

A New Chapter

Public library services in the 21st century

Welsh data about attitudes to and use of public libraries

This factsheet reports on the data from research carried out by Ipsos MORI for the Carnegie UK Trust. The research consisted of five omnibus polls carried out in all five jurisdictions covered by the Trust in its work (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland).

This factsheet contains the data which relates to Wales. Where relevant, comparison is made with data from the other jurisdictions. A full report of the research can be obtained from the Carnegie UK Trust website www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk. Separate factsheets covering the other four jurisdictions are also available, as well as a short discussion paper setting out the Trust's view of the key policy issues.



Research findings

The findings from the omnibus poll provide comparable data from all five jurisdictions. In Wales, 1,018 adults aged 16 or over were included in the poll.

2.1 Importance of public libraries

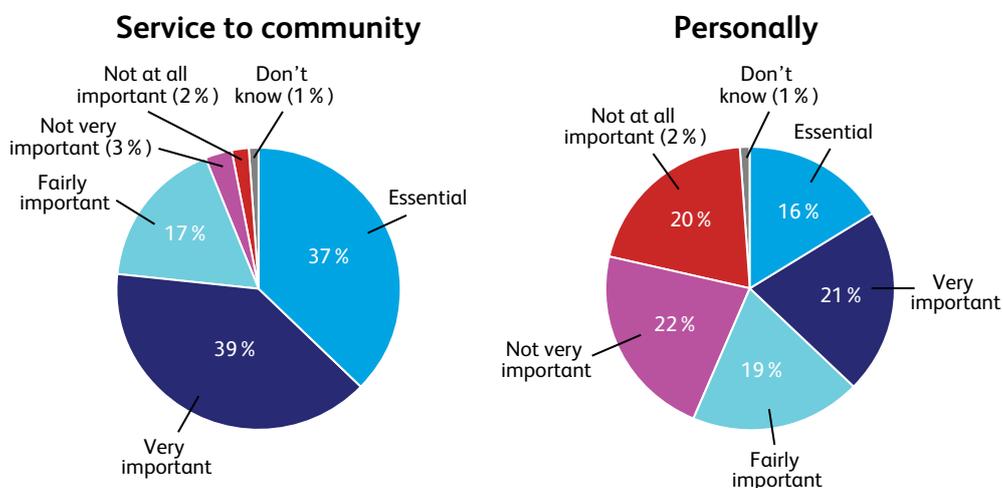
- Our data shows that over three quarters (77%) of people in Wales said that libraries were very important or essential to their community.
- Less than half (38%) said that they were very important or essential to them personally. The figure for personal importance in Wales was lower than in any other jurisdiction, with Scotland and England having 47%, Ireland 45% and Northern Ireland 39%.
- More than two thirds of non-users (68%) thought that public libraries were essential or very important to their community, compared with 88% of users.

- Almost half of those in social group AB (47%) viewed libraries as 'essential' for communities compared with 29% of those in social group E.
- Half (50%) of those in social group E indicated that libraries were 'not very' or 'not at all' important to them personally compared with 34% of those in social groups AB.

2.2 Use of public libraries

- 45% of those surveyed had used a public library in the previous 12 months.
- More women than men had used the service (48% compared to 42%) in Wales, which was less variation than in some other jurisdictions.
- Use by 25-34 year-olds in Wales was slightly higher than the average (50% compared with 45%) which contradicts some earlier research findings which suggested that libraries did not appeal to younger people.
- Use by 15-24% year-olds was slightly below average at 40%.

Table 1: Importance to the community and to the individual: Generally speaking, how important or unimportant do you think public libraries are as a service to the community? How important or unimportant are public libraries to you personally?



Base: All Welsh adults 15+ (1,018), 16-25 September 2011

- There was a strong and statistically significant relationship between library use and one other factor: being a prolific reader. Wales was unusual in being the only jurisdiction where there was not a significant relationship between library use and having children.
- Those working part-time or not working were more likely to use a library than those who were working full-time.
- Retired people were less likely to use a library (39% compared with the average of 45%).
- There was no difference in Wales between levels of use in rural and urban areas.
- Those within managerial or professional occupations (social group AB) were most likely to have visited a library (57%) compared with those in social group E (31%).

2.3 Frequency of use

- Overall, 82% of people who indicated that they had visited a library in the last 12 months, had done so at least 3-4 times.
- Just over half (57%) of those who had used a library in the previous year were frequent users, ie using the public library at least once a month. This is in line with the statistics from the other four jurisdictions.
- Despite the fact that those in social group E were least likely to have visited a library in the last 12 months, those that had were most likely to say that they visited their local library 'at least once a week' (30%) whereas those in groups AB and C were the least likely (18% and 17% respectively).

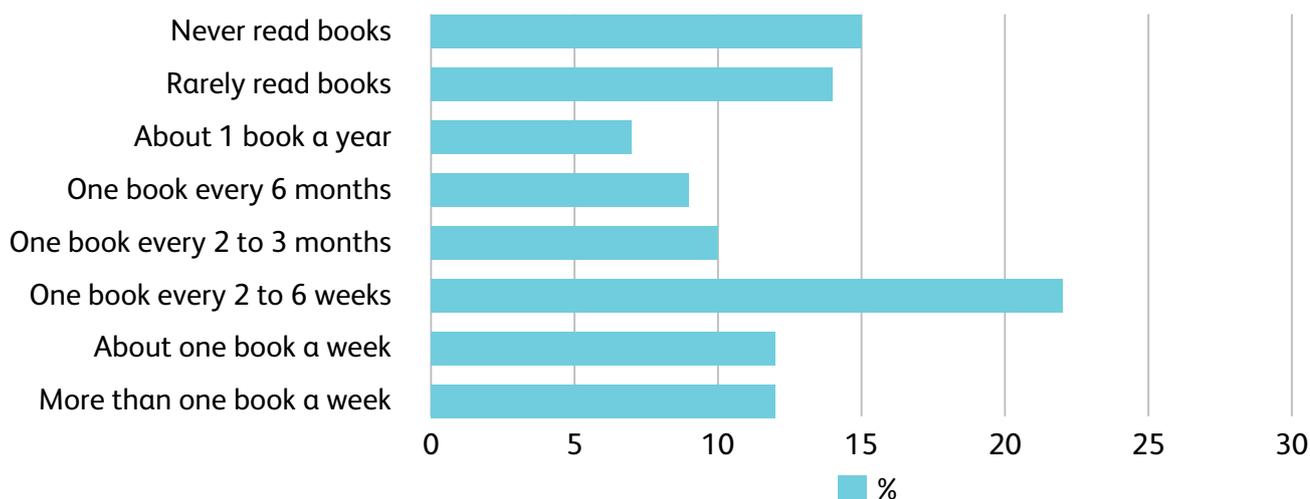
- 62% of frequent users are women, and 50% are men.
- Frequent users were more likely to be working part-time, not be working or be retired than to be working full-time.
- Frequent users were more likely to live in urban areas (59%) than rural areas (48%)
- Those aged 15-24 were more likely to be frequent users (63%) than those in the 25-34 age group (48%), compared with an average of 57%.
- In Wales, there was a statistically significant relationship between two factors and frequency of use: being a prolific reader; and living in an urban area. Wales was the only jurisdiction in which there was a significant relationship with living in an urban area.

2.4 Reading behaviour

We asked people how many books they read.

- Wales had relatively a relatively high level of people who rarely or never read books (29%) compared with 12% in Scotland, 17% in Ireland and 21% in England.
- Across the five jurisdictions, those who are most likely to be prolific readers are women and retired people.

Table 2: Reading behaviour in Wales



Base: All Welsh adults 15+ (1,018), 16-25 September 2011

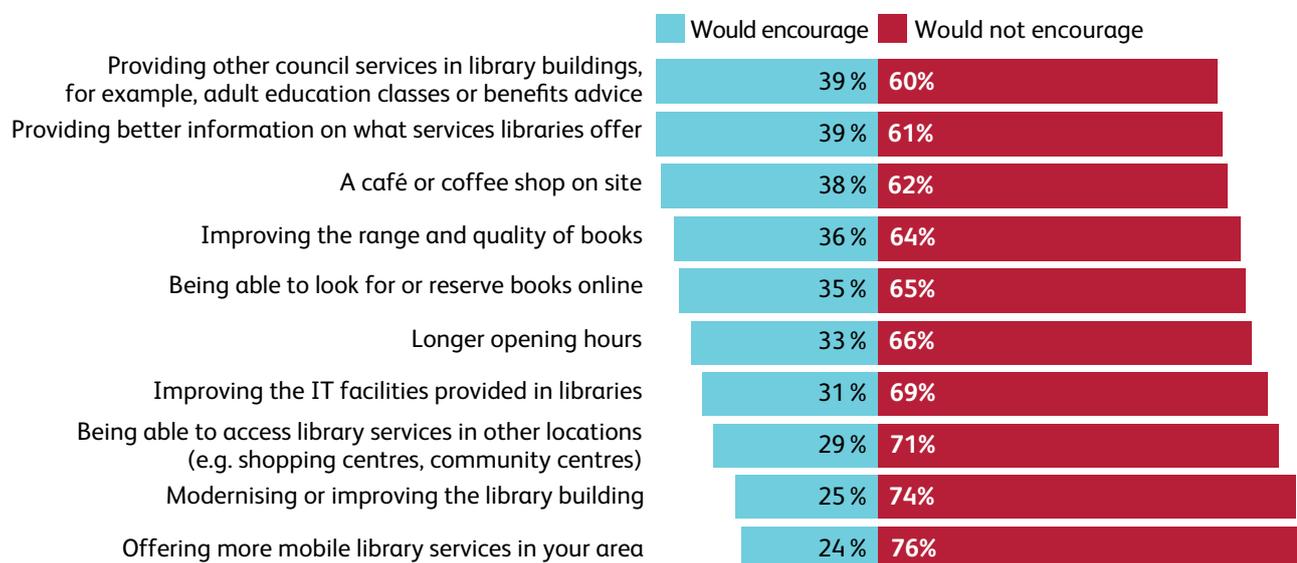
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2.5 Attitudes to possible service improvements

- Overall, this data shows that none of the suggested changes would make a difference to more than half of those surveyed.

- The most popular improvements to the service in Wales would be providing other council services in library buildings; providing better information about what services were available; and having a café or coffee shop on site.

Table 3: Which particular changes or improvements would affect library use

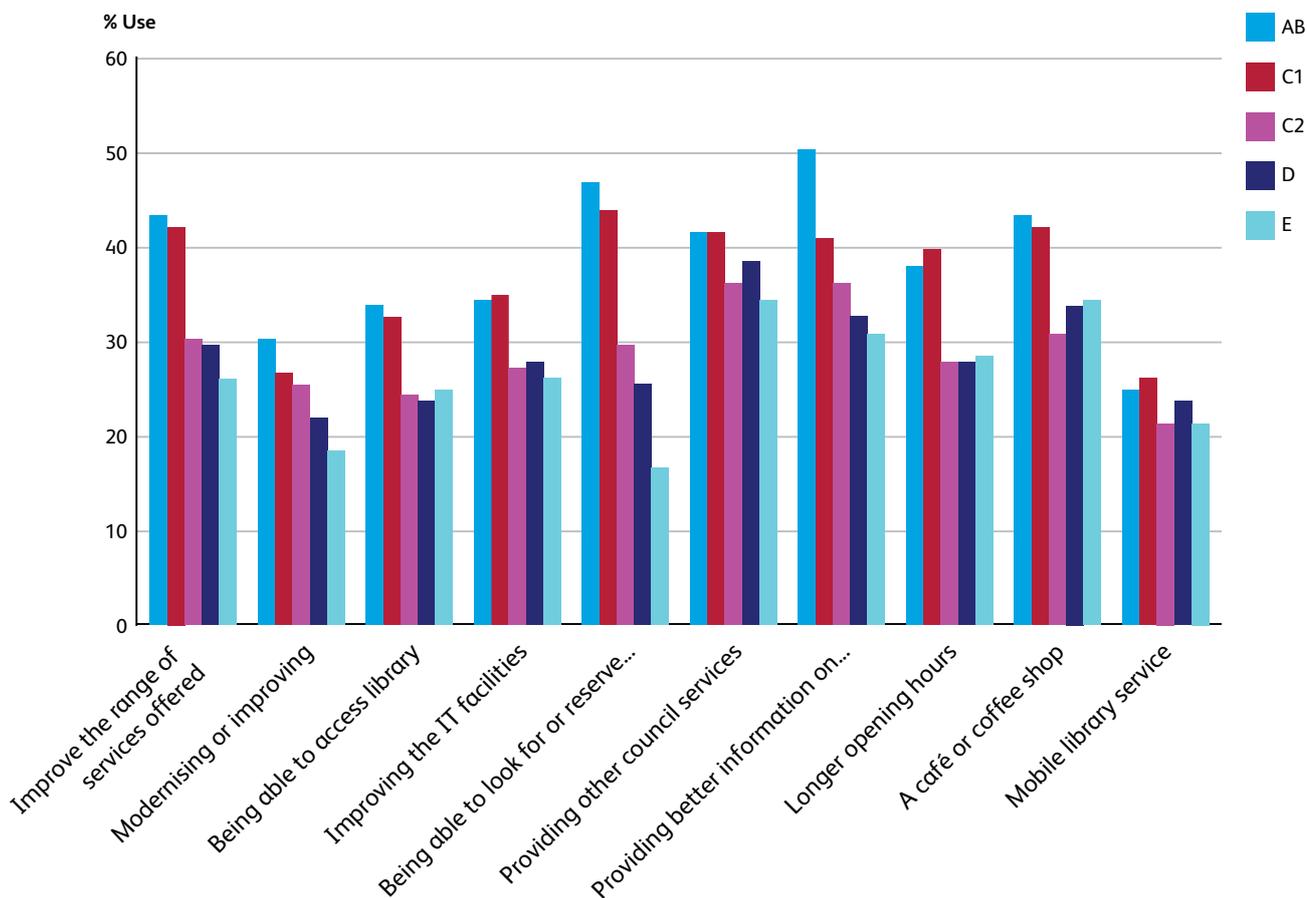


Base: All Welsh adults 15+ (1,018), 16-25 September 2011

Ipsos MORI

- In Wales, 38% said that none of these improvements would encourage them to use the service, a higher level than other jurisdictions (Scotland was 13%, and Ireland 14%).
- In all five jurisdictions there was more difference between users and non-users of the service than between frequent and infrequent users. Users were more likely to say that the improvements would increase their use of the service than non-users, with little difference between frequent and infrequent users.
- With the exception of ‘mobile library services’, those in managerial and professional occupations were most likely to say that each of the factors listed would increase their library use.
- With the exception of ‘being able to access library service in other locations’, those in social group E were least likely to indicate that service improvements would encourage them to use libraries more often.
- Similarly, those who were retired (23%) were significantly less likely to say that being able to look for books and reserve them online would encourage them to use libraries more.
- Those in social group AB(47%) were significantly more likely than other social groupings to say that they would increase their library use if they could look online and reserve books.

Table 4: Attitudes to service changes or improvements by social class



Definition of socio-economic groups

AB	Senior managers and professionals; middle managers
C1	Junior managers; small traders with staff and premises
C2	Skilled workers
D	Semi-skilled and unskilled workers
E	Casual workers; those with no income other than state benefits

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