#LetsTalkLibraries – Children's Survey
Phase 2 Public Consultation Response Report

Produced by Consultation and Engagement Team
for Dorset Council

March 2023

#LetsTalkLibraries – Children's Survey

Consultation Response Report

What was the consultation about?	This consultation forms part of a larger piece of work looking at the future of Dorset Council's library service. Respondents were asked for their views to help shape a new library strategy which will inform how Dorset Council develop and deliver the service in the future. There are 23 council-run and eight community-managed libraries in the Dorset Council area. This survey refers to the 23 libraries we run, not the eight community managed libraries that we support. The first phase of our consultation was completed in January 2022. We received over 7,500 responses. By listening to your views, we have developed our draft strategy and our mission: To Inspire, Connect and Enable our communities through our services.
What did we need to find out	We now need to refine the strategy. We need your help to prioritise and explore what the library service could look like in your community. The survey is designed in two parts. Part one seeks your views on the draft strategy and part two explores what the library service could look like in your community. We welcomed views on the whole survey, but accepted answers focused only on the local facilities. It was really important that we heard from everyone. We offered phone assistance for anyone needing any help in completing the survey. You could also request alternative survey formats by emailing letstalklibraries@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

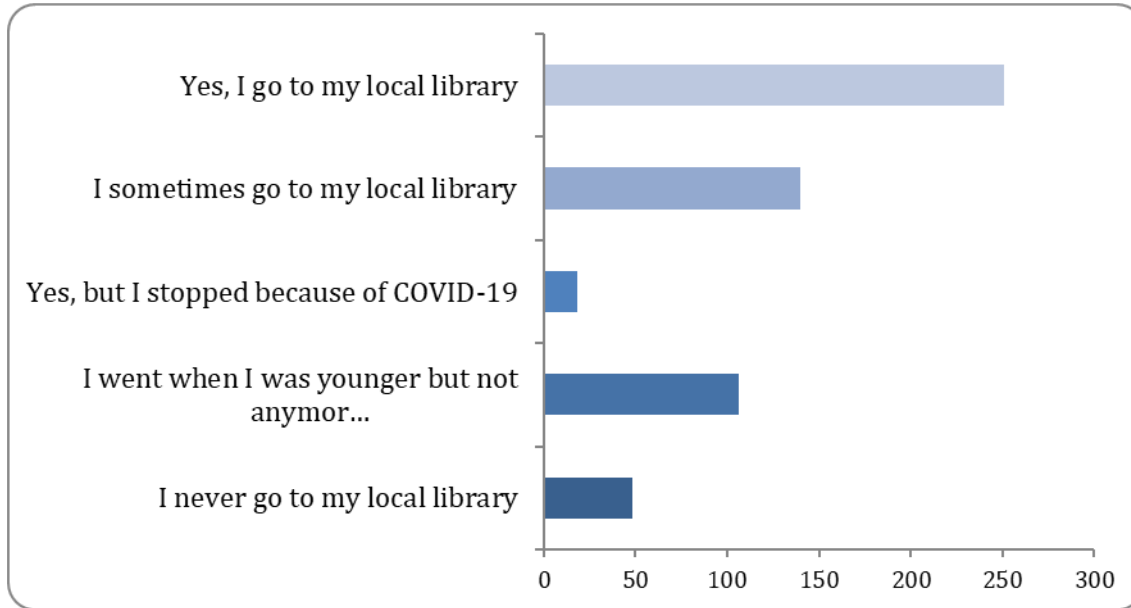|	
How many responses were received overall?	Total 563 responses were received for the children's survey. Individual respondents to this survey were asked for data about themselves. The survey was an children's survey aimed at those aged 5 to 16 or over. These were voluntary questions. 50.9% of respondents to the survey (who gave their age), were aged 5 to 10 years old, 45.4% were aged 11 to 15 years old and 2.6% were aged 16 or over.
How representative is the response to the wider population?	Low number of responses were received for the 16 or over age category.
Where will the results be published?	Results will be published on the council's website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and on the #letstalklibraries webpage
How will the results be used?	The results will be used to help shape a new library strategy which will inform how Dorset Council will develop and deliver the service in the future.
Who has produced this report?	Consultation and Engagement team, Dorset Council, March 2023

Executive Summary

Responses

- we had an overall response of 563 to the children's survey with the responses made up of 50.9% from those aged 5-10 years old, 45.4% 11–15-year-old and 16 or over at 2.6%. 0.8% of respondents chose not to disclose their age.
- overall, 69.4% of respondents still go to their local library. However, 18.8% claim they to when they were younger but not anymore. Children aged 5-10 (60.2%) are more likely to visit the library compared to the older age group of with 11-15 (24.2%) age group.
- respondents were asked to rank statements according to importance to them. 'Have books to inspire you to enjoy reading and learning' ranked highest with 3.75 out of 5. 'Having lots of different children's events and activities' ranking a close second with 3.09 out of 5. 5-10 and 11-15, agree, with both age groups ranking 'have books to inspire you to enjoy reading and learning' as most important.
- making libraries a welcoming space for everyone and fun places to visit are most important to respondents with them ranking 3.62 and 3.58 out of 5, respectively. A theme of inclusivity, motivation, and inspiration are appearing in terms of desires for a library experience. However, we do see the younger age group seeing libraries being a fun place as the most important whereas the older age groups, 11- 15 and over 16 years old find welcoming spaces to be the most important.
- overall, 59.15% of respondents don't have a strong opinion either way of what the library is called, and most think the names make sense (68.5%).
- ranking of opening time options suggests the afterschool period from 4.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m. (ranked 2.17 out of 3) and 12.30 p.m. – 4.00 p.m. (ranked 1.93 out of 3) option is most popular with very little difference between them.
- Saturday is the day most respondents are likely to use the library and Monday being the least likely day for people to visit.
- most respondents claim they would visit the library more in the afternoon (47.7%) and on weekdays (46.8%) during school holidays.
- borrowing books (69.2%) and attending activities (43.1%) are things that would be most missed by those who responded to the survey. Some respondents acknowledged that being able to read or browse books, having a quiet area to relax, learn or study and a place to colour and draw are a few of the other things that would be missed if access to the library was unavailable.

Do you visit your local library (not your school library)?

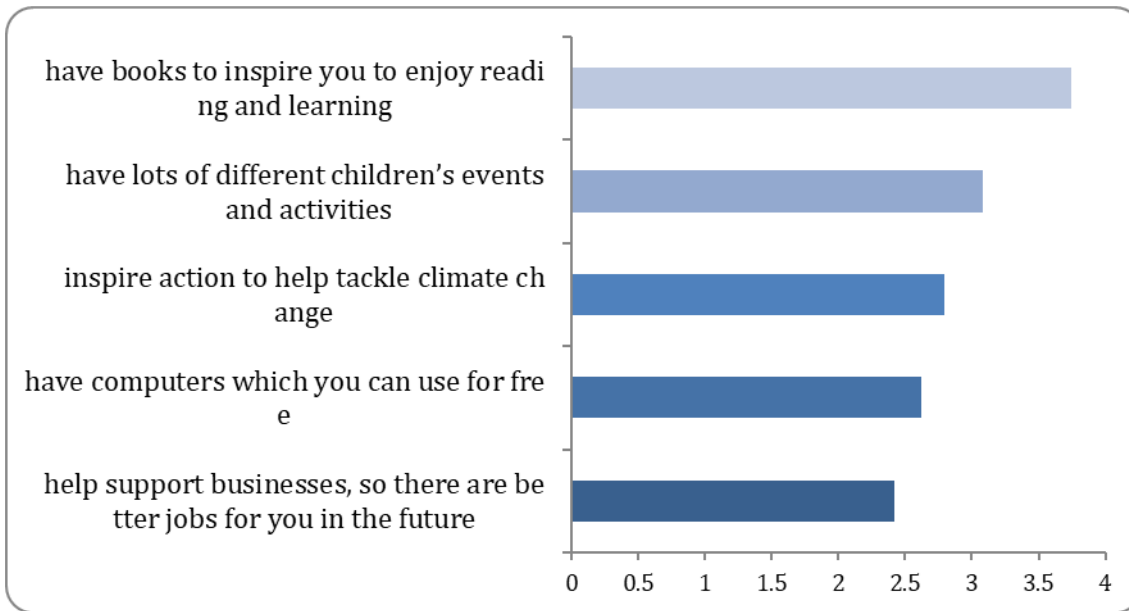There were 563 responses to this question.

	Total	Percent
Yes, I go to my local library	251	44.58%
I sometimes go to my local library	140	24.87%
Yes, but I stopped because of COVID-19	18	3.20%
I went when I was younger but not anymore	106	18.83%
I never go to my local library	48	8.53%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Overall, 69.4% of respondents confirmed they still go to their local library with 44.5% responding yes, I go to my local library and 24.8% responding they something times go their local library. However, 18.8% claim they to when they were younger but not anymore. This figure represents a portion of the population who in theory could be a key target audience to promote the library to and increase visitor numbers.

We see a significant drop in confirmed responses of 'yes, I go to my local library' with 11-15 (24.2%) age group compared to the younger children aged 5-10 (60.2%) visiting the library more often. Just over a third (34.7%) of 11-15 age group claimed they used to visit the library when they were younger. Data supports that this age group is a key audience to target, which suggests they had an interest in the library, but attention has waned.

We would like to know, which of these things are most important to you?
Ranking of 'We would like to know, which of these things are most important to you?'

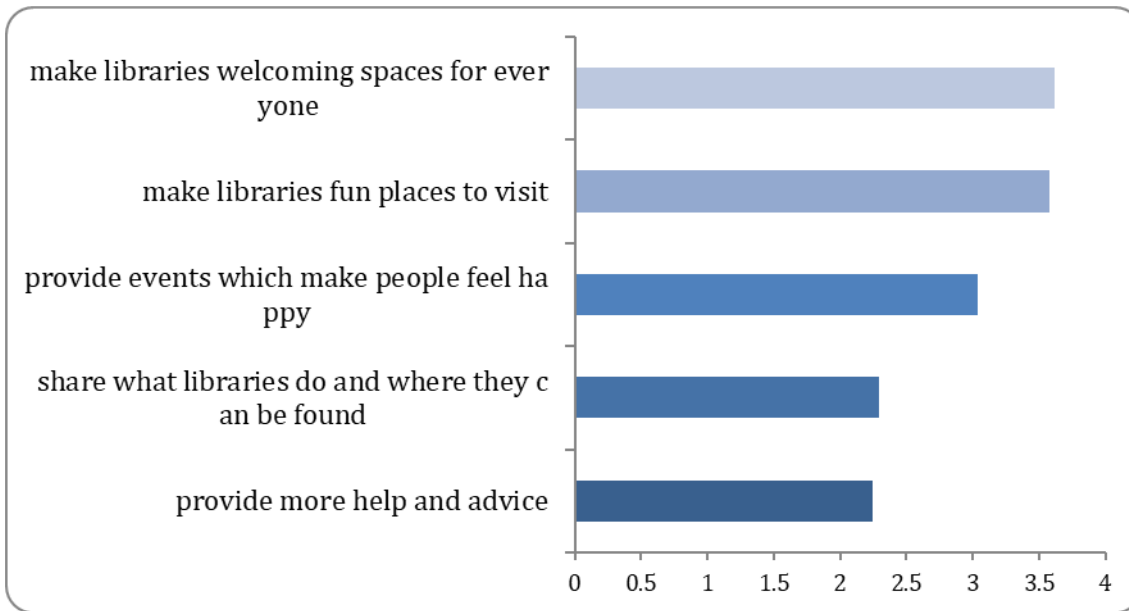| Item	Ranking
have books to inspire you to enjoy reading and learning	3.75
have lots of different children's events and activities	3.09
inspire action to help tackle climate change	2.79
have computers which you can use for free	2.63
help support businesses, so there are better jobs for you in the future	2.42

Respondents were asked to rank statements according to importance to them. 'Have books to inspire you to enjoy reading and learning' ranked highest with 3.75 out of 5. This statement suggests that the desire to read is exists and promotion of books available to inspire people to read would be worth considering by the library. With 'having lots of different children's events and activities' ranking a close second with 3.09 out of 5, it would be reasonable to consider using this strategy to promote reading, learning, and using the library.

Inspiring action to help climate change was ranked the next most important statement at 2.79 out of 5. With the importance of climate change being on people radar, combining events to be inclusive of environmental action could also be beneficial to libraries. Another important current event that may having impacted 'have computers which you can use for free' at 2.63 out of 5 is the cost-of-living crisis. With rising costs, wi-fi and devises are added costs and those families who cannot afford these may be utilising the library's resources. The ranking results suggests this is still important to users. 'Help support businesses, so there are better jobs for you in the future' is ranked the least important with 2.42 out of 5. This claim suggests that users are thinking about their immediate circumstances and future benefits are not quite resonating with users at the moment.

Interestingly, the two age groups with the most responses, 5-10 and 11-15, both still ranked 'have books to inspire you to enjoy reading and learning' as most important. On the other hand, 5-10 age group ranked 'have lots of different children's events and activities' as the next most important statement whilst this is the least important for the older age group. It is reasonable to suggest that as the 11-15 age group are growing older, they are likely to lose interest in organised children's activities and this is supported by the survey findings. It is replaced with the importance of climate changing being the next highest ranking. With the higher age group and maturity, an interest in current environmental factors and its effects are ranked a higher priority.

We would like to know, which of these things is most important to you?
Ranking of 'We would like to know, which of these things is most important to you?
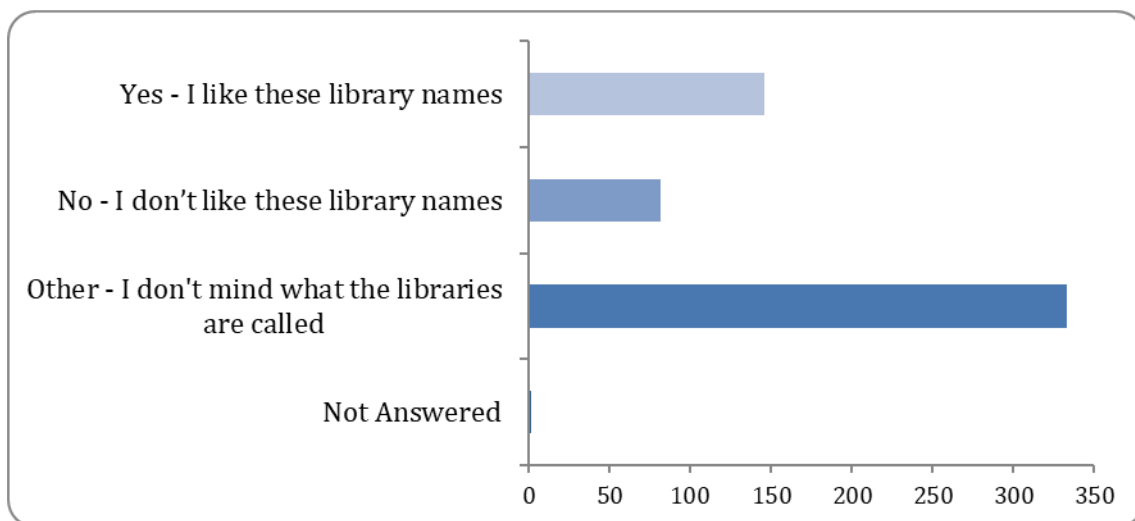
Item	Ranking
make libraries welcoming spaces for everyone	3.62
make libraries fun places to visit	3.58
provide events which make people feel happy	3.03
share what libraries do and where they can be found	2.29
provide more help and advice	2.25

Results show that making libraries a welcoming space for everyone and fun places to visit are most important to respondents with them ranking 3.62 and 3.58 out of 5, respectively. Inclusivity, motivation, and inspiration to visit appear to be a valuable aspect to the library experience. Respondents claim providing events to make people feel happy is next most important to them at 3.03 out of 5. Sharing what libraries do and where they can be found and

providing help and advice are the least important (2.29 and 2.25 out of 5). The results suggests that the experience the library can provide in terms of activities, learning and socialisation rate a higher level of importance than merely a place that offers help and advice.

In terms of responses by age groups, the top 2 are similar for all 3 groups, however, 'making libraries a fun place to visit take precedent for the younger 5-10 age group, followed by making them welcoming spaces. The older age groups, 11- 15 and over 16 years old find making libraries welcoming spaces for everyone the most important statement.

Do you like these library names?
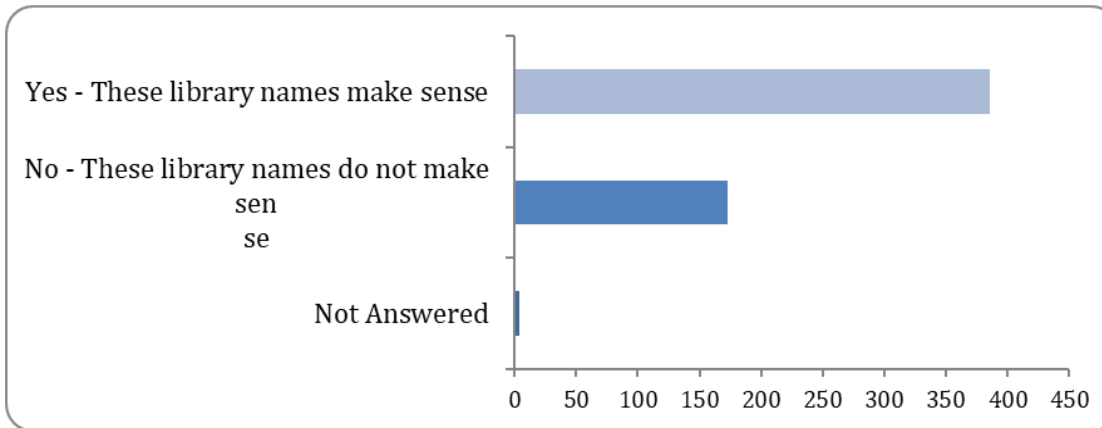

Option	Total	Percent
Yes - I like these library names	146	25.93%
No - I don't like these library names	82	14.56%
Other - I don't mind what the libraries are called	333	59.15%

Not Answered	2	0.36%

Most respondents, 59.1% claim they do not mind what the libraries are called however, a quarter (25.9% claim they like the library names and only 14.5% did not like the names. Overall, results suggest that respondents do not have a strong opinion in the naming of the libraries.

Do you think these library names make sense?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes - These library names make sense	386	68.56%
No - These library names do not make sense	173	30.73%
Not Answered	4	0.71%

Overall, most respondents (68.5%) claim the library names make sense. Under a third (30.7%) claim they do not make sense.

Below are example verbatim comments of different library names:

Do you have any better ideas for describing the different library types?
Smallest - Library Express Medium - Library Largest - Library Extra
World Library Small library
Library moon Library earth Library sun
The small helper, The bank of books and The world of books.
Small libraries - The Hut Meddium libraries - The Cave Big libraries - The Fortress
Library Bronze Library Silver Library Gold
Express, Central and Hyper but now have made it sound like a supermarket chain!
Tinsy library = small Humungous library = large
The 'connect' is a bit vague. Maybe Hub?
Book world world of adventures in books
i like rocket league
keep as library other it will get confusing
I think library's should be called what ever you think they should be called I just don't like the idea of library connect
A small library would be called a small book about books. A Medium library would be called a book of imagination. A large library would be called a big book of amazing imaginations.

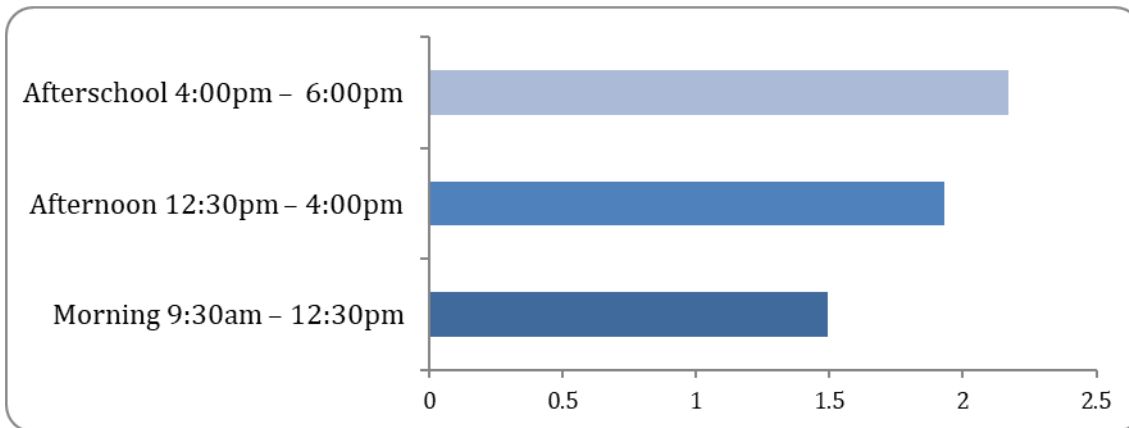| |
|---|
| A small library would be called mini books .A medium library would be called book of inspiration. A large library would be called book of the world . |
| Bees and Books |
| There is no need to call them different names |
| small library=library junior
medium library=family library
large library=local library |
| Book world. |
| (smallest library) book worm library (mediam library) book worm librar |
| just call every library a library they don't need to have different names it is pointless and confusing a small library a medium library and a big library should just be called a library. it doesn't matter about a library's size A LIBRARY IS A LIBRARY!! |
| The Albert room |
| instead of naming them by size, name them by their contents. If they have just fiction name it that. |
| they are all boring |
| if its a small library maybe call it a fun library then if it is a exiting library call it a big library and if it is a massive library call it a fantastic library |
| For small Library they can be called like it said just "Library" Medium sized ones again is good as Library+. And large Library's be called "The great Library" |
| they are a bit confusing more for children they might not understand |
| Just call them library- why make it difficult for people |
| Kids don't care. Just call it a library |
| A library is a library - for books . If you want community centres call them community centres! |
| Book mania |
| Please keep it simple - Library is just fine. Separating things into specifics only complicates matters and creates hierarchies. We are happy visiting our library and sometimes go to the big library in Dorchester or the smaller one in Beaminster. They're all connected like a big family. |
| 'Library + colouring' to tell you what else you can do |

Please select your local library or libraries you visit (you can tick more than one)

Option	Total	Percent
Beaminster Library	6	1.07%
Blandford Library	41	7.28%
Bridport Library	28	4.97%
Corfe Mullen Children's Centre and Library	219	38.90%
Crossways Library	9	1.60%
Dorchester Library and Learning Centre	78	13.85%
Ferndown Library	35	6.22%
Gillingham Library	32	5.68%
Littlemoor Library	11	1.95%
Lyme Regis Library	13	2.31%
Lytchett Matravers Library	33	5.86%
Portland Library	11	1.95%
Shaftesbury Library	29	5.15%
Sherborne Library	21	3.73%
Swanage Library	27	4.80%
Sturminster Newton Library	20	3.55%
Upton Library and Children's Centre	32	5.68%
Verwood Library	21	3.73%
Wareham Library	30	5.33%
West Moors Library	15	2.66%
Weymouth Library and Learning Centre	37	6.57%
Wimborne Library	112	19.89%
Wyke Regis Library	13	2.31%

Not Answered	29	5.15%

Respondent numbers for Corfe Mullen library and Wimborne library are unusually high.

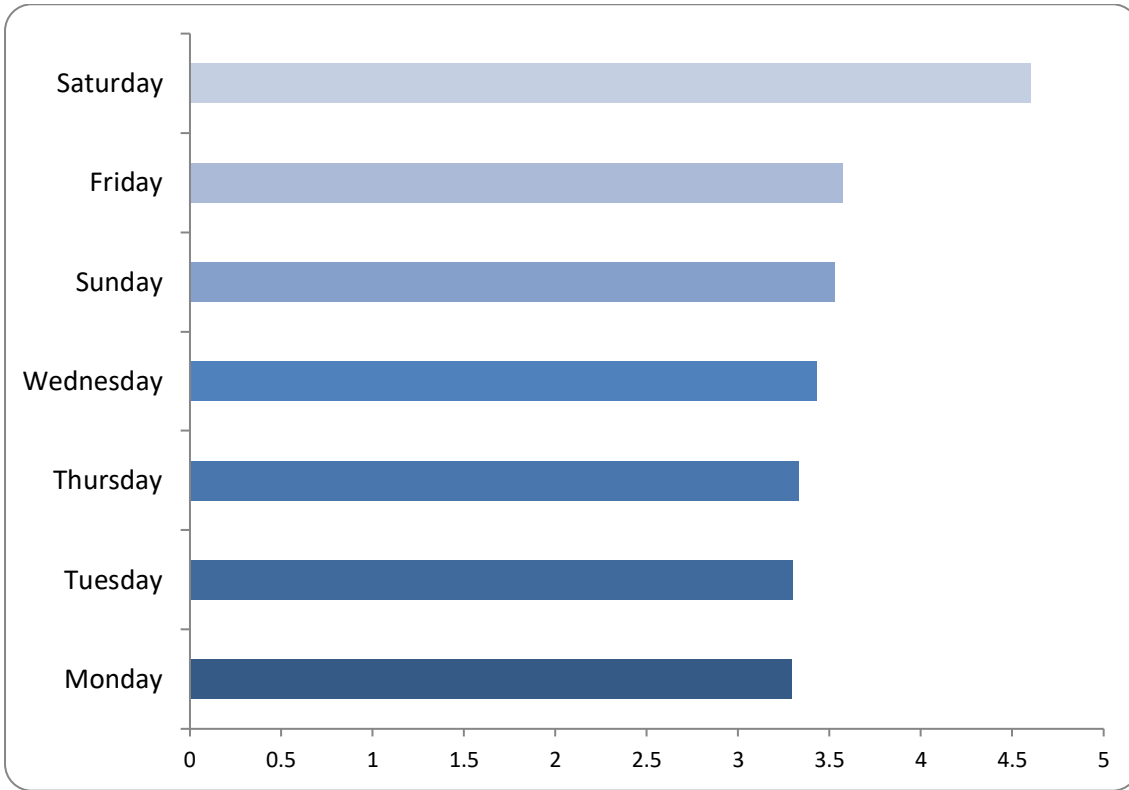## Ranking of 'During term time, when would you like to be able to visit the library?'

Item	Ranking
Afterschool 4:00pm – 6:00pm	2.17
Afternoon 12:30pm – 4:00pm	1.93
Morning 9:30am – 12:30pm	1.49

Ranking of opening time options suggests the afterschool period from 4.00 – 6.00 pm is when most respondents would like to visit the library, closely followed by the 12.30 – 4.00pm option. The morning slot between 9.30 am – 12.30 am appears to be the least likely time slot for people to visit the library.
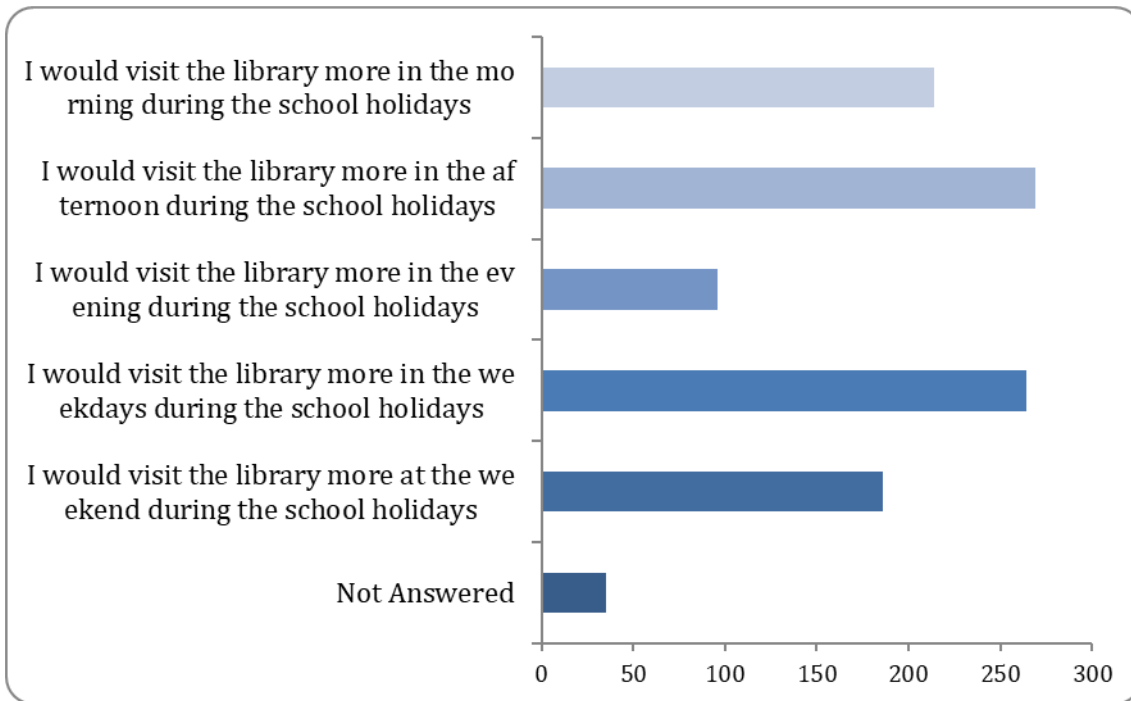
Ranking of 'During term time, what days would you like to be able to visit the library?'

Item	Ranking
Saturday	4.60
Friday	3.57
Sunday	3.53
Wednesday	3.43
Thursday	3.33
Tuesday	3.30
Monday	3.29

Saturday is the day most respondents are likely to use the library and Monday being the least likely day for people to visit.

During the school holidays, would the times you visited the libraries change?
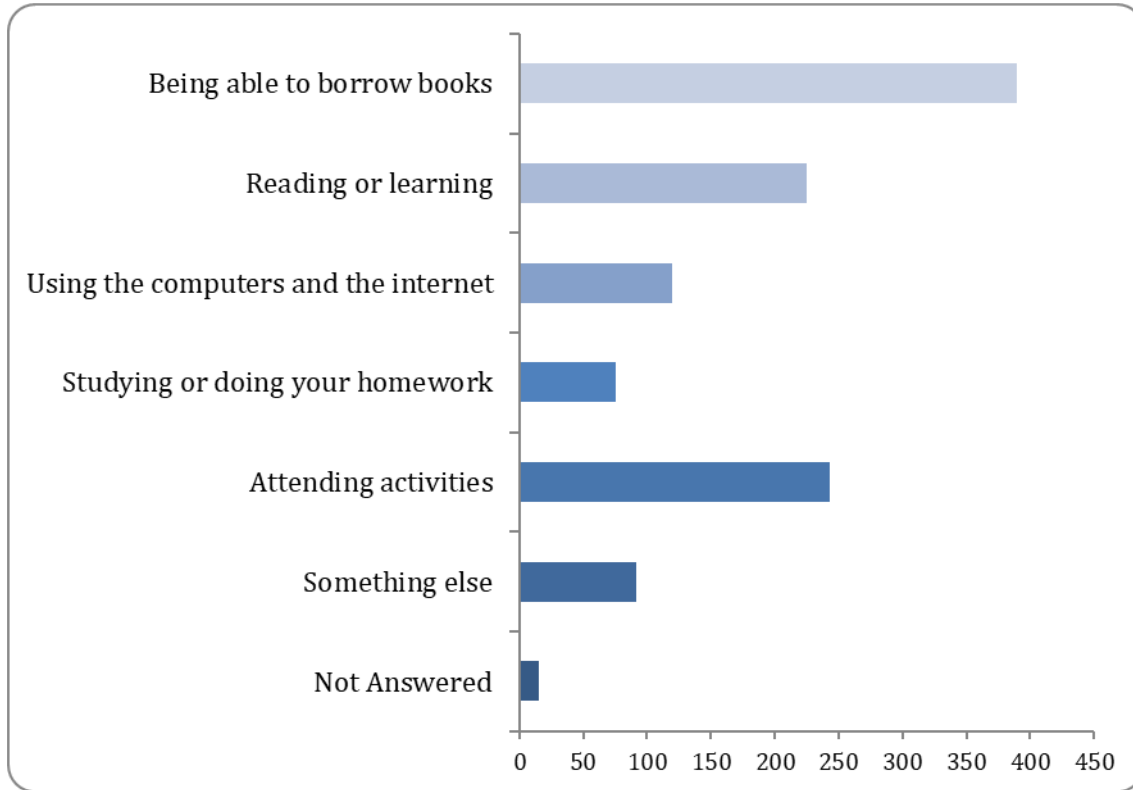

Option	Total	Percent
I would visit the library more in the morning during the school holidays	214	38.01%
I would visit the library more in the afternoon during the school holidays	269	47.78%

I would visit the library more in the evening during the school holidays	96	17.05%
I would visit the library more in the weekdays during the school holidays	264	46.89%
I would visit the library more at the weekend during the school holidays	186	33.04%
Not Answered	35	6.22%

Most respondents claim they would visit the library more in the afternoon (47.7%) and on weekdays (46.8%) during school holidays. The least number of visits are likely to happen in the evening during school holidays. Looking at the results by age group, over half of the 5–10-year-old groups would choose to visit the library in the morning (50.3%) and afternoon (50%) of a school holiday, whereas the majority of the 11–15-year-old age group would prefer to visit the library in the afternoons (52.1%). Most of the 16 and over age group (46.1%) prefer to visit the library on the weekends. Results indicate a subtle shift between the 5–10-year-old and 11–15-year age groups, with the latter's preference for morning library visits being far less than the youngest age group. This could be due natural progression of child development where 11-15year are either in or heading into their teenage years and thus have less of an inclination to morning starts.

If your local library is closed on some days or at certain times, what would you most miss out on?

Option	Total	Percent
Being able to borrow books	390	69.27%
Reading or learning	225	39.96%
Using the computers and the internet	120	21.31%
Studying or doing your homework	76	13.50%
Attending activities	243	43.16%

Something else	92	16.34%
Not Answered	15	2.66%

Borrowing books holds a high importance for respondents where 69.2% claim it is something they would miss out on. Attending activities is also something that will be missed out on with 43.1% of respondents claiming this fact. This information correlates well with previous questions regarding the most sought-after usage of the library and the importance it holds to the community.

Free text entries	Total
Picture hunt	7
Games/computer games/ toys	9
Fun	5
Librarians	4
Colouring/drawing	8
Community/meeting friends	6
Accessing books/ reading & browsing books	18
Quiet/ safe/open space	11
Comfy seating	2
Reserve/request books	2
Open all days/ access all the time	3
E-books /audible books	2
Free sweets	3
Nothing they would miss	13
Don't go to the library	4
Other	10