average of 18,000 members at Carlisle Library to 4,933 members at Workington Library. Branch libraries vary from 2,144 registered members at Maryport Library to 286 members at Frizington Library. Registered membership across the Library Links is relatively low, the majority between 30 and 353 registered members and this would be expected as these services are generally located in more rural, sparsely populated areas, and without regular onsite staff support to support the joining process. The exception is Cockermouth Library Link with a registered membership of 3,245 persons.

Physical borrowers

On average there were 5,434 active users i.e. physical borrowers, per month. This ranged from an average of 679 per month within library links to an average of 3,090 per month within the main libraries.

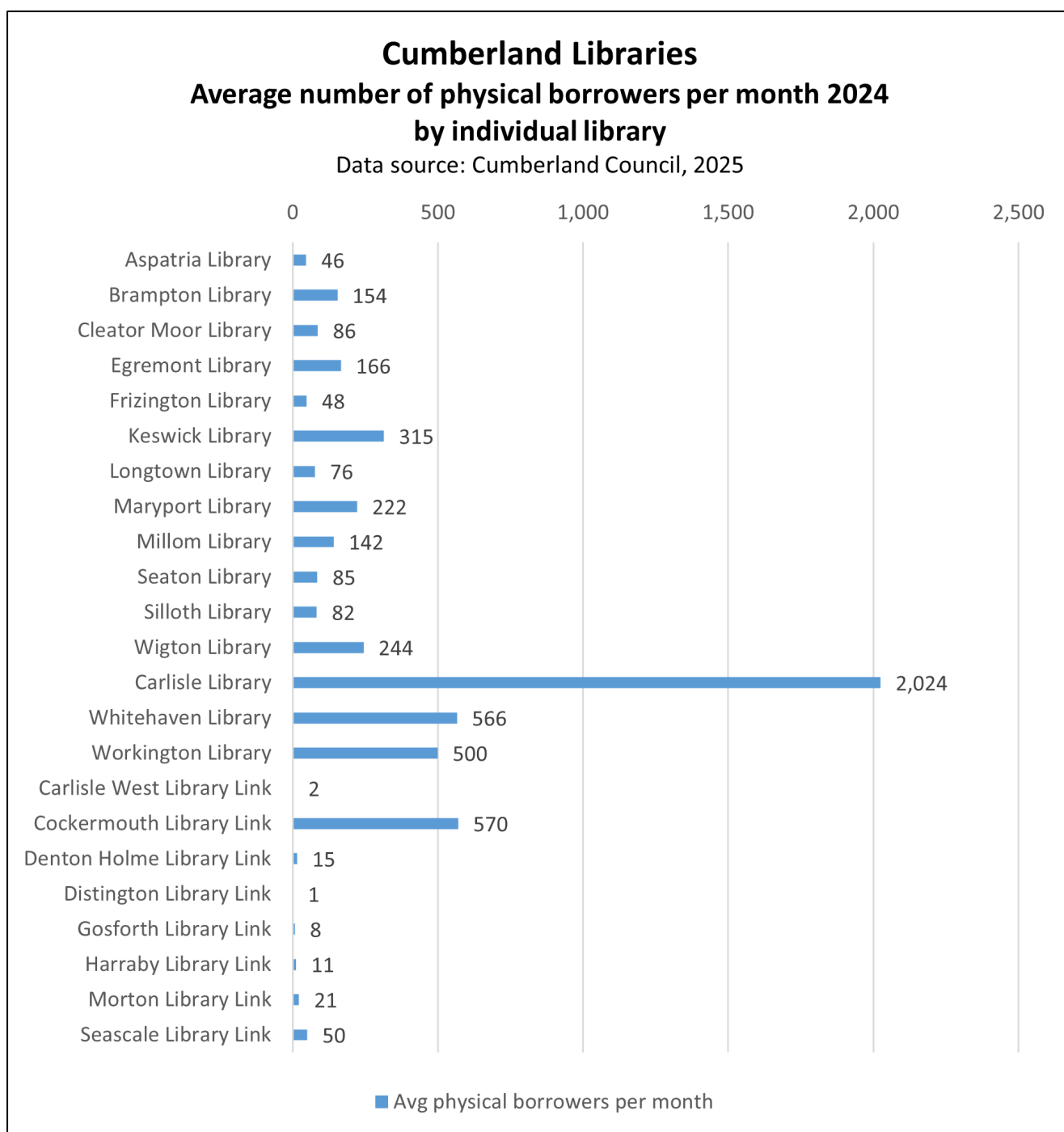
Whilst numbers vary from month to month, relatively large increases can be seen in the summer months of June and July which corresponds to the main holiday season. Smaller increases are also apparent around February, April and October which could be a reflection of other holidays times, eg school half term and Easter holidays.



The average number of active members each month varies between individual libraries, with the smallest volumes generally seen in the library links. For example there was just one on average each month within Distington Library Link, two on average per month within Carlisle West Library Link and eight on average per month within Gosforth Library Link. This is likely to reflect the low levels of registered membership at these libraries and calls into question the sustainability of these service points.

The largest volumes were seen in the main libraries, with an average of 2,024 active users each month at Carlisle Library, 566 on average per month at Whitehaven Library and 500 on average per month at Workington Library.

The caveat to this is that referencing active member use to a 'home library' obscures the effect of the ability of library members to borrow from multiple locations. This can inflate levels of use in this metric to some extent (ie in only 3 months in 2024 were there book issues from Distington so the average above reflects use at other service points by active users with this as a home library).

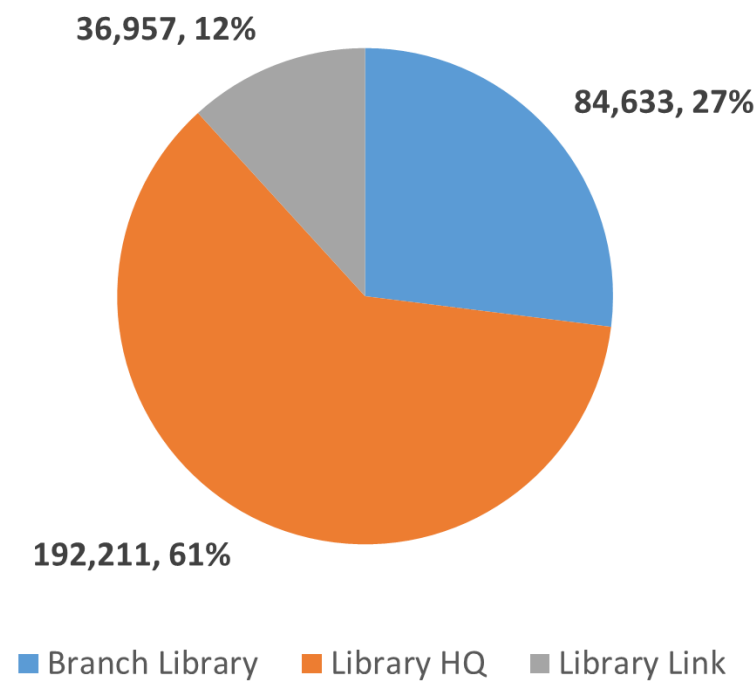


Physical resource issues

During 2024 a total of 313,801 physical resources were issued to active users. Three fifths were issued from the main libraries of Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington (61.3%; 192,211), just over one quarter from branch libraries (27.0%; 7,053) and one in eight from library links (11.8%; 3,080). Across all three service types, there is an indication of increased demand around Easter and also during the summer months of July and August, and this could be expected as the number of active users also increased during these times.

Cumberland Libraries Physical issues, 2024, by service type

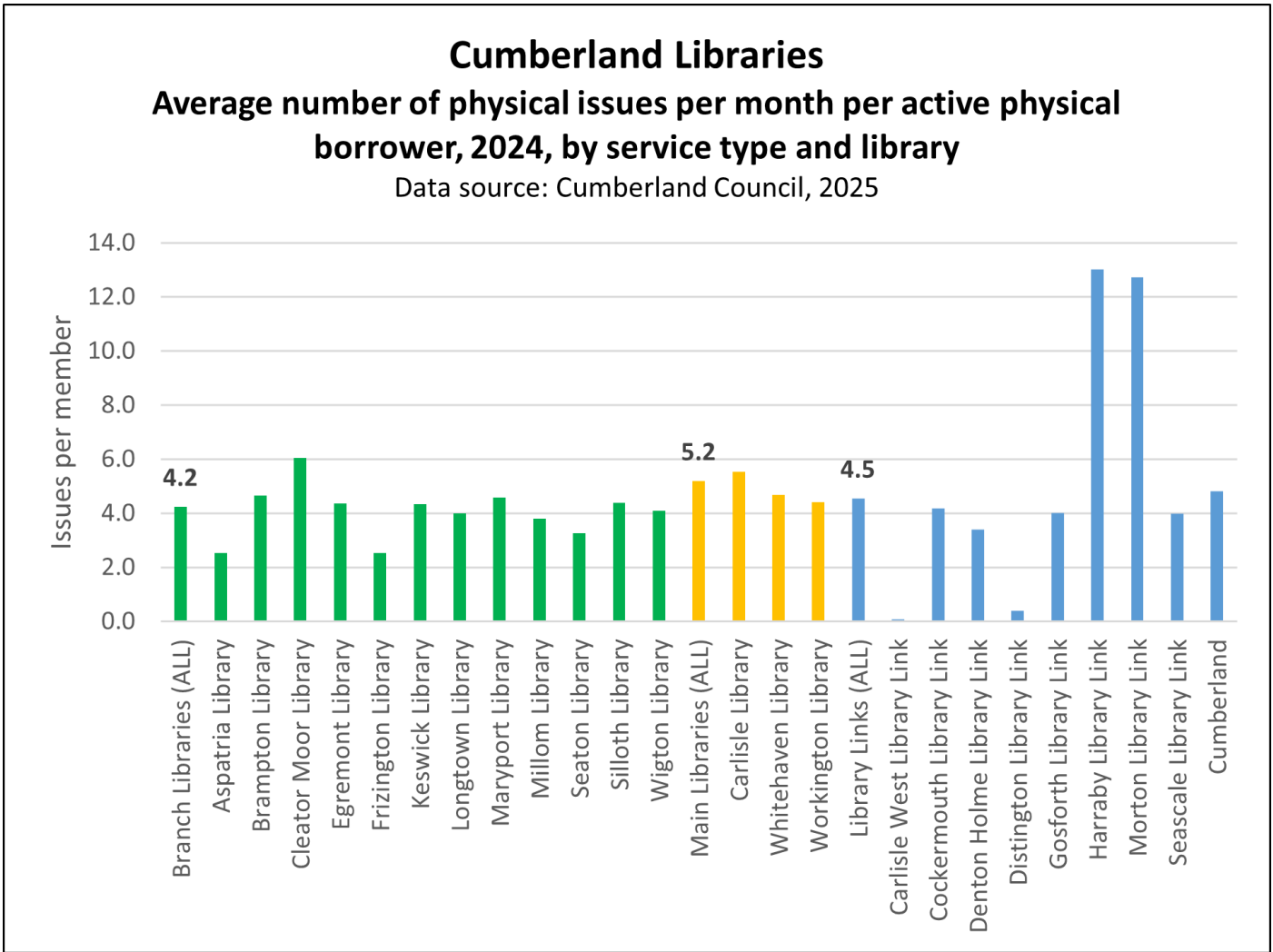
Data source: Cumberland Council, 2025



On average during 2024, there were 4.8 physical items issued per month in Cumberland to each active user. Differences can be seen between the service types: 4.2 items per borrower on average each month from branch libraries; 4.5 items per borrower from library links; and 5.2 items per borrower from the main libraries.

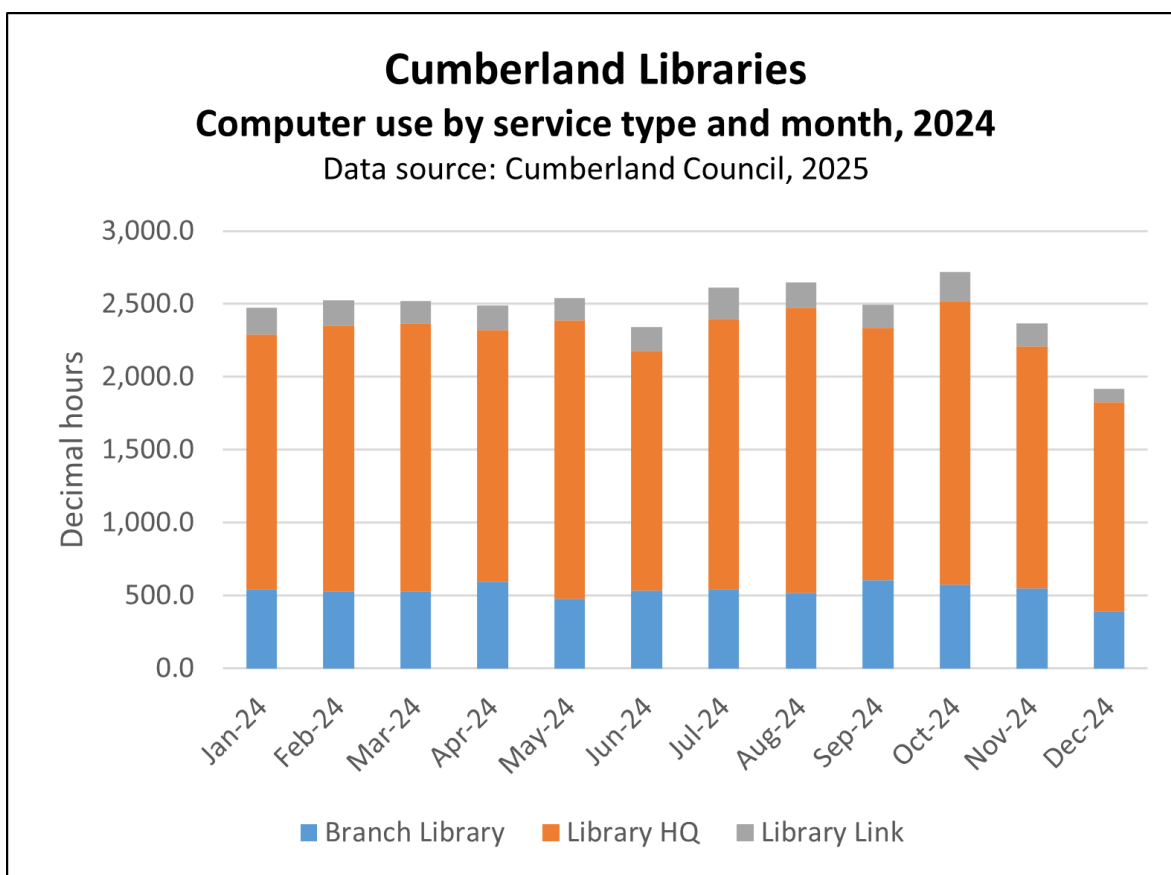
There are variations between libraries in each of the service types. Across the branch libraries this varied from 2.5 items issued to each active user per month on average from Aspatria and Frizington libraries, to 6.1 items per month on average from Cleator Moor library. Main libraries varied from 4.4 items per month on average per active user from Workington Library to 5.5 items per month from Carlisle Library.

However, it is the library links that show the greatest variation. Harraby and Morton Library Links issue on average 13.0 and 12.7 items per month to each physical borrower respectively, but at the other end of the scale Carlisle West and Distington Library Links have particularly low rates, issuing 0.1 and 0.4 items on average per month respectively to each active user. The low rates in Carlisle West and Distington are likely to reflect the very low levels of registered membership for these service points (42 registered members on average for Carlisle West in 2024, and 30 members on average for Distington). In addition, Carlisle West has been more focused on resources for children which is an imbalanced offer for a community, and meanwhile customers have proximity to other libraries that offer a broader service. Similarly, Distington customers have other options in the local area. Both library links being unstaffed may also be a factor.



Computer Use in libraries

During 2024 the use of computers (PCs) in libraries totalled 29,645.5 decimal hours, an average of 2,470.5 decimal hours per month. The greatest proportion of these were in the main libraries of Carlisle, Workington and Whitehaven (71.8%; 21,276.8 decimal hours), with 21.5% (6,379.1 decimal hours) in branch libraries and 6.7% (1,989.6 decimal hours in library links). Data indicate increased demand between July and October 2024, before demand tailed off in December. PC users have to be registered library members to use the PCs in libraries and this membership entitles them to two hours' free PC access per day.



PC usage in main libraries ranged from an average of 322.8 decimal hours per month in Workington Library to 1,074.1 decimal hours per month in Carlisle Library. PC use in branch libraries varied from an average of 3.0 decimal hours per month at Aspatria Library to 145.2 decimal hours per month in Keswick Library. While not all library links offer access to PCs, those that do outperformed many of the branch libraries in 2024, ranging from an average of 31.7 decimal hours per month at Morton Library Link to 69.5 decimal hours per month at Cockermouth Library Link.

Lower usage at the branch libraries may be influenced by a range of factors: opening hours and facilities (eg Silloth and Seaton libraries both open 21 hours per week with three PCs in each location and Frizington just 8.5 hours per week over three half days with two PCs); accessibility; proximity to a main library; customer awareness; and in the case of Aspatria library refurbishment and reduced operation during 2024.

PC use in the library links is quite robust: Cockermouth Library Link average 69.5 hrs per month; Harraby Library Link 64.6 hours; Morton Library Link 31.7 hours and this reflects that these sites are relatively busy. Cockermouth Library Link was staffed (Cockermouth Town Council in 2024) over six days each week with three PCs available. Harraby and Morton library links open six and five days each week respectively and are located in busy community centres where there are related services and demand from building users.

Service type	Average PC use (decimal hours) 2024	% of PC use by service type	% of PC use by library within service type
Branch Library	531.6	21.5%	
Aspatria Library	3.0		0.6%
Brampton Library	26.7		5.0%
Cleator Moor Library	28.6		5.4%
Egremont Library	25.0		4.7%
Frizington Library	0.6		0.1%
Keswick Library	145.2		27.3%
Longtown Library	18.1		3.4%
Maryport Library	107.5		20.2%
Millom Library	142.1		26.7%
Seaton Library	7.5		1.4%
Silloth Library	9.3		1.7%
Wigton Library	18.0		3.4%
Library HQ	1,773.1	71.8%	
Carlisle Library	1,074.1		60.6%
Whitehaven Library	376.2		21.2%
Workington Library	322.8		18.2%
Library Link	165.8	6.7%	
Cockermouth Library Link	69.5		41.9%
Harraby Library Link	64.6		39.0%
Morton Library Link	31.7		19.1%
Cumberland	2,470.5	100.0%	

Note: Aspatria Library was closed from January to July 2024 for refurbishment, re-opening in August 2024, with temporary limited PC offer (one laptop with printing facilities).

Footfall

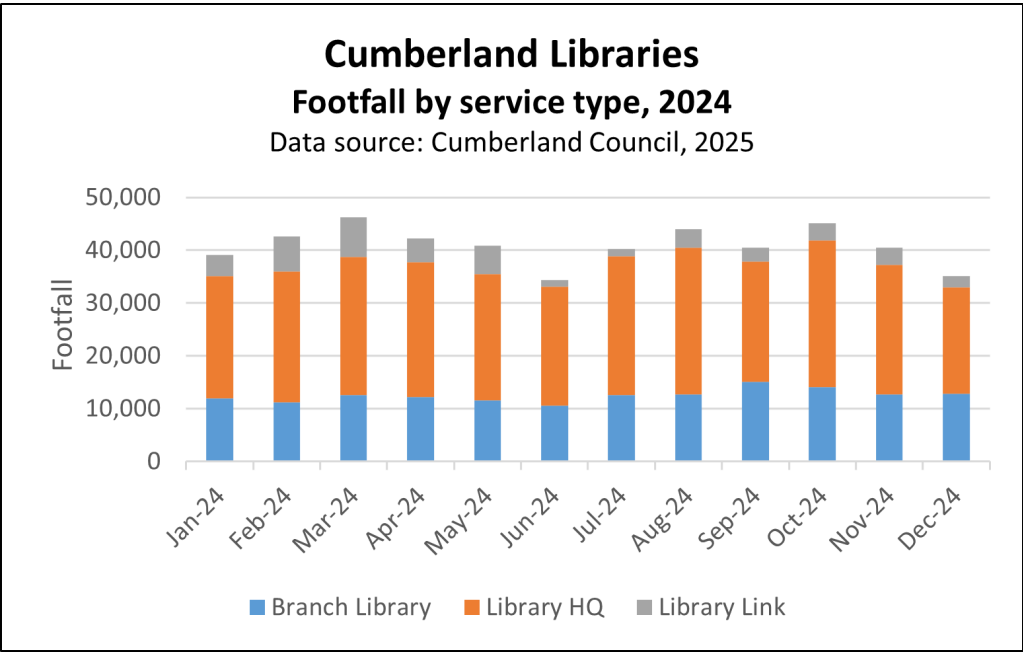
Almost half a million visits are known to have taken place to Cumberland's libraries in 2024. This figure is likely to be higher, as footfall is not recorded for all library link services, and figures are lower for Aspatia Library than would generally be expected as access was restricted during refurbishment. Main libraries accounted for three in five (60.1%; 295,169 visits), branch libraries accounted for almost one third (30.6%; 150,011 visits) and known library links almost one in ten visits (9.3%; 45,629 visits). It should be noted that the number of visits does not represent the number of discrete individuals.

Outside the main libraries, the largest proportions of visits were seen in Millom Library (8.0% of the Cumberland total) and Cockermouth Library Link (9.3% of the total).

Service Type / library name	Total footfall 2024	% of total 2024
Branch Library	150,011	30.6%
Aspatia Library	2,472	0.5%
Brampton Library	11,942	2.4%
Cleator Moor Library	11,710	2.4%
Egremont Library	9,300	1.9%
Frizington Library	5,381	1.1%
Keswick Library	19,268	3.9%
Longtown Library	3,932	0.8%
Maryport Library	17,165	3.5%
Millom Library	39,331	8.0%
Seaton Library	5,922	1.2%
Silloth Library	8,120	1.7%
Wigton Library	15,468	3.2%
Library HQ	295,169	60.1%
Carlisle Library	174,618	35.6%
Whitehaven Library	48,102	9.8%
Workington Library	72,449	14.8%
Library Link	45,629	9.3%
Cockermouth Library Link	45,629	9.3%
Cumberland total	490,809	100.0%

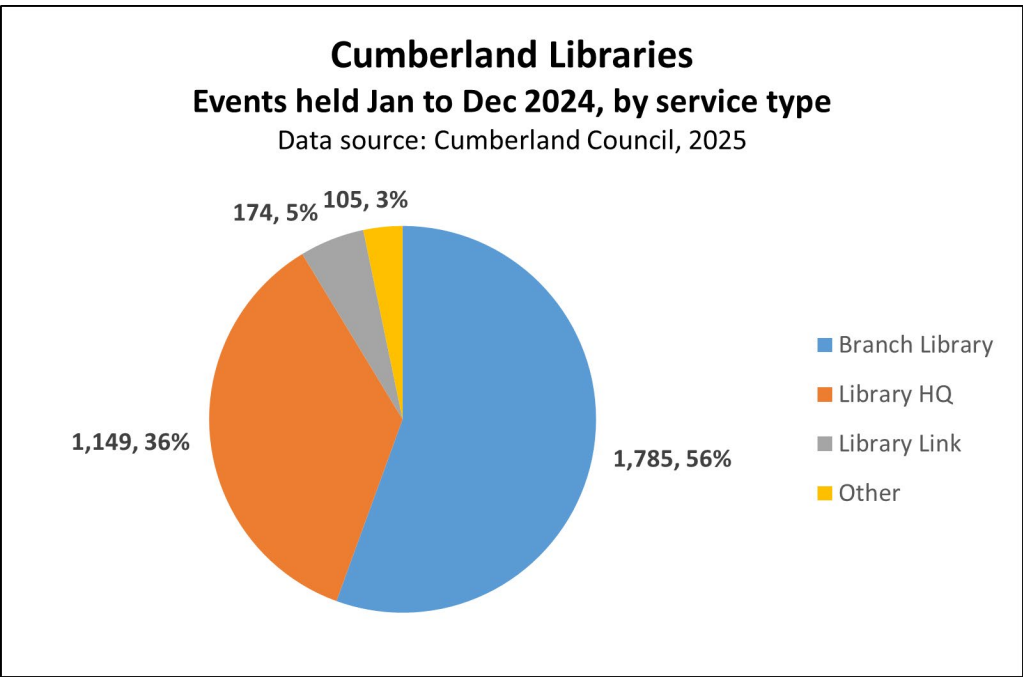
Note: Aspatia Library was closed from January to July 2024 for refurbishment, re-opening in August 2024.

Across all three service types, there is an indication of increased footfall around March, August and October, which corresponds with the increased volume of active use/ physical resource issues and PC use over these times.

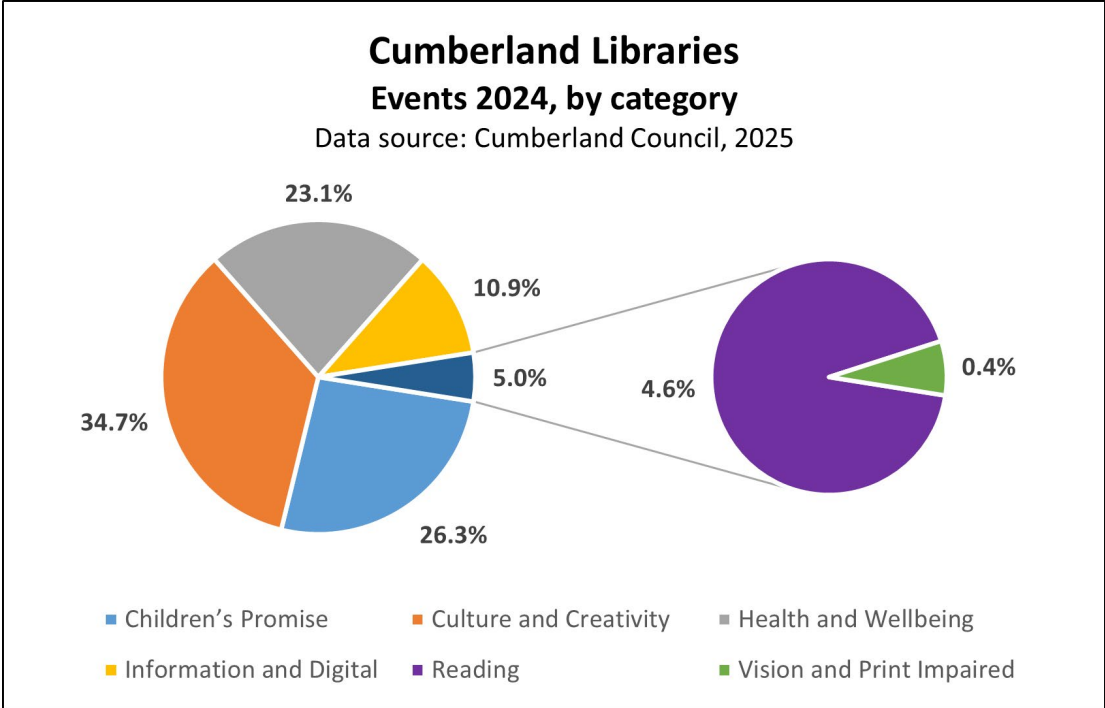


Community Engagement Events and Activities

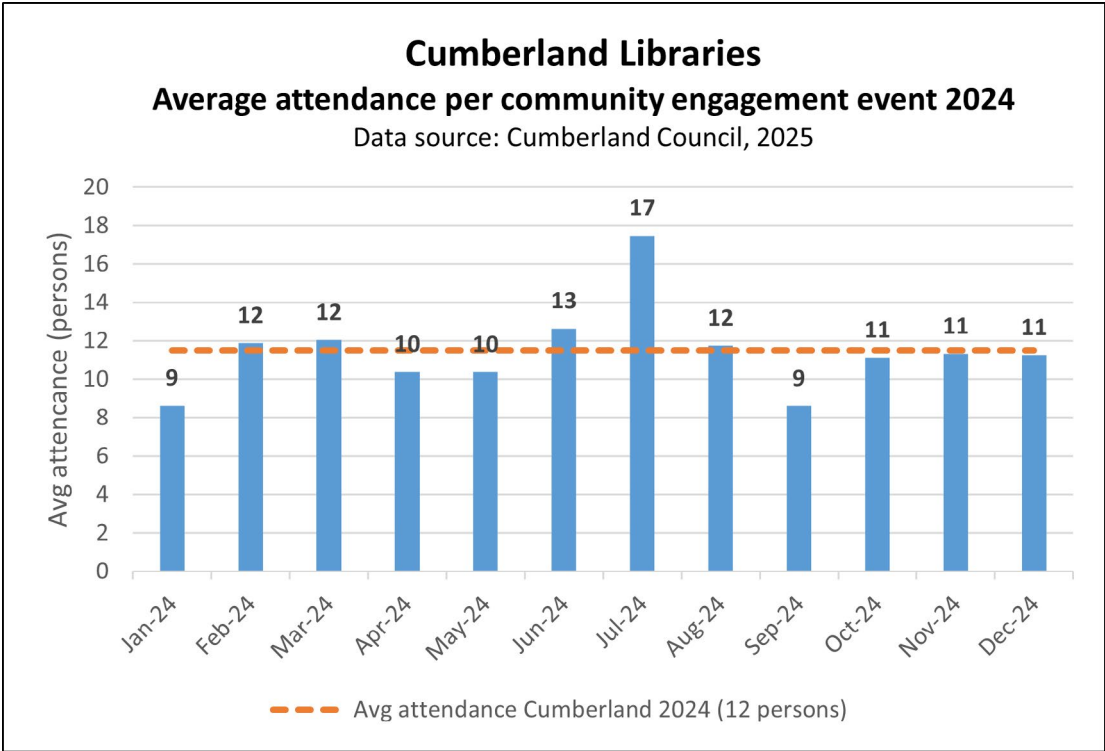
A large number of community engagement events and activities were held during 2024. In total 3,213 events attracted 36,968 attendees; this may not be the number of discrete individuals as some people may have attended more than one event. Over half of all community engagement events occurred in branch libraries (55.6%; 1,785 events), just over one third in main libraries (35.8%; 1,149); one in 19 in library links (5.4%; 174 events). A small proportion (3.3%; 105) were “other” events; this includes events organised by third parties, not on library premises, but with engagement from library staff (eg to promote the BorrowBox service), or could be organised and hosted by third party organisations and held within library service premises. Overall the number of events were generally higher during the autumn and winter months (October to March).



A wide range of community engagement events were held across Cumberland, the greatest proportion relating to culture and creativity (34.7%). Just over one in four events (26.3%) are aimed at children / younger age groups including, but not limited to, class visits, craft sessions, story times, rhyme times and LEGO clubs. Just under one in four (23.1%) related to health and wellbeing.



Events were attended by 12 people on average during 2024, ranging from 7 people on average at branch library events, to 35 people on average at other events. Although the number of events were generally higher during the autumn and winter months (October to March), attendance was at its highest during June 2024 and particularly during July 2024 which saw 17 people attending each event on average. The 64 events for children and young people held during July are likely to have contributed to this high attendance rate with each event attracting 45 individuals on average.



Community engagement events across the library links appear to be relatively robust, ranging from an average of 9 attendees per event at Cockermouth Library Link, Morton (11 per event), Denton Holme (13 per event) to 17 attendees per event at Harraby Library Link. It should however be noted that the number of events at Denton Holme, Harraby and Morton Library Links are relatively small.

Cumberland Libraries - Community Engagement 2024			
<i>Data source: Cumberland Council, 2025</i>			
Service type and library	Events 2024	Attendees 2024	Avg attendees per event 2024
Branch Libraries	1,785	12,368	7
Brampton Library	27	76	3
Cleator Moor Library	184	1,434	8
Egremont Library	157	1,206	8
Frizington Library	138	1,517	11
Keswick Library	303	2,556	8
Longtown Library	2	24	12
Maryport Library	287	1,800	6
Millom Library	246	1,755	7
Seaton Library	83	342	4
Silloth Library	137	897	7
Wigton Library	221	761	3
Library HQs	1,149	19,245	17
Carlisle Library	397	10,643	27
Whitehaven Library	405	4,180	10
Workington Library	347	4,422	13
Library Links	174	1,636	9
Carlisle West Library Link	0	0	n/a
Cockermouth Library Link	167	1,534	9
Denton Holme Library Link	2	25	13
Harraby Library Link	4	66	17
Morton Library Link	1	11	11
Other	105	3,719	35
Cumberland Total	3,213	36,968	12

E Resource Use

All registered library members in Cumbria have access to digital library resources. These are made available via the Borrowbox service, freely available via an app or online on a PC. Borrowbox provides access to e-audiobooks, e-books and e-press issues (newspapers, magazines and comics). These publications can be read/listened to on smartphones, tablets, some e-readers readers (eg Kobo, Nook, Kindle Fire) and computers.

“Digital only” members, as the name suggests, can access digital resources only (ie not physical books and resources). However, other registered library members are also able to access Borrowbox’s digital resources in addition to physical library resources. However, many registered library members do not take advantage of the digital resources on offer, and only a small proportion of Digital only members are actively using Borrowbox services. There may be a variety of reasons for this, which could include a lack of awareness of the services on offer or the availability of items of interest. Not everyone is comfortable using digital devices or navigating online platforms, and this could also be a significant barrier for some customers, including those who register for digital only membership but are not making active use of it. Some customers may not have reliable internet services or access to digital devices of their own. Many people still prefer the tactile experience of physical books and magazines, or may spend a great deal of time using screens for work, education and entertainment and may want to avoid extending that digital time. Concerns about data privacy and security may also deter some from using digital resources.

The e-resource library data below relating to issues is based on library services across Cumbria, a breakdown between unitary authority areas is not available at the time of writing.

In total over half a million e-resources were issued in 2024 (599,338). Demand for digital issues of magazines and newspapers is greatest and reflecting that a proportion of the titles are published daily, making up over half of all issues in 2024 (57.0%; 341,921), eaudiobooks accounted for just over a quarter of all issues (27.3%; 163,446) while e-book issues made up one in six issues (15.7%; 93,971).

These figures are not insignificant in comparison to physical issues which include physical books and audio-books.

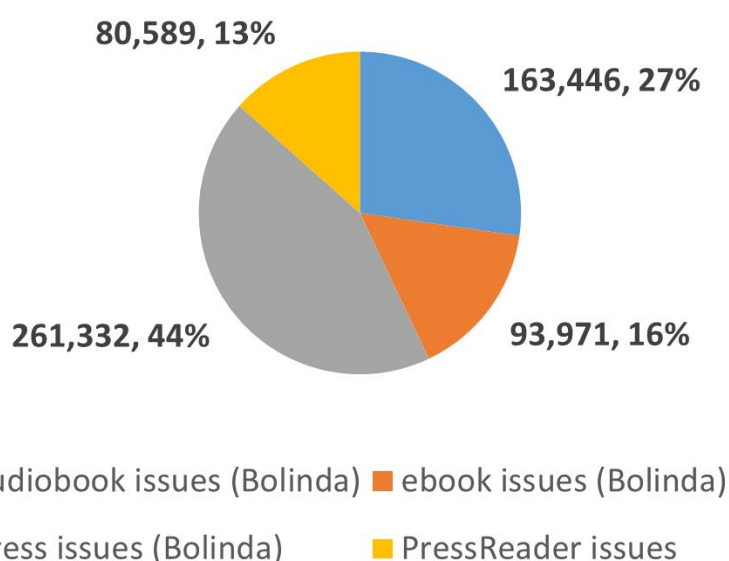
E-audiobook and e-book issues show an increase over the summer months of July, August and September, with a generally increasing usage trend over 2024. Holiday times may be a factor. There is increased usage also around Easter, and increases are also apparent over Christmas and New Year with e-audiobook issues greatest in December 2024 and e-book issues relatively high in January 2024.

Trend is slightly more difficult to establish with the issues of e-newspaper and e-magazines as the E-press contract commenced in September 2023 to replace the PressReader contract which terminated in March 2024. Data show relatively small numbers of e-press issues in January 2024, although it should be noted that e-press was a new product to replace PressReader; e-press issues increased more rapidly once the PressReader contract ended. Overall the volume of e-press issues at December 2024 are shown to exceed the volume of PressReader issues at the end of the contract.

Library Service in Cumbria

Total e-resource issues, 2024

Data source: Cumberland Council, 2025



2024 Cumberland Use of Digital v Physical Resource

Ordinary Registered Library Members	41,828
Digital-Only Registered Members	2,451
Total Registered Members	44,279

Total Members actively borrowing physical books	16,381	% take-up
Total Members actively using Borrowbox	2,625	36.99%
		5.93%

Digital-Only Members actively using Borrowbox	426	17.38%
Ordinary Members actively using Borrowbox	2,199	5.26%

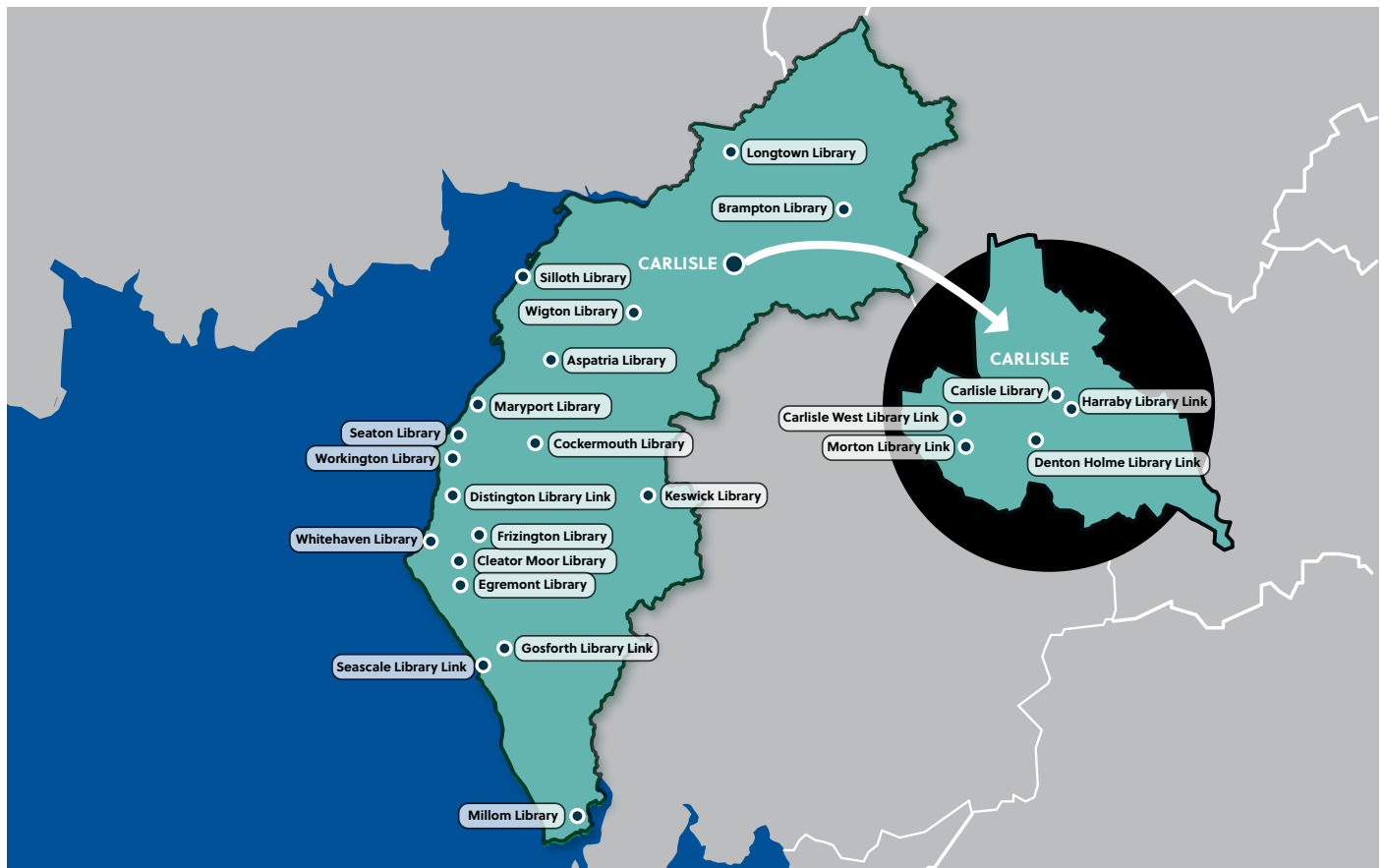
Borrowbox active only (not physical-books active)	1,733
Borrowbox active and also physical-books active	892
Borrowbox active or physical-books active	18,114
Physical-books active but not Borrowbox active	15,489

Table produced using data supplied after main analysis.

Library Buildings

Cumberland's libraries are situated across the region and located in densely populated areas and within smaller community areas.

Where our libraries are



Libraries are either owned by the Council (Freehold), on long-term leases (Leasehold) or rented from other organisations on rolling contracts.

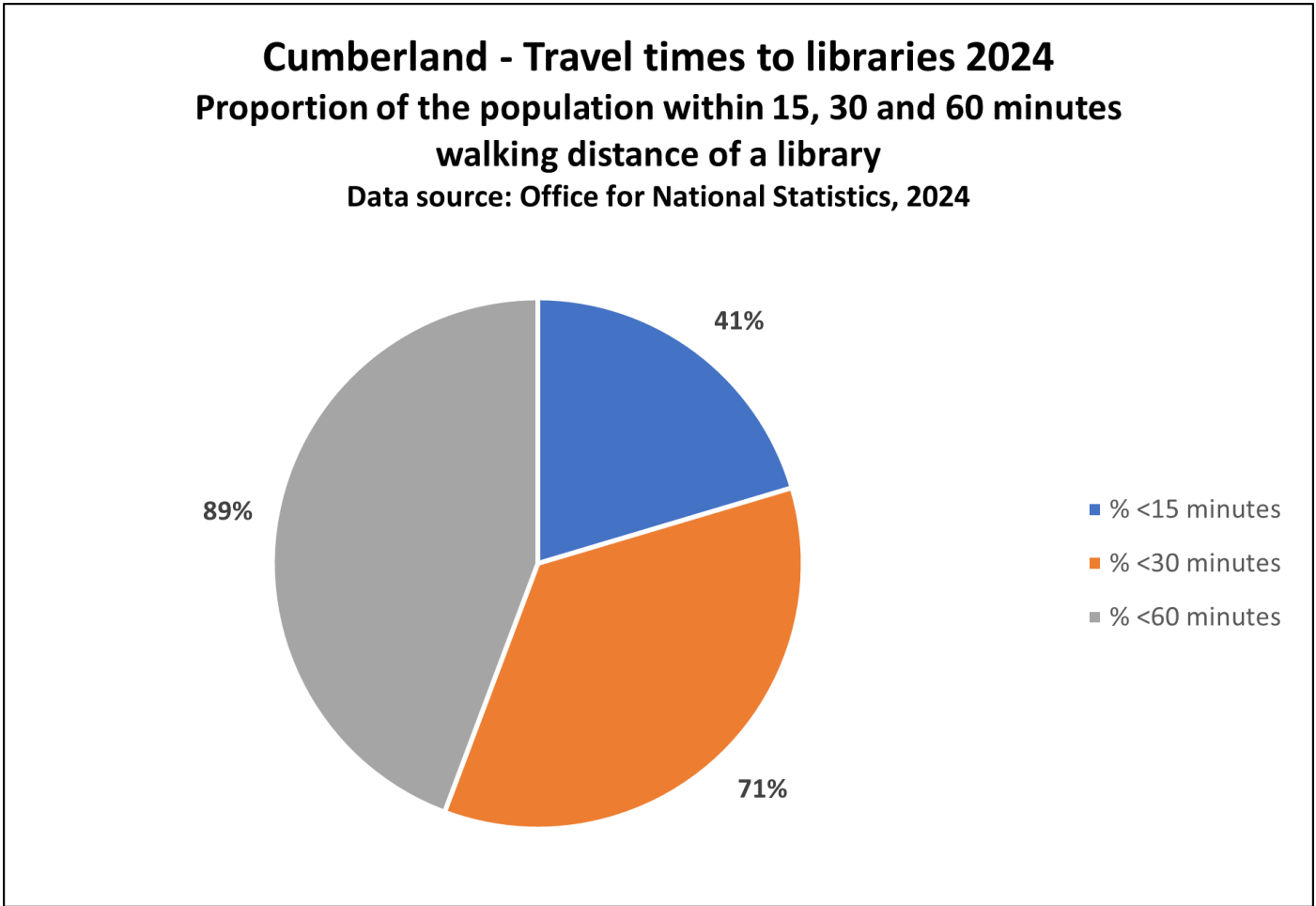
The quality of buildings varies considerably. Aspatria and Millom have recently been refurbished, Carlisle Library is currently being refurbished and funding has been secured to refurbish Workington and Cleator Moor libraries. Whitehaven Library building is not fit for purpose. Several libraries require development.

The table below shows level of usage at each location.

Library	Type	Opening Pattern - days/ hours	Annual Footfall	Books issued 24/25 monthly average	Tenure
Aspatia Library	Branch	Monday: 10am to 5pm Tuesday: 1pm to 5pm Wednesday: 11.30am to 5pm Friday: 1pm to 5pm	6444	233	Freehold
Brampton Library	Branch	Monday: 2pm to 5pm Wednesday: 10am to 12pm and 2pm to 5pm Thursday: 2pm to 5pm Friday: 2pm to 5pm Saturday: 10am to 1pm	15954	736	Freehold
Carlisle Library	Main	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am to 5.30pm Tuesday: 10am to 5.30pm Saturday: 9am to 4pm	168252	11225	Leasehold
Carlisle West Library	Link	Monday: 10am to 4pm Wednesday: 10am to 4pm Thursday: 10am to 4pm Friday: 10am to 4pm	Not Available	1	Rented
Cleator Moor Library	Branch	Monday: 9am to 2pm Tuesday: 9am to 5pm Wednesday: Closed Thursday: 9am to 5pm Friday: 9am to 2pm	11358	526	Freehold
Cockermouth Library	Branch	Monday: 10am to 4pm Tuesday: 10am to 4pm Wednesday: 10am to 5pm Thursday: 10am to 4pm Friday: 10am to 4pm Saturday: 10am to 2pm	44319	2362	Rented
Denton Holme Library	Link	Monday: 1pm to 3pm Wednesday: 11am to 4pm Thursday: 10am to 12pm	Not Available	46	Leasehold
Distington Library	Link	Monday: 10am to 2pm Tuesday: 10am to 2pm Wednesday: Closed Thursday: 10am to 2pm Friday: 10am to 2pm	Not Available	1	Leasehold
Egremont Library	Branch	Monday: 9am to 5pm Tuesday: 9am to 5pm Thursday: 9am to 5pm Friday: 9am to 5pm Saturday: 10am to 12pm	9032	706	Freehold
Frizington Library	Branch	Monday: 2pm to 5pm Wednesday: 2pm to 5pm Friday: 9.30am to 12pm	7245	118	Freehold
Gosforth Library	Link	Monday: 1pm to 2.30pm Wednesday: 4pm to 5.30pm Saturday: 10am to 12pm	Not Available	30	Rented
Harraby Library	Link	Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm	Not Available	198	Rented
Keswick Library	Branch	Monday to Thursday: 9.30am to 1pm, 1.30pm to 5pm Friday and Saturday: 9.30am to 12pm	18967	1285	Freehold
Longtown Library	Branch	Monday: 1pm to 5pm Wednesday: 10am to 2pm Friday 1pm to 5pm	4207	304	Freehold
Millom Library	Branch	Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm Saturday: 9am to 12pm	38,878	526	Freehold
Maryport Library	Branch	Monday: 9.30am to 5pm Tuesday: 9.30am to 5pm Wednesday: 9.30am to 5pm Thursday: 9.30am to 5pm Friday: 9.30am to 5pm Saturday: 9.30am to 12.30pm	16675	983	Freehold
Morton Library	Link	Monday to Friday: 9.30am to 4.30pm Saturday: 9am to 11.30am	Not Available	317	Leasehold
Seascale Library	Link	Monday: 10am to 12.30pm Wednesday: 10am to 12.30pm Friday: 2.30pm to 5pm Saturday: 10am to 12.30pm	Not Available	185	Rented
Seaton Library	Branch	Monday: 1pm to 5pm Tuesday, Thursday: 10am to 12.30pm, 1.00pm to 5pm Friday: 9am to 12pm	7998	258	Freehold
Silloth Library	Branch	Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10am to 4pm Saturday: 10am to 1pm	8742	185	Leasehold
Whitehaven Library	Main	Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 9am to 5pm Tuesday and Thursday: 9am to 6pm Saturday: 10am to 2pm	50613	2550	Freehold
Wigton Library	Branch	Monday: 9.30am to 5pm Tuesday: 9.30am to 5pm Thursday: 9.30pm to 5pm Friday: 9.30am to 5pm Saturday: 10am to 12pm	15,468	982	Freehold
Workington Library	Main	Monday, Wednesday: 9am to 6pm Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am to 5pm Saturday: 9am to 2pm	72483	2156	Freehold

Travel Times to Libraries

Cumberland is classified under the Rural Urban Classifications for local authorities in England as a “Largely Rural” local authority. This is likely to be reflected in the proportion of the population that can access a library within 15, 30 and 60 minutes by walking. Two in five people are likely to be able to access a library within 15 minutes (41%), and seven in ten within 30 minutes (71%). These are likely to be people living in more densely populated areas. However, one in nine people living in Cumberland (11%) are not able to access a library within 60 minutes by walking.



Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

An engagement exercise was undertaken to gather feedback to inform this SNA and supplement the data analysis.

A survey was designed to obtain views on the following aspects of library services:

- How effective are our current library services delivering against key national outcomes?
- How cost effective are library services in Cumberland compared to other regions with similar demographics?
- What will the future population of the region look like and what are the primary needs of that demography likely to need from libraries?
- What do residents want from public library services and library buildings? (users and non-users)
- What does the Council want from public library services and library buildings?
- What are residents' views on different models of providing library services? (e.g. buildings/ digital/ remote)
- What is the Council's view on different models of providing library services? (e.g. buildings/ digital/ remote)
- What is the condition of library building stock?
- Ideas on how library services could be improved or developed
- What are the Council's prevention priorities for the authority area?

A number of different versions of the survey were created including shorter versions, quick tick versions for use in different discussion forums and settings but consistency with questions was maintained in all so that data could be captured and collated.



Responses were gathered over the engagement period in various ways:

Surveys	How
Joint Leadership Team	Pilot group – Online JLT Survey - March 13th – 28th March
Libraries Staff	Online Libraries Internal Survey – March 24th – 11th April Followed by facilitated Focus Groups to explore feedback in more detail during April/May
The Public - Anyone and Everyone	On-line External Survey promoted 22nd April to 4th July via: Library and Council Consultation webpages Press releases to media All Council Newsletters Promotion in all libraries Cumberland Council Community Panel meetings Social Media Attendance at events Direct emails for cascade Email inbox for feedback and questions
The Public - Targeted	Face to face drop-in sessions in each library Supported and facilitated discussions with groups representing people with Protected Characteristics Targeted email promotion to groups representing people with protected characteristics
Key internal stakeholders	Focus groups with Management Teams for each Council Service

The engagement period included:

- 26 staffed drop ins held in library sites
- Email contact with over 102 community organisations to invite returns and offer targeted focus groups (see appendix 6).
- 20 targeted groups
- 10 targeted sessions in youth centres/schools engaging with 11-25 year olds
- Direct emails to the MPs representing Cumberland Council's region
- Direct emails to all Town and Parish Councils

The response rate and contribution of respondents has brought value to understanding residents' usage and perceptions of Cumberland Libraries. However, the number of responses is small compared to the total number of Cumberland Library members, which in turn is a small percentage of the resident population of the authority area.

Summaries of responses by stakeholder group are set out below.

Councillors & Officer Engagement

A presentation about the engagement programme including links to the online survey, was made to Cumberland Council's Senior Leadership Team / Executive Members (Joint Leadership Team (JLT)), and Directorate Management Teams from March 2025 onwards.

All 46 elected Councillors were invited to one of 3 online seminars, which engaged with the members of the 8 Community Panels and the Business and Resources Scrutiny Committee. All Councillors were invited to complete the public survey and share it amongst constituents.

Feedback from these meetings highlighted the contribution libraries already make to enabling the Councils' priorities, given their direct accessibility and contact with residents and their local communities.

Cumberland Council's Vision & Priorities

Cumberland Council takes a fresh approach to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by our residents and communities.

By enabling positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, prosperity and the environment we will fulfil the potential of our people and our area.

Our ambitions are to:

- Improve health and wellbeing
- Address inequalities
- Develop local economies that work for local people
- Develop environmental resilience
- Deliver excellent public service

There was a strong appetite to build on existing library services and develop them to support the council's Prevention Approach and a desire to see greater presence of other council services being accessible in libraries, including access to customer services.



Contributing to Cumberland's Prevention Approach

Our Vision is to

Empower every Cumberland resident, and people acting on their behalf, at any stage of their life to build the independence and resilience to help themselves achieve positive outcomes for health and wellbeing and prosperity, delivered in a financially sustainable way.



Putting **residents at the heart of our services** to support individuals and families build independent and resilient lives, whether they live in urban or rural areas



Empowering our teams to **help residents the first time** through a strengths-based, holistic, and insight-led approach



Adopting a **digital by default** mindset where possible, with options to support a diverse range of access needs



Developing a **multi-disciplinary, integrated offer** that leverages the strengths and assets of the council, community and voluntary sector, and partners



Using **data and automation** in a secure, ethical and compliant way to drive improved decision making and service offers



Achieving **improved efficiency and effectiveness** by transforming the way we deliver our services to ensure the council is financially sustainable over the long term

This will deliver value for:

Our residents:

- ✓ I receive early and appropriate support
- ✓ I can access Council services through my preferred channel
- ✓ I have a stronger relationship with my Council

Our staff:

- ✓ I am able to work collaboratively internally and with partners
- ✓ I am equipped with the tools and knowledge I need
- ✓ I am satisfied with my job

Our Council:

- ✓ We have reduced demand into statutory services
- ✓ We deliver positive outcomes for our residents and partners
- ✓ We can deliver our strategic objectives

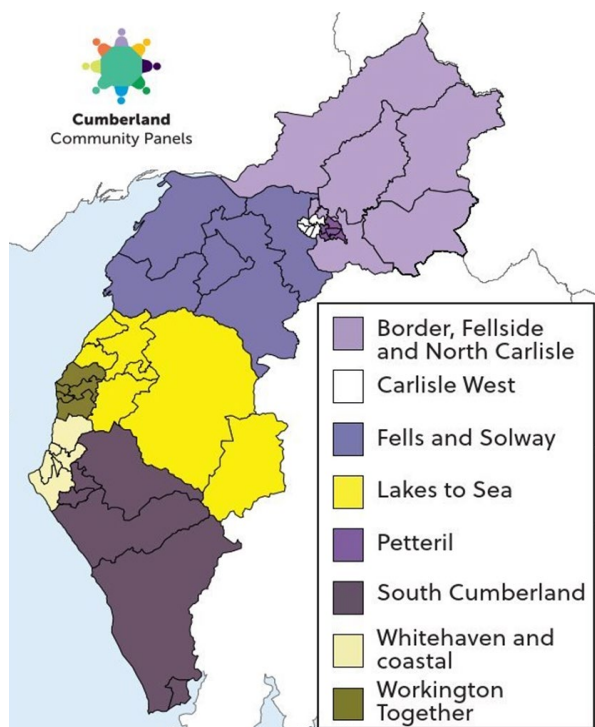
Interest was expressed in extending the use of library buildings to contribute to the Council's Community Hub model.

The Council vision for Cumberland Community Hubs is as follows: "Community Hubs in Cumberland offer welcoming and accessible spaces within the heart of our diverse communities, where residents can access key public and third sector services to meet their needs and positively impact their wellbeing."

Given the Council's libraries already provide a wide range of Information, advice and guidance and work closely with their communities, it was expressed that it would be desirable to continue to develop existing library buildings as key spaces for the public to get greater access to more supports that will enable them to live healthier, better and more sustainable lives.

Councillors expressed an interest in a more tailored, coproduced and collaborative approach to developing services within the council's panel areas linked to locally identified priorities.





They recognised libraries provide a great opportunity for direct and personal engagement with local communities and residents and were keen to support the wider promotion of library service and asked for consideration to be given to improved access to library services for deprived and vulnerable residents, particularly those in rural communities.

Council Officers recognised the importance of libraries and the opportunity to use their relationship with their local communities and residents to build stronger relationships and connections and also considered ways in which the library service could contribute to supporting their customers. Key outcomes included:

- Waste
- Opportunity to use libraries as venues to engage with public
- Opportunity to share more information – as per customer service support
- Highways
- Opportunity to share schedules of work and support consultation and engagement events
- Children's
- Cross promote services, library membership pack for looked after children
- Support more initiative at Family Hubs and Commission Service support
- Health
- Develop greater synergy between outreach teams, more IAG, more events/activities in libraries
- Public Health activity and initiatives delivered in Libraries
- Adults
- Warm homes project links
- Possible visibility of Adult Social care in Libraries
- Remote services being offered in Care settings
- Promotion of library services to Care providers

Library Staff Engagement

Cumberland's 120 library staff, from public and support/ specialised services, were provided with the opportunity to complete the staff survey. The full set of questions can be found at Appendix 1. In total, 70 responses were received, representing the views of three out of five of Cumberland's library staff (58.3%), with the majority working within the public library service at Cumberland's three main libraries (Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington).

The majority of staff completing the survey are female (80%); this is a much larger proportion than the average gender split for Cumberland (females 51% / males 49% - Source: Office for National Statistics, 2023). The majority describe their ethnicity as White (97.1%); this is a slightly smaller proportion than the average for Cumberland (White 97.7% - Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021). One in five report having a disability or a long-term health condition (21.4%); this is a slightly larger proportion than the average who report being disabled under the Equality Act in Cumberland (19.8% - Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021).

Many staff feel their role is fulfilling and worthwhile and makes a positive contribution to the local community. Three quarters of staff rate library services overall as above average. It is clear from responses to this survey that library staff want to be able to deliver a good service, but there is frustration at being hindered in their effectiveness by a number of issues. Key ones relate to the condition of library buildings, staffing levels, and gaps in knowledge and training, and printing services with some concern regarding online digital resources for customers, an overly complicated public-facing online catalogue.

Response Themes



Resources & Staffing

- Budget pressures and staffing levels are major concerns.
- Difficulty covering absences is affecting service delivery and morale.
- Staff struggle with changing workloads and customer expectations.
- Some feel unsafe with some library users.
- Training needed for consistent customer advice and support; some staff or ill-equipped to deal with complex enquiries.



Library Services Development

- Staff support service improvement and accessibility.
- Apprehension around Community Hubs and external partnerships diluting core library offer.
- Libraries seen as key to supporting health, wellbeing, and social inclusion, but need investment.
- Drop-in services in smaller site locations welcomed, but expertise and expectation management are vital.



Promotion & Communication

- Frustration over poor marketing—many residents unaware of libraries' full offer.
- Over-reliance on library social media misses good proportion of potential audience.
- Events, building upgrades, and community hubs seen as ways to raise visibility.
- Internal communication mostly rated "good" or "fair".

Technology

- Borrowbox, free WiFi, and computer access rated highly.
- Printing and internet connectivity often unreliable, with 'Papercut' print solution for customer offer causing considerable frustration
- Suggestions include better WiFi, improved printer solution eg Bluetooth enabled, improve public access catalogue and digital training for customers.
- AI and tech seen as growth opportunities.

Buildings & Infrastructure

- Buildings need repairs and improved maintenance.
- Spaces not seen as welcoming or accessible.
- Investment needed to modernise, improve insulation, heating, and overall comfort.

Meeting & Study Spaces

- Current meeting/study spaces rated poorly—lack of provision across library estate, and privacy and quality variable.
- Need for more inviting and flexible areas for study, groups, and business use.
- Suggestions include meeting pods, hot-desking, and spaces for wellbeing services.

Some staff felt that the survey question 3, which asked respondents about a range of current services, did not allow for those who did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable to select a 'not known' option. These tended to be staff who did not work in public libraries. As a return has to be made, these staff had to select one option, leading to a margin of error.

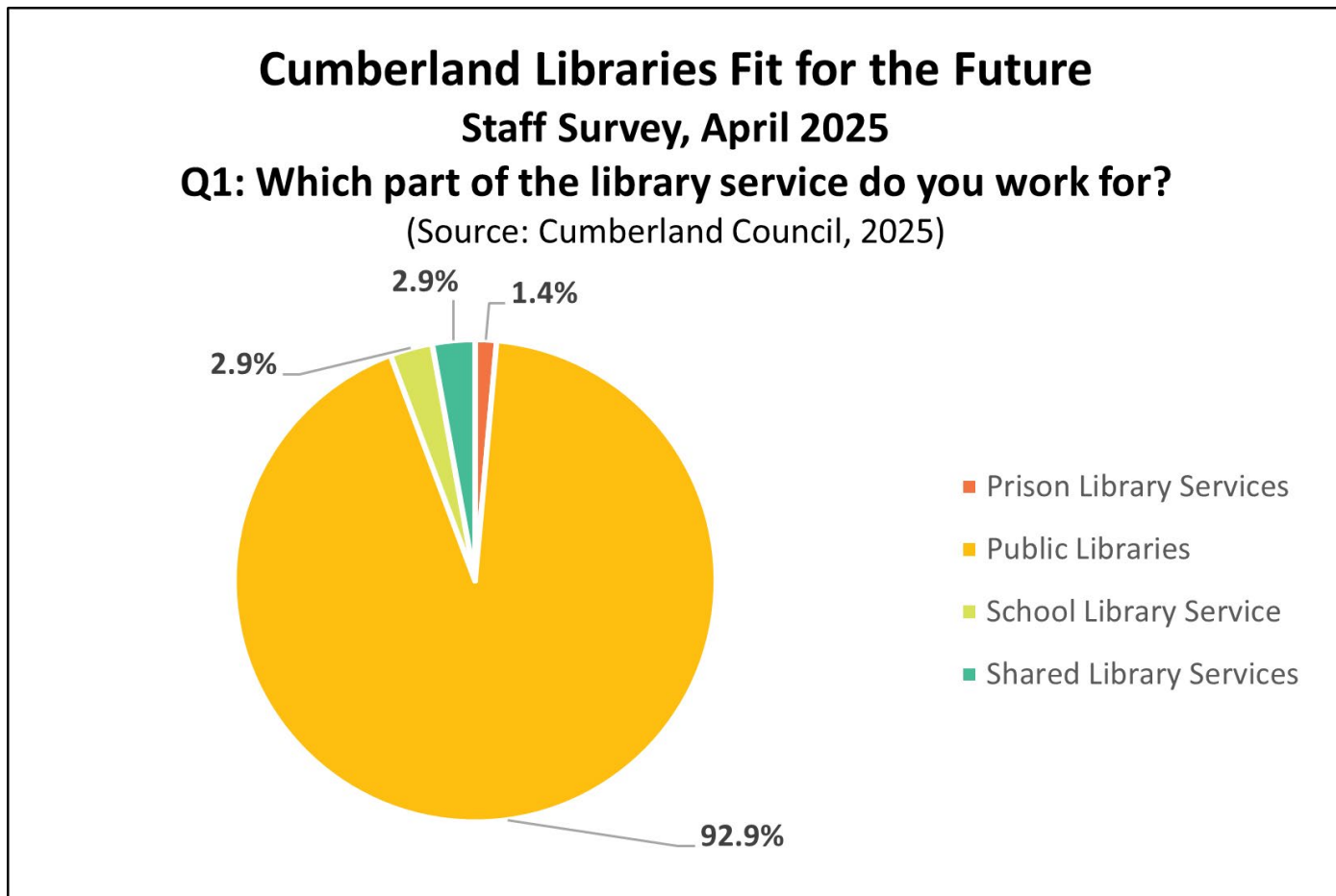


Findings

Section 1: Your Library Experience

Q1: Which part of the library service do you work for?

The majority of staff responding to the staff survey work within the public library service.



Q2: What library or building is your main base of work?

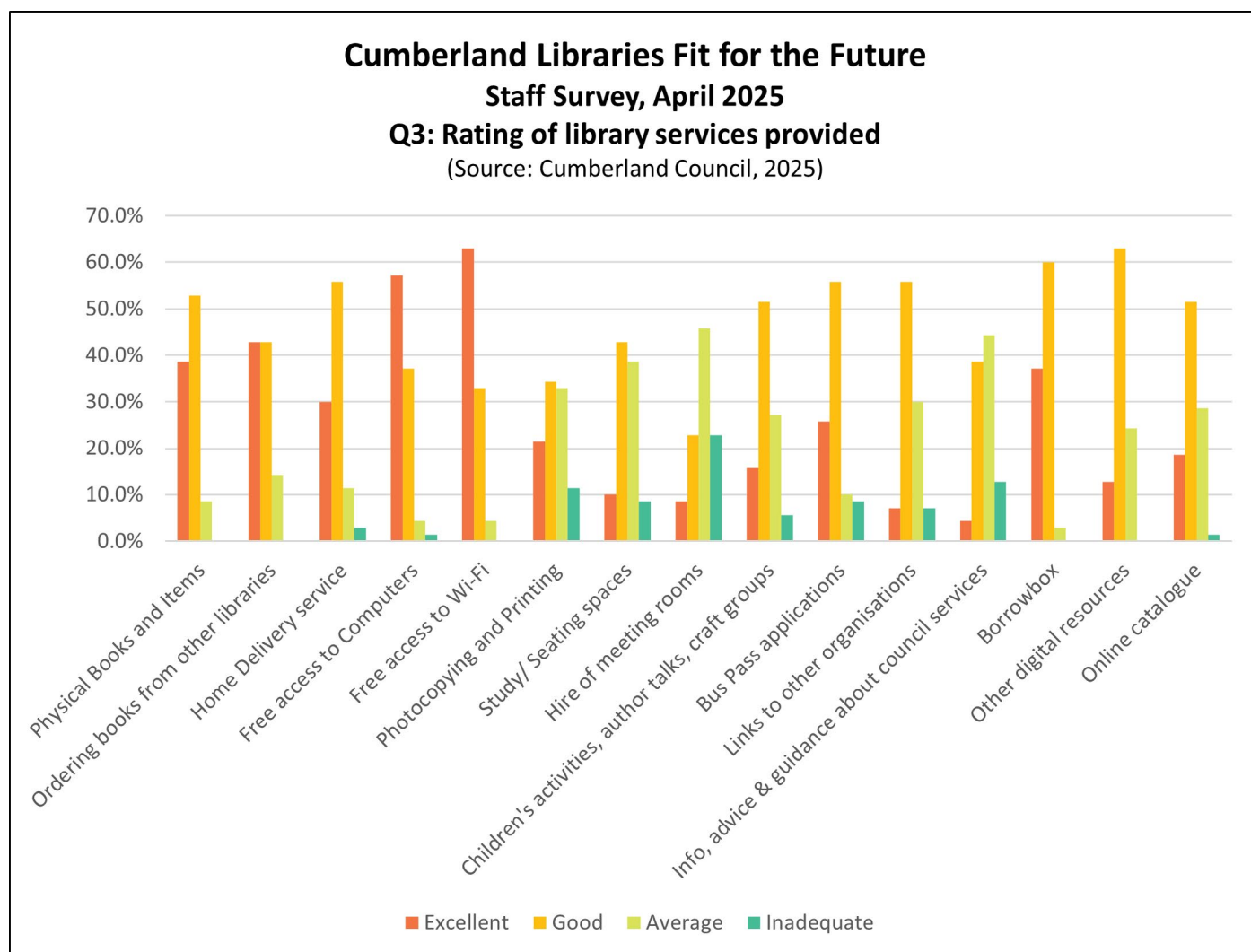
The majority of responses came from Cumberland's three main libraries: Carlisle Library (42.9% of the responses), Whitehaven Library (18.6%) and Workington Library (14.3%). This is not surprising as these libraries are the work base for the largest proportion of Cumberland Library staff. Most branch libraries are single-staffed.



Section 2: What do you think of the services we offer as an employer?

Q3: Rating of library services offered

Library staff were asked to rate 15 services provided in public libraries as either excellent, good, average or inadequate. The results are shown in the illustration below.

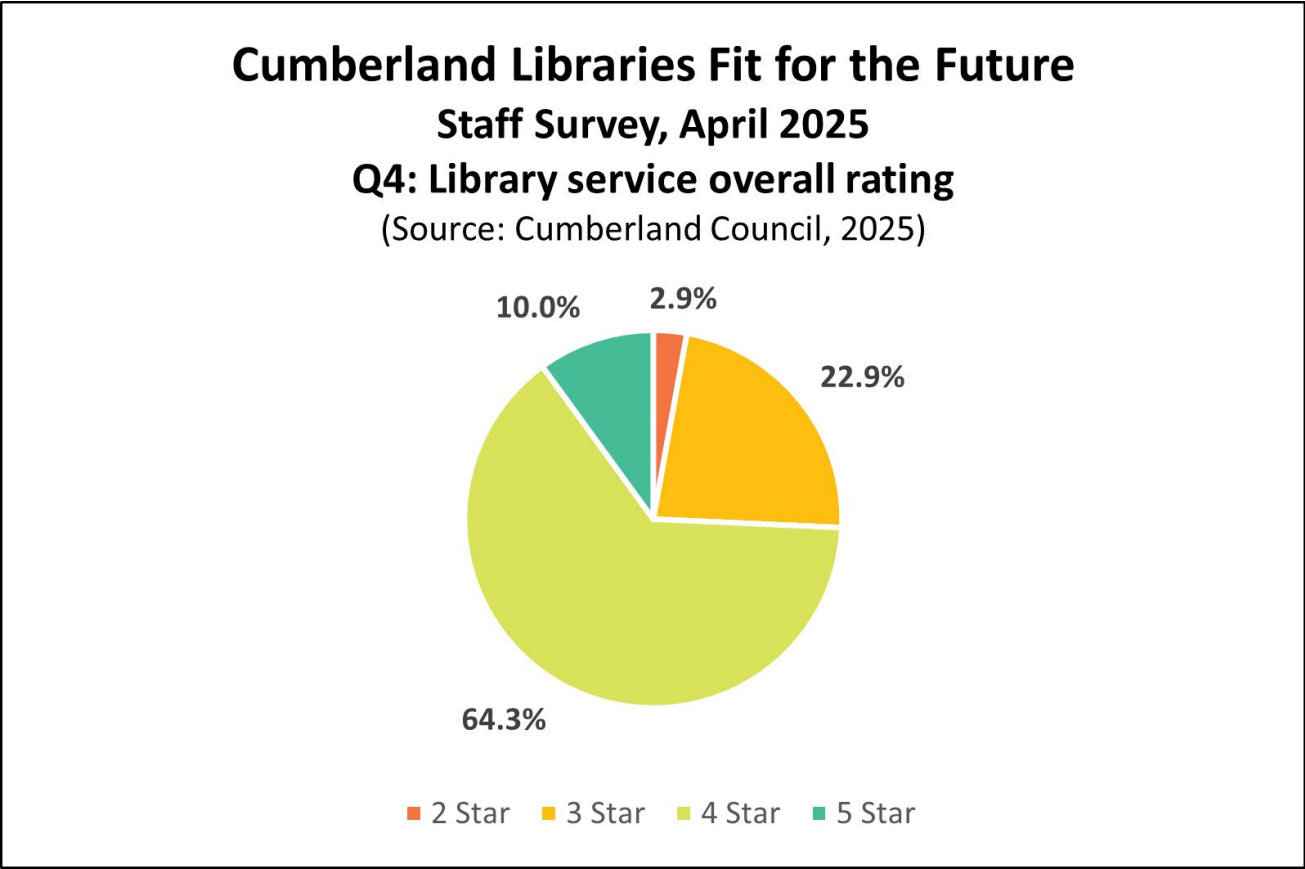


Staff are most satisfied with the Borrowbox service, with 97.1% of staff rating this service as either "excellent" or "good". Free access to WiFi is also considered either excellent or good by the majority of staff (95.7%) as is free access to computers (94.3%) and physical books and items (91.4%).

In contrast, one in seven staff (68.6%) rate the hire of meeting rooms as either inadequate or average, with over one in five rating this as inadequate (22.9%); the majority of inadequate ratings come from staff based at the main libraries (Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington). Over half of all staff (57.1%) rate the information, advice and guidance about council services as either inadequate or average. Similarly, the rating of current study or meeting spaces fares poorly (47.1% inadequate or average) as does photocopying and printing services (44.3% inadequate or average). Negative ratings are reflected in the comments provided by staff captured under question 5. It should be noted staff were not given an option if they didn't know, and this was raised as an issue by staff who did not work in public libraries so felt ill-qualified to comment.

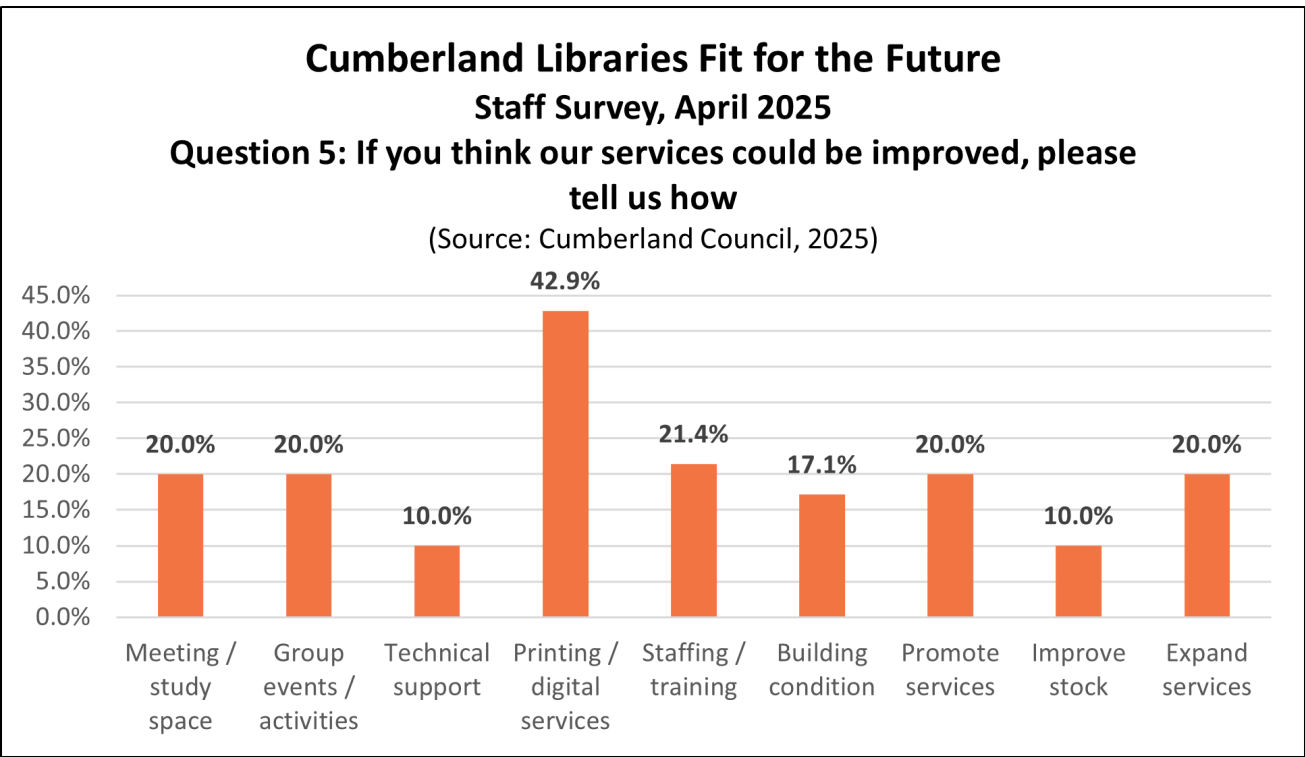
Q4: Library service overall rating

Library staff were asked to give the library service an overall rating from one star (worst) to five stars (best). Three out of four respondents (74.3%) rated the service as above average (four or five stars). There were no one star ratings, and only a small proportion of two star ratings (2.9%). Branch library staff are most likely to rate services as above average.



Q5: How do you think library services could be improved?

Library staff had a range of opinions around how services could be improved.



A summary of comments provided around the main themes shown above are set out below.

Improve meeting / study space

One in five respondents (20%, 14 staff) raised issues regarding the available of meeting and / or study space. Study areas are needed for quiet and private study but can be noisy and lacking in privacy. Demand for meeting rooms by partner and external organisations outstrips supply and opportunities for events and generating commercial income can be missed as a result. Many branch libraries have no meeting room provision. There is concern that discussions can be overheard which may deter participation or be off-putting for other library users.

Expand group events / activities

One in five respondents (20%, 14 staff) thought this was an area for improvement. They suggested events and activities need to be expanded to cater for people at different life stages, but their provision can be limited due to staffing capacity, particularly in single staffed branch libraries. It is thought that holding events and activities could increase membership and highlight what is on offer in libraries.

Provide technical support

Seven respondents identified that technical support would be of benefit to customers. Many people struggle with digital literacy and need more support than current staffing capacity and capability allows. It is suggested support could be provided by volunteers or by linking with other agencies.

Improve printing and digital services

Printing and digital services for customers are a particular concern for two out of five respondents (42.9%, 30 staff). The printing tool "PaperCut" is described as "hit or miss" and "not fit for purpose", and problems with its unreliability are considered to place a pressure on staff time. There is concern that long waiting times for titles in Borrowbox is off putting and frustrating, making the service hard to promote. The public-facing online catalogue is considered overly complicated for customers, providing some information that is only understood and relevant to those who work within the library.

Staff training

One in five staff (21.4%, 15 staff) are concerned about staff training. In particular, some do not feel confident in signposting customers to other services and feel they require better knowledge of services provided by the council and other.

Improve building condition

Twelve staff highlighted the need for improvement in this area, referring to the poor condition of some libraries, Whitehaven Library in particular. Buildings could be warmer; heating at Whitehaven Library described as being "unstable for years".

Promote services

Fourteen staff consider that services are not adequately advertised and that promotion of library services could widen use. Suggestions included offering library tours for local sixth form / college students and hosting homework clubs. One staff member makes the point that "if you don't know what we offer, how can you know what you are missing out on?".

Improve stock

There is concern expressed by 7 staff about the age and condition of resources, especially non-fiction, and music and drama stock. Staff would like to see a better range of books from varied suppliers, and larger print in addition to standard print to cater for an ageing society.

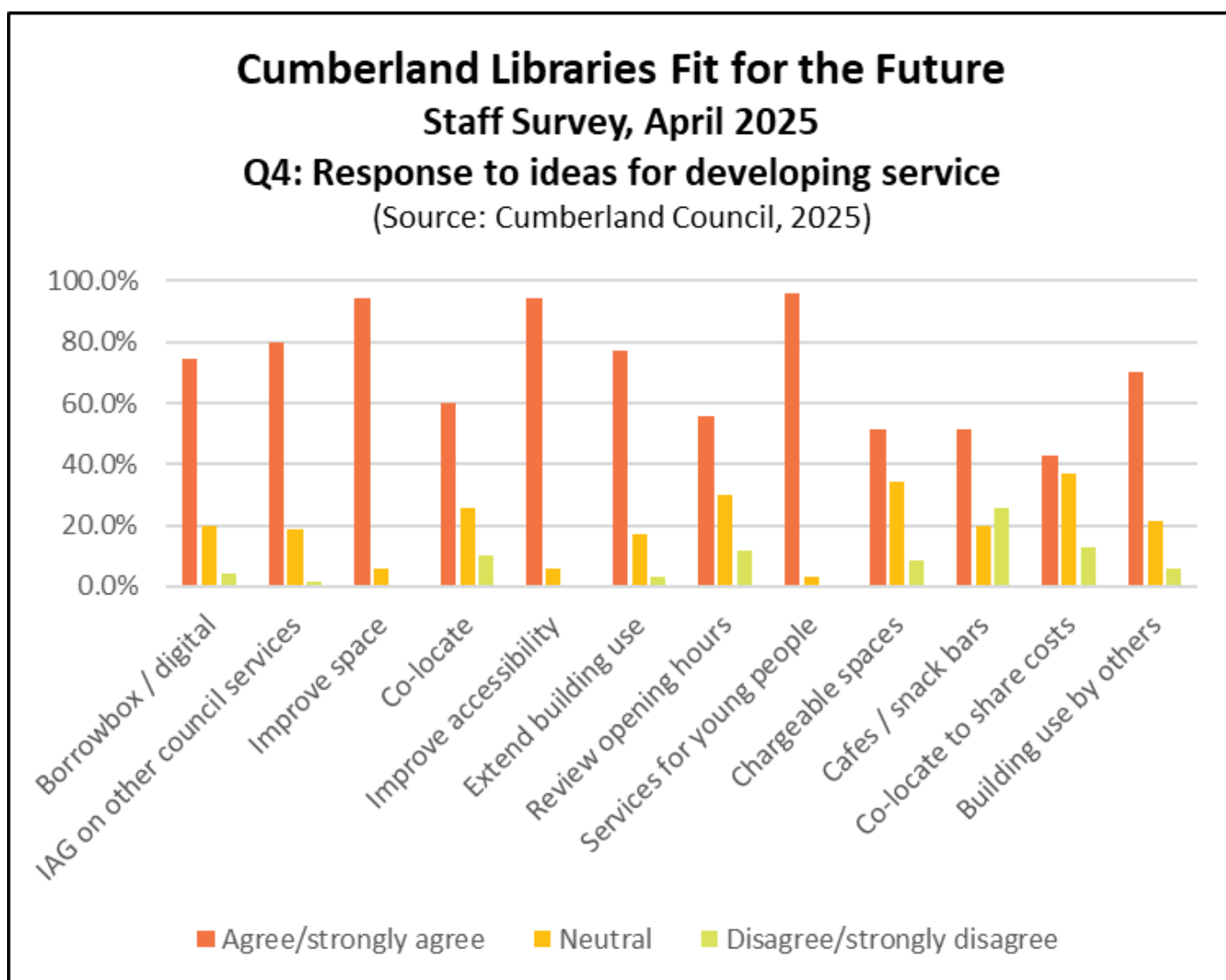
Expand services

Fourteen staff suggesting a need to expand services available in libraries. Individual suggestions included reintroducing newspapers, providing refreshments, board games and learning activities, expanding bus pass applications, late night opening, and extending home delivery services for an increasingly ageing population. However, there is concern that libraries need to retain their core function as they get busier with activities.

Section 3: What would make our libraries fit for the future?

Q6: Response to ideas for developing library services

Staff were asked for their opinions for developing library services against a set of options (listed in appendix 1) and were asked to rate 12 ideas from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, as shown below.

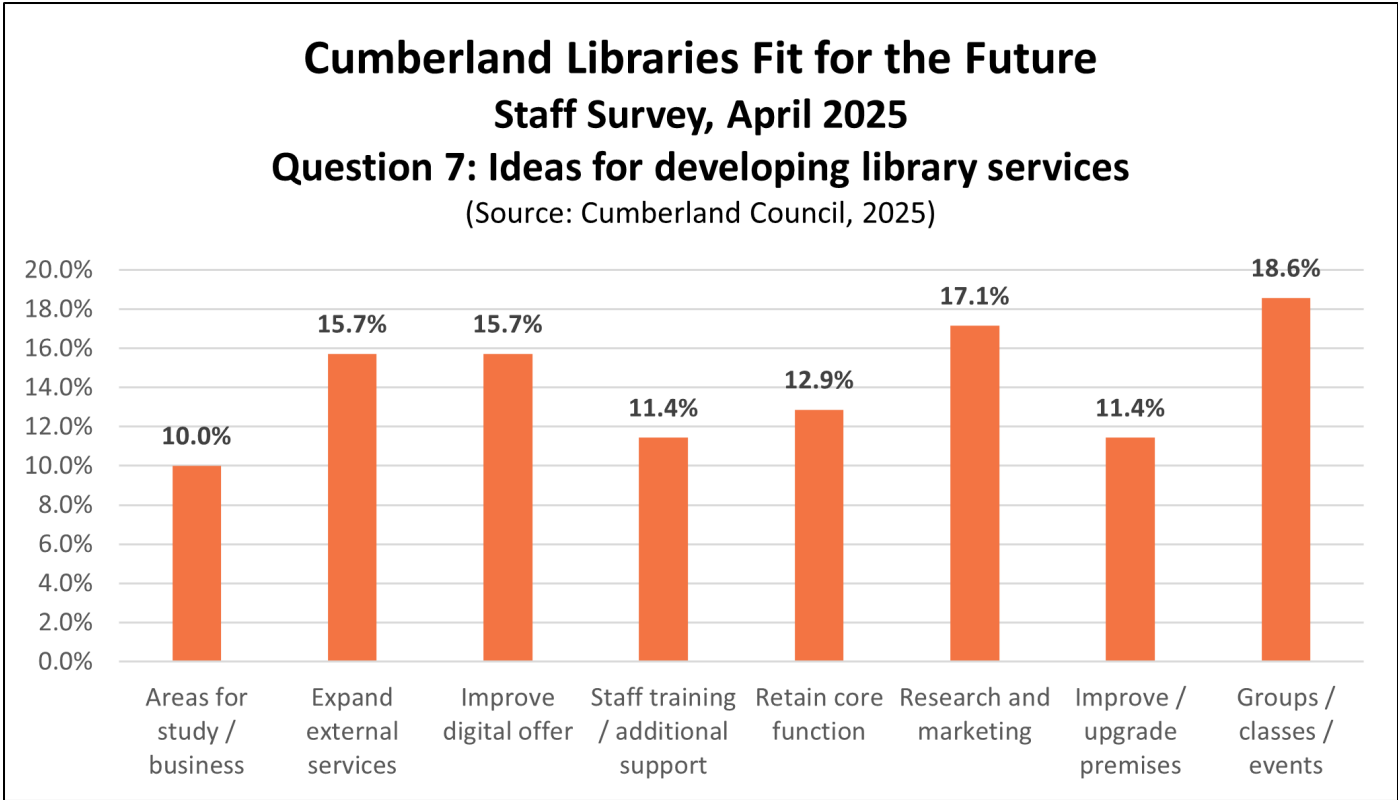


Staff are very supportive of exploring ways to improve services and support young people (95.7% either strongly agree or agree), making library services more accessible to more people (94.3% of respondents), developing library buildings to provide improved space (94.3%) and offering more information advice and guidance on other council services (80.0%).

One in four (25.7%) either disagree or strongly disagree with introducing cafés or snack bars into larger libraries; one in eight (12.9%) disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to locate library services with other organisation that can share costs of buildings and facilities, and just over one in ten (11.4%) disagree with reviewing opening hours.

Q7: Ideas for developing library services

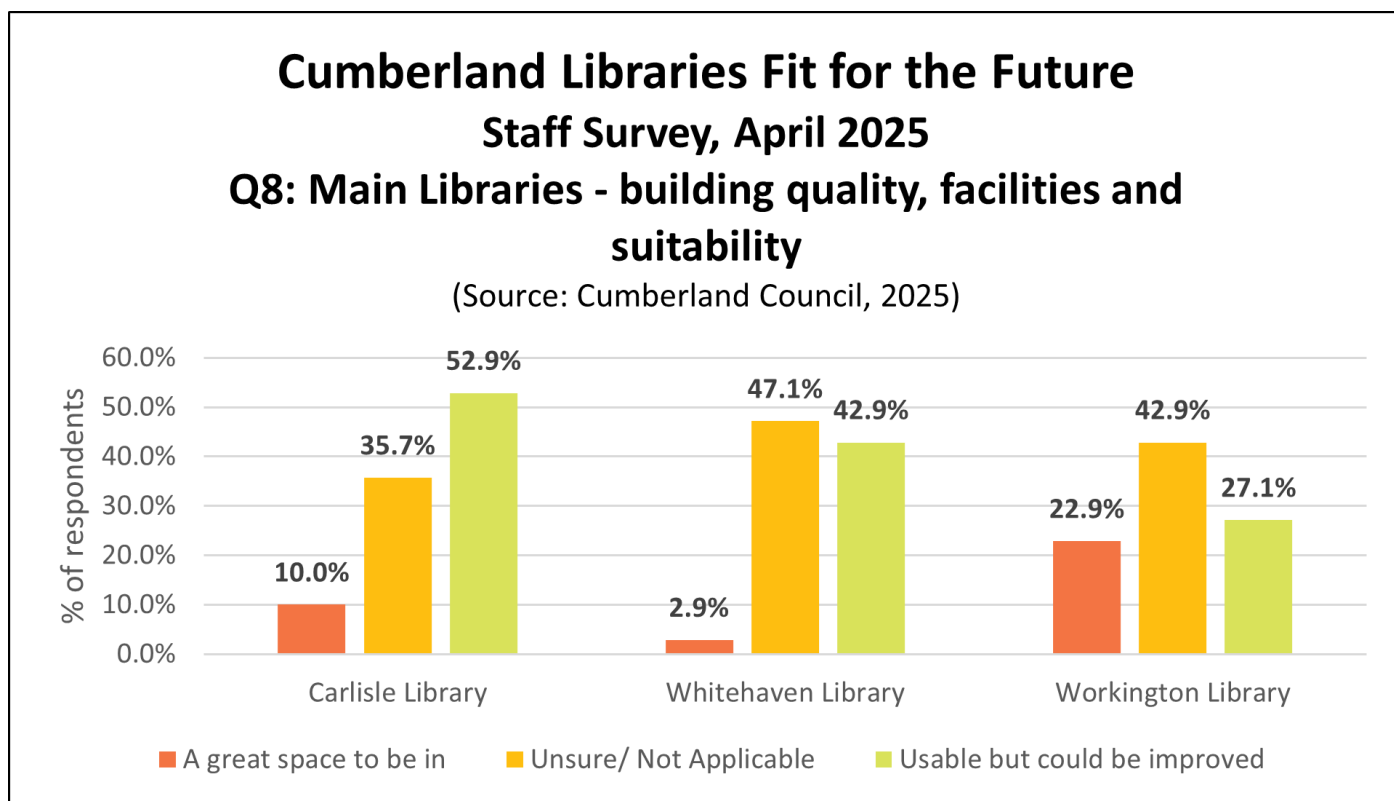
Staff had a variety of other suggestions on how library services could be developed to ensure they are fit for purpose. The free-text comments provided fall within the main themes shown below.



Section 4: Library Buildings

Q8: Rating quality of buildings and facilities – main libraries

Staff were asked to rate the quality of the library building, the facilities and how suitable they are for a main library. The results are set out in the chart below.

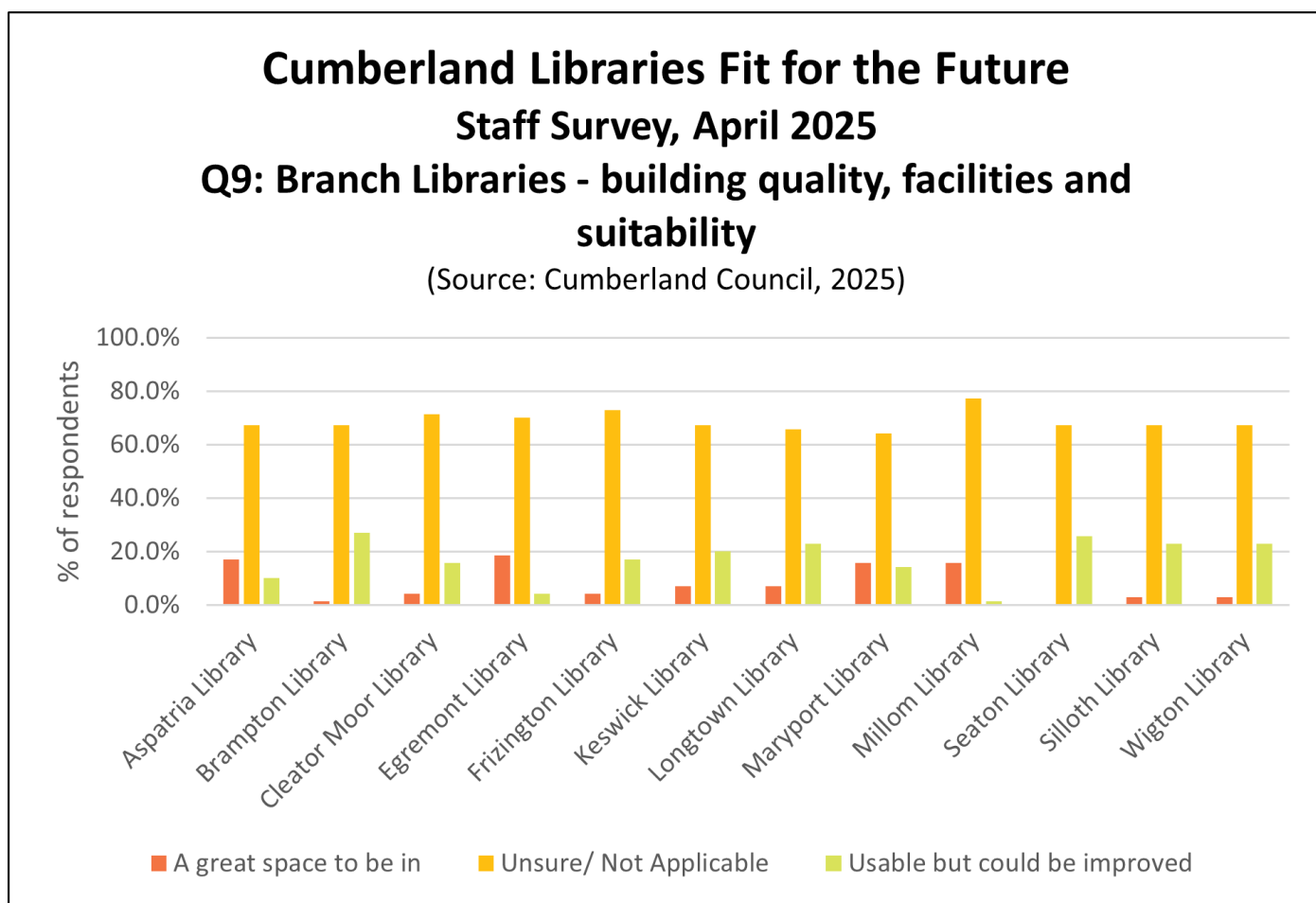


Two in five responses to this question (41.9%) indicated that people were unsure and a further 5.2% of respondents did provide not answer. On average, just one in eight respondents (11.9%) considered Cumberland's three main libraries a "great space to be in"; this ranged from 22.9% for Workington Library to 2.9% for Whitehaven Library. The poor result for Whitehaven is likely to reflect comments provided about poor building maintenance and long-standing problems with heating.



Q9: Rating quality of buildings and facilities – branch libraries

As for the previous questions, staff were asked to rate the quality of the library building, the facilities and how suitable they are for a library. The results are set out in the chart below.

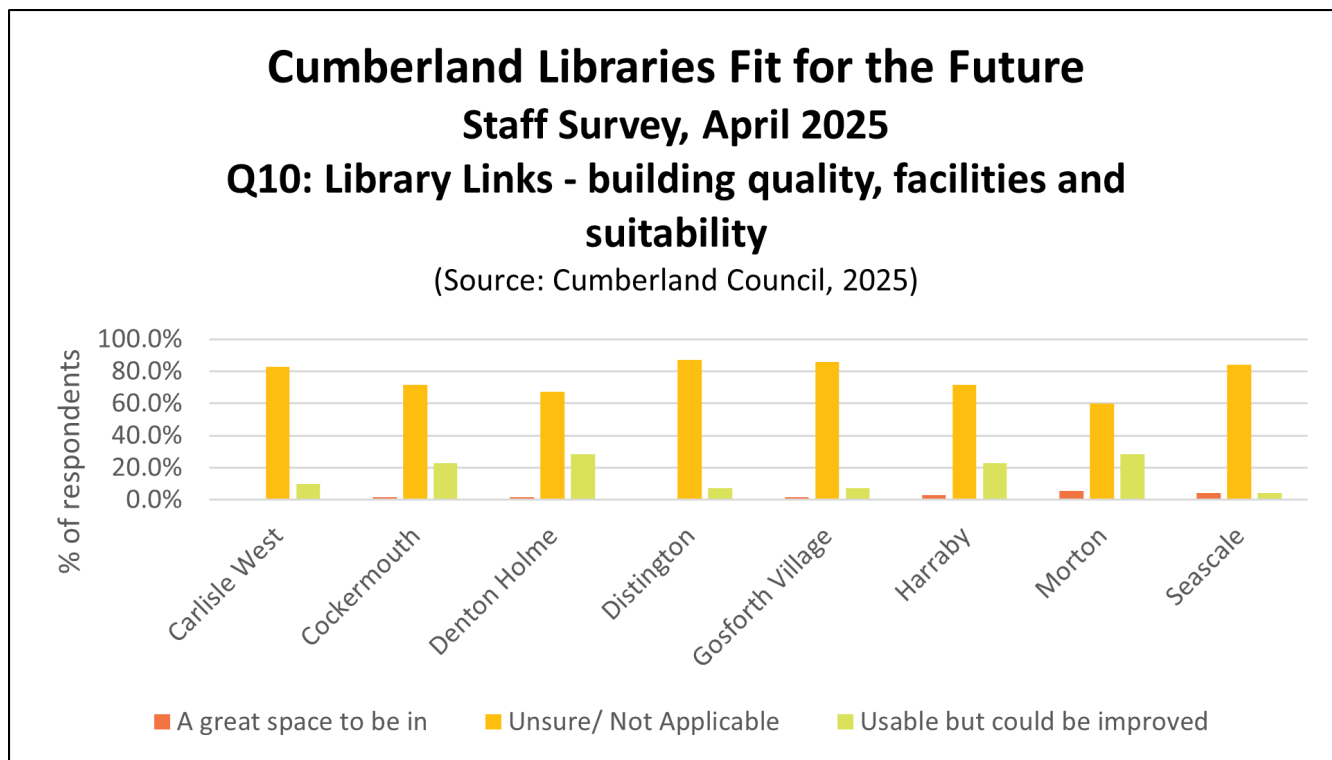


The majority of respondents (68.7%) were unsure or had no knowledge about the building quality, facilities and suitability of branch libraries. This perhaps reflects that just under one in five respondents (18.6%) are based in branch libraries as their main place of work. Egremont and Aspatia libraries are most likely to be considered “a great place to be in”, with Seaton and Brampton libraries being the least likely. Millom is Cumberland’s newest library building, followed by Aspatia and Egremont so the high rating of the latter two may reflect that investment.



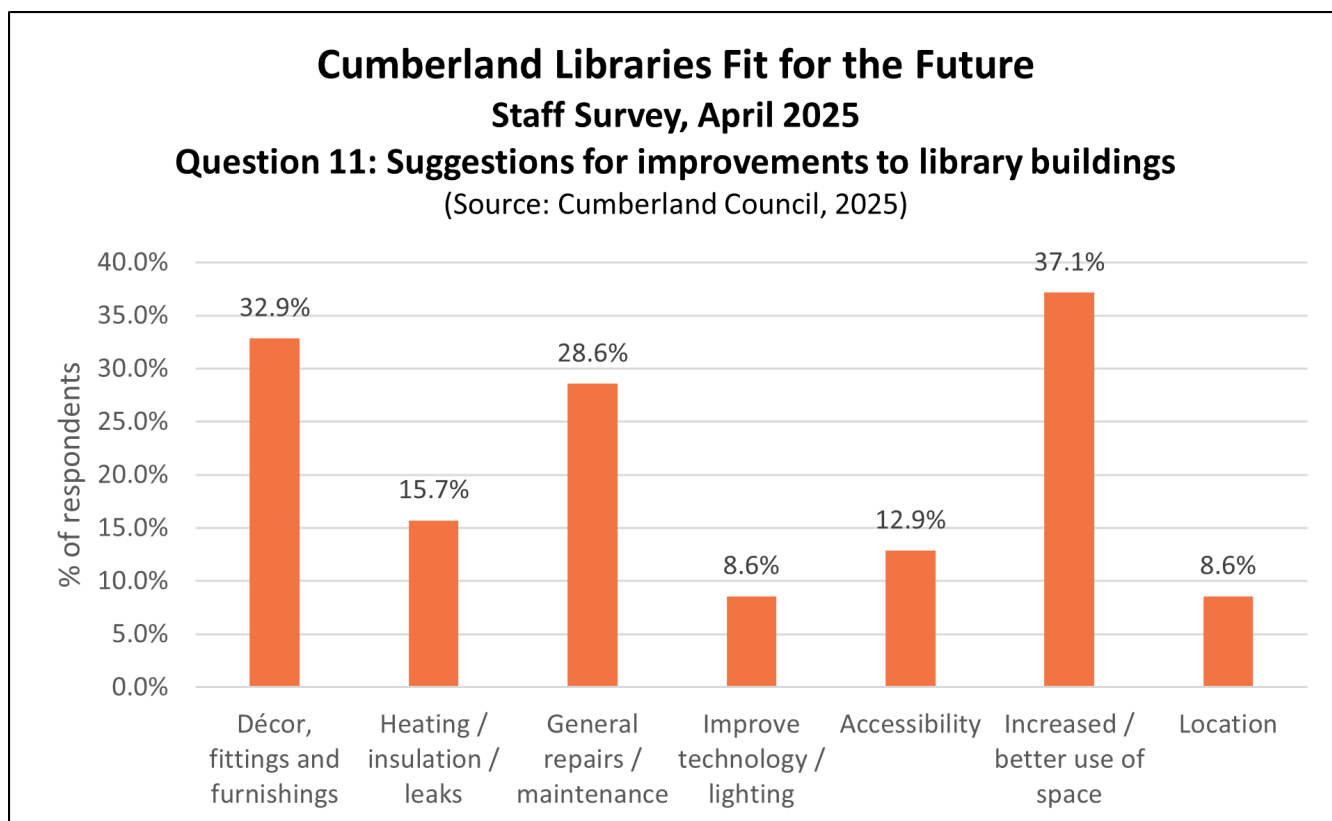
Q10: Rating quality of buildings and facilities – Library Links

Three out of four library staff (76.3%) are unsure or have no knowledge of the building quality, facilities and suitability of library links premises and this is perhaps not surprising as no library link has a permanent staff presence and only one respondent to the survey considered a library link as their main place of work.



Q11: Ideas for improving library buildings

Staff were invited to supply comments where they thought a particular library building could be improved.



Answers are therefore particular to individual sites, but three themes emerged as representing most comment.

Increase / better use of space: One in three staff (37.1%; 26) commented on the lack of usable space. It was suggested that buildings are not always used to their full potential, small adjustments and relatively low investment could make underutilised spaces more productive. Some sites are considered too small or cluttered. Private meeting spaces are identified as being needed and some provision of refreshments (perhaps a water cooler and/or vending machine) was suggested by two respondents for Whitehaven, as this is often requested by mothers and parents at baby groups, students working long hours as well as registrar clients waiting for appointments.

Décor, fittings and furnishings: One in three staff (32.9%; 23) consider buildings to be “tired and shabby” in appearance, needing modernisation and in some cases improvements to layouts.

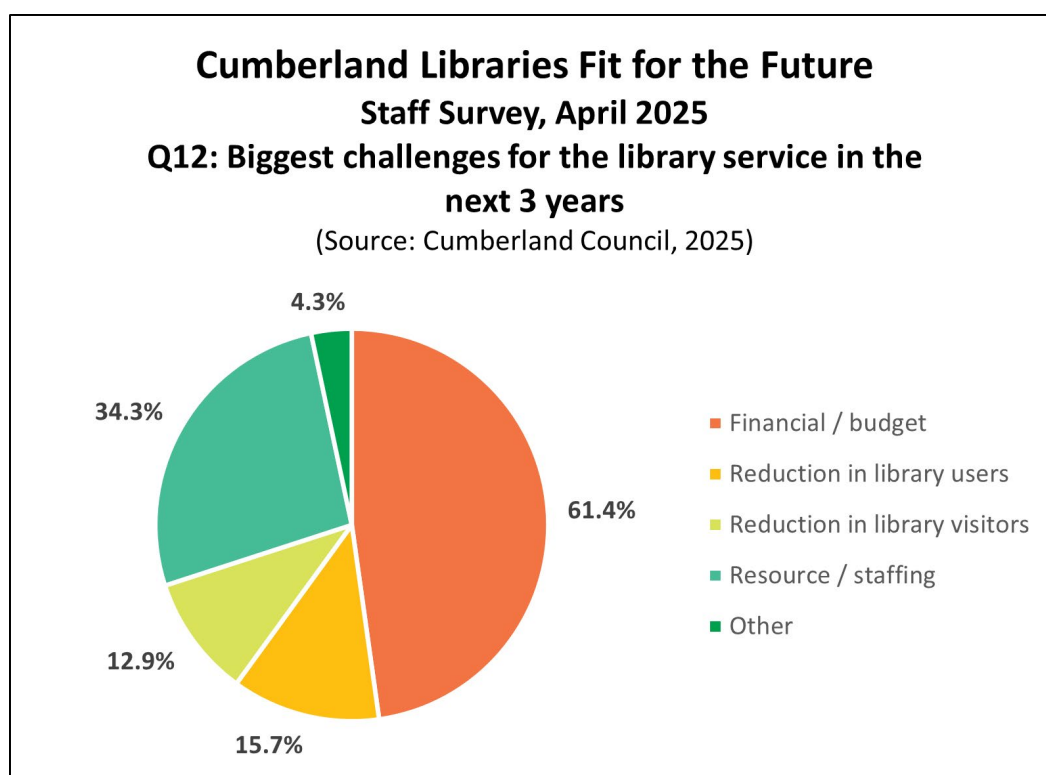
General repairs / maintenance: Building maintenance needs to be proactive and timely to keep on top of repairs; in some cases, repairs are required which have been reported for a long time. Libraries need to be maintained to a higher standard than is currently the case.

Heating issues, insulation and leaks merited its own categorisation (15.7%; 11) which other staff may have considered being general repair work.

Section 5: Working in Our Library Service

Q12: What are the biggest challenges for the library service in the next three years?

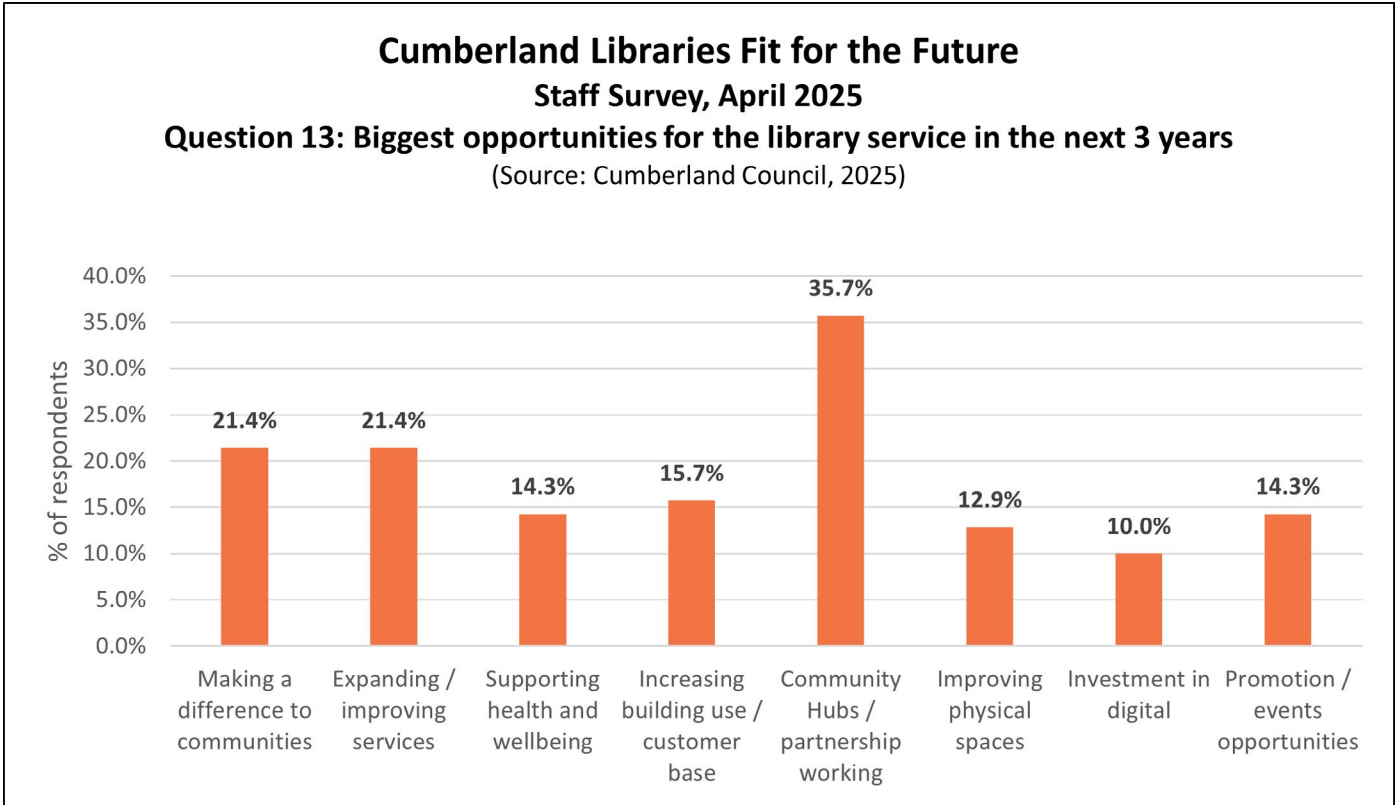
Staff were asked to choose from a range of options what they considered to be the biggest challenge for the library service in the next three years. The percentages in the chart below sum to more than 100% as some staff considered more than one of the options to be the most pressing challenges.



Three in five staff consider finance and budget pressures to be the biggest challenge (61.4%; 43) while just over one third consider resourcing and staffing to be the biggest issues (34.3%; 24). Almost three in ten are concerned about a reduction in library users and visitors to library buildings (28.6%; 20). The “other” challenges relate to; providing information, resources and opportunities of development to a community with ever-changing needs and socio-economic pressures; not appreciating how library services can enhance and improve people’s lives; books becoming less of a priority.

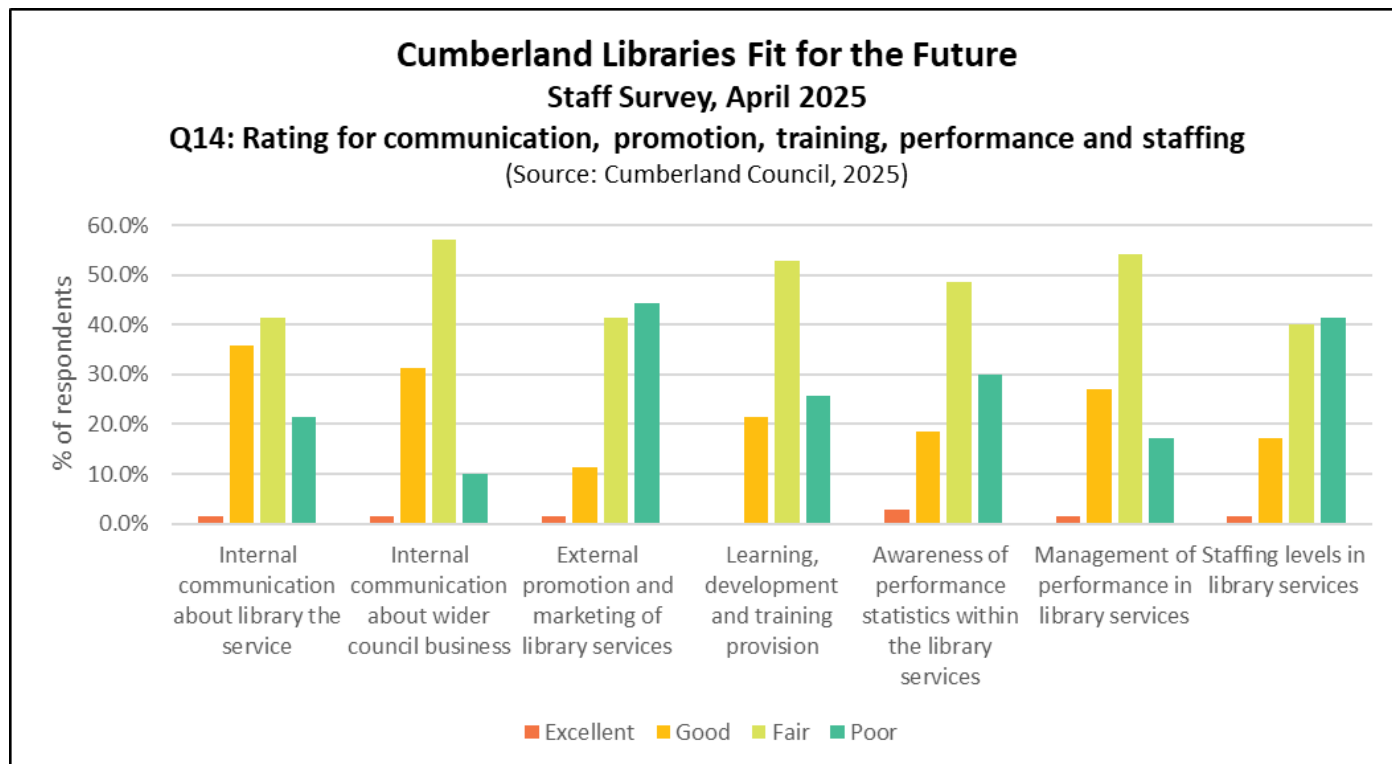
Q13: What are the biggest opportunities for the library service in the next three years?

Staff were asked for their thoughts on opportunities that may be open to the library service in the next three years, and these responses have been grouped into the following themes.



Q14: Rating communication and operational functions within libraries

Staff were asked to rate communication, promotion and marketing of services, training, performance statistics, performance management and staffing levels from excellent to poor. The results are shown in the chart below.



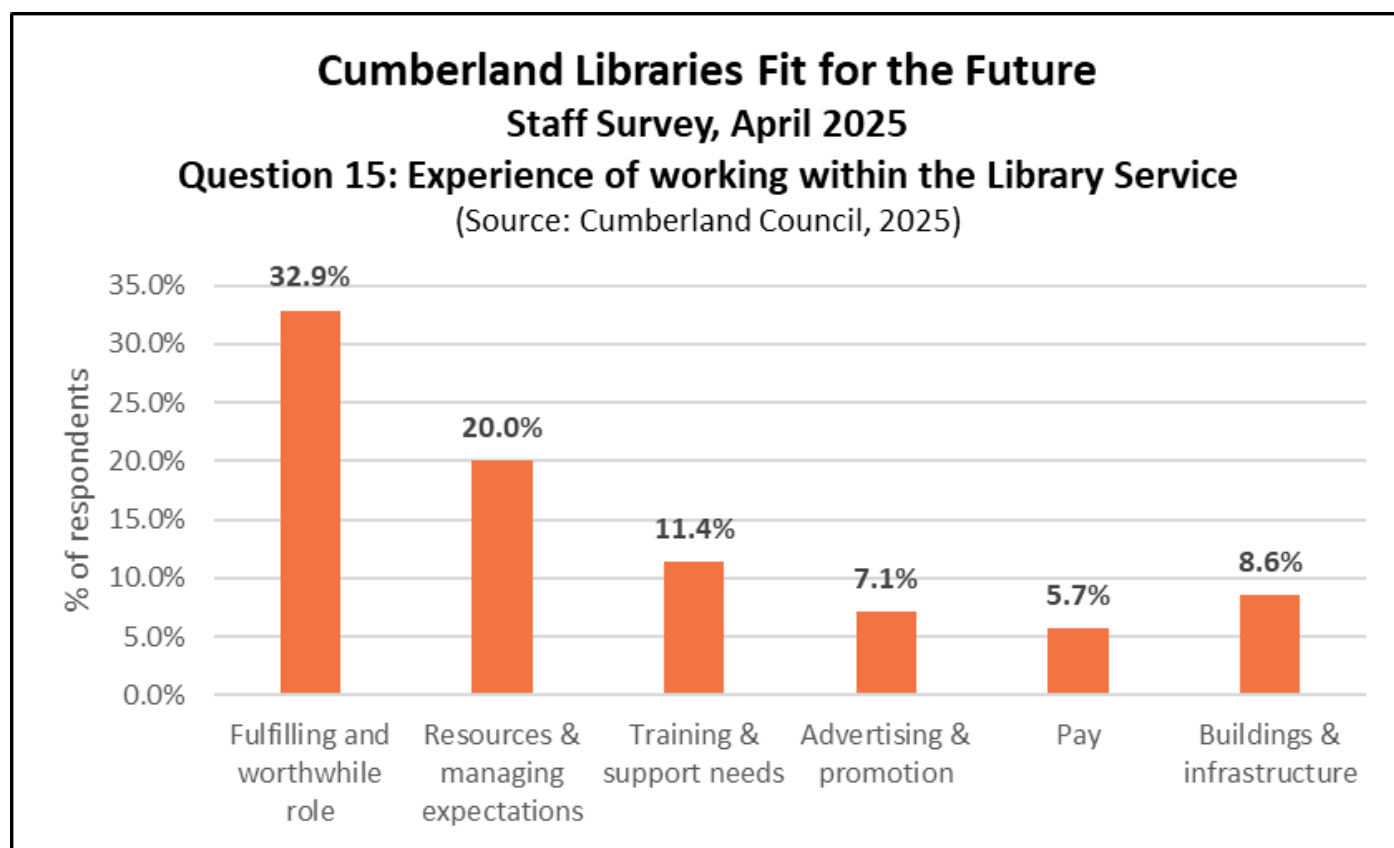
The chart above illustrates that none of the options were rated as "excellent" overall.

Internal communication is rated as either "good" or "fair" by the majority of staff: internal communication about wider council business (88.6%; 62); internal communication about libraries, the service (77.1%; 54). Four out of five rate management of performance in library services as either good or fair (81.4%; 57).

However, just over two fifths (44.3%; 31) rate external promotion and marketing of library services as "poor"; this is not surprising as it is reflected in comments provided by staff in previous sections. Two in five rate staffing levels as poor (41.4%; 29) and again, this is reflected in comments provided by staff about the capacity to deliver additional services to customers or extend opening hours. Three in ten do not appear to be well informed about performance statistics within the library service (30.0%; 21).

Q15: Experience of working within the library service

Staff were invited to provide additional comments around their experience of working for the libraries service. Six main themes were apparent in the comments as illustrated below.



Comments relating to the categories in the chart above are summarised below.

A fulfilling and worthwhile role: One in three respondents (32.9%; 23) feel that their role within the library is fulfilling and worthwhile and makes a positive contribution to the local community.

Concern around resources and managing expectations: one in five (20.0%; 14) are concerned about understaffing and managing customer expectations, especially with workload and diversification of job roles. Expanding services is considered positive overall, but understaffing and capacity is having an impact on the quality of services provided; staff sometimes feel rushed and less able to provide time and attention to individual customers. There are difficulties in covering sickness, leave and vacancies. Some staff report customers becoming increasingly difficult to deal with as a result of language, homelessness, aggressive behaviour or drug use, making staff feel vulnerable.

Training and support needs: staff often feel they lack the training, knowledge and experience to help vulnerable people. They are approached by people seeking help for serious issues such as poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, suicidal thoughts and struggling to support themselves.

Advertising and promotion: As mentioned previously in this report, there is some frustration that the good services provided by libraries are not promoted more widely. One comment reads... "It is essential that we broaden our reach, remove barriers to access, and reshape perceptions so that libraries are seen not as outdated institutions, but as dynamic, responsive, and welcoming spaces for all".

Pay: Increasing workloads, tasks and demands are not considered to be reflected in current pay and grading.

Buildings and infrastructure: Frustration is apparent with inconsistent technology, as referred to elsewhere. Similarly, as evident from other question responses, buildings are in need of maintenance and investment is needed to make library spaces more welcoming and fit for the future.

Public Engagement

As part of Cumberland Council's assessment of the current library offer and services, a public engagement survey "Libraries Fit for the Future" was launched on 22 April 2025 which ran for just over 10 weeks, closing on 4 July 2025. Widely publicised, accessible online and in paper format, the survey invited residents to have their say on the library services offered by Cumberland Council and aimed to understand the views of members of the public and other stakeholders around what is wanted from Cumberland's libraries, what is needed and what can be delivered. The survey sought the views from current library users and non-users alike to ensure the service meets the needs of the community.

In addition to the survey 26 drop-in sessions were held at all libraries providing opportunities for face-to-face conversations and feedback. Focus groups were also held with various groups including school children to gather input from specific segments of the community. In total about 30 focus group meetings were held, with views captured from children under 11 years of age, children / young people aged between 11 and 16 years, adults, parents with babies, older people, people with disabilities, non-English speakers and a number of mixed groups.

Comments were also invited via social media.

The findings from the public consultation survey, drop in / focus group sessions and social media comments are covered below.



Public Survey

The Libraries Fit for the Future public consultation survey captured the views of 1,582 respondents.

Summary of respondent profile (survey returns):

Residence locality

- Majority live within the Cumberland (98.2%; 1,554 respondents)
- Almost half live within the Allerdale locality (47.6%), one third in the Carlisle locality (33.7%) and one in six in the Copeland locality (16.9%).
- Seven out of 10 respondents (69.8%) live in the five main postal town areas: Carlisle, 27.9%; Cockermouth, 12.1%; Wigton, 10.6%; Workington, 10.6%, and Keswick, 9.0%.
- One in five respondents have dependent children under the age of 18 years (20.3%; 321 respondents). Two out of five of these use branch libraries as their main library type (39.6%); just over one third use main libraries (35.2%) and one in six use library links (16.2%).

Family make-up

- One in five respondents have dependent children under the age of 18 years (20.3%; 321 respondents). Two out of five of these use branch libraries as their main library type (39.6%); just over one third use main libraries (35.2%) and one in six use library links (16.2%).
- More likely to have dependent children aged 0-11 years and less likely to have dependent children aged 12 years and over. This could be because parents of younger children are often more actively involved in their children's learning and leisure activities.

Library users

- The majority are already using Cumberland's library services (90.7%) either in person or digital access only; one in 11 are not currently library service users.
- The libraries used most often by respondents are Carlisle, Cockermouth Keswick Library (45.6%). Those used least often are Denton Holme and Carlisle West Library Links and Frizington Library (0.8%), with no user feedback from Distington Link.

Non-library users

- The main reasons for non-use were lack of awareness of available services, inconvenient opening times, or not having a library nearby.
- Other reasons include a change of habit or routine including preference for Kindles and second-hand books, time constraints, atmosphere (noise and busyness) and health barriers.
- Practical issues like joining procedures and lost library cards deterred some.



Demographics

- Females are over-represented compared to the general population, making up seven in ten respondents (69.4%) with males making up 26.5% of respondents.
- Four out of five respondents identified as heterosexual (81.5%), lower than the general population (91.1%, *ONS Census 2021*). The proportion describing themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (2.6%) is similar to known figures from the 2021 Census.
- Some respondents found being asked about sexual orientation unnecessary and intrusive, and 15.0% preferred not to say or did not answer the question.
- The majority of respondents describe their ethnic origin as White (93.7%); this is slightly smaller than the average for Cumberland (97.7%) (*Census 2021*).
- Respondents describing their ethnic origin as "Mixed or multiple ethnic groups", "Black, Black British, Caribbean or African" and "Other Ethnic Groups" make up slightly larger proportions than the Cumberland average. Migration patterns since the Census was taken may influence these results.
- Half of all respondents (50.7%) consider themselves to be Christians, lower than the Cumberland average (58.5%, *Census 2021*). One in ten respondents did not answer the question, and therefore the volume could be larger. The combined volume of those respondents identifying as other faith, Buddhist and Jewish (2.6%) is larger than the average for Cumberland (0.6%; *ONS Census 2021*). However, the volume is small (41 respondents), and it is therefore difficult to attach any significance to this result.



Disability

- Almost one quarter of respondents (23.8%) consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition. This is a larger proportion than the average who report being disabled under the Equality Act in Cumberland (19.8%, *ONS Census 2021*)
- Focus group feedback offered additional opportunity for people with disabilities to provide views and feedback.

Many respondents felt that the survey question 9 which asked respondents about a range of current services and whether those met their needs, did not allow them to accurately express their views. Services marked as "not meeting needs" should not necessarily be interpreted as negative feedback.

Survey Findings

Survey response rate

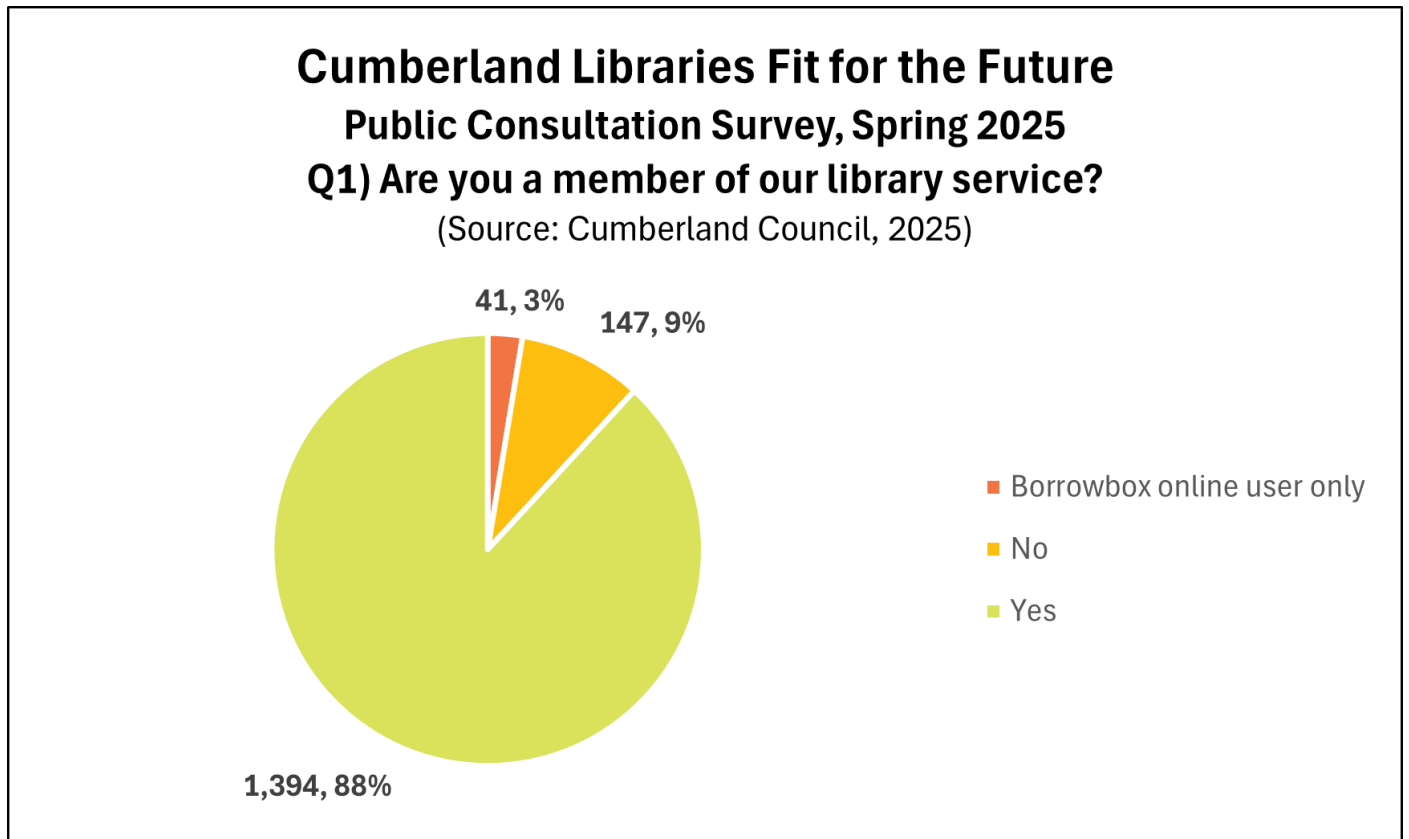
Both current library users and non-users were invited to take part in the survey. The full set of questions can be found at Appendix 2. In total 1,582 responses were received, the majority (98.2%; 1,554) known to be from people resident within Cumberland representing a response rate of 6.9 per 1,000 population aged 18+ years (*ONS Population Estimates, 2022*).

Section 1: Customer Service

The questions in this section are designed to gather feedback and insights about library service usage, customer experience and digital engagement, focusing particularly on the BorrowBox online service.

Q1: Are you a member of our Library Service?

Of the 1,582 responses received, nine out of ten respondents (90.7%; 1,435) are already members of Cumberland's library service, either in person (88.1%) or online BorrowBox users only (2.6%). One in 11 respondents are not currently members of Cumberland's library services. Reasons for not accessing library services are explored in Question 4.



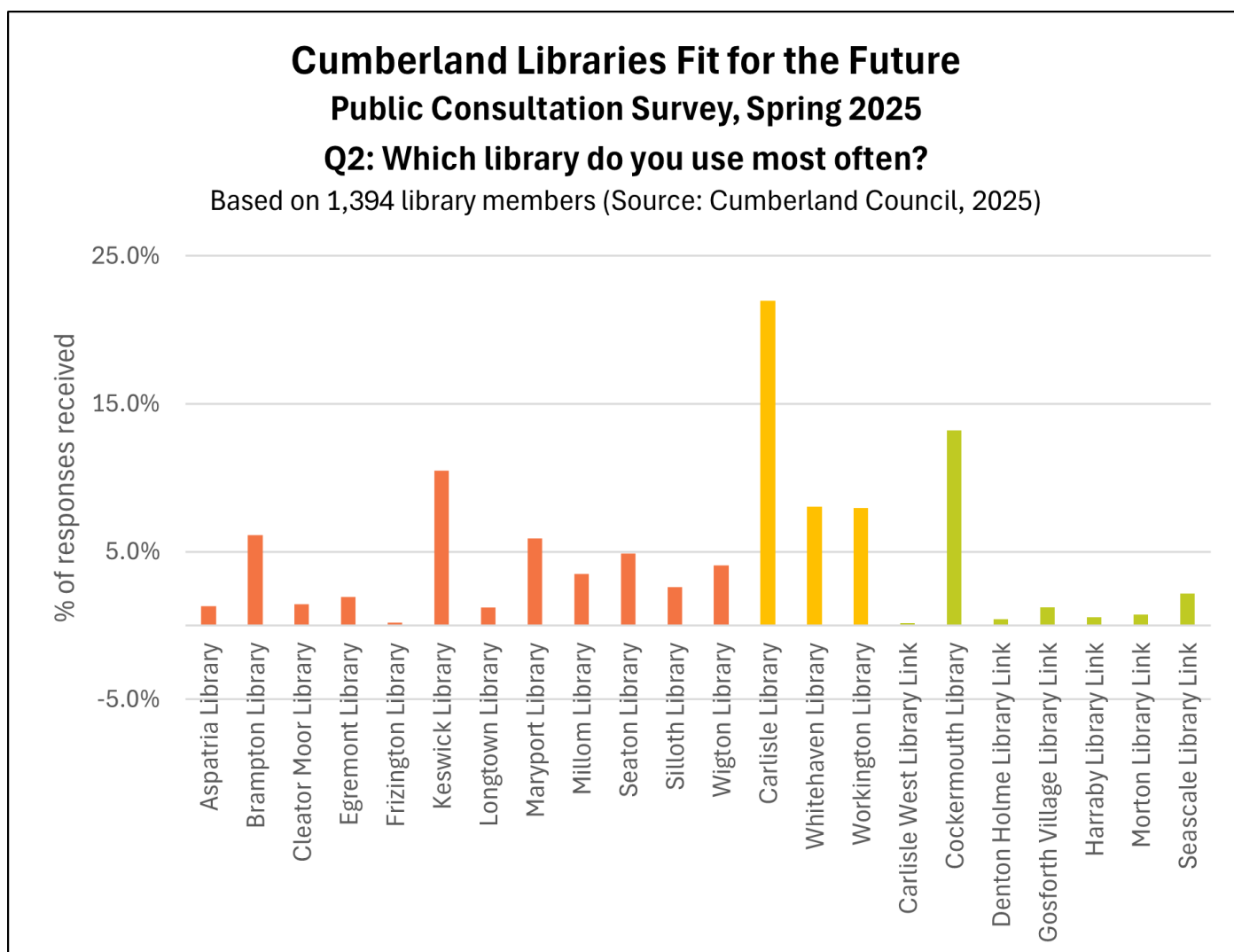
Q2: Which Library do you use most often?

Library services are accessed in person by 1,394 survey respondents. Just over two fifths access branch libraries across Cumberland (43.6%; 608); just over one third access the main libraries of Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington (37.9%; 529) and almost one in five access library link buildings (18.4%; 257).

Branch libraries: 10.5% (146) of all respondents who are library members (excluding digital only users) use Keswick Library most often, and Frizington Library the least often (0.2%; 3 respondents).

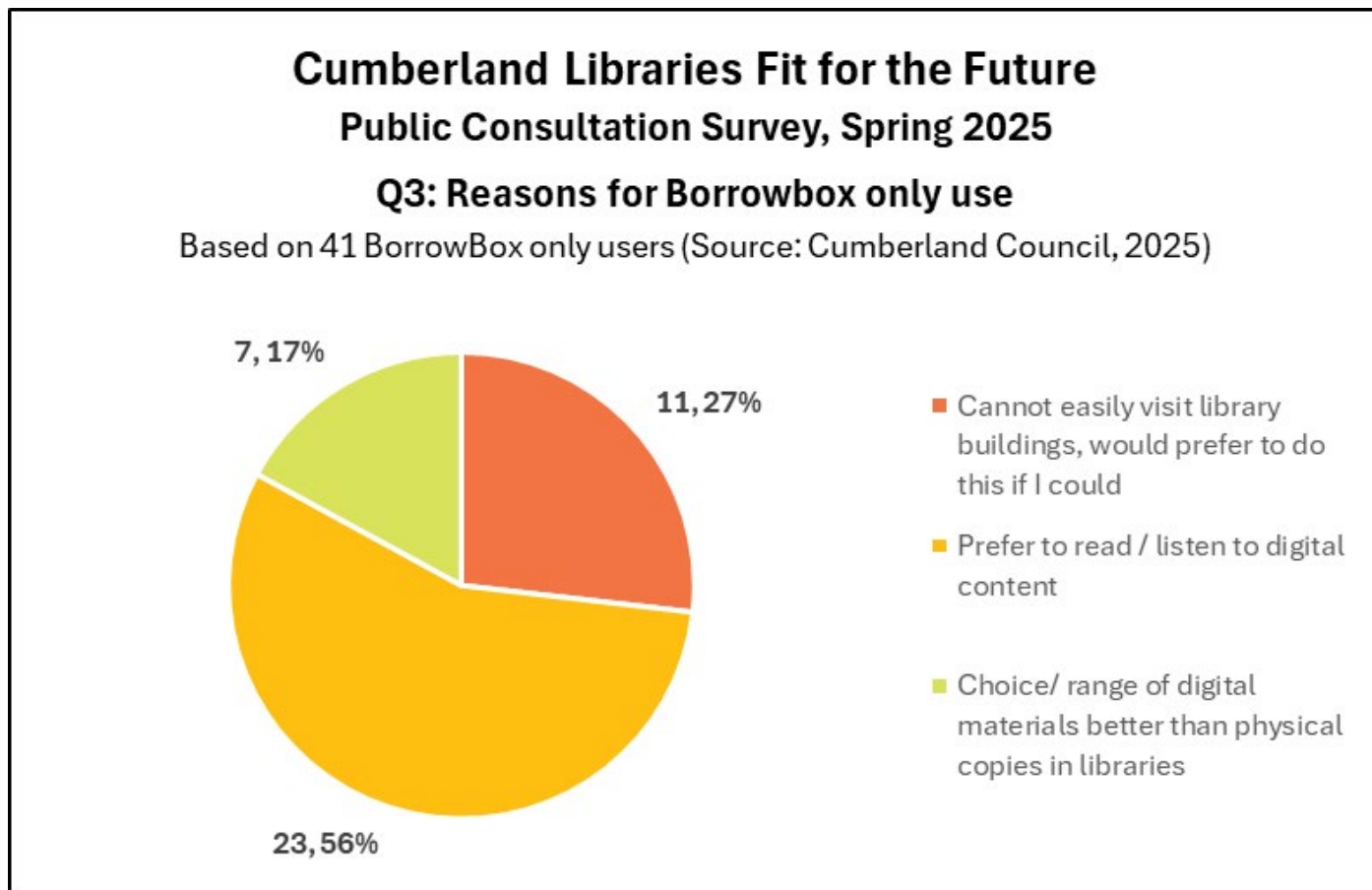
Main libraries: The most frequently used by survey respondents is Carlisle Library with just over one in five respondents (22.0%; 306); 8.0% use the main libraries in Whitehaven and Workington.

Library links: Cockermouth Library Link is named as the library used most often by 13.2% of respondents (184 individuals). The least used is Carlisle West (0.1%; 2 respondents), and no respondents indicated they used Distington.



Q3: Can you tell us more about why you only use our online BorrowBox Service?

A small proportion of respondents (2.6%; 41) are BorrowBox online users only. Over half of these (56.1%; 23) use BorrowBox rather than physical library services because they prefer to read or listen to digital content. One quarter (26.8%; 11) cannot easily visit library premises but would prefer to do this if they could, and the remainder (17.1%; 7) consider the choice and range of digital materials to be better than the physical offer in libraries.

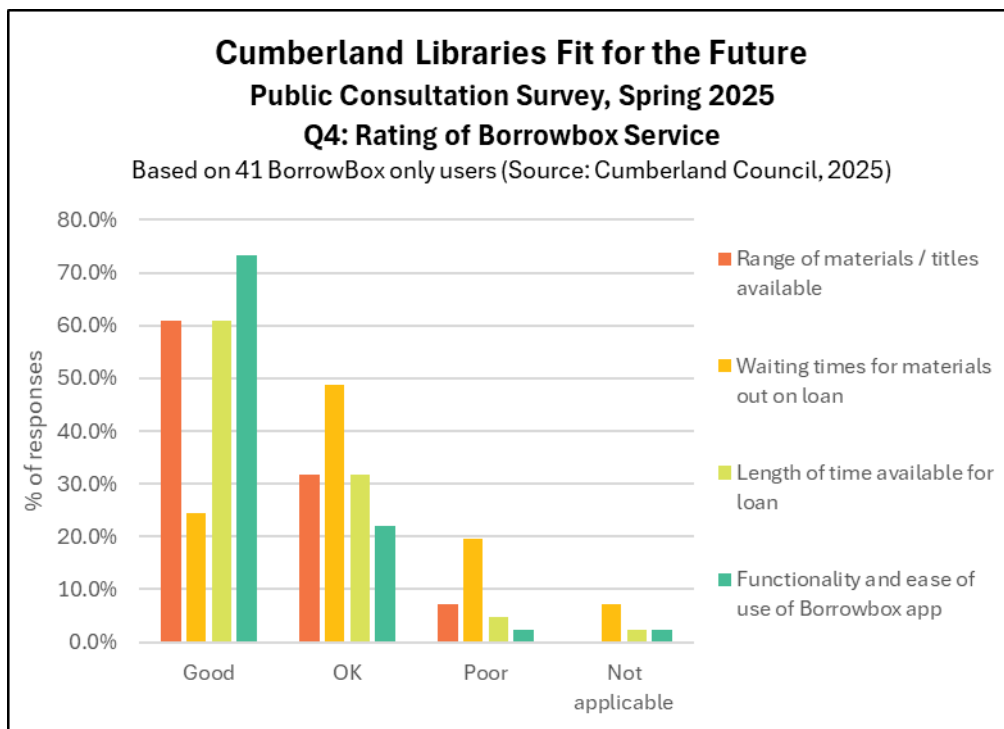


Although eliciting a low response rate, this partly reflects 2024 data, discussed above, that shows only a small proportion of those with this Digital only membership had made active use of the Borrowbox service. It also will reflect that the engagement exercise with residents was concentrated in libraries, rather than online.



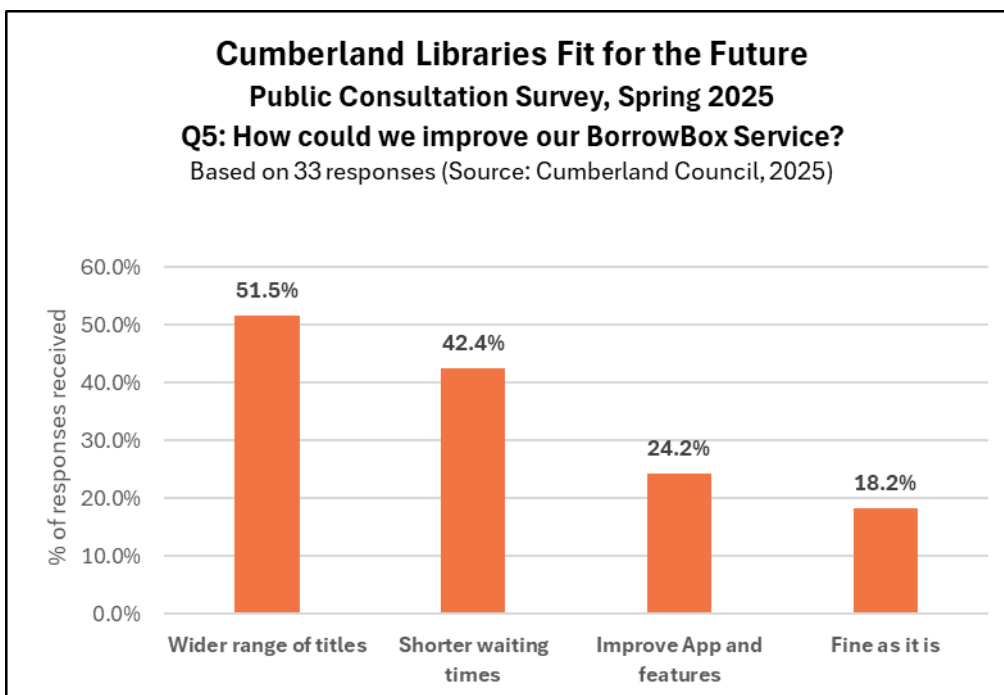
Q4: Please tell us more about what you think of our BorrowBox Service

The functionality and ease of using the BorrowBox app is considered positive, with 95.1% (39 individuals) rating this as either good or OK. Respondents appear to be generally satisfied with the range of materials and titles available, and the length of time materials are available for loan with over nine in 10 rating these aspects as either good or OK (92.7%; 38 individuals). The waiting times for materials out on loan appears to cause the most dissatisfaction, with one in five rating this as poor (19.5; 8 individuals).



Q5: Please tell us how we could improve our BorrowBox Service

Respondents were asked to suggest ways in which the library's BorrowBox service could be improved. In total 33 responses were received, and from those, four main themes emerged as illustrated below.



Many users requested a broader selection of books, especially recently released titles, non-fiction and literary fiction and children's books, and more copies of popular books to reduce long waiting times. Some respondents also noted there were some missing books in a series (e.g. missing the third book in a trilogy).

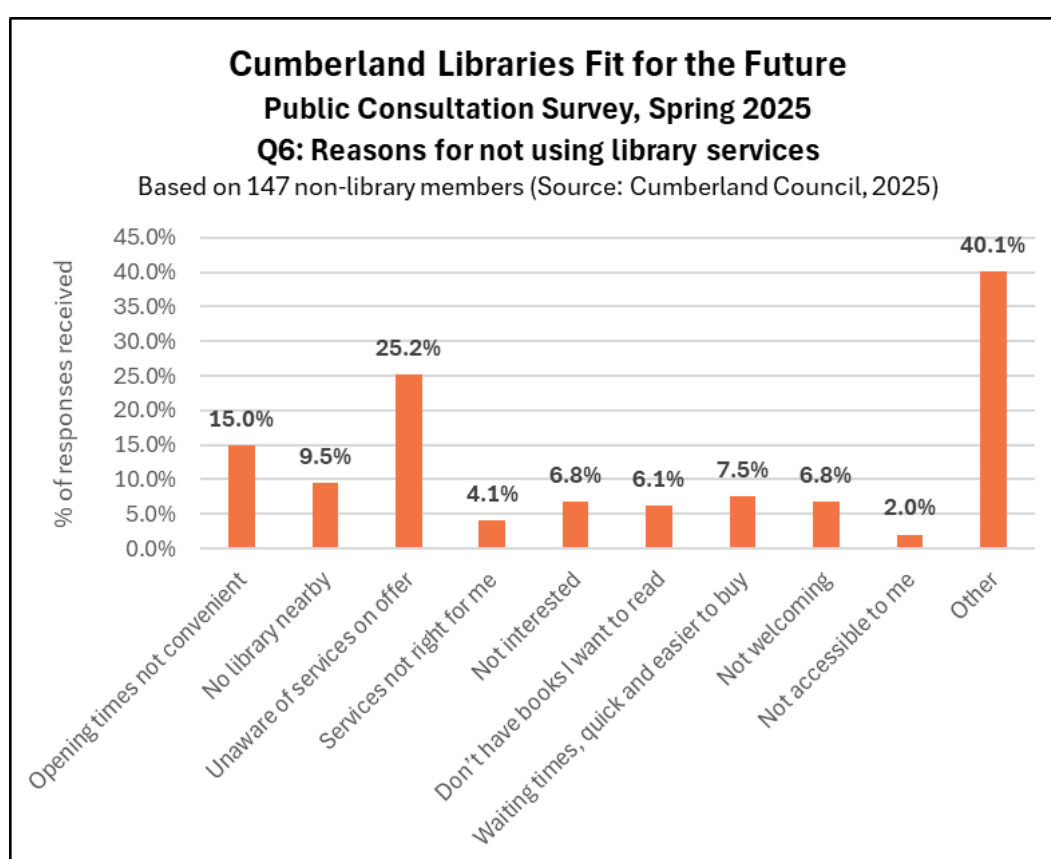
A frequent concern was waiting times, especially for popular or new titles. A suggestion is to explore multiple licences or to have more copies available to allow simultaneous access and reduce delays. Some would like the ability to borrow more than six books, especially for those reading a series.

Users would like to see some improvement to the BorrowBox app and features, including improved browsing and filtering, better search functionality and subject-based browsing. One comments that "it can be frustrating searching for titles". Some would like a more intuitive interface and find the app confusing or having issues with downloads. Mixing formats is considered a problem by some, e.g. eBooks appearing in the audiobook section. Some users were under the misapprehension separate accounts were not available for children, expressing a desire for separate accounts for their children so that borrowing children's titles doesn't take up space on their account.

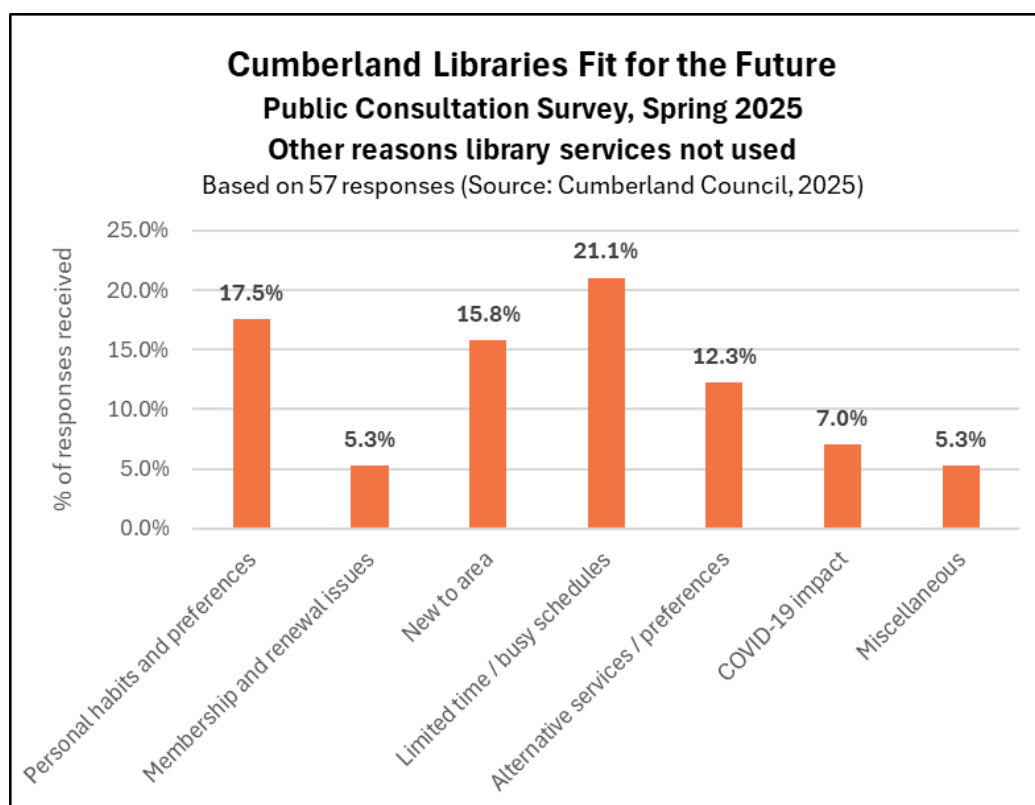
Overall, many users expressed very high satisfaction with the service, calling it a "lifesaver" or "brilliant". As one user says "BorrowBox is very good already, why try to improve it when it's already good". There were some suggestions to raise awareness of the service.

Q6: Can you tell us more about why you don't use library services? (choose all that apply)

One in four respondents who are not currently members of Cumberland's library service are unaware of the services on offer (25.2%; 37 respondents), one in seven consider the opening times are not convenient (15.0%; 22) and one in 11 have no library nearby (9.5%; 14). Two fifths (40.1%; 59) said it was for other reasons.



57 respondents provided more detail about other reasons they do not use library services.



Some respondents have simply fallen out of the habit of using their library or have changed their routines.

There have been some digital or administrative barriers, and issues with joining or renewing membership were noted. One reports that renewing their membership did not work online, and another that they were not able to join as the main library was temporarily closed (likely to be Carlisle Library). Another had library membership previously but has “not renewed it as feel like it might be a hassle”.

Several people mentioned that they had recently moved to the area and hadn’t yet joined the library. Most however appear to intend to become library members.

Some would like to use the library more but cited being too busy with work, family or other commitments.

Some respondents prefer using their own books or other sources or are interested in specialist books that the libraries may not stock. While most feel that libraries are a good community resource, one respondent has a different point of view, stating “I can get all that they offer elsewhere. There are better ways of using public money to support communities.”

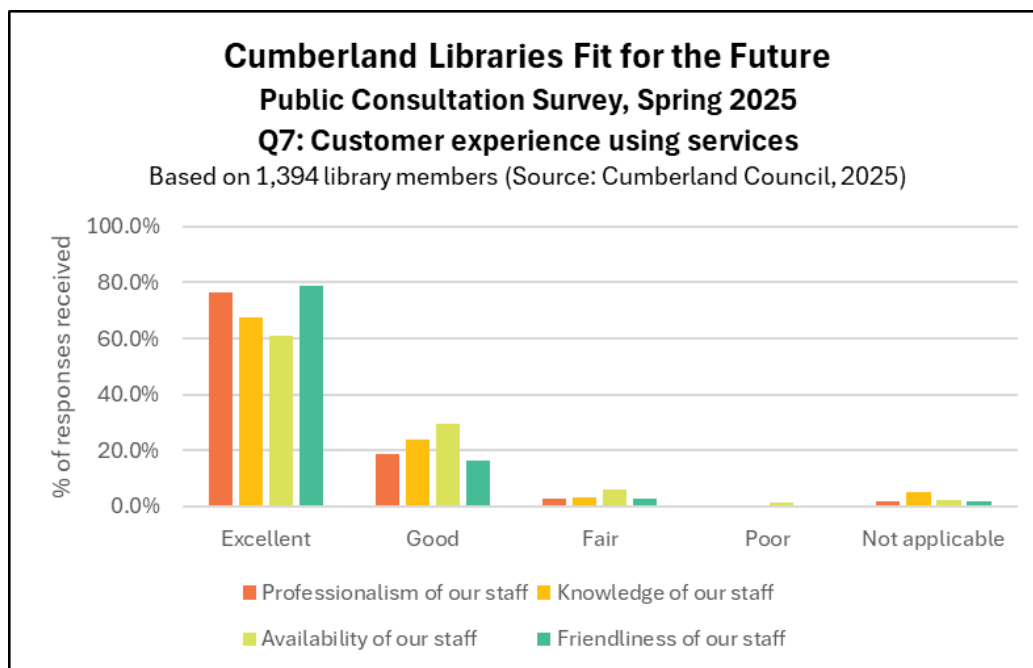
Some respondents have not been since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 for a variety of reasons including membership expiring and not renewed since, and some continuing to avoid in-person meeting places and communal settings.

Miscellaneous reasons including health barriers (being housebound) and comments about the environment and atmosphere of the library as being “too noisy with little provision for seating to study” and “like a children’s playground”.

While some do not consider themselves users of library services, they do use the library facilities for community or social activities, such as attending Knit and Natter groups, other meetings, or to collect hearing aid batteries.

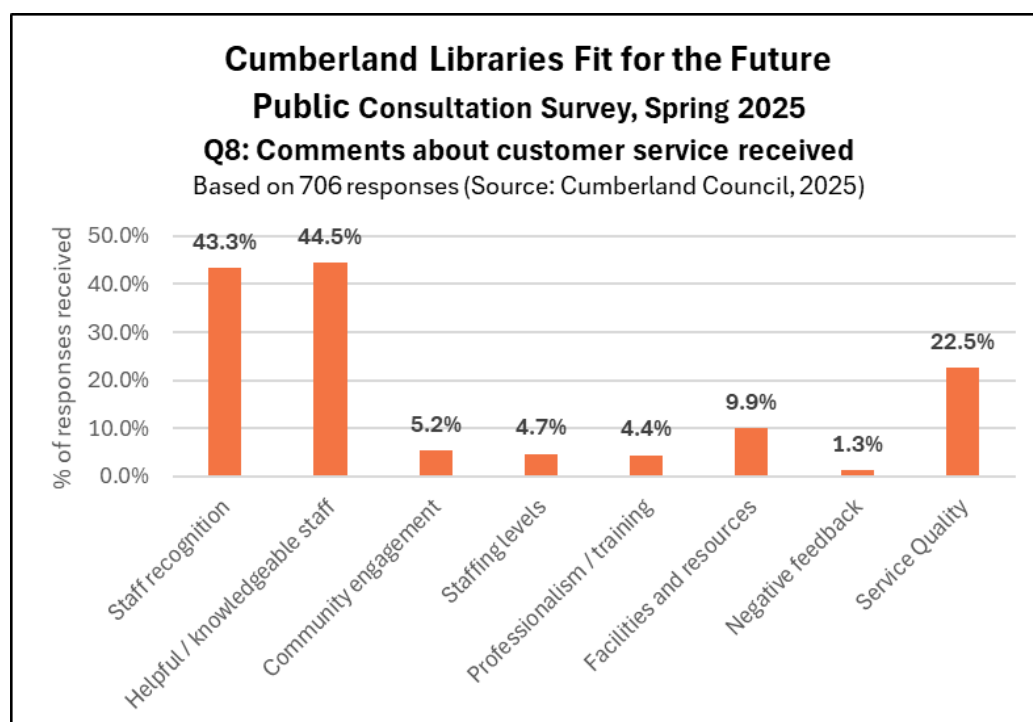
Q7: We'd like to know more about your customer experience when you use our services

This question was asked of the 1,394 respondents who are physical users of Cumberland's library services. It is clear from the responses that Cumberland's library staff are considered to be both professional and friendly: 95.0% of respondents rated professionalism of staff as either "excellent" or "good"; this was 95.1% for friendliness of staff. Whilst the proportion is relatively small, the service area most likely to be rated either "fair" or "poor" is staff availability (7.6%; 106 respondents).



Q8: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the customer service you have received?

706 people answered this question, and it is clear from the responses that library services in Cumberland are highly regarded.



Staff recognition: Many responses highlighted individual staff members by name or praised the team. Words like “friendly”, “welcoming” and “wonderful” are common, indicating that respondents find libraries to have a warm and inviting atmosphere. One respondent says of the staff “I honestly can’t fault them. I wish I could have the same customer experience in shops” while another says that their local branch library staff “are a wonderful point of contact for local people, and a friendly face for those on their own”.

Helpful / knowledgeable: Respondents frequently mentioned how staff went out of their way to assist, often describing above-and-beyond service. Staff being knowledgeable and well-informed was appreciated, especially for local knowledge, book recommendations and research help and practical help with issues such as printing.

Community engagement: Clubs, children’s activities and community events are mentioned by some. Libraries are considered important and viewed by some as community spaces. One respondent says of that their branch library (Egremont) is “so much more than a library, it is a valued hub of our community”. It is clear that respondents value having a place where they feel welcome, can have a chat and socialise with others from their communities. More events, and engagement and educational opportunities would be welcomed.

Staffing levels: While there is overall satisfaction with the library services, there are some concerns about staffing capacity levels which can affect the ability of library staff to deal with customer queries, help customers with specific problems and also restricts opening times especially in the smaller libraries. One respondent commented that: “it would be wonderful if there were sufficient members of staff to keep the library fully open”. Another in commenting about part time opening hours comments that “the service is superb given the restrictions”, while another says about part time opening hours “this is extremely annoying and inconvenient in today’s society”.

Professionalism / training: Respondents refer to that in library links run by volunteers, whilst this often creates a friendly and welcoming environment, there is concern that this has negatively impacted on the depth of knowledge and expertise. The accuracy and consistency of information can be unreliable, and as one respondent says “... sometimes the information given can be a bit hit and miss if you need advice”. Volunteer run library links are seen as less informed about broader library and council services than those staffed by professionals. Feedback indicates there are inconsistent service standards across different library types. However, smaller libraries are well used, and feedback indicates that people wish to retain library services across a range of locations.

Facilities / resources: Many users describe libraries as welcoming, safe, and pleasant spaces, often highlighting their cleanliness and atmosphere. There are some suggestions for improvement including air conditioning for comfort during hot weather, refreshment areas, expanded computer use areas, better signage and improved toilet access. Some comments express frustration with limited or unpredictable opening hours, especially in smaller branches. Libraries are appreciated for providing computer access, printing, photocopying, and Wi-Fi, however some users report having technical issues. Users would like to see improved support for digital services. Respondents value the wide selection of books, but some would like more diverse titles and improvements to inter-library loans. One respondent considers a library to be an essential public service and comments that “young people would be disadvantaged growing up in a town without a library and it would distance them from the world of books and the enjoyment and knowledge that they bring.”

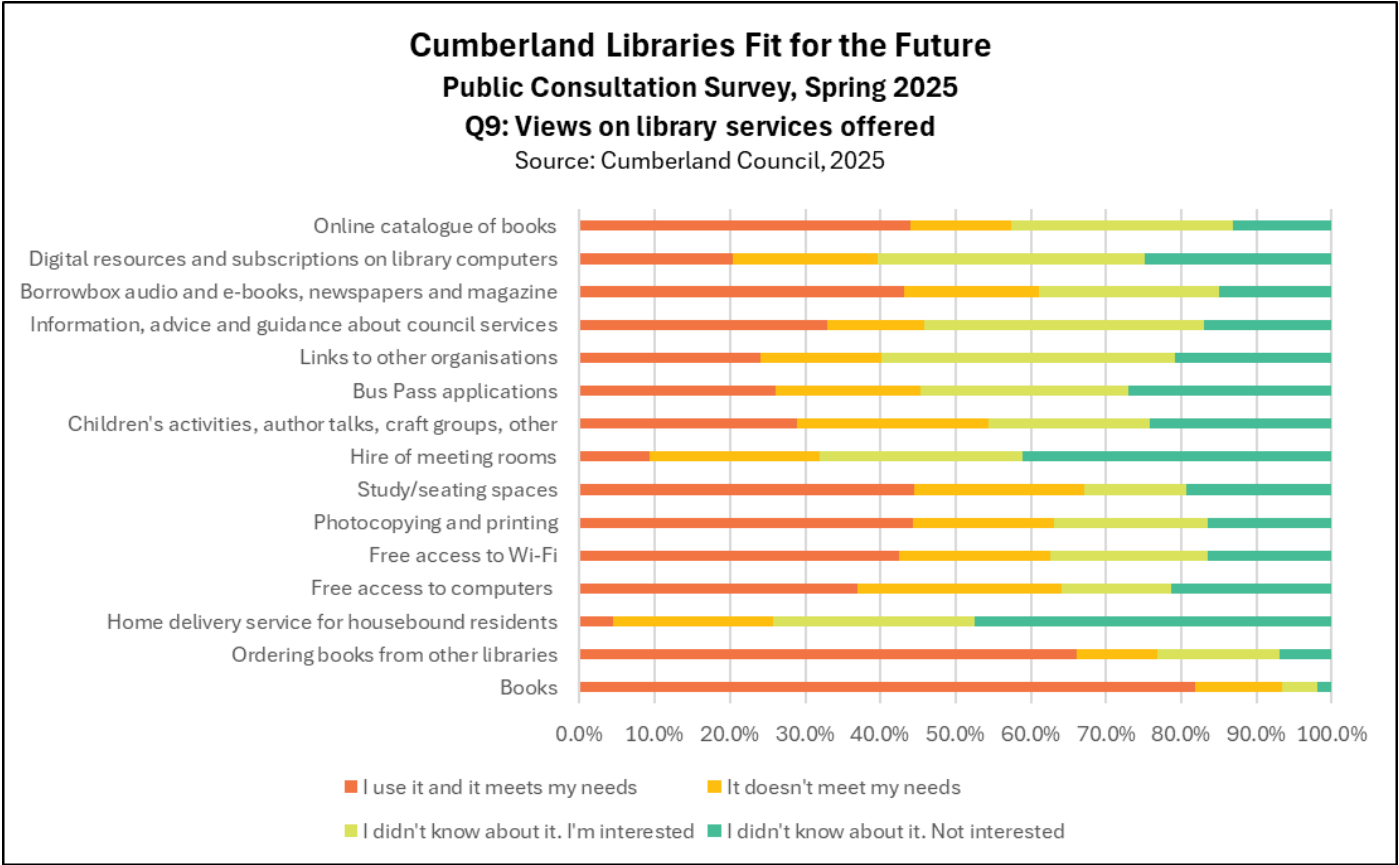
Negative feedback: Some respondents highlight inconsistencies, and while many staff are praised, some are described as unhelpful, rude, or disinterested. Specific examples include staff pointing to self-service machines rather than providing help, not following through on technical issues eg reports of faulty digital resources. There were some concerns about inconsistent access to facilities, particularly toilets, with some users feeling discriminated against.

Service quality: There is general praise for the quality of service, often described as "excellent," "amazing," or "outstanding." One respondent noted: "coming to the library is one of the most pleasurable experiences of my daily life", and another comments that the service is "consistently excellent".

Section 2: Library Services

The questions in this section aim to gather feedback from users about their awareness, usage, and opinions of a wide range of library services offered across Cumberland. Users are also invited to share suggestions for improvement for services they currently use and asked to explain barriers that prevent them from accessing services.

Q9: Please let us know if you know about the library services we offer and what you think of them



For the majority of respondents (81.8%; 1,294) the core library offer of books to borrow meets their needs. Similarly ordering books from other libraries meets the needs of a large proportion (66.1%; 1,045).

A number of services appear not to meet the needs of many respondents. These include: free access to computers (27.2%); activities, talks and craft groups (25.5%); hire of meeting rooms (22.7%); studying / seating spaces (22.5%); the home delivery service (21.4%); free access to WiFi (20.2%); digital resources and subscriptions (19.3%) and bus pass applications (19.3%). At least one in five respondents consider these services to not meet their needs.

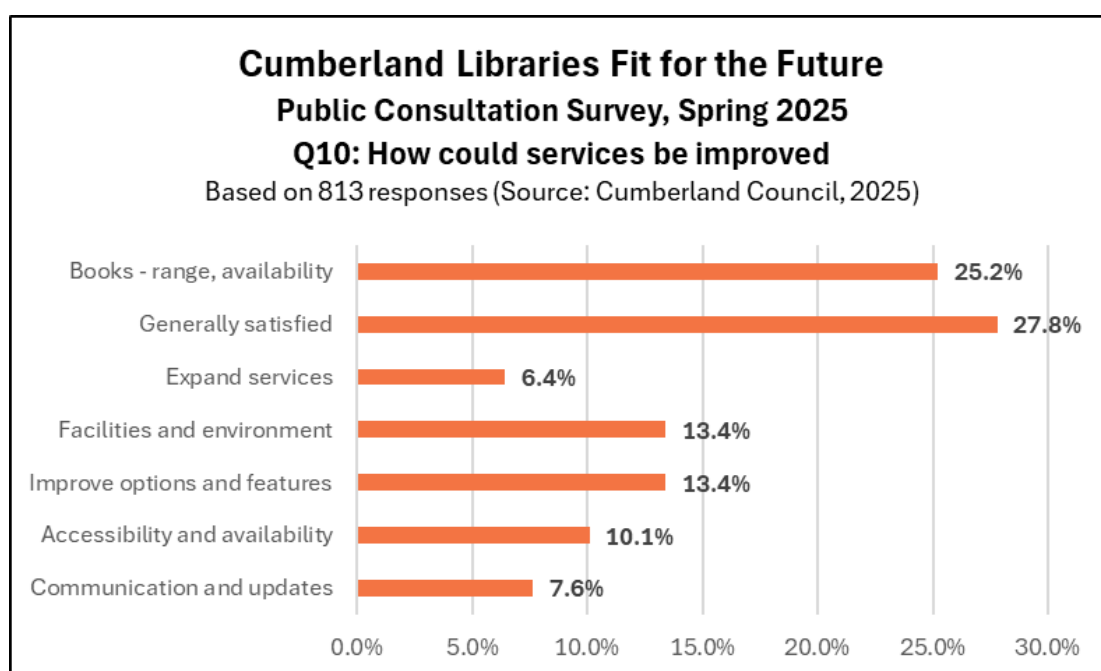
The proportion of respondents who indicated they would not be interested in such a service needs to be considered against this, with at one in five respondents not having any interest in these services: free access to computers (21.3%); activities, talks and craft groups (24.2%); hire of meeting rooms (41.2%); the home delivery service (47.2%); links to other organisations (20.9%) and bus pass applications (27.1%).

In addition, there have been some comments from respondents stating they would have liked an additional option of "I know about it, but don't use it" or "I know about it but am not interested" and therefore it is possible that a proportion of respondents may have ticked the "it doesn't meet my needs" option as a best fit response. One respondent commented in answer to Question 10 that they had been "forced to provide incorrect answers about several services" as there was not an additional option.

It is interesting to note that a large proportion of respondents are unaware of the range of services offered within libraries. While not all would be interested in using these services, over half were unaware that they could access the following: home delivery service (74.2% unaware); hire of meeting rooms (68.0%); bus pass applications (54.6%); links to other organisations (59.9%); digital resources and subscriptions on library computers (60.4%). This suggests that more promotion of library services is required.

Q10: For services that you do use – please tell us how they could be improved if you have feedback

Respondents had a number of ideas regarding how services could be improved as illustrated in the chart below, with some overlap with issues that emerged in other questions.



Generally satisfied: Many respondents (226, the greatest number in this question) feel that library services are fit for purpose.

Books – range, availability: 205 respondents indicated services could be improved in this area. There were requests for a wider variety of books, fiction, non-fiction, children's books and large print. Some frustration is evident over incomplete book series and long waiting times for books requested from other libraries. BorrowBox is popular but referenced as having limited availability and long waiting times.

Expand services: There is general appreciation for services such as home delivery, bus pass applications and hearing aid support but 52 respondents wished for expansion in this area. The detail of this varied from more events and activities, for example story time, rhyme time, playgroups, reading groups and adult education, through to interest in extended opening hours, or for some libraries more consistent hours.

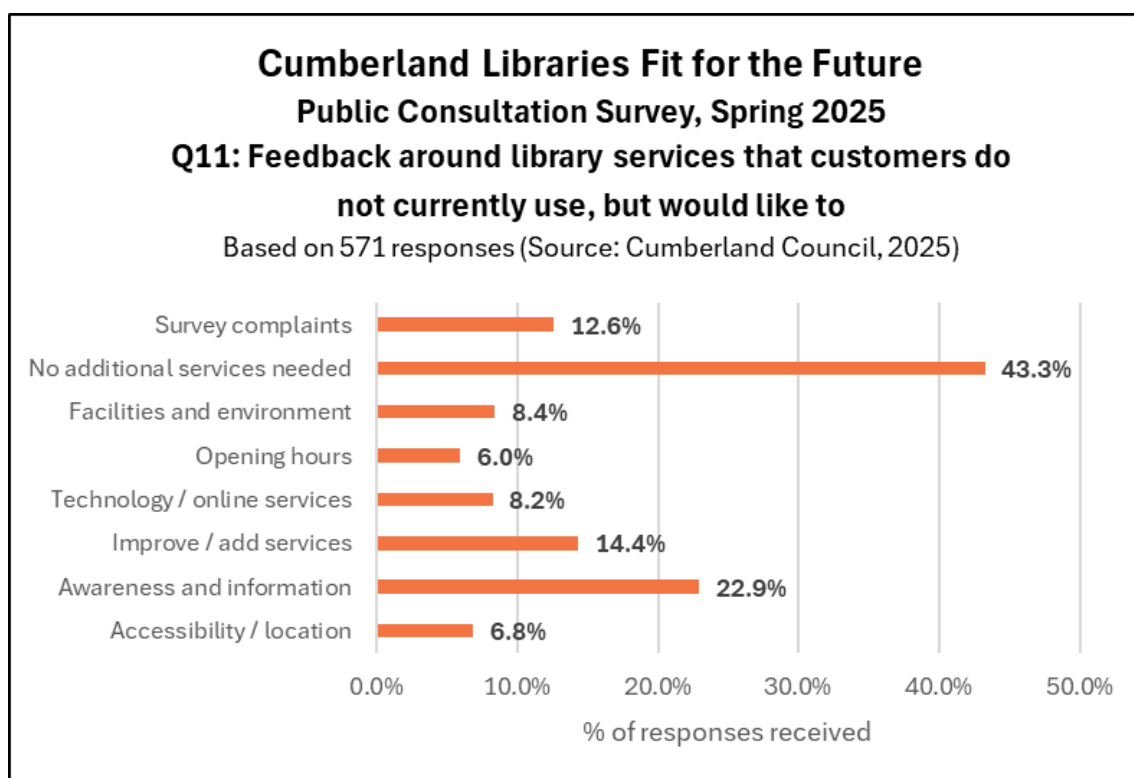
Facilities and environment: 109 had comments on this, including a need for more study spaces, quiet areas and comfortable seating. Some respondents are concerned about noise, especially from disruptive visitors, which can be intimidating to other library users. Access to toilets, refreshment facilities and better heating are also mentioned. General refurbishment is required in some areas.

Improve digital options and features: 109 respondents made suggestions under this theme. BorrowBox usability could be improved; there are suggestions for better search functions and Kindle compatibility. Some respondents consider discontinuing PressReader to be a negative step; the new system is considered to have limited functionality and have a limited range of titles and publications. Photocopying and printing are described as complicated, unreliable or expensive by some. Users suggest being able to have an account where prepayment could be made to simplify use. Users would like easier navigation and better search features within the online catalogue. There are some requests for more online resources, including academic and foreign language materials.

Accessibility and availability: 109 respondents fed back under this theme with comments covering a number of issues. Mobility challenges are a concern for some, with one user requesting assistance for collecting and returning books due to limited mobility. The lack of a lift to the upper floors certain sites was noted as a significant barrier, limited access to meeting and private spaces for those with physical disabilities. There were some concerns about limited audiobook availability, especially for neurodivergent users who rely on audio formats. The disparity between print and audio resources was seen as a barrier to equal access.

Communication and updates: Some respondents feel that events and services could be better advertised. Users feel for instance that BorrowBox is a good service, but one respondent says they only found out about it through their Kindle group. Some would like updates on new books ordered by the library, an update on the status of requested books, and email notifications in advance if renewing a book is not going to be possible. (62 respondents).

Q11: For services you don't use, but would like to, please outline why you can't use them, and how they could be made more accessible



Survey complaints (72 respondents): Many people felt that the survey did not allow them to accurately express their views; this was particularly in relation to the previous question. Services marked as "not meeting needs" should not necessarily be interpreted as negative feedback.

No additional services needed (247): Many responses indicate that people are aware of, and use the services they need, and are not looking for anything additional.

Awareness and information (131): Many respondents simply did not know that certain services existed, such as printing services and online resources. Respondents suggested better publicity would be beneficial. One suggested providing welcome packs for new members, and another that providing handouts would be useful as "not everyone is happy using the Internet to access information". As another respondent put it "I would love to know what is out there".

Improve / add services (82): Some respondents would like more events, such as author talks, writing workshops, craft sessions, language cafés or book clubs to reflect community interests. Events should be held at a variety of times to accommodate different users.

Facilities and environment (48): The physical state of some buildings is poor and run down. One respondent commented "It should have been warm, welcoming, bright, informative, cheerful, and pleasant to visit and spend time in, but it wasn't. It was none of the things that make up a good library." Other comments referred to libraries being cramped, no toilet facilities, lack of seating, study spaces needing to be updated.

Technology / online services (47): Some users struggle with digital services, and the library website is considered difficult to use. Digital skills workshops or clearer instructions and in-library support would be welcomed. One respondent stated there is "too much online or requiring QR codes/online access, even printing in the library is too complicated".

Accessibility / location (39): Physical, digital and logistical barriers can prevent access to services, such as the library being too far away, lack of access for people with disabilities, and

opening hours that do not fit into busy schedules. Some users are unaware of the home delivery service or digital options available to them. One responder mentioned being autistic and needing literal and specific instructions on accessing services.

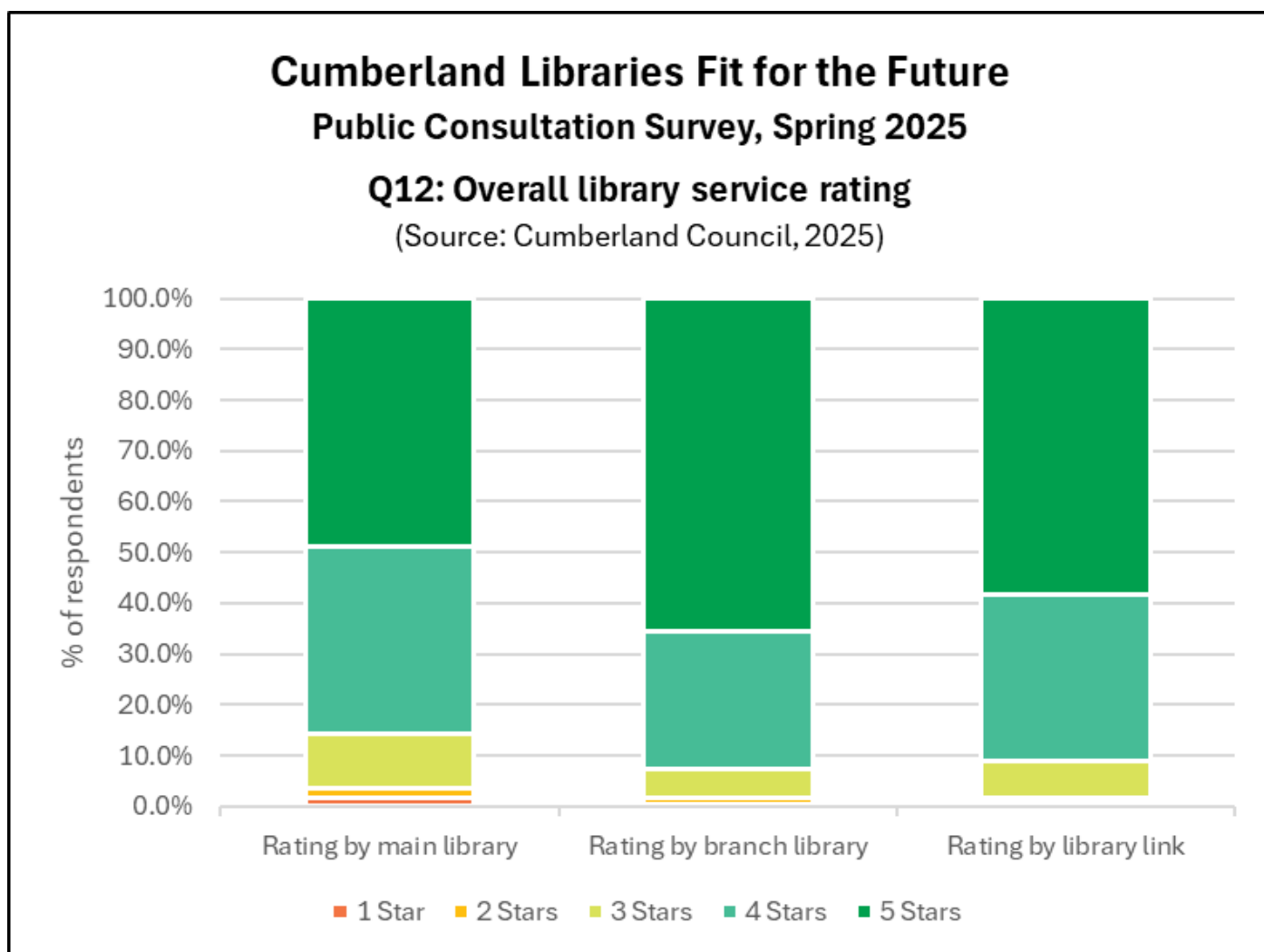
Opening hours (34): Opening hours are not always convenient. Some users, such as those unable to access their local library during working hours would like opening hours to be extended into the evenings or weekends.

Q12: If you had to give your library service an overall rating - what would it be?

Respondents were asked to give library services an overall rating, from 1 Star (not so good) to 5 Stars (excellent).

The majority of respondents (84.7%; 1,340) rated services as either very good (4 stars) or excellent (5 stars). This rating was highest across the branch libraires, with 92.6% rating services as either very good or excellent.

A small proportion (4.2%; 66 respondents) rated services as not so good (1 star) or fair (2 stars). Respondents were more likely to rate services in main libraries as not so good or fair (3.6%) compared to 1.6% for branch libraries and 1.6% for library links.

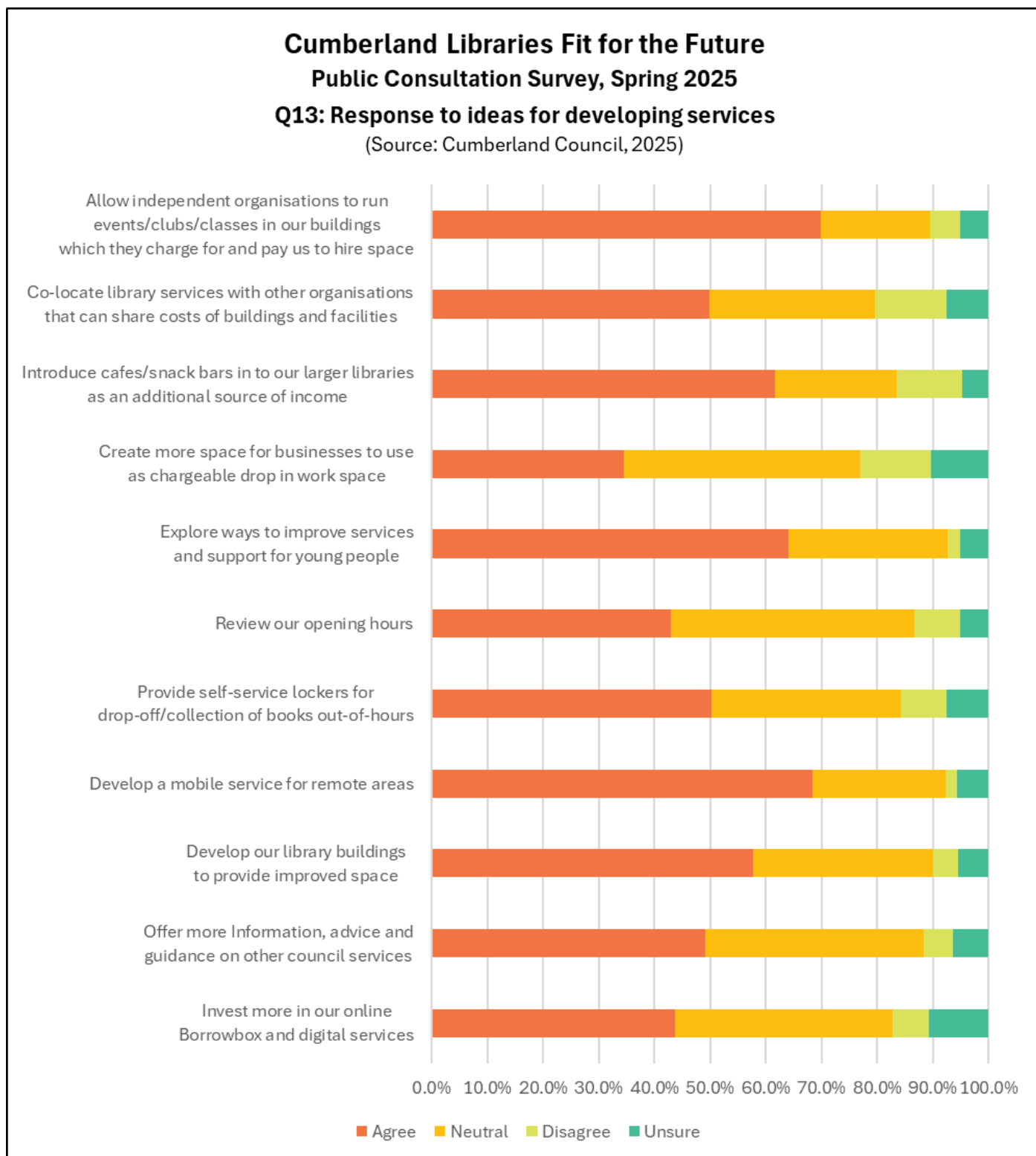


Section 3: Libraries Fit for the Future

This section asked respondents for their views on a range of suggestions for developing library services to ensure library services are sustainable into the future and meet the needs of Cumberland's communities. Respondents were asked about digital access, library spaces and facilities, community engagement and support, and partnership working. Respondents were also invited to provide contribute their own suggestions for future-proofing library services.

Q13: Please let us know what you think of these ideas

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a range of suggestions. The results are presented in the chart below.



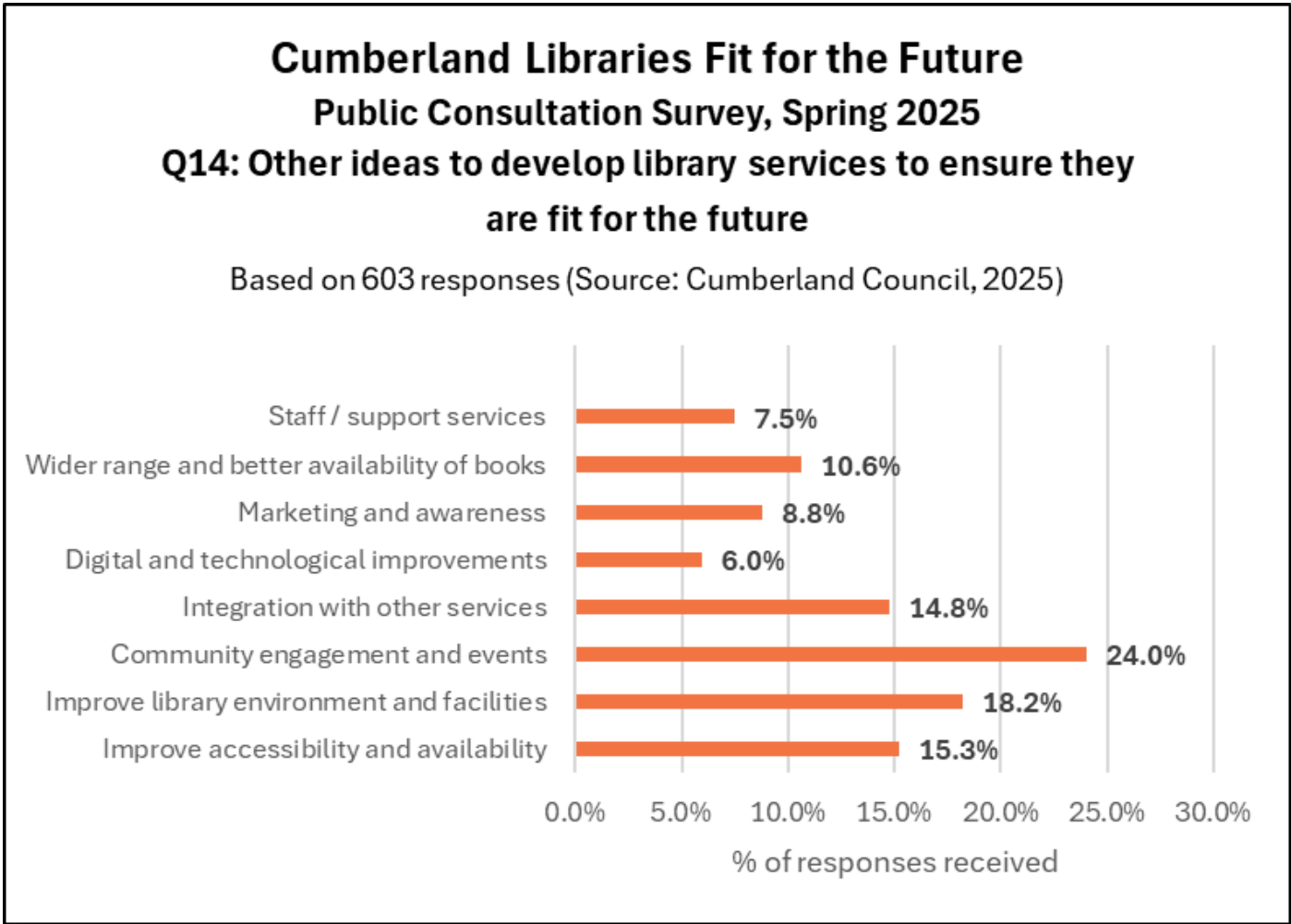
Allowing independent organisations to hire library spaces to run charged for events attracted the most support, almost seven in 10 respondents agreed with this suggestion (69.8%; 1,105). Developing a mobile service for remote areas is also attractive to respondents (68.3%; 1,081) and is likely to reflect the rural nature of Cumberland. Exploring ways to improve services and support for young people is also popular (64.0%; 1,012). Around three out of five respondents also agree with the idea of introducing refreshment facilities into larger libraries as a source of income (61.6%; 975).

The proportion of respondents who disagree with individual proposals is relatively low. However, around one in eight disagree with the proposal to create spaces to use as chargeable drop in workspaces (12.9%; 204), co-locating library services with other organisations to share costs (12.8%; 203) and introducing refreshment facilities into larger libraries (11.8%; 186).

However, a relatively large proportion of respondents were either neutral or unsure about many of the suggestions, ranging from over half of all respondents (52.7%; 833) for the suggestion to create chargeable drop in workspaces, to one quarter of all respondents (24.7%; 391) for the suggestion to hire library spaces to independent organisations to run charged for events.

Q14: Do you have any other ideas on how we can develop library services to ensure they are fit for the future?

In total 603 respondents provided ideas for developing library services. The main themes are presented below.



More detail around each of the themes is outlined below.

Staff / support services: Respondents would like to see more library staff employed and reduce the reliance on volunteers, which may reflect that some library links deploy volunteer resources, as they observed volunteers can lack detailed service knowledge and technical expertise. Sufficient staffing levels are needed to ensure consistent service, including extended hours. In terms of support services, there is a desire for libraries to offer practical help such as online safety workshops and digital literacy support. Other suggestions included using libraries as hubs to support home educators, autism learning and dyslexia groups and those struggling with reading, and providing private spaces for online health appointments, all of which would contribute to community wellbeing.

Wider range and better availability of books: Respondents show strong support for maintaining access to physical books, especially new titles, large print, and children's books. There are comments that it would be good to see more available copies of popular titles.

Marketing and awareness: As mentioned previously in this report, comments indicate that many users are simply unaware of the services available to them.

Digital and technological improvements: There are requests for IT training, digital literacy courses, and support using BorrowBox for those unfamiliar with using online tools. Comments indicate that the layout of the website and search facilities could be improved.

Integration with other services: Views are mixed regarding sharing space with other services. Some support co-location with council services improve support to customers, but others are concerned that this approach may overshadow the library's core purpose. While amenities such as cafés would be appreciated, some suggest additional services should be separate from areas set aside for study or reading. There is concern that libraries could be dominated by non-library functions. As one respondent comments about Workington Library, "it does feel like books have been sidelined to accommodate everything else but books".

Community engagement and events: There is a desire for libraries to host a wider range of events and activities, including those that appeal to young people and disadvantaged communities. Suggestions include author visits, poetry readings, story time, crafts, writing competitions, and creative workshops. There is also support for educational initiatives. Libraries are seen as important community spaces. However, there is concern that libraries may become too focused on non-book or digital-only services. There is support for development as long as this does not detract from the core purpose of libraries.

Improve library environment and facilities: Respondents would like libraries to be warm, welcoming, and inclusive spaces that support both leisure and learning. Suggestions include comfortable seating, quiet study areas with access to computers, and improved facilities such as toilets and baby changing areas in all branches. There is interest from some in expanding the library's role as a community hub, offering council service guidance, tourist information, and health-related signposting. While some support co-location with other services, others stress the importance of preserving the library's core identity as a place for books, study, and learning.

Improve accessibility and availability: The importance of maintaining physical accessibility in libraries is mentioned, with some commenting that some buildings lack lifts or other suitable access points for people with mobility issues. Opening hours were again mentioned as a barrier to accessing services, with requests for more evening and weekend availability.

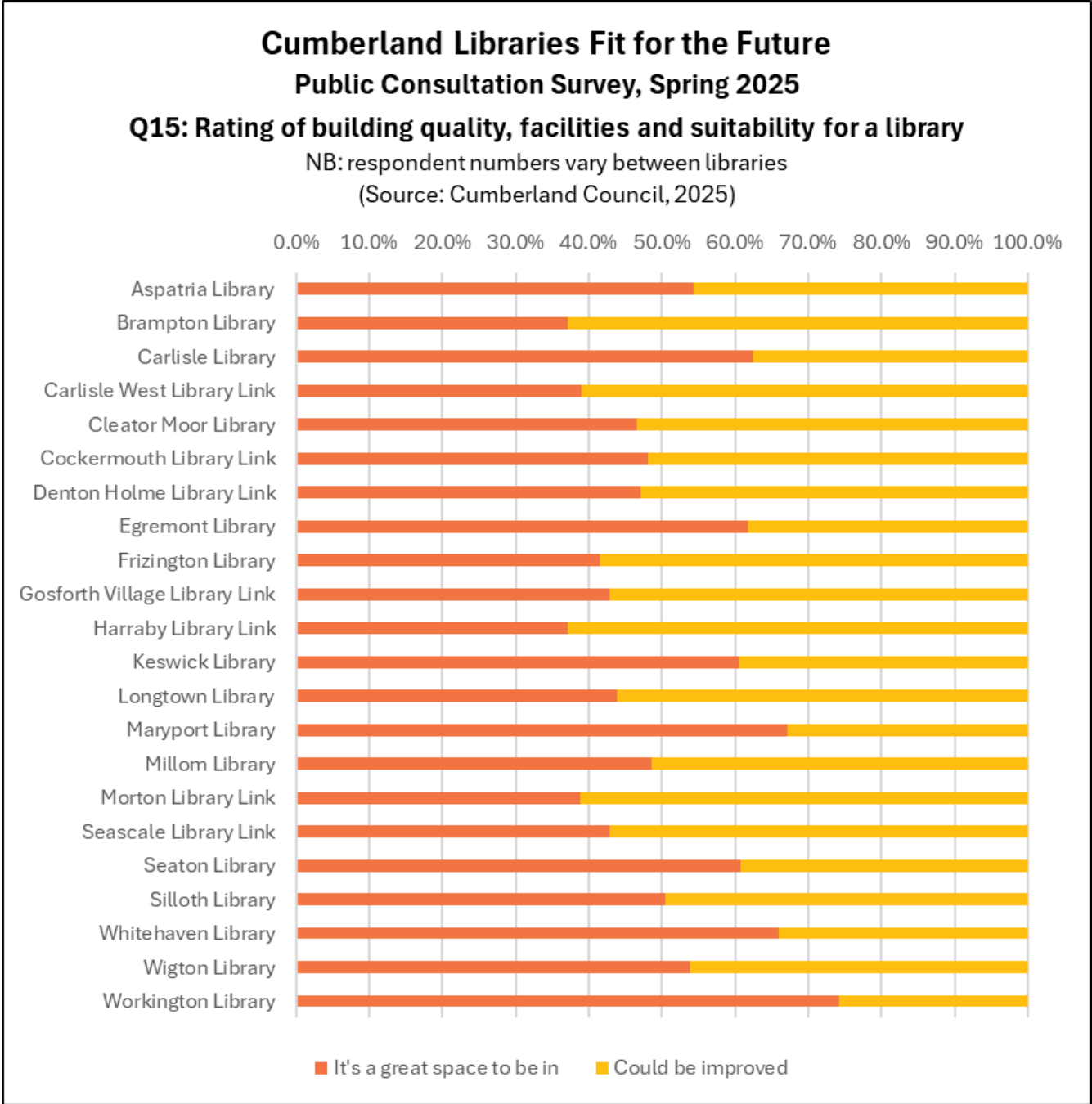
There is also support for mobile library services to ensure rural and isolated communities have access to services, especially those who are elderly, disabled, or caring for young children. Suggestions included consulting directly with disabled users to improve accessibility and ensure inclusive service design.

Section 4: Library Buildings

This section asked respondents to comment on the quality, accessibility, and suitability of library buildings and facilities. Respondents were also invited to share ideas for improving library buildings.

Q15: Please tell us how you would rate the quality of the building, facilities and how suitable you think they are for a library

Respondents were asked to choose whether they regard the library building they use regularly as either “a great space to be in” or “could be improved”. The results are illustrated in the chart below.

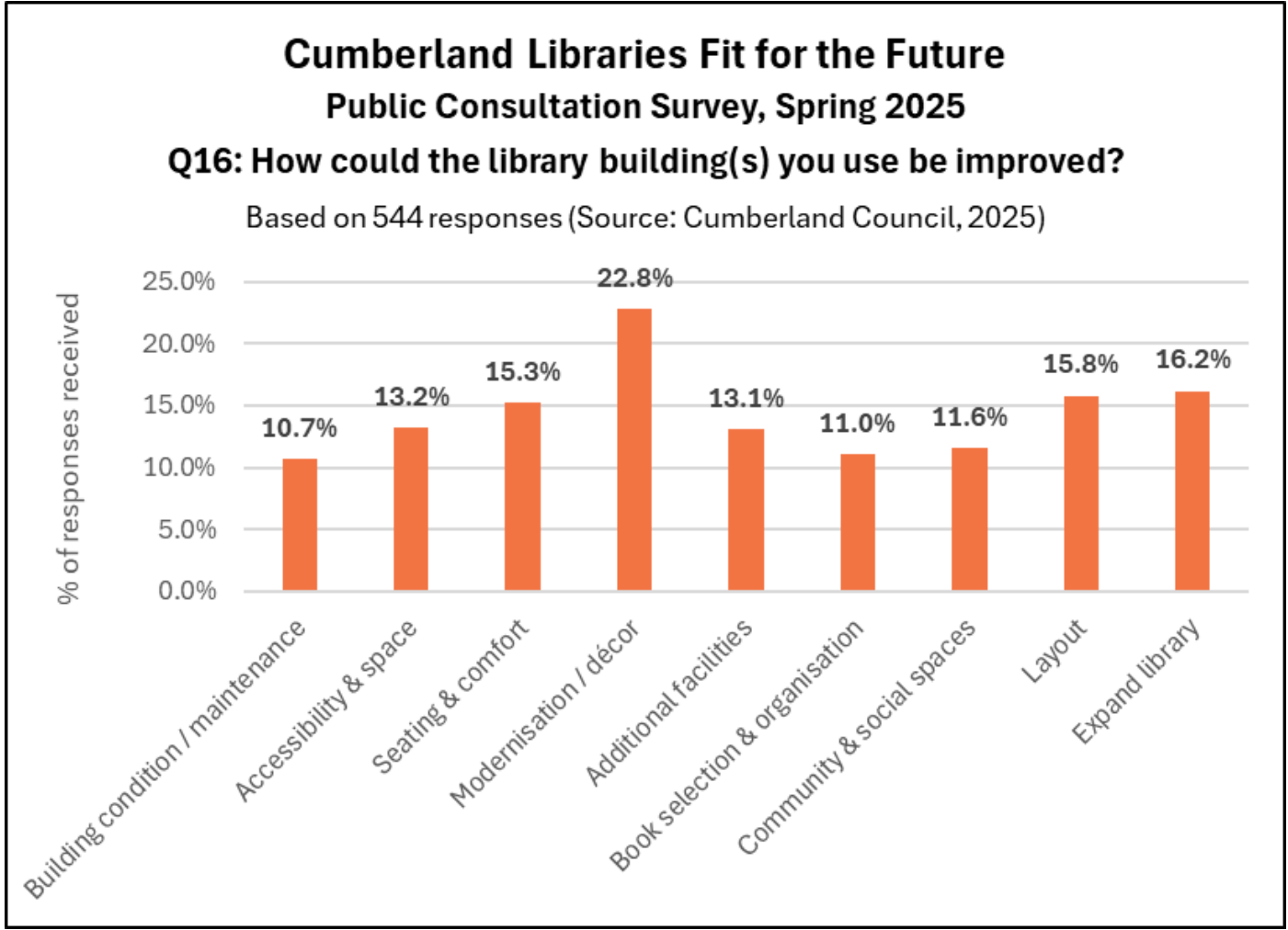


Overall, two thirds of respondents who commented about the main library buildings in Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington considered them “great spaces to be in” (66.5%; 740 out of 1,112 responses). This compared with just over half for the branch libraries (53.8%; 870 out of 1,616 responses). Just over two in five considered library links “great spaces to be in” (44.0%; 353 out of 803 responses).

The top three libraries considered “great spaces to be in” are: Workington Library (74.3% of people who chose this library); Maryport Library (67.1%) and Whitehaven Library (66.0%). The three libraries considered to be most in need of improvement are: Harraby Library Link (63.0% of people who chose this library); Brampton Library (63.0%) and Morton Library Link (61.3%). It should be noted that the number of responses varies between the different libraries, in some cases below 100, and should be treated with a degree of caution, and there were no users who used Distington Library Link.

Q16: If you think the library building/s you use could be improved, please tell us how

In total, 544 respondents answered this question. The main emerging themes are captured below.



Building condition / maintenance: Buildings are described as dated, tired or in disrepair. Common issues include leaking roofs, inadequate lighting, draughty spaces, windows needing to be replaced and inadequate heating and air conditioning systems. One respondent said, “it’s too hot in summer and freezing in winter”. Whitehaven and Workington libraries are described by one as “beautiful buildings, but in a poor state of repair”. Cockermouth, Keswick, Whitehaven libraries and Seascale Library Link were mentioned in relation to building condition and maintenance.

Accessibility and space: There is demand for better access for people with mobility issues, including lifts or stairlifts to upper floors, improved signage, better parking for disabled users and wider aisles for wheelchair users. Some libraries were seen as poorly located or not visible enough. Extending opening hours was again mentioned.

Seating and comfort: Respondents suggest the need for more comfortable seating such as sofas or beanbags, quiet reading areas, study desks and private workspaces.

Modernisation / décor: There are calls for brighter, more modern décor, better lighting, updated carpets, signage and artwork, more inviting entrances. Carlisle, Keswick, Cockermouth, Workington and Wigton libraries and Gosforth Library Link were mentioned in relation to modernisation and décor.

Additional facilities: Suggestions include toilet facilities, refreshment area or café. More computer and working space would be welcomed by some.

Book selection and organisation: There are comments about the limited selection of books, especially in smaller libraries, outdated or poorly organised collections. A wider selection and improved displays are suggested.

Community and social spaces: Some would like libraries to be more of a community hub, suggesting cafés or coffee machines, spaces for events, club and talks, and games areas or craft spaces. Having more bookable spaces for local organisations or community groups is suggested.

Layout: Some libraries were described as too small, cramped or poorly laid out. Suggestions included more open plan designs, clearer signage and better navigation and dedicated quiet zones or children’s areas.

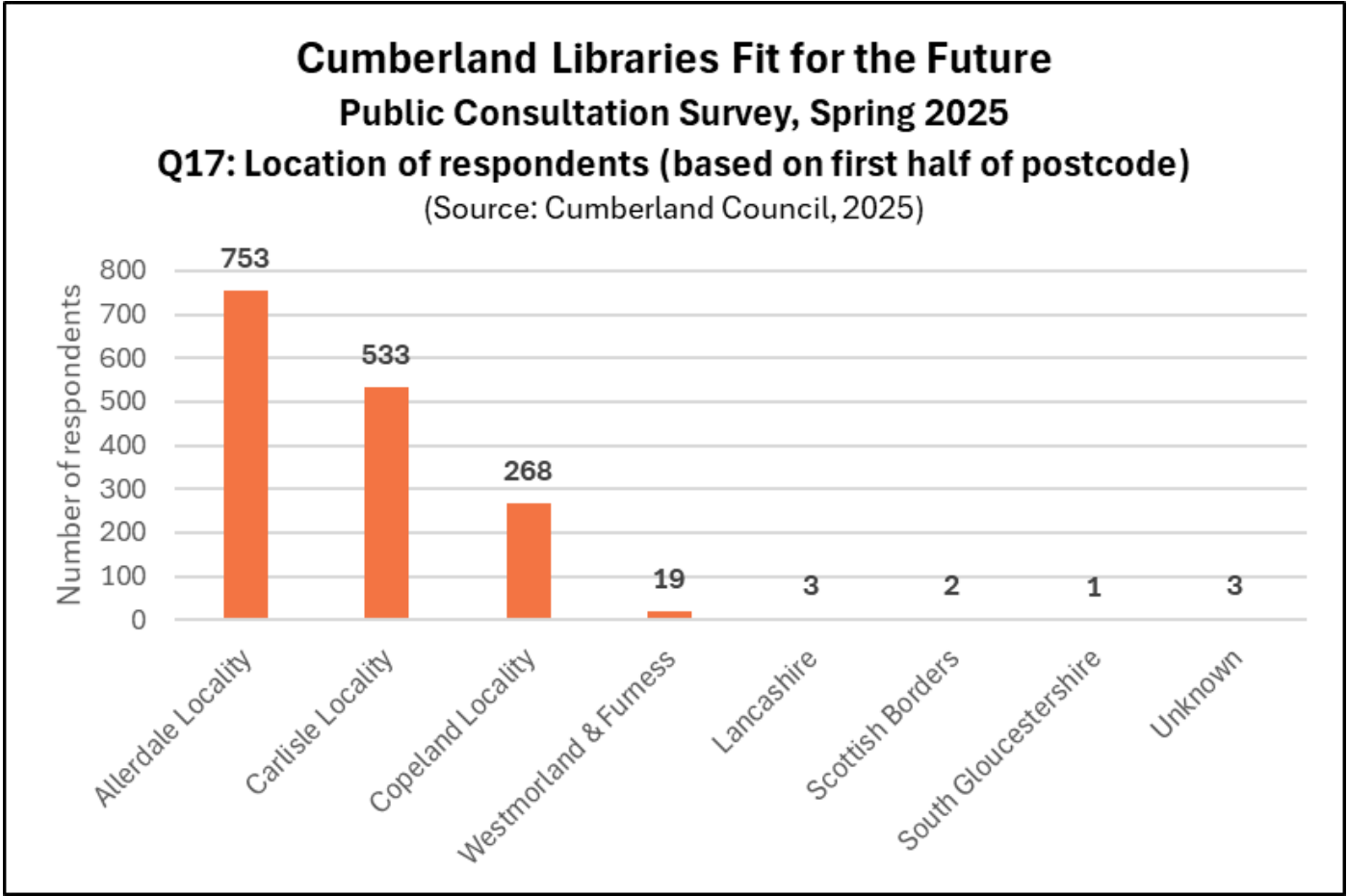
Expand library: A number of comments were received about restricted space in libraries. This included Silloth, Brampton and Millom.

Section 5: A bit about you

The questions in this section were designed to gather demographic and accessibility-related information to help improve services and ensure they are inclusive. Information has been gathered regarding location to understand the geographic distribution, family / dependents, personal identity, accessibility and inclusion and whether respondents are interested in staying informed about and/or being involved in service development.

Q17: Please provide the first half of your postcode

The majority of respondents live within the Cumberland area (98.2%; 1,554 respondents). Almost half live within the Allerdale locality (47.6%; 753), one third in the Carlisle locality (33.7%; 533) and one in six in the Copeland locality (16.9%; 268). A small proportion live outside Cumberland (1.6%; 25). Location is unknown for 0.2% of respondents (3).

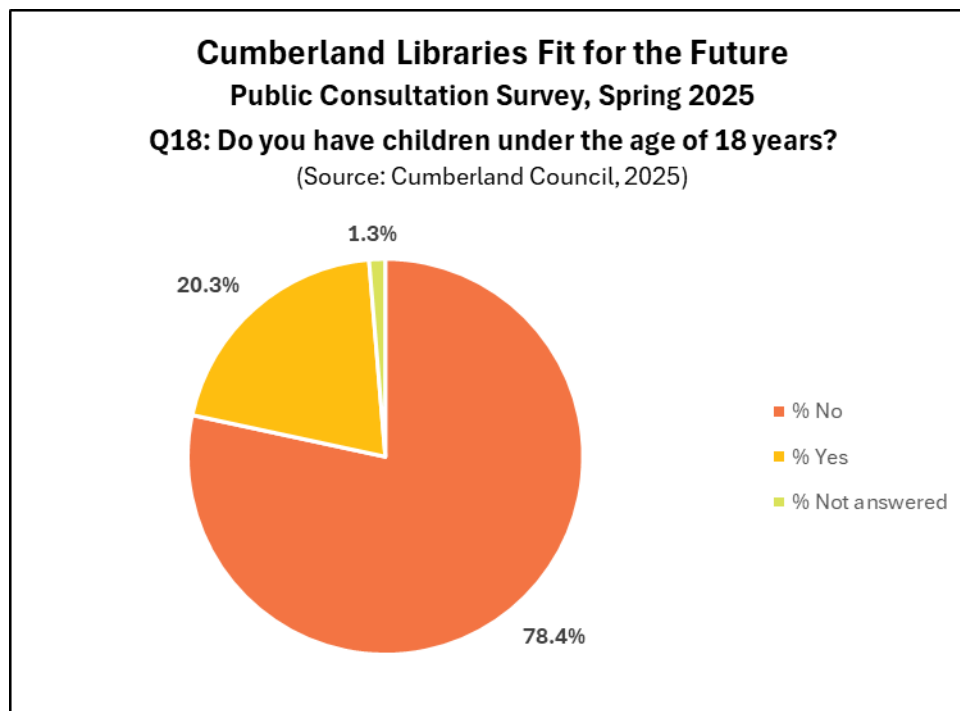


The table below provides more detail by postal town and area and shows that seven out of 10 respondents (69.8%; 1,105) come from five main postal town areas: Carlisle, 27.9%; Cockermouth, 12.1%; Wigton, 10.6%; Workington, 10.6%, and Keswick, 9.0%.

Cumberland Libraries Fit for the Future Cumberland survey respondents by postal town and area, Spring 2025					
Postcode area	Locality area	Post Town	Town / area	% of total	Count
CA13	Allerdale	Cockermouth	Cockermouth, Lorton, Buttermere	12.1%	192
CA12	Allerdale	Keswick	Keswick, Seatoller, Braithwaite, Bassenthwaite, Threlkeld	9.0%	143
CA15	Allerdale	Maryport	Maryport, Dearham, Flimby, Allonby	5.7%	90
CA7	Allerdale	Wigton	Wigton, Silloth, Aspatria, Caldbeck, Hesket Newmarket	10.6%	167
CA14	Allerdale	Workington	Workington, Distington, Seaton	10.2%	161
CA8	Carlisle	Brampton	Brampton, Gilsland, Greenhead, Slaggyford	5.8%	91
CA1	Carlisle	Carlisle	Carlisle East	6.5%	103
CA3	Carlisle	Carlisle	Carlisle North	4.6%	72
CA2	Carlisle	Carlisle	Carlisle South West	8.5%	134
CA5	Carlisle	Carlisle	Dalston, Burgh by Sands	2.9%	46
CA6	Carlisle	Carlisle	Longtown, Bewcastle	2.8%	44
CA4	Carlisle	Carlisle	Warwick Bridge, Wetheral, Cumwhinton, Armathwaite	2.7%	43
CA21	Copeland	Beckermeth	Beckermeth	0.4%	6
CA23	Copeland	Cleator	Ennerdale Bridge	0.4%	6
CA25	Copeland	Cleator Moor	Cleator Moor	1.7%	27
CA22	Copeland	Egremont	Egremont, Thornhill	1.3%	20
CA26	Copeland	Frizington	Frizington, Croasdale	0.4%	7
CA19	Copeland	Holmrook	Holmrook, Santon Bridge, Eskdale	0.8%	13
LA18	Copeland	Millom	Millom	2.6%	41
LA19	Copeland	Millom	Millom, Waberthwaite, Bootle	0.7%	11
CA24	Copeland	Moor Row	Moor Row	0.4%	6
CA20	Copeland	Seascale	Seascale, Sellafield, Gosforth, Wasdale Head	2.4%	38
CA27	Copeland	St. Bees	Saint Bees	0.6%	10
CA28	Copeland	Whitehaven	Whitehaven, Sandwith	5.2%	83
Outside Cumberland / unknown				1.8%	28

Q18: Do you have children under the age of 18?

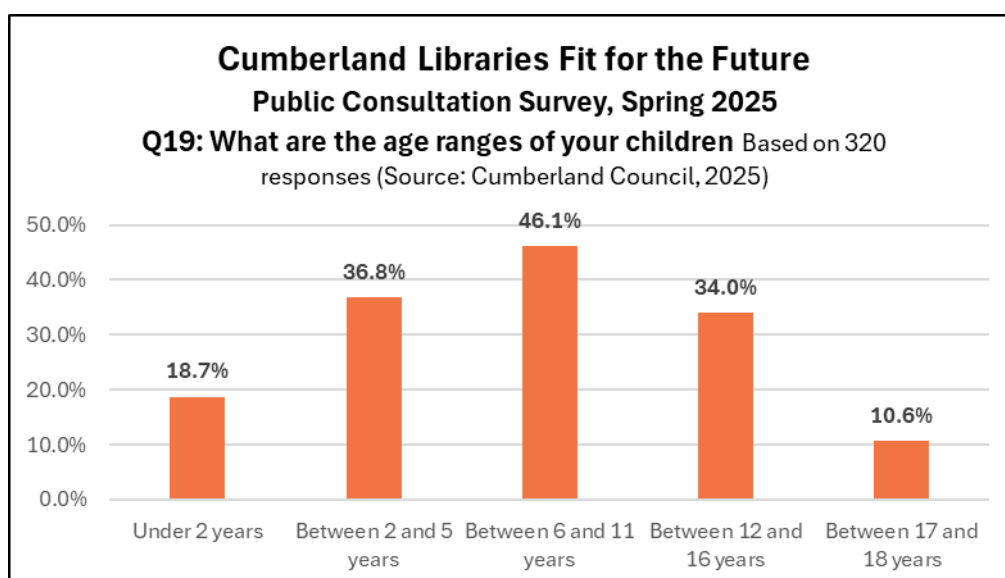
One in five respondents have dependent children under the age of 18 years (20.3%; 321 respondents).



Of the 321 respondents with dependent children, two out of five use branch libraries as their main library type (39.6%; 127); just over one third use main libraries (35.2%; 113) and one in six use library links (16.2%; 52). Almost one in ten respondents with dependent children under 18 years (9.0%; 29) are not currently library members. Carlisle Library, Cockermouth Library and Keswick Library have the largest number of respondents with dependent children under 18 years (50, 40 and 32 respondents respectively).

Q19: What are the age ranges of your children?

The chart below indicates that survey respondents are more likely to have dependent children aged 0-11 years and less likely to have dependent children aged 12 years and over. This could be because parents of younger children are often more actively involved in their children's learning and leisure activities; children of this age range are more likely to use library services accompanied by their parents. Parents of older children may be less engaged with library services.

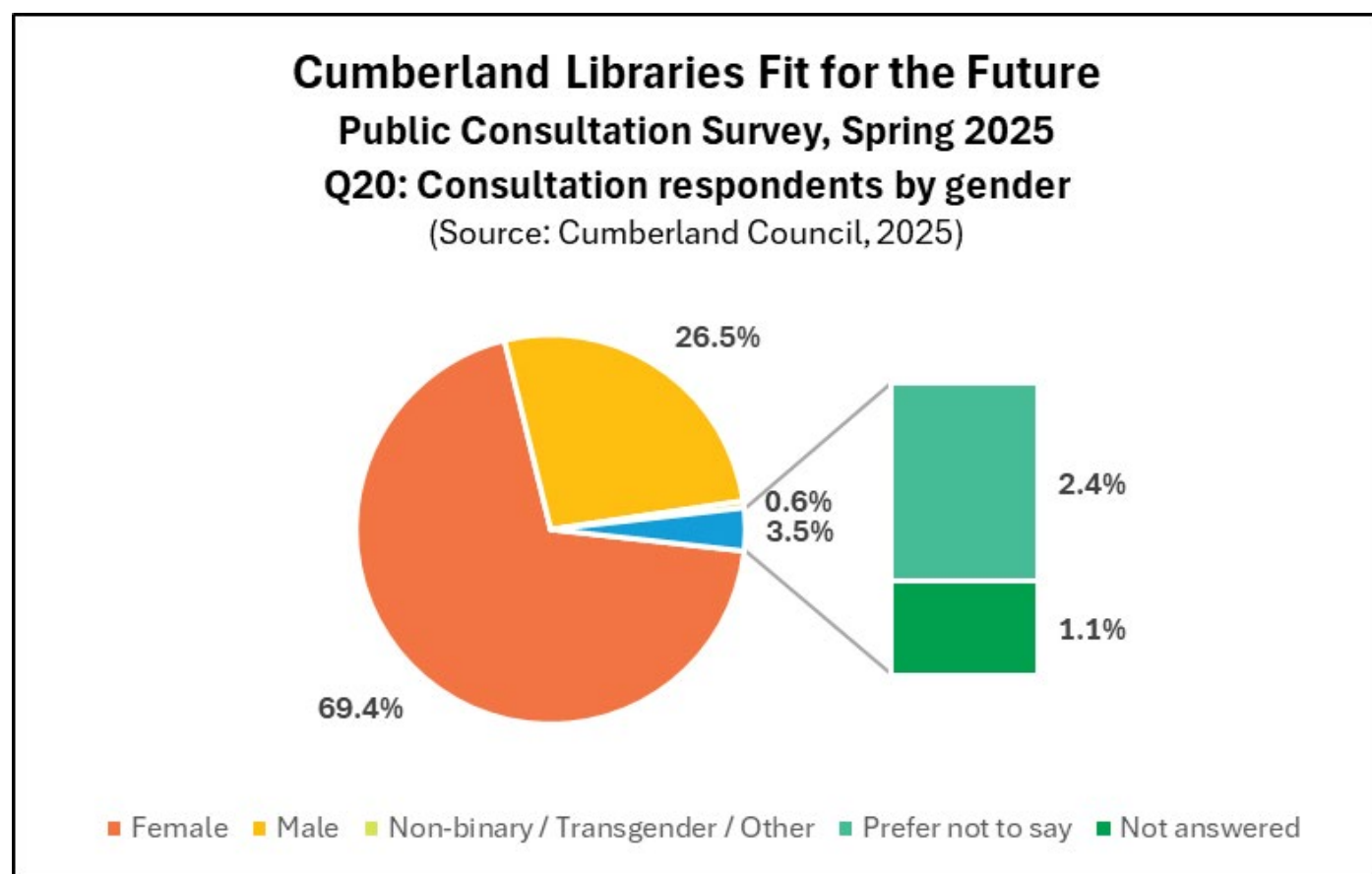


Please note that the above chart will not sum to 100% as respondents may have more than one dependent child under the age of 18 years.

Q20: Gender

Seven in ten respondents are female (69.4%; 1,098 respondents). This is a larger proportion than the Cumberland average where females make up just over half (51%) of the resident population (Source: Office for National Statistics, 2023). Males account for one in four survey respondents (26.5%; 419) which is a smaller proportion than the average for Cumberland (males 49% according to the Office for National Statistics, 2023). The larger proportion of females than males is likely in part to reflect library membership, with larger proportions of female library users at all life stages.

The proportion of non-binary, transgender and other is relatively small (0.6%; 9 respondents). However, as 2.4% preferred not to answer this question and 1.1% of all respondents left the question unanswered, this proportion may be larger.



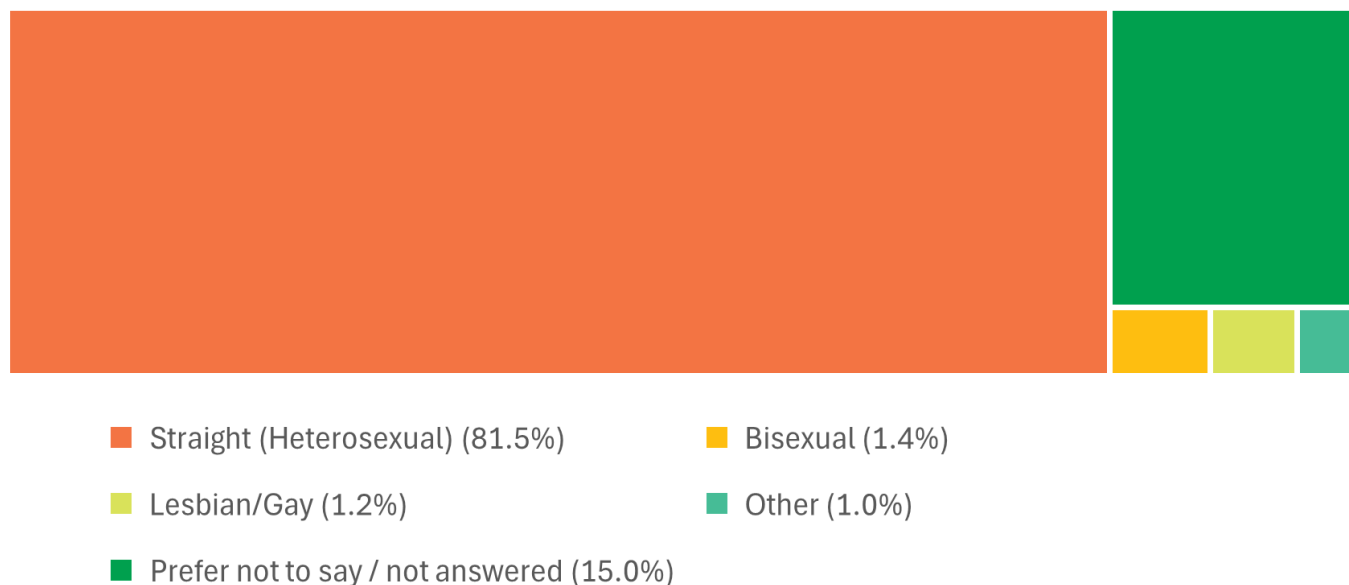
Q21: Sexual orientation

In the 2021 Census, nine out of ten residents in Cumbria (91.1%) identified as heterosexual; 6.5% declined to answer and 2.3% identified as either gay/lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or queer.

Four out of five respondents in the Libraries Fit for the Future survey identified as heterosexual (81.5%; 1,289). This is a smaller proportion than the general population, however a relatively large proportion of respondents (15.0; 238) either preferred not to say or did not answer the question, and the proportion is therefore likely to be larger. The proportion describing themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (2.6%; 41) is similar to known figures for the general population.

Some respondents objected to this question, finding it unnecessary and intrusive, and this may be reflected in the relatively large proportion who declined to answer.

Cumberland Libraries Fit for the Future Public Consultation Survey, Spring 2025 Q21: Consultation respondents by sexual orientation (Source: Cumberland Council, 2025)



Q22: Ethnicity

The majority of respondents describe their ethnicity as White (93.7%; 1,483 respondents). This is a slightly smaller proportion than the average for Cumberland (97.7%) according to the Census (ONS, 2021). Respondents describing themselves as Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (1.1%) make up a slightly larger proportion than the Cumberland average (0.8%) as do those describing themselves as Black, Black British, Caribbean or African (0.4% vs 0.2% across Cumberland) and Other Ethnic Groups (1.1% vs 0.4% across Cumberland). These differences may be explained in part by changes in migration since the Census was taken. Ethnicity is not known for 3.1% of respondents.

Cumberland Libraries Fit for the Future

Public Consultation Survey, Spring 2025

Q22: Respondents by ethnicity

(Source: Cumberland Council, 2025)



Q23: Faith, religion or belief

Census 2021 data indicate that three out of five people in the Cumberland area (58.5%) consider themselves to be Christians. It should be noted that this question within the Census may relate more to identity than to an actual measure of practice or belief. Small proportions reported as Muslim (0.5%), Buddhist (0.3%), Hindu (0.2%), Jewish (0.04%) and other faith / religion (0.3%). Around one third (35%) reported having no religion.

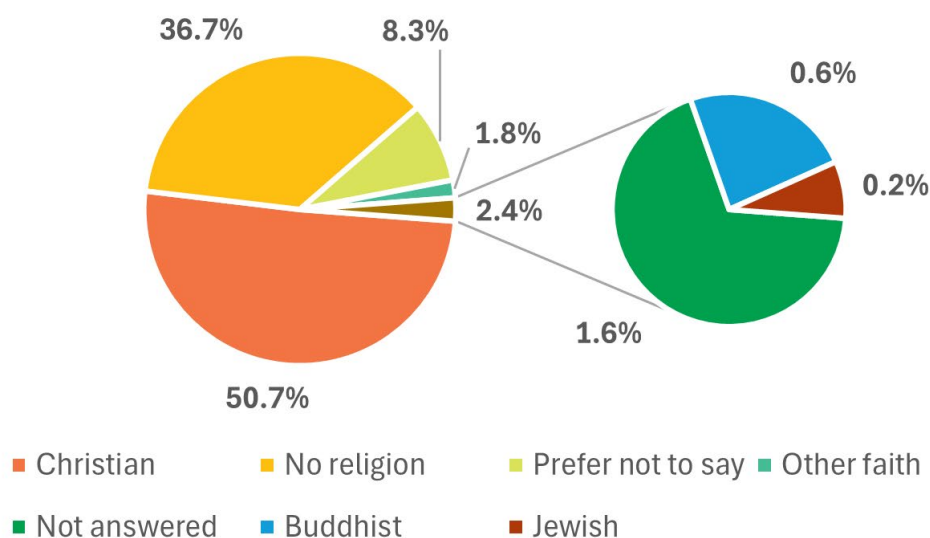
Survey answers indicate that 50.7% of respondents (802) identify as Christian. While this is a smaller proportion than the Cumberland average, one in ten respondents (10.0%; 158) either preferred not to say or did not answer the question, and therefore the volume could be larger. The combined volume of those respondents identifying as other faith, Buddhist and Jewish (2.6%; 41 respondents) is larger than the average for Cumberland. However, the volume is small (41 respondents), and it is therefore difficult to attach any significance to this result.

Cumberland Libraries Fit for the Future

Public Consultation Survey, Spring 2025

Q23: Respondents by faith / religion / belief

(Source: Cumberland Council, 2025)

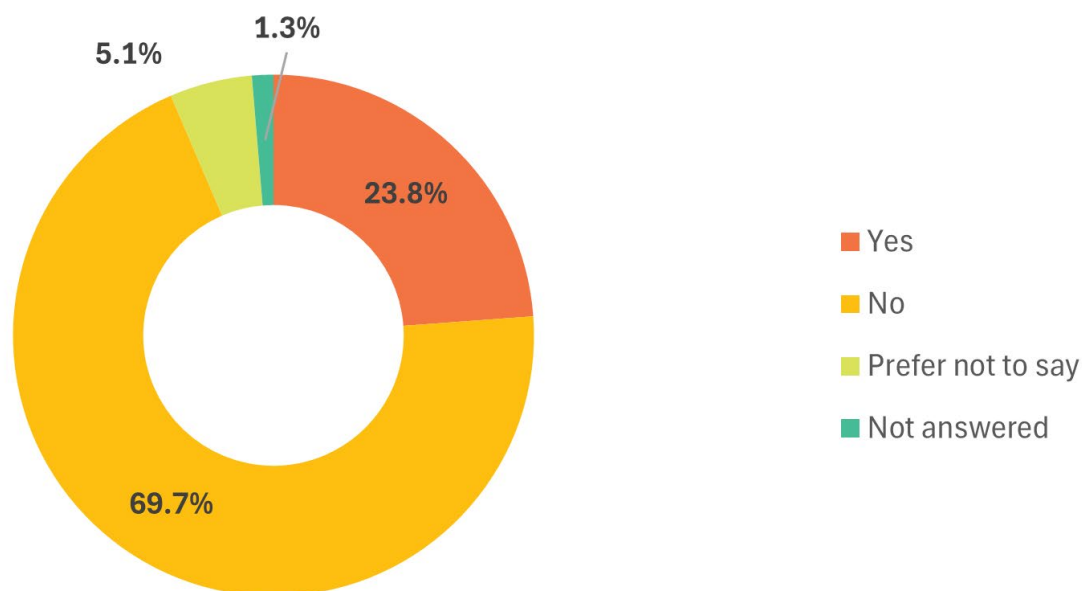


Q24: Disability

Respondents were asked if they considered themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition that affects their daily life.

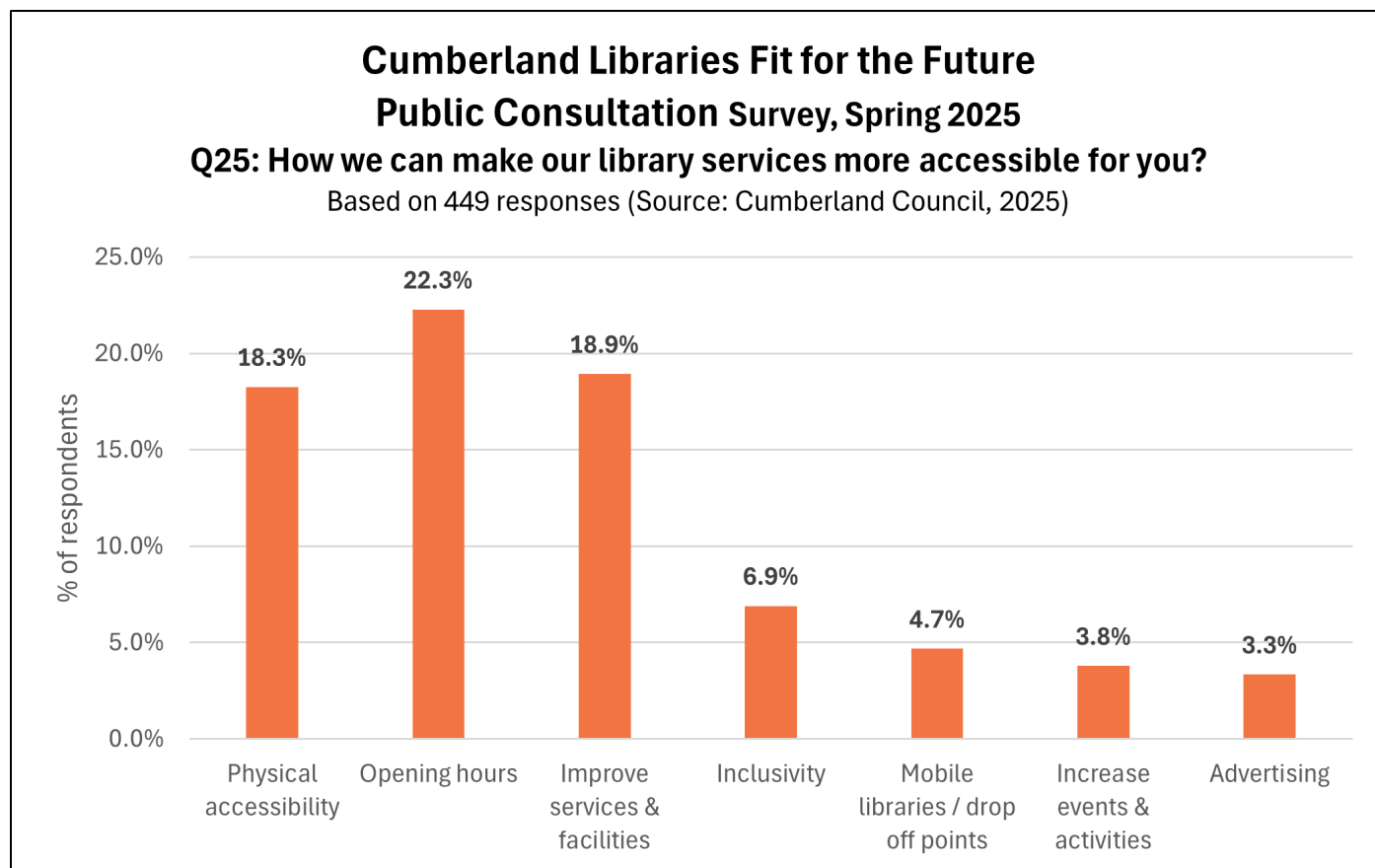
The majority of respondents do not consider themselves disabled (69.7%; 1,103), and a further 6.4% (102 respondents) either prefer not to say or have not answered the question. However, almost one quarter of respondents (23.8%; 377) do consider themselves to have a disability or long-term health condition. This is a larger proportion than the average who report being disabled under the Equality Act in Cumberland (19.8%, ONS Census 2021) and has implications for the accessibility of physical library spaces, inclusive digital services, staff training and awareness, service design, community engagement and future planning.

Cumberland Libraries Fit for the Future Public Consultation Survey, Spring 2025 Q24: Disability or long-term health condition (Source: Cumberland Council, 2025)



Q25: Please tell us if and how we can make our library services more accessible for you?

Respondents were asked for suggestions to ensure library services are more accessible. The main emerging themes are set out below.



More information around the themes is set out below.

Physical accessibility: Respondents have highlighted several barriers to physical access, particularly for those with limited mobility, wheelchair users and parents with prams. Suggested improvements include lifts or stairlifts, wider aisles and doorways for wheelchairs and scooters, lower thresholds and better signage, accessible toilets. People would like to see more disabled parking spaces, libraries related to more central or accessible areas, better signage and visibility, and varied seating to accommodate different physical needs.

Opening hours: Library users show an interest in having more flexible and consistent opening hours. It was noted by some that current schedules, including intermittent lunchtime closures and reduced weekend availability make it difficult to access services, particularly for those who work during the week or live in rural areas. Individual suggestions included reinstating Sunday openings, extending hours into the evening, and avoiding lunchtime closures. Clear communication and consistent opening times would be welcomed.

Improve services and facilities: Toilets and baby changing facilities would be welcomed. The repair and maintenance of buildings and equipment is mentioned by some. Some respondents praised BorrowBox and online renewals. Others expressed frustration with digital systems. Others requested improved online catalogues, and easier access to digital resources and audiobooks. While self-service machines are appreciated, human interaction is still important.

Inclusivity: Comments from respondents suggest a need for more inclusive environments that accommodate diverse needs. Suggestions include providing better access for blind and visually impaired users, autism-friendly time slots and quieter spaces for those with social anxiety, and staff training on neurodiversity and mental health awareness. Welcoming spaces for trans and gender non-conforming individuals would also be welcomed.

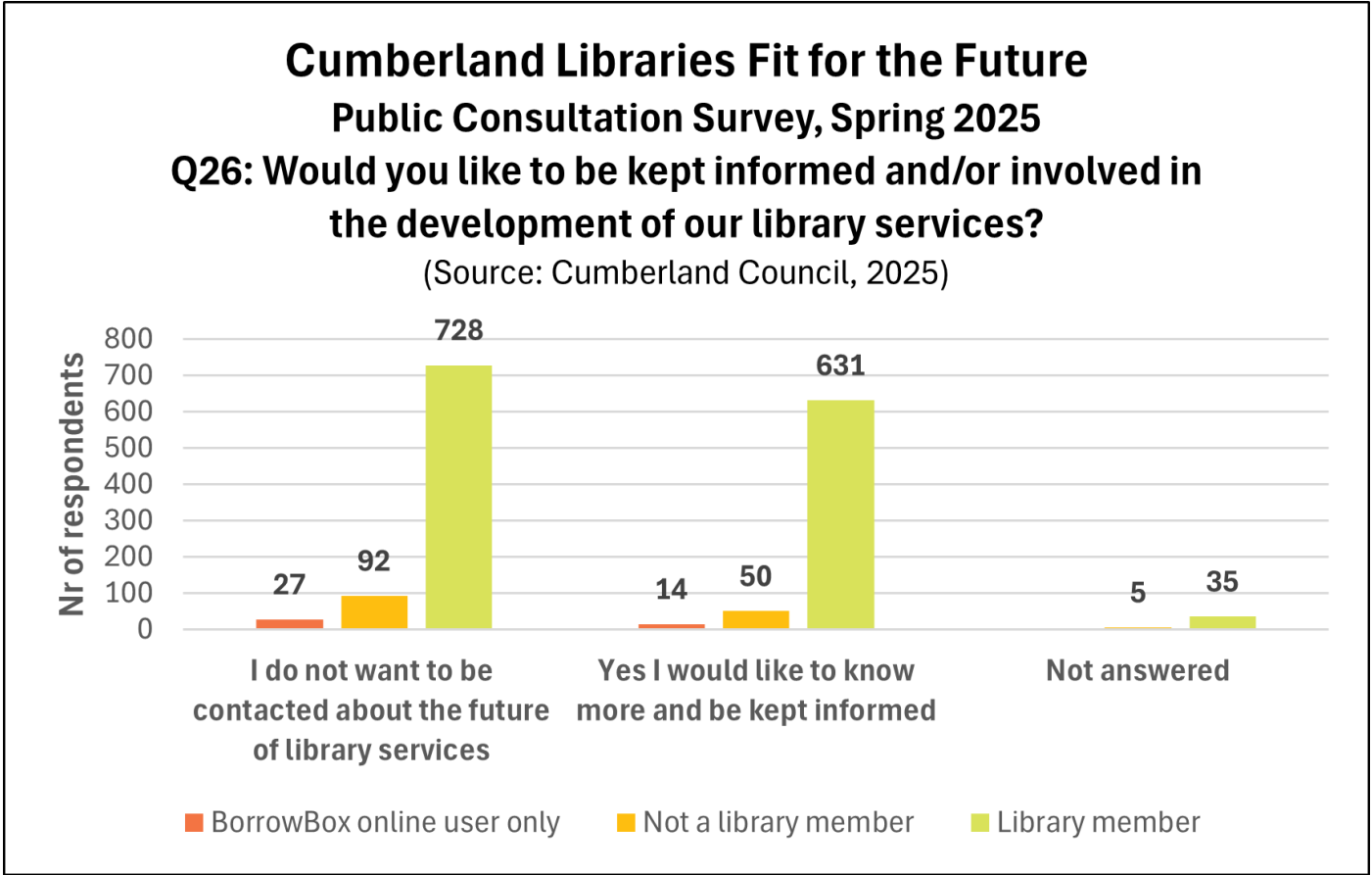
Mobile library services / drop off points: A mobile library service would be welcomed by those unable to access the library. A number of respondents would welcome a drop box service for out of hours returns, perhaps at churches or community centres.

Increase events and activities: Requests include hosting evening events, such as author or local history talks, holiday activities for children, story time, after school activities, more for pre-teens, homework clubs.

Advertising: Many respondents are unaware of services, opening times and events. Improved communication would be welcomed via a variety of channels. Suggestions include email newsletters, posters in community spaces and less reliance on social media.

Q26: Would you like to continue to be informed and/or involved in the development of our library services?

Just over two in five respondents (43.9%; 695) would like to be kept informed and/or involved in the development of library services. Of these, 631 are currently library members, 14 are BorrowBox online users only and 50 are not currently library members.



Q27: How respondents would like to be involved in the development of library services in Cumberland

In total, 664 respondents answered this question. Almost nine out of 10 (88.1%; 585) would like to be kept informed about library service developments delivered by Cumberland Council and over two in five (45.3%; 301) would like to be kept informed of all Cumberland Council's latest news and developments. One in four would be interested in participating in future focus groups about library services (25.3%; 168).

Cumberland Libraries Fit for the Future

Public Consultation Survey, Spring 2025

Q27: How respondents would like to be involved in the development of library services in Cumberland

Based on 664 responses (Source: Cumberland Council, 2025)

To be kept informed of developments about library services delivered by Cumberland Council, 88.1%

To be kept informed of all Cumberland Council latest news and developments, 45.3%

Future focus group participation about library services, 25.3%



Social Media Feedback

People were invited to express their views via social media in answer to two questions (Appendix 4). The number of responses was limited and is summarised below.

Q1: Do you use your local library? If not, why not?

Around 30 people responded to this question. Their comments are summarised below.

Many respondents actively use their local libraries, with frequent visits for borrowing books, attending events, and accessing digital services like BorrowBox. Libraries are appreciated for their friendly staff, welcoming atmosphere, and community value. However, barriers to use include limited opening hours, reduced services at Library Link locations, mobility issues, and distance from full-service branches. Some users prefer buying books or accessing content online, while others noted that changes in work schedules or library closures have impacted their usage. Despite these challenges, there is strong support for maintaining and improving local library services.

Q2: If you're not a library user already, what would you most like to use your local library for?

Four people responded to this question. They expressed interest in using libraries as welcoming spaces for reading, writing, and socialising. Suggestions included borrowing children's books, attending family history sessions, and enjoying hot drinks or a café-style environment. Online book ordering and collection were also appreciated, with libraries seen as comforting and family-friendly places.

Drop-in Session and Focus Group Findings

Focus Group Participation

Drop-in sessions were held at all libraries providing opportunities for face-to-face conversations and feedback. In addition, focus group meetings (30 in total) were also held in a variety of locations including cafés, libraries, youth zones, schools, community hubs, farmers' markets, knit and natter groups, pre-schools, Parish halls and warm hubs, capturing community views from a broad range of people including children, adults, older adults, people with disabilities and non-English speakers.

Participants were asked for their views on a range of questions which can be found at Appendix 3. 58 forms summarising the respondents' views were returned; this disparity is due to some sessions returned more than one summary form representing separate views, rather than collective opinion. These allowed some detailed conversations with residents but proportionally, with numbers between 4 and 45 at such sessions, they form a much smaller sample of responses compared to the survey and may not be representative.

Q1: What do you like about our libraries and services?

Respondents highlighted the wide variety of books and genres available, including resources on local history and initiatives like the summer book challenge for children. Staff were consistently praised for being friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable, contributing to a welcoming atmosphere. The library environment was described as quiet, relaxed, and conducive to concentration. Facilities such as online catalogues, self-service options, free Wi-Fi, and children's play areas were appreciated, alongside services like hearing aid batteries and access to free courses. Libraries were also valued as community hubs offering social activities and groups. Accessibility and the freedom to visit without barriers were noted, though some respondents were unaware of local library locations.

Q2: What don't you like about our libraries and services?

Some users expressed frustration with book availability, particularly the lack of new non-fiction titles, limited access to reading group books, and difficulty finding specific genres or series. Young adults felt underrepresented in the selection. Environmental concerns included noise from children, distracting decor, and occasional discomfort due to cold or poor lighting. Accessibility issues were noted, such as unsuitable opening times, inconvenient locations, and the discontinuation of mobile libraries. Technological challenges included limited online search functionality, difficulties with BorrowBox, and a preference for personal interaction over self-service machines. Despite these concerns, several respondents reported being fully satisfied with the services.

Q3: Why don't you use our library services?

Many respondents cited personal preferences and changing habits, such as accessing books online, using Kindles, or purchasing second-hand books from charity shops. Some felt libraries offered limited choice, especially in smaller branches, or simply no longer considered them part of their routine. Accessibility was another barrier, with libraries being too far away, poorly timed bus routes, or inconvenient opening hours. A few mentioned not being aware of the full range of services available, while one respondent shared a negative experience with staff. Practical issues like lost library cards also contributed to non-use.

Q4: What would make you use our libraries and services?

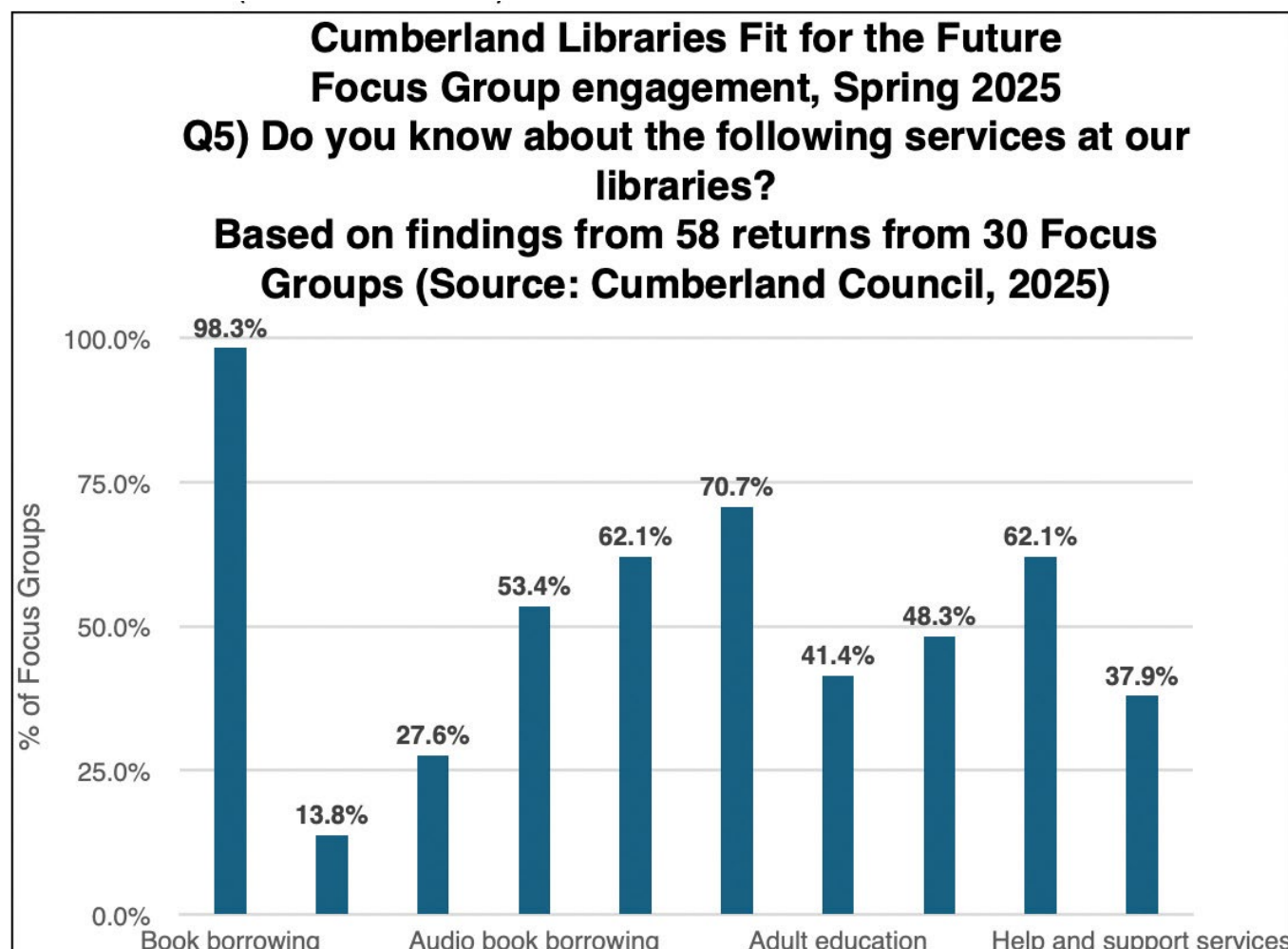
Respondents suggested that improved accessibility, such as reinstating mobile library services, relocating branches, and addressing transport challenges would encourage greater use. Enhanced services like coffee mornings, social groups, and activities for older children were also requested. Some mentioned the need for friendlier staff, more modern facilities, and a wider selection of resources. Better advertising, especially beyond social media, was highlighted as key to raising awareness of library offerings. However, a few individuals felt unlikely to return due to personal habits or reduced interest in reading.

Q5: Do you know about the following services at our libraries?

Participants were asked whether they knew about the following services: book borrowing; book delivery service; e-Books / BorrowBox services; Audio; Free WiFi; Computer services; adult education; quiet areas for study; help and support services.

Feedback from the 58 returns from the 30 focus groups indicated widespread awareness of book borrowing (98.3%; 57 returns), and good awareness of computer services (70.7%; 41 returns), clubs and activities (62.1%; 36 groups) and free WiFi (62.1%; 36 returns).

Feedback also indicates a general lack of awareness of services such as the book delivery service (13.8%; 8 returns) and e-books / BorrowBox services (27.6%; 16 returns) and reasonably low levels of awareness of help and support services (37.9%; 22 returns) and adult education (41.4%; 24 returns).



Respondents envisioned libraries as calm, comfortable, and welcoming spaces with a balance of colour and quiet to support focus and relaxation. Suggestions included larger, more open layouts with soft seating, individual workspaces, and accessible computer areas. Many wanted integrated cafés and social spaces to encourage community interaction, especially for young people. Improved book labelling, broader collections including comics and study resources and the ability to suggest new titles were also requested. Accessibility was a key theme, with calls for better disabled access, mobile services, and inclusive environments. Enhanced communication and promotion, especially beyond social media, and additional facilities like toilets, technology loans, and children’s areas were also highlighted.

Q7: What would you like to do in a library?

Respondents expressed interest in using libraries for reading, research, and learning, including exploring family history and accessing career advice. Many valued quiet spaces for browsing and study, while others wanted more social opportunities such as discussion groups, author talks, and community events like quizzes and crafts. Access to digital resources and computers was also important, with requests for more study and tech support areas. Suggestions included creating spaces for both quiet reading and lively interaction, offering refreshments, and improving communication about available services. Some users were satisfied with current offerings or unsure of additional needs.

Q8: How and where would you like to access library services?

Respondents expressed a strong preference for accessing library services through physical access points located close to home, with some requesting more rural and community-based options. Mobile libraries were mentioned as a desirable solution, especially for areas with limited access. Online and at-home services, including home delivery and digital resources, were also valued. Accessibility concerns included mobility issues and limited opening hours, particularly at weekends. Suggestions included integrating library services into schools and community hubs to enhance reach and social connection. Improved promotion and visibility of services were also noted as important.



Cumberland Council Strategic Priorities, Prevention Approach and Role of Libraries

Cumberland Council's vision is to deliver inclusive services shaped by residents and communities. Its aim is to improve health and wellbeing, prosperity, and environmental outcomes for all.

Key Strategic Priorities:

- Addressing inequalities
- Building local economies that work for local people
- Promoting environmental resilience and tackling the climate emergency
- Delivering excellent public services

Core Values:

- Compassionate
- Innovative
- Empowering
- Ambitious
- Collaborative

The Council defines its delivery model through the 'Cumberland Approach', which includes:

- Accessible and trusted services
- Listening, involving and engaging residents
- Learning and improving
- Prevention and early intervention
- Collaborative working across sectors
- Local-first service delivery
- Driving change and sustainability

The Council's Prevention Approach (2025-2030) aims to embed prevention across all Council services and partnerships. It defines prevention as a proactive and collaborative approach to enhance health and wellbeing, prevent problems before they arise, and stop existing issues from worsening.

Vision for Prevention:

“To empower residents, and those acting on their behalf, at any stage of their life to build the independence and resilience necessary to achieve positive outcomes in a financially sustainable way.”

Three Strategic Aspirations:

- Create inclusive opportunities for residents of all ages to thrive
- Proactively meet residents where they are, in a way that works for them
- Equip teams with the right tools to support residents effectively and early

Libraries are integral to Cumberland’s community hub model and prevention strategy. They serve as accessible, trusted spaces where residents can receive early help, digital access, and community support.

Libraries contribute by:

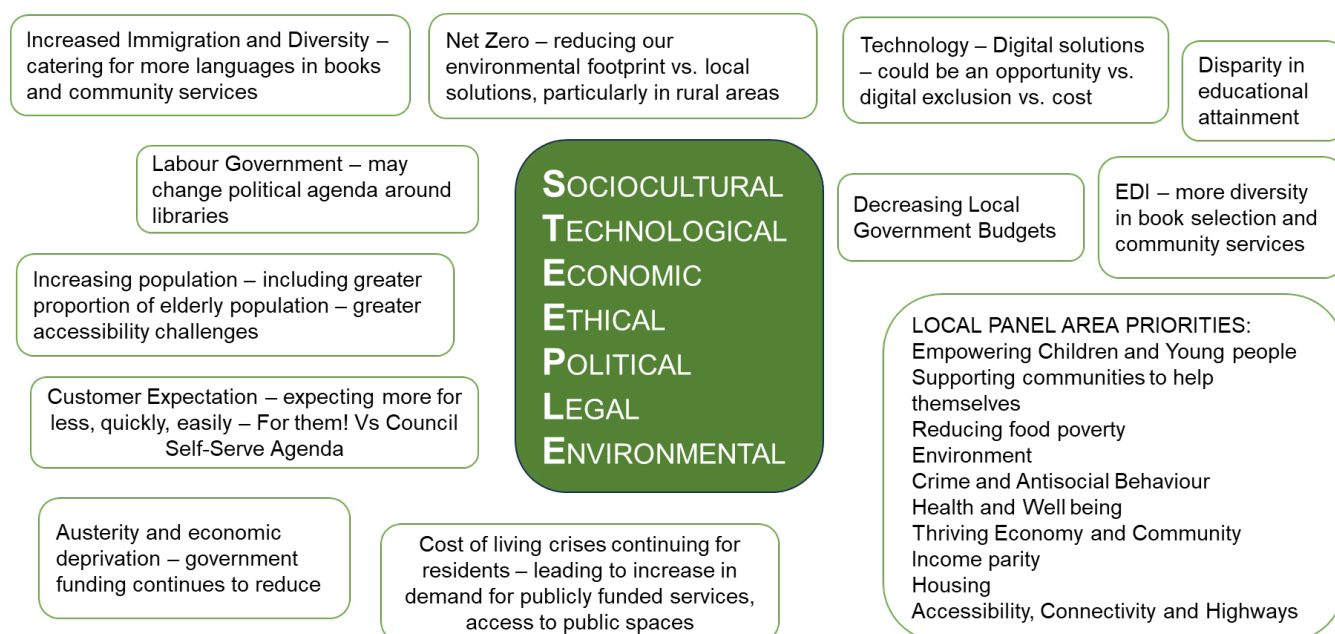
- Acting as local hubs for council and partner services
- Offering non-stigmatising access to support and information
- Reducing isolation and promoting digital inclusion
- Supporting pilots like the Workington Community Hub, which demonstrated positive resident outcomes

Cumberland Council’s strategic direction is rooted in inclusive, preventative, and place-based principles. Libraries are key enablers of this vision, helping deliver early help, community engagement, and improved wellbeing across the region.

Cumberland Council Library Service Self Assessment

As part of this process the Library Service has undertaken an assessment of service delivery within the context set out in this strategic needs assessment.

Set out below are the primary external factors that have the potential to affect the library services provided by Cumberland Council:



As part of this review, feedback was also captured about challenges the library service face internally in delivering services and concerns about developing services.

Staff were proud of the service they provide, they get feedback from their customers and believe they deliver much of what their stakeholders want so have a good basis on which to build.

Their primary concerns relating to capacity and resources.

Capacity in the service is already a challenge with resources often spread too thin resulting in unstable and unsustainable service provision. Libraries are frequently having unplanned closures due to lack of staff to maintain the service offer, negatively affecting customers' experience.

Despite aspirations to develop and enhance services within libraries there is concern that budget restrictions and reductions (facing all council services) will be a constraint and parameter within which the service will need to operate and this may impede their ability to develop services as they would like to.

A more recent concern arising is an increase in incidents occurring in libraries putting staff in unsafe and challenging situations resulting from members of the public being either abusive or presenting challenging mental health issues. The need to ensure staff are safe is putting further pressure on capacity as sites previously manned by one member of staff may require additional resource for safety reasons.

Assessment of Needs

Summary

This Strategic Needs Assessment provides an evidence base for the Council to utilise when determining how public library services will be delivered for the residents of Cumberland going forward.

Cumberland covers a large geographical area and despite being deemed a "Largely Rural" local authority has a mix of built-up areas with a number of larger towns. The delivery of services, including a library service, in such a location presents complexities and the library usage data and resident feedback highlights the need to target provision effectively to meet local needs including in areas of rurality and deprivation.

The engagement results provide a snapshot of resident experience and aspiration. However, despite extensive attempts to encourage participation through multiple and channels over a period through outreach activities and communications, take up was limited. The number of respondents is a very small proportion of overall Cumberland Library members, which in itself, is a small percentage of the entire resident population of the area.

Cumberland Council is also aware of some limitations in the survey exercise. The questionnaire was long, in terms of questions, which is reflected by a falloff in detailed responses; respondents reflected back that one question was flawed; and in some areas respondents were invited to give feedback on set ideas, which lead them to consider set views, albeit they also had chance to return additional comments via free text.

Taking that into consideration, the themes arising from the survey have been relatively consistent so whilst acknowledging these limitations, the feedback is useful and considered valid.

Demographic data highlights the need to consider service models to meet some needs identified:

- Cumberland's population is an ageing population with the number of older people (65+yrs) projected to increase by 21.6% by 2032. In considering a library service Fit for the Future it is also natural to give consideration to services to those who may use and benefit from it for years to come yet the number of children and young people (0-15 years, - 12.7%) and working-age people (16-64 years, -2.5%) is projected to decrease by 2032. However, it is evident that survey respondents want to see the development of services for children and young people.
- As well as the ageing population, the number of years of people living in good health has fallen in Cumberland. With healthy life expectancy for both males and females in Cumberland below national averages there could be an increased need to consider the provision of services for the elderly, including those with health needs. This could have implications for the home library services or suggest a need to deliver outreach services in a different way.
- The number of residents in Cumberland who have a disability is above the national average for England. Amongst survey respondents, there was an even larger proportion than the average who report being disabled under the Equality Act in Cumberland) and has implications for the accessibility, staff training and awareness, service design, and future planning.
- An ageing population and associated increases in health risks, along with levels of disability which affect Cumberland more acutely than many parts of the country.
- Areas of deprivation are located in some of Cumberland's more urban areas and along parts of the west coast. High levels of child poverty and low educational attainment; low household incomes; higher unemployment rates; and poor overall health outcomes tend to be found in these areas. Libraries can make a positive impact on reading and literacy of the population.
- Educational attainment levels amongst school populations are lower than the national average as is the proportion of the working age population with high level qualifications. There may be opportunities for libraries to build existing links with the Adult Learning team.
- Rurality will impact on service provision and access to services, with infrastructure and transport networks impacting access and availability.
- Cumberland's population is not as ethnically diverse as the rest of England.
- When compared the national average, Cumberland had a much smaller proportion of residents born in non-UK countries (Cumberland: 4.6%, England & Wales: 16.8%). However, the proportion of residents born in non-UK countries varied considerably across Cumberland's wards and this may require local consideration of service user needs.
- Similarly, student populations associated with the university campuses and higher education colleges may also create local need, particularly in Carlisle where the greatest number of full-time students aged 16-24 years reside.

- The percentage of the population identifying as LGBTQ+ is slightly lower than the average for England, but their needs should be reflected in the provision of services and there was some feedback from the survey that library services need to be inclusive.
- There is no evidence to suggest that the needs of library users vary according to their religion, belief or marital status.

Library statistical data also highlights several key issues:

- Registered library members are likely to represent around 16.1% of Cumberland's population, ranging from 13.6% of the population in the Copeland area to 17.8% in the Carlisle area.
- Data indicates that females are more likely to be active library users than males at all life stages, and this increases with age.
- All age groups use the library service although there is some disparity between them, including those that are active, and those that use Digital only services. Libraries need to deliver services to all age groups but whilst adapting this to differing requirements and preferences
- Analysis of Cumberland Council library data indicates that people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are less likely to be active or digital library users than those living in the least deprived neighbourhoods. One in four of Cumberland's population are estimated to live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.
- A large number of engagement events and activities are held in libraries and a smaller number in the community (in 2024, 3,213 events attracted 36,968 attendees).
- The greatest proportion relating to culture and creativity (34.7%). Just over one in four events (26.3%) are aimed at children / younger age groups. Just under one in four (23.1%) related to health and wellbeing.
- Use of books and items for loan remains strong, with the service offer including physical and digital stock items.
- Many registered library members do not take advantage of the digital resources on offer, and only a small proportion of Digital only members are actively using Borrowbox services. There may be a variety of reasons for this, but greater understanding is needed of people who have taken out Digital Only membership in particular but then are not using it
- The average number of active users who were physical borrowers each month varies between individual libraries, with the smallest volumes generally seen in the library links where some levels of use are very small.

Stakeholder feedback demonstrates areas of strength and also opportunities for development:

Council Stakeholder Analysis

Feedback from Councillors and key internal Officers emphasised the vital role libraries play in supporting council priorities through their accessibility and strong community connections.

The council's vision focuses on improving health and wellbeing, tackling inequalities, fostering local economies, enhancing environmental resilience, and delivering excellent public services.

There was strong interest in expanding library services to align with the council's Prevention Approach and integrating them into the Community Hub model. Libraries were seen as key spaces for providing information, advice, and guidance, and for hosting additional council services to help residents live healthier and more sustainable lives.

Councillors and officers highlighted opportunities for libraries to support tailored, collaborative services linked to local priorities, improve access for vulnerable and rural residents, and strengthen engagement. Specific ideas included using libraries for public consultations, promoting health initiatives, supporting family hubs, and increasing visibility of adult social care. Overall, libraries were recognized as strategic assets for community engagement and service delivery.

Suggested drivers included building an increased information and advice offer, in support of the Council's Prevention Service, and strengthening links with Council services supporting Children and Young People.

They see a clear link between these Council aspirations and those espoused by the Libraries Universal Offers:

Reading

Building a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.

Information and Digital

Ensuring communities can access quality information and digital services, learn new digital skills and feel safe online.

Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the health and wellbeing of communities through services that inform, engage and connect.

Culture and Creativity

Enabling local communities to enjoy high-quality arts and cultural experiences through libraries.

In particular, reading and literacy are proven to make a positive contribution to life outcomes. Poor literacy is often linked with higher unemployment and low skilled, poorly paid jobs and can also impact on confidence and the ability to support children with school work. Access to library services and the resources they provide is a tool which can be used to address part of this need. Reading for pleasure, the development of reading habits and support from parents and carers have been shown to be key in the development of children's literacy. The Library Service has an important role in this sort of activity.

Digital and information access, available in every staffed library, can play a role in closing the digital divide. Not having access to or being able to navigate online can negatively affect education, employment prospects, social connections, finances, and health and wellbeing.

Staff Feedback Analysis

Most staff feel their role is fulfilling and worthwhile and makes a positive contribution to the local community. Three quarters of staff rate library services overall as above average. It is clear from responses to this survey that library staff want to be able to deliver a good service and are open-minded about change and service development to meet emerging needs.

However, there is frustration at being hindered in their effectiveness by issues relating to the promotion and marketing of the library service, the condition of library buildings, staffing levels, gaps in knowledge and training, and printing services. There is also concern about managing customer expectation as services are expanded, including meeting the needs of core library users.

Library User Feedback Analysis

Library services and staff attracted much praise, with generally high ratings and strong support for maintaining and improving local library services.

Core Services

- Physical books remain central, with high satisfaction in borrowing and requests from other Cumbria Libraries
- Library users value variety in genres, new titles, large print, and children's books, plus initiatives like the summer reading challenge.
- Some smaller branches are seen as having limited collections; calls for more diverse titles, better displays, and expanded stock exchange.
- Young adults feel underrepresented in materials and the general offer.
- Complimentary services including free Wi-Fi, children's play areas, hearing aid batteries, and free sessions were appreciated.
- Staffing shortages impact query handling and constrain opening hours in smaller libraries.

Promotion and Communication

- Many users are unaware of the full range of services; better advertising of events, services, and opening times is needed.
- Suggestions include email newsletters, community-space posters, and less reliance on social media.

Facilities and Building Condition

- Libraries are generally welcoming and safe, but some buildings feel dated, cramped, or poorly maintained.
- Requests for brighter décor, improved lighting, updated carpets, clearer signage, artwork, inviting entrances, and refreshment areas.
- Provision of customer toilets and baby-changing facilities are a recurring ask.
- Noise from disruptive visitors can be intimidating.
- Main library buildings fare better than link buildings in user perceptions.

Technology and Digital Services

- BorrowBox users praise its ease of use but want more titles, shorter waitlists, and better browsing/filtering; Kindle support is requested. Expansion to E-Press content was requested by some.
- Photocopying/printing is seen as complicated, unreliable, or expensive; prepayment accounts could help.
- The website and catalogue are sometimes hard to use and would benefit from redesign; digital skills workshops, including Borrowbox, and clearer instructions would support unfamiliar users.
- Self-service tech cannot fully replace staff assistance.

Accessibility and Barriers

- Lack of lifts and upper-floor access hinders those with mobility and other access issues.
- Limited audiobook availability affects neurodivergent and print-impaired users who rely on alternative formats.

Opening Hours and Location

- Frustration with inconsistent and limited hours, especially at smaller branches; demand for evenings, weekends, and no lunchtime closures.
- Support for remote/mobile/outreach services to reach rural, elderly, disabled, and caregiving populations.
- Desire for out-of-hours returns drop-boxes at community venues.

Community Engagement and Events

- Libraries seen as vital community hubs offering social activities; more events would be welcomed.
- Suggested programming: author visits, poetry readings, storytimes, crafts, writing competitions, creative workshops, and educational talks.
- Timing, location, and promotion of existing programmes need improvement.
- Some worry that income-generating events could disrupt a peaceful library atmosphere.

Service Development and Strategic Ideas

- Calls for varied events (talks, workshops, language cafés, book clubs) at diverse times to suit all ages/ interests.
- Desire for refreshment areas or cafés and more social spaces to encourage interaction, especially among young people.
- Need for additional quiet study spaces and comfortable seating.
- Popular ideas include charging for workspace hire, co-location with other organisations, and mobile/ outreach services for remote areas.
- Opinions split on sharing space with non-library services; some value additional support, others fear loss of the library's core identity.

Non-User Feedback Analysis

A smaller proportion of survey respondents were not users of the library service (one in 11), and their feedback adds another dimension to the needs of non-users and the reasons they are not using services:

- The main reasons for not using library services are being unaware of the services on offer, inconvenient opening times, or not having a library nearby.
- A smaller proportion cited reasons such as a change of habit or routine, time constraints, atmosphere (noise and busyness) and health barriers.
- Personal preferences have an impact, such as accessing books online, using Kindles, or purchasing second-hand books from charity shops.
- Some felt libraries offered limited choice, especially in smaller branches.
- Some were deterred by issues relating to joining procedures and lost membership cards.

Summary of Key Findings

The assessment highlights significant demographic and socio-economic challenges, including an ageing population with higher health risks, pockets of severe deprivation affecting around 28,800 residents, below-average educational attainment, high levels of child poverty, and rurality impacting access to services. While the Library Service is well-regarded, issues such as staffing pressures, building suitability, and low awareness of services among residents require attention. The Council's strategic priorities position libraries as key partners in promoting health, wellbeing, and early intervention.

Feedback from residents, staff, and stakeholders identifies ten priority areas for development:

1. Maintain satisfaction with core services (provision of books and information, IT and PC access, activities and events in and out of library settings), while investing in library buildings.
2. Address low awareness of services among both users and non-users.
3. Expand engagement with the digital offer.
4. Make libraries more appealing to young people through events and study spaces.
5. Enhance staff training to broaden service delivery and digital support.
6. Strengthen collaboration to deliver tailored services and improve access for vulnerable and rural residents.
7. Review the nature, timing, and location of events to match community expectations.
8. Improve marketing and promotion beyond reliance on social media.
9. Address concerns about service quality in library links and volunteer knowledge.
10. Extend services to those unable to access library buildings through mobile and outreach provision.

This Strategic Needs Assessment highlights several key opportunities for Cumberland Libraries to strengthen their role as vital community assets.

To remain relevant and impactful, libraries must enhance their visibility through improved marketing and promotion, ensuring that residents are fully aware of the services available to them.

Equally important is the need to create welcoming, accessible spaces that foster learning, connection, and community engagement.

Libraries can play a greater role in supporting health and well-being by offering more information, advice, and guidance, alongside events and activities that bring people together. Expanding outreach efforts to areas of deprivation and other priority communities will help address inequalities and provide essential support for employability, life skills, digital inclusion, and early years literacy.

The digital offer also requires significant development, both in terms of systems and user access, to ensure residents can benefit from online resources and IT services. For those unable to visit physical locations, creative and accessible alternatives will be crucial.

Finally, building strong partnerships and securing external funding will enable libraries to deliver these priorities effectively and sustainably.

By embracing these considerations, Cumberland Libraries can evolve into dynamic, inclusive hubs that meet the diverse needs of their communities now and into the future.



Background Documentation

This section lists the key national and local strategic documentation, as well as datasets that provide information relative to Cumberland, that has been used to inform this SNA. Sources are acknowledged within the body of the text.

National Library Context

Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/pdfs/ukpga_19640075_en.pdf

Library authorities (unitary, county or metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7). The Act allows for joint working between library authorities and councils may also offer wider library services (for example, providing activities or access to Wi-Fi and computers). In providing this service, councils must, among other things: encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service and lend books and other printed material free of charge to those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8 (3)).

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2025) **Libraries as a statutory service - GOV.UK**

This guidance is to help councils in England and others in considering library service provision as a statutory service.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2024)

Turning the page: understanding the barriers to library use and how to encourage engagement

This research explores library use among young people aged 8–16:

- Library use correlates positively with reading enjoyment and school attainment.
- Usage varies by age and background, with older teens less likely to use libraries.
- Attitudes toward libraries are shaped by both personal interest and perceived relevance

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2017)

Strategic planning: longer-term, evidence-based sustainable planning toolkit

Toolkit to support those looking at the strategic planning of library services.

An Independent Review of English Public Libraries - Report and Government Response, January 2024

An independent review of English public libraries - report and government response - GOV.UK)

An Independent Review of English Public Libraries presented to government by Baroness Sanderson.

The Universal Library Offers

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers>

The Universal Library Offers aim to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity and are currently used by Cumberland Libraries in service design and delivery. The four offers are Culture and Creativity; Health and Wellbeing; Information and Digital; and Reading.

The Universal Library Offers also aims to ensure that all aspects of public library provision are accessible and therefore each offer is underpinned by the Vision and Print Impaired Peoples' Promise developed by Share the Vision and The Children's Promise developed by The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL).

CIPFA Statistics and the Future of England's Libraries (GOV.UK)

Analysing data: CIPFA statistics and the future of England's libraries - GOV.UK

This report analyses long-term trends in public library usage using CIPFA data. It highlights:

- A general decline in library visits and book issues, though some services show growth ("trendbuckers").
- No single cause explains the decline; factors include austerity, digital shifts, and leadership quality.
- The need for better data collection to understand generational and regional differences

Carnegie UK Trust – A New Chapter: Public Library Services in the 21st Century

A-new-chapter.pdf

This comprehensive study includes omnibus surveys across the UK and Ireland, revealing:

- Generational differences in attitudes toward libraries, with older users valuing traditional roles and younger users seeking digital and community services.
- A shift in public expectations, with libraries increasingly seen as community hubs rather than just book lenders.
- The importance of adapting to digital lifestyles and preferences for private over shared resources.

K I Bernes, American Library Association, 2024. Gen Z and Millennials: How They Use Public Libraries and Identify Through Media Use

Gen Z and Millennials: How They Use Public Libraries and Identify Through Media Use

This 2024 study focuses on non-users of libraries and includes generational insights:

- Younger adults often lack awareness of modern library services.
- Convenience, accessibility, and relevance to personal interests are key factors influencing engagement.
- Libraries are valued as community assets, but younger generations need clearer incentives to engage.

Arts Council England, **English Public Library Activity Dataset for 2023-24**

The Libraries Activity Dataset captures activity within public libraries in England between April 2023 to March 2024. The dataset is collected from library services and contains metrics such as the number of active users, the number of and attendance at events, and information on loans and PC use.

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, RCPCH – **State of Child Health – Insight into the state of child health in the UK (2020)**

Report into the health and wellbeing of children and young people providing evidence on child health outcomes and data trends across the UK.

Context for Cumberland locality

Cumberland Council, Council Plan

Cumberland Plan 2023-2027

Outlines the Council's ambition, strategic approach, challenges and opportunities, its priorities and key actions.

Cumberland Council, 2025, **<https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/news/2025/land-unlocked-new-nuclear-development-west-cumbria>**

Cumbria Intelligence Observatory

Cumbria Observatory - Welcome to the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory

Online portal which brings together existing research and analysis resources throughout Cumbria, working jointly with partners, to provide information and intelligence.

Office for National Statistics, Official census (2021).

Census data for Cumberland re overall population and key characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, disability, religion/belief. Location: **<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>** [accessed July 2025]

Office for National Statistics, **Mid-2023 Population Estimates**

Office of National Statistics, **Sub-regional fuel poverty report 2025 (2023 data)**

Office for National Statistics, Official census and labour market statistics (2025) via Nomis

Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics

A residence based labour market survey encompassing population, economic activity (employment and unemployment), economic inactivity and qualifications available at Local Authority level and above.

Office for National Statistics, 2024. **Number of libraries in local areas, England and Wales**

Department for Education, 2024. School Census

Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2024 - GOV.UK

This release contains the latest statistics on school and pupil numbers and their characteristics.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2025.

English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK

English indices of deprivation 2025, Statistics on relative deprivation in small areas in England.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, **Sub-regional fuel poverty report 2025 (2023 data)**

Doogal (2025). Postcode district to postal town and town area lookup. Location: **<https://www.doogal.co.uk/PostcodeDistricts>** [accessed 25/07/2025]

Stat-Xplore provides a guided way to explore DWP benefit statistics, currently holding data relating to a range of different benefits/programmes. **Stat-Xplore - Log in**

Appendix 1 – Staff Survey Questions

Libraries Fit for the Future - Staff Survey	
Ref	Question / Information
Section 1:	Your Library Experience
	We want to find out more about where you work and what role you have
Q1	Which part of the library service do you work for?
Q2	What library or building is your main base of work?
Section 2:	What do you think of the services we offer as an employer?
	Please let us know what you think about the library services we offer
Q3	Staff asked to rate the following as excellent / good / average / inadequate
Q3.1	Physical books and items
Q3.2	Ordering books from other libraries
Q3.3	Home delivery service
Q3.4	Free access to computers
Q3.5	Free access to Wi-Fi
Q3.6	Photocopying and printing
Q3.7	Study / seating spaces
Q3.8	Hire of meeting rooms
Q3.9	Children's activities, author talks, craft groups
Q3.10	Bus pass applications
Q3.11	links to other organisations
Q3.12	Information, advice and guidance about council services
Q3.13	Borrowbox
Q3.14	Other digital resources
Q3.15	Online catalogue
Q4	If you had to give our library service an overall rating - what would it be?
Q5	If you think our services could be improved, please tell us how. Please specify which part of the service your feedback relates to.
Section 3:	What would make our libraries fit for the future?
	We are seeing changing trends in how our library services are being used and we know people may want and need different things from our services in the future. We have been looking into what other councils have done to make changes to their library services and would like to know what you think about some of the things that we could do.
Q6	Please let us know what you think of these ideas...

Libraries Fit for the Future - Staff Survey

Ref	Question / Information
Q6.1	Invest more in our Online Borrowbox and digital services
Q6.2	Offer more Information, Advice and Guidance on other Council Services
Q6.3	Develop our library buildings to provide improved space
Q6.4	Co-locate with other services
Q6.5	Make library services more accessible to more people
Q6.6	Enable further use of our buildings
Q6.7	Review our opening hours
Q6.8	Explore ways to improve services and support young people
Q6.9	Create more space for businesses to use as chargeable drop in Work Space
Q6.10	Introduce cafes/ snack bars in to our larger libraries as an additional source of income
Q6.11	Co-locate library services with other organisations that can share costs of buildings and facilities
Q6.12	Allow independent organisations to run events/ clubs/ classes in our buildings which they charge for and pay us to hire space
Q7	Do you have any other ideas on how we can develop library services to ensure they are fit for purpose?
Section 4:	Library Buildings
	We'd like to know more about what you think about our library buildings. Even if you don't use all our library services, you may be familiar with our buildings.
Q8	Please tell us how you would rate the quality of the building, facilities and how suitable you think they are for a library. These are our Main Libraries.
Q8.1	Carlisle library
Q8.2	Whitehaven library
Q8.3	Workington library
Q8.4	Schools' library
Q9	Please tell us how you would rate the quality of the building, facilities and how suitable you think they are for a library. These are our Branch Libraries.
Q9.1	Aspatria Library
Q9.2	Brampton Library
Q9.3	Cleator Moor Library
Q9.4	Egremont Library
Q9.5	Frizington Library
Q9.6	Keswick Library
Q9.7	Longtown Library

Libraries Fit for the Future - Staff Survey

Ref	Question / Information
Q9.8	Maryport Library
Q9.9	Millom Library
Q9.10	Seaton Library
Q9.11	Silloth Library
Q9.12	Wigton Library
Q10	Please tell us how you would rate the quality of the building, facilities and how suitable you think they are for a library. These are our Link Libraries.
Q10.1	Carlisle West Library Link
Q10.2	Cockermouth Library Link
Q10.3	Denton Holme Library Link
Q10.4	Distington Library Link
Q10.5	Gosforth Village Library Link
Q10.6	Harraby Library Link
Q10.7	Morton Library Link
Q10.8	Seascale Library Link
Q11	If you think the library buildings you use could be improved, please tell us how (Please specify the which library your comments are referring to)
Section 5:	Working in our library service
	In addition to finding out more about what you think about the services we currently offer and could offer in the future, we also want to know what would make your experience of working in the library service better.
Q12	We want to know, what do you think the biggest challenges are for the library service in the next 3 years?
Q13	What do you think the biggest opportunities are for the library service in the next 3 years?
Q14	Please tell us how you would rate the following
	Internal communication about library the service
	Internal communication about wider council business
	External promotion and marketing of library services
	Learning, development and training provision
	Awareness of performance statistics within the library services
	Management of performance in library services
	Staffing levels in library services
Q15	Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about your experience of working in the libraries service

Libraries Fit for the Future - Staff Survey

Ref	Question / Information
Section 6:	A bit about you
	We want to gather a bit of information about you so that we can assess if we have got responses for a wide range of people that reflects the diversity of our region. Equality and diversity monitoring can help identify people's needs, possible inequalities and problems accessing our services and information. It helps us to check that we are reaching all parts of the community and hearing everyone's views. It also allows us to take further action if we identify inequalities to address.
Q16	I am (question around gender)
Q17	I am (question around sexual orientation)
Q18	I am (question around ethnicity)
Q19	Which of the following best describe your faith/ religion/ belief?
Q20	Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term health condition that affects your daily life?
Q21	Please tell us if and how we can make our library services more accessible for you?

Appendix 2 – Public Survey Questions

Libraries Fit for the Future - Public Consultation Survey	
Ref	Question
Section 1:	Customer Service
Q1	Are you a member of our Library Service?
Q2	Which Library do you use most often?
Q3	Can you tell us more about why you only use our online BorrowBox Service?
Q4	Please tell us more about what you think of our BorrowBox Service
Q4.1	Range of materials/ Titles available
Q4.2	Waiting time for
Q4.3	materials out on loan
Q4.4	Length of time available for loan
Q5	Functionality and ease of use of BorrowBox app
Q6	Please tell us how we could improve our BorrowBox Service
Q6.1	Can you tell us more about why you don't use library services? (choose all that apply)
Q7	Other - please provide details
Q7.1	We'd like to know more about your customer experience when you use our services. Please rate the following statements.
Q7.2	Professionalism of our staff
Q7.3	Knowledge of our staff
Q7.4	Availability of our staff
Q8	Friendliness of our staff
	Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the customer service you have received?
Section 2:	Library Services
Q9	Please let us know if you know about the library services we offer and what you think of them
Q9.1	Books
Q9.2	Ordering books from other libraries
Q9.3	Home delivery service for housebound residents
Q9.4	Free access to computers
Q9.5	Free access to Wi-Fi
Q9.6	Photocopying and printing
Q9.7	Study/seating spaces

Libraries Fit for the Future - Public Consultation Survey

Ref	Question
Q9.8	Hire of meeting rooms
Q9.9	Children's activities, author talks, craft groups and other library sessions
Q9.10	Bus Pass applications
Q9.11	Links to other organisations
Q9.12	Information, advice and guidance about council services
Q9.13	BorrowBox audio and e-books, newspapers and magazine
Q9.14	Digital resources and subscriptions on library computers
Q9.15	Online catalogue of books
Q10	For services that you do use – please tell us how they could be improved if you have feedback (please specify the service/services your feedback refers to)
Q11	For any of the services you don't use but would like to, please tell us why you can't use them and how we could make them more accessible for you if you have feedback? (please specify the service/services your feedback refers to)
Q12	If you had to give your library service an overall rating - what would it be?
Section 3:	Libraries Fit for the Future
Q13	Please let us know what you think of these ideas
Q13.1	Invest more in our online BorrowBox and digital services
Q13.2	Offer more Information, advice and guidance on other council services
Q13.3	Develop our library buildings to provide improved space
Q13.4	Develop a mobile service for remote areas
Q13.5	Provide self-service lockers for drop-off/collection of books out-of-hours
Q13.6	Review our opening hours
Q13.7	Explore ways to improve services and support for young people
Q13.8	Create more space for businesses to use as chargeable drop in workspace
Q13.9	Introduce cafes/snack bars into our larger libraries as an additional source of income
Q13.10	Co-locate library services with other organisations that can share costs of buildings and facilities
Q13.11	Allow independent organisations to run events/clubs/classes in our buildings which they charge for and pay us to hire space
Q14	Do you have any other ideas on how we can develop library services to ensure they are fit for the future?
Section 4:	Library Buildings
Q15	Please tell us how you would rate the quality of the building, facilities and how suitable you think they are for a library - please only select an answer for each building you use regularly.
Q16	If you think the library building/s you use could be improved, please tell us how. Please name the library/libraries your feedback is referring to.

Libraries Fit for the Future - Public Consultation Survey

Ref	Question
Section 5:	A bit about you
Q17	Please provide the first half of your postcode
Q18	Do you have children under the age of 18?
Q19	What are the age ranges of your children? (Tick all that apply)
Q20	I am ... question around gender
Q20.1	I am ... question around gender (other - please specify)
Q21	I am ... question around sexual orientation
Q21.1	I am ... question around sexual orientation (other - please specify)
Q22	I am ... question around ethnicity
Q23	Which of the following best describe your faith/ religion/ belief?
Q24	Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term health condition that affects your daily life?
Q25	Please tell us if and how we can make our library services more accessible for you?
Q26	We really appreciate your feedback. If you would like to continue to be informed and/or involved in the development of our library services let us know by selecting from the options below
Q27	Let us know what you are interested in being involved with (choose all that apply)



Appendix 3 – Focus Group Questions

Libraries Fit for the Future - Focus Groups	
Ref	Question
Q1	What do you like about our libraries and services?
Q2	What don't you like about our libraries and services?
Q3	Why don't you use our library services?
Q4	What would make you use our libraries and services?
Q5	Do you know about the following services at our libraries?
	• Book borrowing
	• Book delivery service
	• e-Books / BorrowBox services
	• Audio book borrowing
	• Free WiFi
	• Computer services
	• Adult education
	• Quiet areas for study
	• Clubs and activities
	• Help and support services
Q6	If you could design a library that meets your needs, what would it look like?
Q7	What would you like to do in a library?
Q8	How and where would you like to access library services?

Appendix 4 – Social Media questions

Libraries Fit for the Future - Social Media

Ref	Question
Q1	Do you use your local library? If not, why not?
Q2	If you're not a library user already, what would you most like to use your local library for?



Appendix 5 – Engagement Activity Summary

Activity	Audience	How We Did It	Response Rate
JLT Survey	Senior Leadership Team / Executive Members (Joint Leadership Team (JLT))	Presentation to 13 March 2025 JLT meeting. Online survey via MS Forms	15% (3 out of 20)
Member Sessions	All 46 Elected Members	3 online seminars, briefing at the 8 Community Panels and the Business & Resources Scrutiny Committee	
DMT Sessions	Directorate Management Teams	In-person presentation to all DMTs from Richard Foster, Service Manager Libraries and Community Hubs	100% participation
Public Survey (including 26 Library drop-in sessions)	Library Users, Non-users and digital only.	Online public survey using EngagementHQ via council website & social media	1582 responses
Staff Workshops	Library Staff (all levels)	Mixed format: in-person and MS Teams. Bespoke online survey via MS Forms	58.3% (70 out of 120)
Youth Engagement Workshops	Young People (11-25)	10 Targeted sessions in youth centres/ schools	
Focus Groups and Workshops (short survey)	People with Protected Characteristics	Over 20 face-to-face drop-ins or hosted workshops at libraries and community venues	58 responses
Direct mailing		Email with link to survey sent to over 102 organisations	

Appendix 6 – Organisations Invited to Participate

Groups/ associations emailed to invite to make a return/ host a facilitated session/ or receive more information

Group or Agency	Demographic/ Characteristics	Cumberland Council Community Panel area
A New Hope Mental Health Drop in	Mental Health	Workington Together
Age UK North Cumbria	Age	Cumberland wide
Allerdale Disability Association	Disability	Workington Together
Always Another Way	Disability & LGBTQ Support	Whitehaven & Coastal, South Cumberland
Alzheimer's Society	Age	Cumberland wide
Andy's Man Club (Whitehaven)	Mental Health	Whitehaven & Coastal
Andy's Man Club (Workington)	Mental Health	Workington Together
Anti Racist Cumbria	Race	Cumberland wide
Anti Racist Cumbria	Race	Cumberland wide
Aspatria Dreamscheme	Age	Fells & Solway
Autism Support Allerdale & Copeland	Disability	Workington Together
AWAZ	Race	All Cumberland areas
Baby Basics	Pregnancy & Maternity	South Cumberland
Barnardos	Age	Cumberland wide
Beavers Maryport	Age	Lakes to Sea
Bee Unique	Disability	Workington Together, South Cumberland
Blue Sky Trust	Disability	Whitehaven & Coastal
Brampton Over 50s Group	Age	Border, Fellside and North Carlisle
Brampton Youth Project	Age	Border, Fellside and North Carlisle
British Legion Carlisle	Armed Forces	All Carlisle Panels
CADAS	Health	Cumberland wide
Carer Support West Cumbria	Age	All West Cumberland
Carlisle Eden MIND	Mental Health	All Carlisle Panels

Groups/ associations emailed to invite to make a return/ host a facilitated session/ or receive more information

Group or Agency	Demographic/ Characteristics	Cumberland Council Community Panel area
Carlisle Key	All	All Carlisle Panels
Carlisle Mencap	Disability	All Carlisle Panels
Carlisle Refugee Action Group	Religion or Belief	All Carlisle Panels
Carlisle Sight Support	Disability	All Carlisle Panels
Carlisle Youth Zone	Age	All Carlisle Panels
Christians Against Poverty	Religion or Belief	Whitehaven & Coastal
Chrysalis (Wigton)	Disability	Fells & Solway
Churches Together	Religion or Belief	All Carlisle, South Cumberland
Churches Together	Religion or Belief	All Carlisle Panels South Cumberland
Citizens Advice	All	Border, Fellside and North Carlisle, Carlisle West, Petteril
Citizens Advice	All	Workington Together, Lakes to Sea, Fells & Solway
Copeland /Millom Disability Group	Disability	South Cumberland
Cumbria Cerebral Palsy	Disability	All Cumberland
Cumbria CommuniTea Care (Wigton)	Age	Fells & Solway
Cumbria CVS	All	Cumberland wide
Cumbria Deaf Association	Disability	Cumberland wide
Cumbria Family Support	Age	Cumberland wide
Cumbria Gateway	Sex/Pregnancy/Age/ Disability	All Carlisle Panels
Dandelion Coaching	Age/Sex	All Carlisle Panels
Drigg Young Farmers Club	Young People	South Cumberland
ESOL	Race	Workington Together
Ewanrigg Centre	Age	Lakes to Sea
Feel Good Mamas	Pregnancy & Maternity	All Carlisle Panels
Gateway for Women	Sex/Pregnancy/Age/ Disability	All Carlisle Panels
Glenmore Trust	Disability	All Carlisle Panels
Gosforth Nursery	Age	South Cumberland

Groups/ associations emailed to invite to make a return/ host a facilitated session/ or receive more information

Group or Agency	Demographic/ Characteristics	Cumberland Council Community Panel area
Growing Well	Disability	Whitehaven & Coastal, South Cumberland
Growing Well - West Cumbria	Mental Health	South Cumberland
Happy Mums	Pregnancy & Maternity	Cumberland wide
Healthy Hopes	Mental Health	Workington Together
Heathlands	Disability	All Carlisle Panels
Hospice At Home	Age	Whitehaven & Coastal
ICAN	Mental health	Cumberland wide
Keswick Senior Club	Age	Lakes to Sea
Keswick Youth Club	Age	Lakes to Sea
Kings Church - Parents and baby/toddler group	Baby & Toddler	Lakes to Sea
Knit & Knatter	Age	Lakes to Sea
Law Centre	All	All Carlisle Panels
Macmillan	Disability	Whitehaven & Coastal
Maryport Rescue	All	Lakes to Sea
Maryport Rotary	All	Lakes to Sea
Multi Cultural Cumbria	Race	Cumberland wide
North Allerdale Development Trust (Wigton)	Age	Fells & Solway
Northern Fells Group	Age	Fells & Solway
Oaklea Trust	Disability/Age	Cumberland wide
One World Centre	Race	All Carlisle Panels
OutReach Cumbria	Sexual Orientation/ Gender Reassignment	Cumberland wide
Over The Rainbow Support	Sexual orientation/ Gender Reassignment	Workington Together
Owl Blue	Disability	Lakes to Sea
People First	All	Cumberland wide
Phoenix Youth Project	Age	South Cumberland
PINC	Sex/Sexual orientation	Cumberland wide
Pride	Sex/Sexual orientation/ Gender Reassignment	Cumberland wide
Proud & Diverse Cumbria	Sexual orientation/ Gender Reassignment/ Race	Whitehaven & Coastal

Groups/ associations emailed to invite to make a return/ host a facilitated session/ or receive more information

Group or Agency	Demographic/ Characteristics	Cumberland Council Community Panel area
Samaritans (West Cumbria)	Mental Health	Cumberland wide
Sea Cadets	Age	Whitehaven & Coastal
Shackles Off	Age	South Cumberland
Shout Parent	Disability	Lakes to Sea
South Whitehaven Youth Partnership	Age	Whitehaven & Coastal
St Mary's Church	Sexual Orientation	Workington Together
St Michael's Youth Group	Age	Workington Together
Sticky Bits	Sex/Sexual orientation	All Carlisle Panels
The Centre West Cumbria (Tuesday lunch club)	Older adults	Lakes to Sea
The Freedom Project	Domestic Violence Support	West Cumberland
The Living Room	Age	South Cumberland
The Rock Youth Club	Age	Currock/Upperby/Harraby South
The Settlement	Mental Health	Lakes to Sea
Time to Change West Cumbria	Poverty	South Cumberland
Triple A	Disability	All Carlisle Panels
U 3 A	Age	South Cumberland
Watchtree Nature Reserve	Disability/Age	Fells & Solway
West House	Disability	Workington Together
Whitehaven Community Trust	Pregnancy & Maternity	Whitehaven & Coastal
Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project	Age	Whitehaven & Coastal
Wigton Market Hall & Café	All	Fells & Solway
Wigton Theatre Club	Age	Fells & Solway
Wigton Youth Station	Age	Fells & Solway
Workington Parkinsons Group	Disability	Workington Together
Workington Sea Cadets (Vanguard Sailing Club)	Age	Workington Together
Young Farmers	Age	Cumberland wide

Youth Group or Agency

Group or Agency	Demographic/ Characteristics	Cumberland Council Community Panel area
Children and Young People Partnership	Youth agencies	All Cumberland
Carlisle Youth Zone	Youth	All Carlisle Panels
Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project	Youth	Whitehaven & Coastal
South Workington Youth Partnership	Youth	Workington Together
Youth Councils (various)	Youth	All Cumberland
Bookwell Primary, Egremont	Youth (Junior)	South Cumberland
St Patrick's Catholic Primary	Youth (Junior)	Workington Together
Thomlinson Juniors	Youth (Junior)	Fells & Solway
Keswick School	Parents/Youth (Secondary)	Lakes to Sea
St Michael's, Dalston	Youth (Junior)	Fells & Solway
Robert Ferguson Primary	Youth (Junior)	Carlisle West
Newlaithes Juniors	Youth (Junior)	Carlisle West
Newman School	Youth (Secondary)	Carlisle West
Cockermouth School	Youth (Secondary)	Lakes to Sea
Keswick School	Youth (Secondary)	Lakes to Sea
Carlisle Youth Zone	Youth agencies	Petteril
Website - online drop in x 3 (open invitation)	All ages	All Cumberland