

COUNTRY FACTSHEET

Shining a Light

English data about attitudes to and use of public libraries 2011–2016

Five years ago the Carnegie UK Trust conducted research into the use of public libraries and public attitudes towards libraries in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland. This was the first time data was generated that enabled direct comparison across these jurisdictions.

In 2016 we ran the survey again to examine whether attitudes towards libraries and levels of use have changed since 2011. We added some new questions to reflect some of the current debate around volunteers and changes in services. Research was carried out by Ipsos MORI for the Carnegie UK Trust. The research consisted of an omnibus poll carried out in all five jurisdictions covered by the Trust in its work.

This factsheet contains the data which relates to England. In England **1,341 adults** over the age of 15 were included in the poll. The findings from the omnibus poll provide comparable data from all five jurisdictions. Where relevant, comparison is made with the 2011 statistics.



DATA FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

The factsheets for Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, a booklet comparing the various jurisdictions can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/shining-a-light>. If you would like to access the datasets in SPSS format please contact info@carnegieuk.org



THE PICTURE IN 2016

The data shows that a significant proportion (72%) of people in England say that public libraries are important for their communities and around half of people (46%) used a library in the previous year. Two-fifths (40%) say libraries are important for themselves personally. These findings are comparable with those from other jurisdictions.

In England, women and those with children in their household are more likely than men and those without children in their household to use libraries. However, being female and the presence of children in the household has less impact on the frequency of library use.

There is an 8 percentage point range in library use by age and a 5 percentage point range in library use by working status. In terms of socio-economic grouping, key differences include: ABC1 is more likely to use the library and use it frequently than those in C2DE. Again, group AB are more likely to use the library than those in group C1C2 or DE and group C1C2 is also more likely to use the library than those in DE.

PREDICTORS

Logistic regression identifies the following factors as predictors for the likelihood of respondents in England having used a library in the previous 12 months:

- being a woman
- having children in the household
- being 15–24 years old
- being a prolific reader
- being in socio-economic group ABC1

COMPARING 2011 AND 2016

England sees a decline in both the use (50%-46%) and frequency of use (52%-46%) of public libraries since 2011. Key drops in use include those among men (-7 percentage points), those that aren't working (-11 percentage points) and those in socio-economic group DE (-8 percentage points). In terms of frequent use, key drops are among those in part-time employment (-10 percentage points), those aged 55+ (-9 percentage points), women (-11 percentage points), people with children in their household (-11 percentage points), and those in socio-economic group AB.

Overall, England sees an increase in support for improvements and changes to encourage greater library use, and people broadly support volunteers to augment existing staff but are opposed to volunteers replacing staff.

Notes

There is one difference in how data was collated in 2016 compared with 2011. In 2016 the definition of 'prolific readership' was changed to 'one or more books every eight weeks' from 'one or more books in six weeks' to better align answers to interview questions.

TERMINOLOGY

Use – used or contacted the library in the 12 months prior to the omnibus poll

Frequent use – used or contacted the library at least once every month in the 12 months prior to the omnibus poll

Library user – refers to those who used the library in the 12 months prior to the omnibus poll

Non-user – refers to those who have not used the library in the 12 months prior to the omnibus poll

Frequent user – library users that used or contacted the library at least once every month in the 12 months prior to the omnibus poll

Prolific reader – refers to those who read at least one book every eight weeks

Important – refers to the categories of 'essential' and 'very important' alone. 'Fairly important' has been excluded from this definition to sharpen analysis.

THE OVERALL PICTURE IN ENGLAND

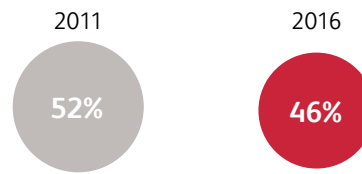
Library use



2016
ALMOST $\frac{1}{2}$ of people use libraries

2011–2016
↓
-4 Decline in library use

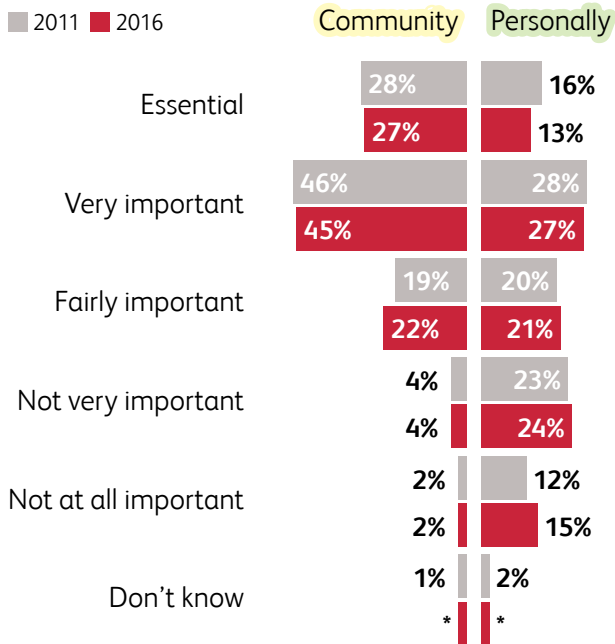
Frequency of library use



2016
ALMOST $\frac{1}{2}$ of library users are frequent users

2011–2016
↓
-6 Decline in frequent library use

Importance of libraries to the community and personally

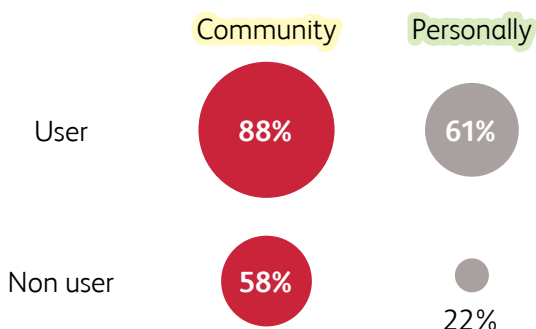


2016
ALMOST $\frac{3}{4}$ of people say public libraries important for communities

AROUND $\frac{2}{5}$ of people say libraries important to themselves personally

Library users more likely to say libraries important for community and for themselves personally

Opinions of Users and Non-users



2016 SUMMARY

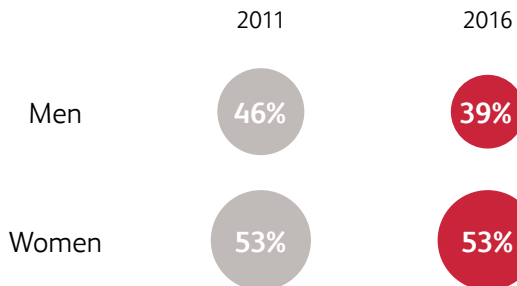
The overall picture in England



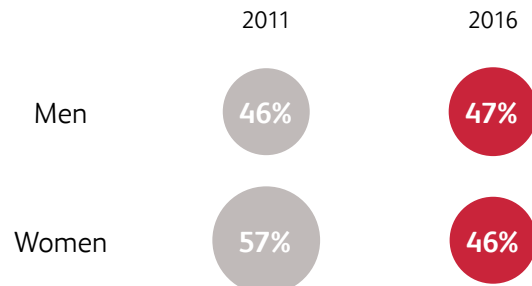


FOCUSING IN ON **GENDER** IN ENGLAND

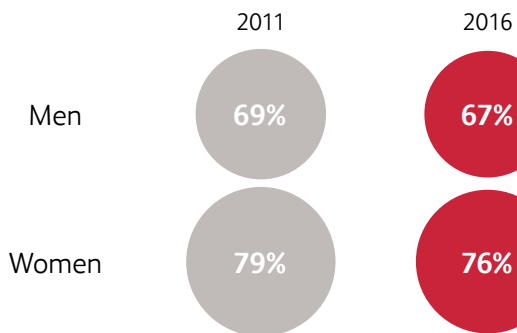
Library use by gender



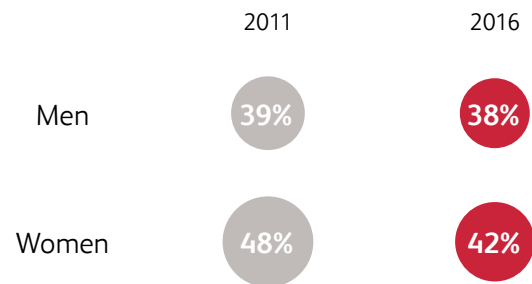
Frequency of library use by gender



Importance of libraries to community

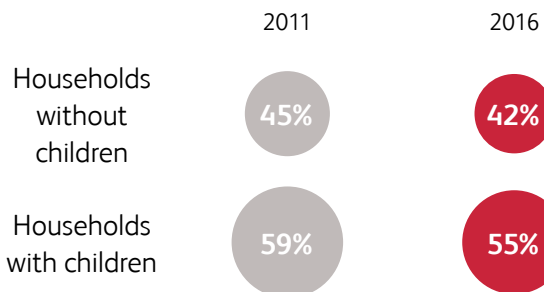
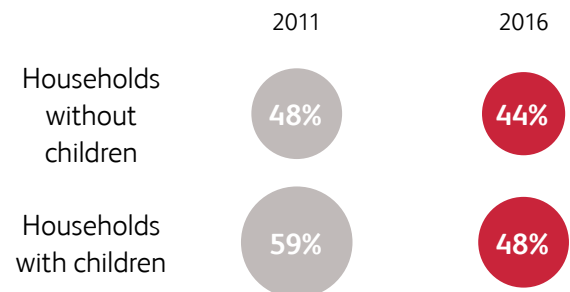
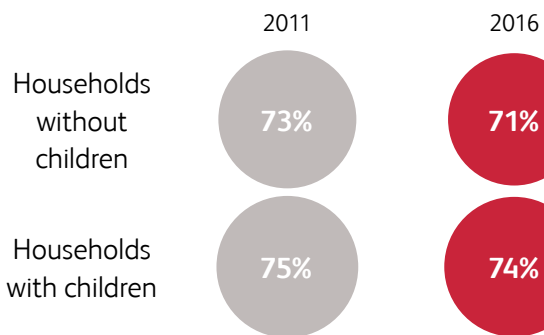
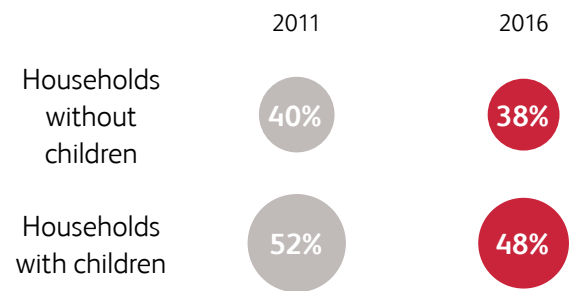


Importance of libraries to me personally



PREDICTORS

Logistic regression analysis, which controls for other factors, shows that being a woman is a predictor for the likelihood of people in England having used a library in the past 12 months.

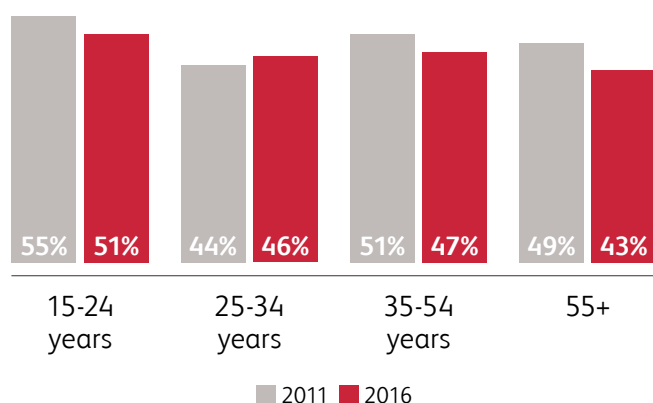
FOCUSING IN ON HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN IN ENGLAND**Library use by households with children****Frequency of library use by households with children****Importance of libraries to community****Importance of libraries to me personally****PREDICTORS**

Logistic regression analysis, which controls for other factors, shows that having children in the household is a predictor for the likelihood of people in England having used a library in the past 12 months.

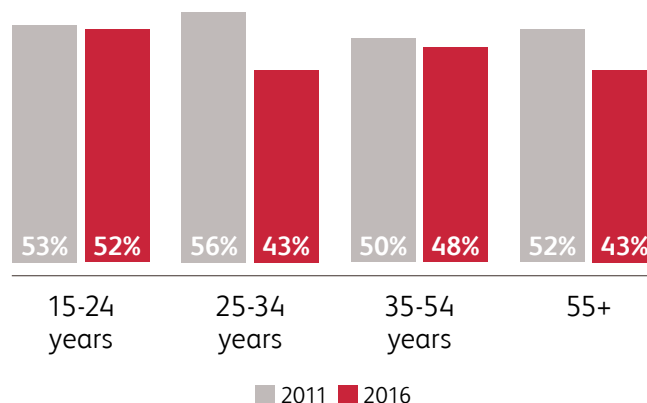


FOCUSING IN ON AGE IN ENGLAND

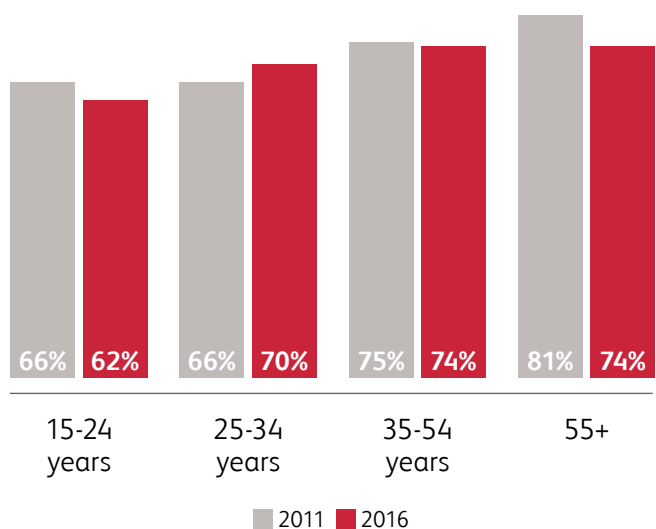
Library use by age



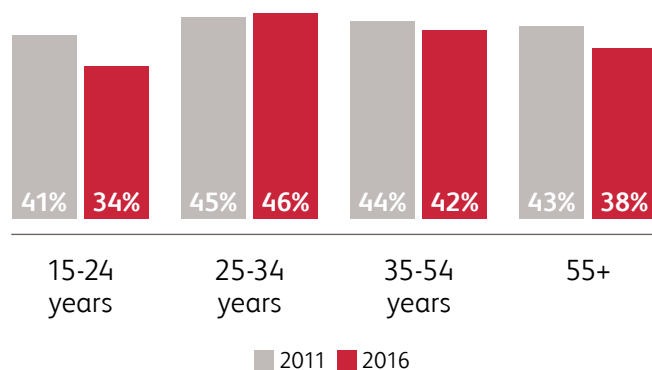
Frequency of library use by age



Importance of libraries to community



Importance of libraries to me personally

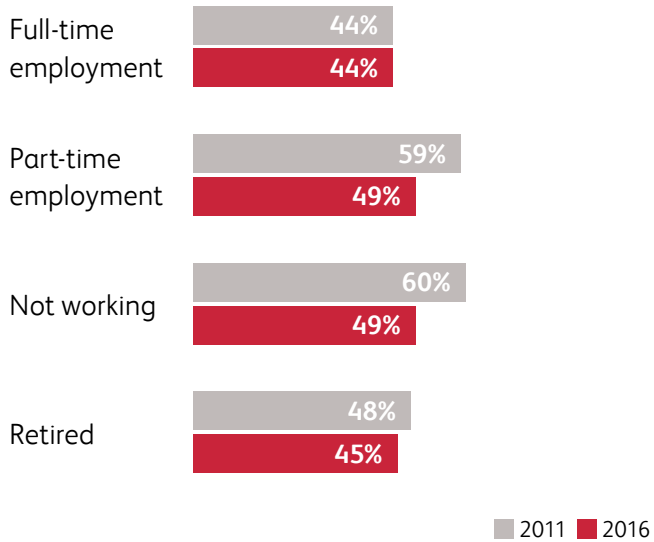


PREDICTORS

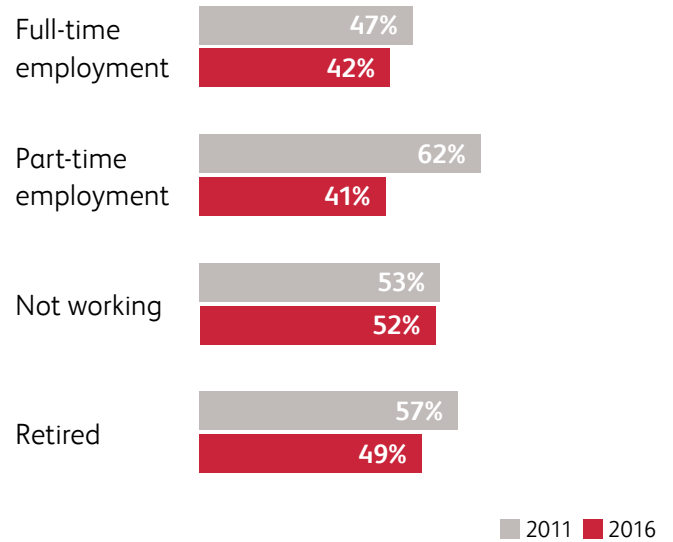
Logistic regression analysis, which controls for other factors, shows that being 15-24 years old is a predictor for the likelihood of people in England having used a library in the past 12 months.

FOCUSING IN ON WORKING STATUS IN ENGLAND

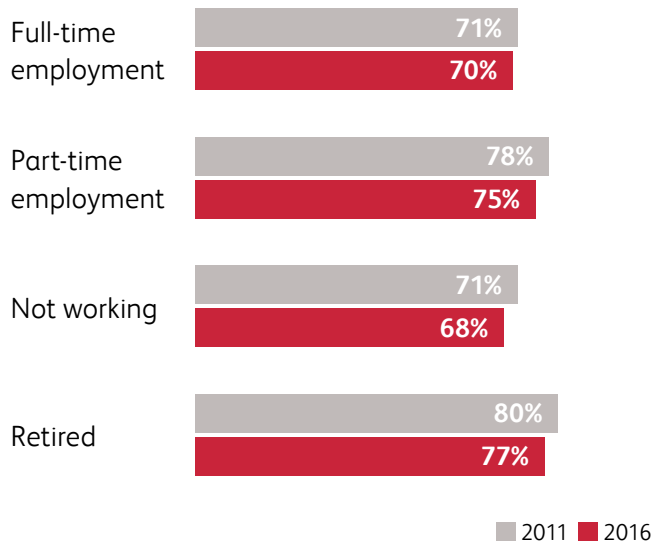
Library use by working status



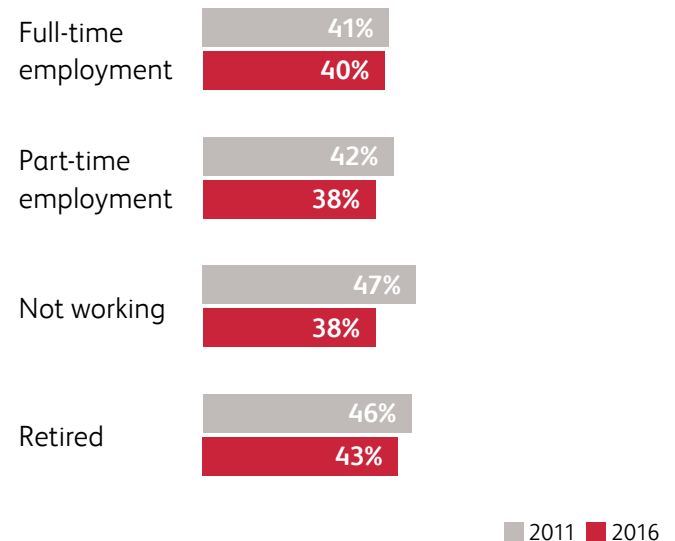
Frequency of library use by working status



Importance of libraries to community



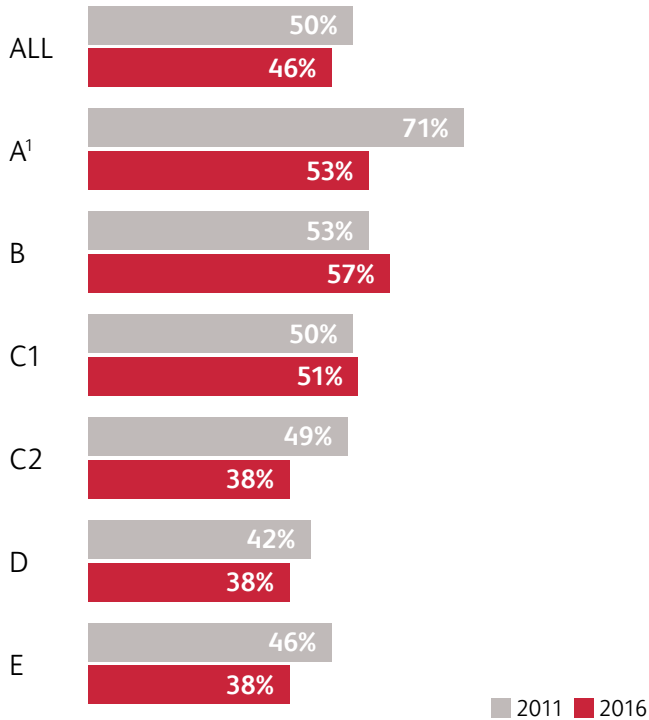
Importance of libraries to me personally



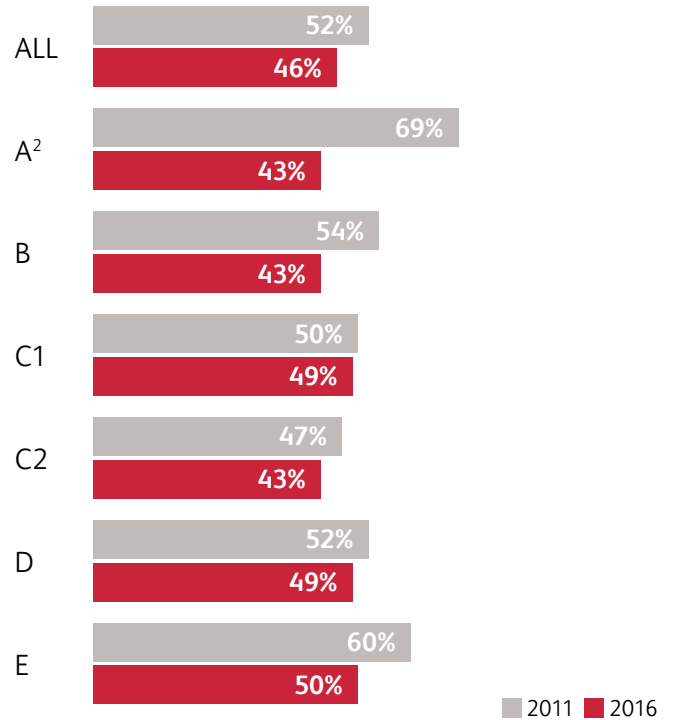


FOCUSING IN ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP IN ENGLAND

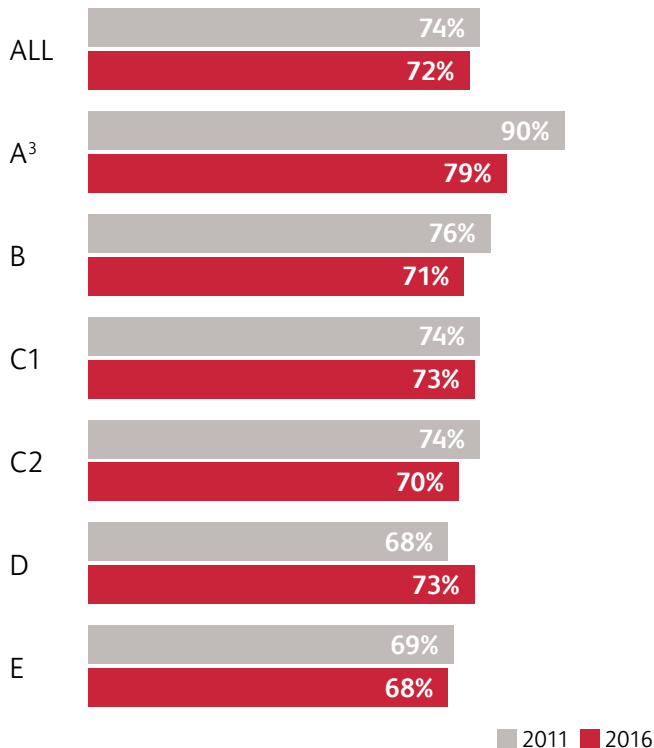
Library use by socio-economic group



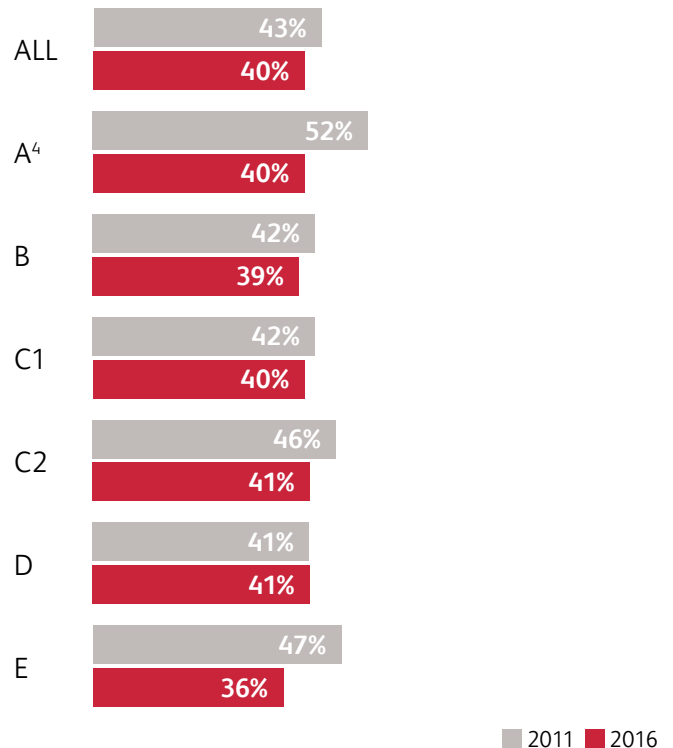
Frequency of library use by socio-economic group



Importance of libraries to community



Importance of libraries to me personally

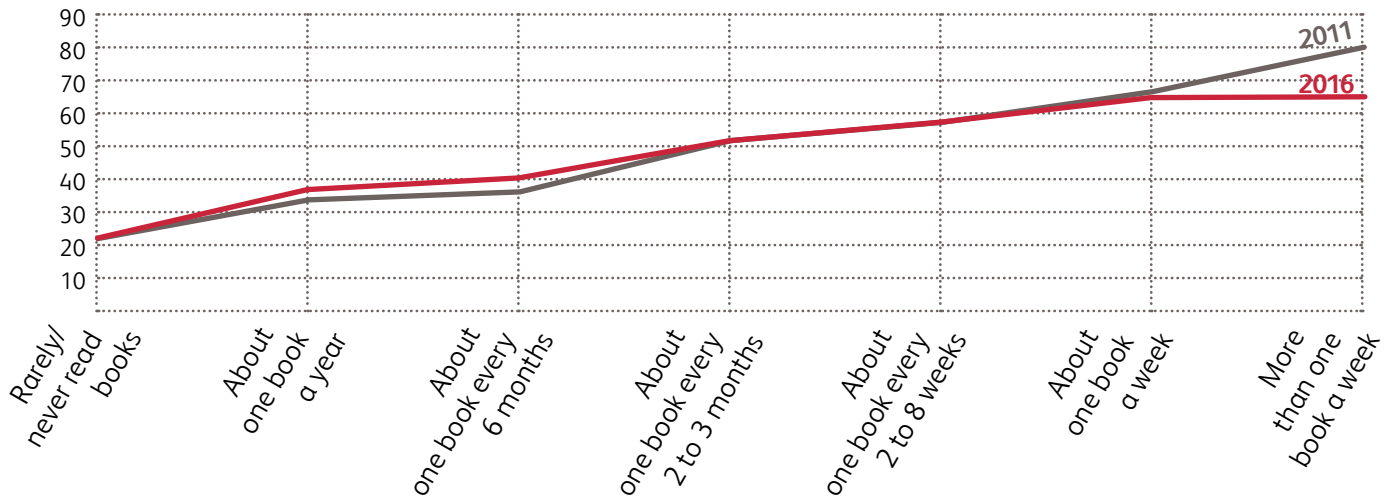


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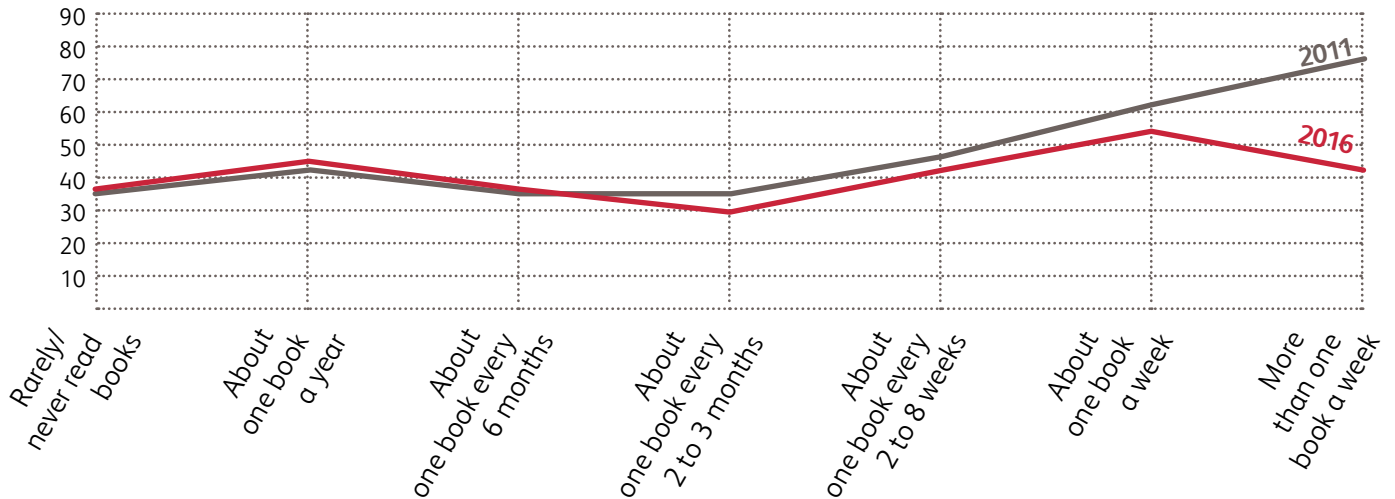
FOCUSING IN ON READING BEHAVIOUR IN ENGLAND

Library use by readership (%)

Readership is defined in terms of books that are read in any format (eg a physical book, on a e-reader or other device, or audio book) not including books that are read for paid work or academic study.



Frequency of library use by readership (%)



PREDICTORS

Logistic regression analysis, which controls for other factors, shows that being a prolific reader is a predictor for the likelihood of people in England having used a library in the past 12 months.

Logistic regression analysis, which controls for other factors, shows that being a prolific reader is a predictor for the likelihood of people in England having used a library frequently in the past 12 months.

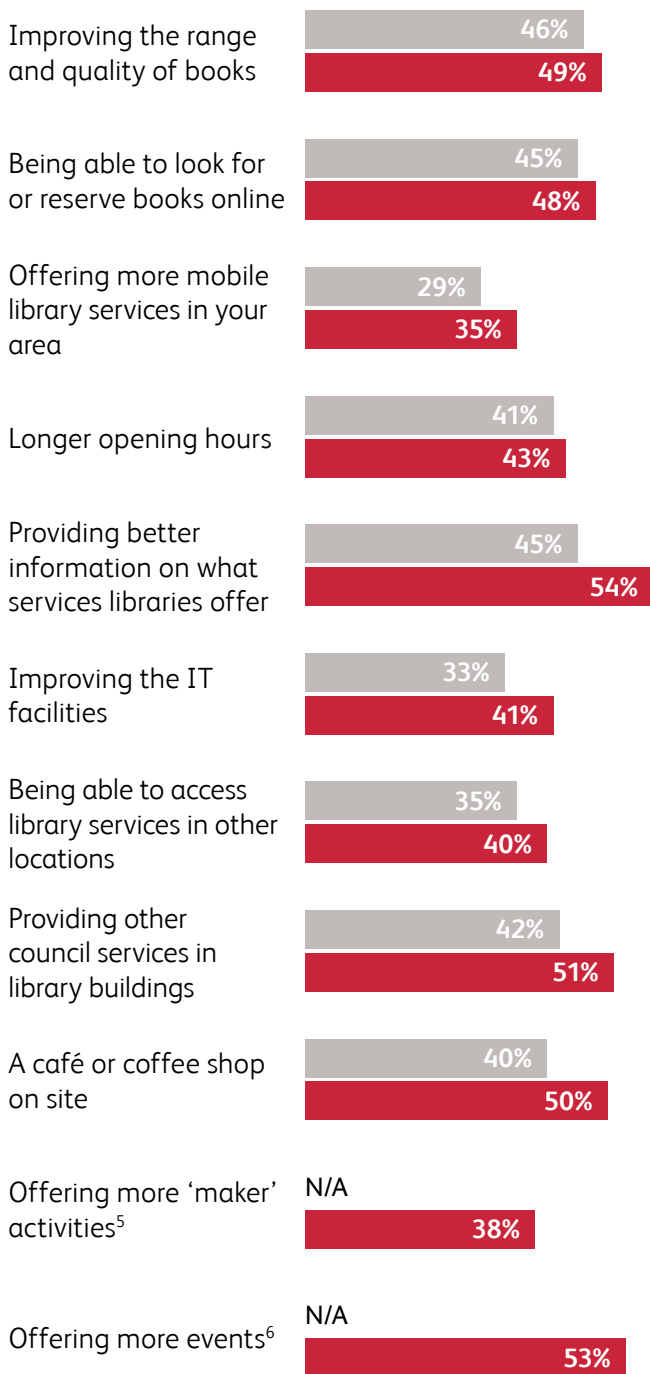
“ Although there is a statistically significant relationship between library use and prolific readership, 21% of people who rarely or never read books use the library. ”



ATTITUDES TO POSSIBLE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN ENGLAND

We asked people in England to consider whether or not a number of potential changes would encourage them to make more use of library services. Overall, compared with 2011, respondents were more likely to be encouraged to use their library if services were to change or improve.

Support for suggested improvement and changes to service 2011 and 2016



■ 2011 ■ 2016

⁵ This was a new category for 2016.

⁶ This was a new category for 2016.

2011–2016

Most popular suggested improvements to the service in 2011



Providing **better information** about the services available at the library (45%)



Improving the **range and quality** of books (46%)



Being able to look for or reserve books **online** (45%)

Most popular suggested improvements to the service in 2016



Providing **better information** on the services that are delivered (54%)



Offering **more events** (53%)



Providing **other council services** in the library (51%)

USERS & NON-USERS

Most popular improvements among library users



Providing **better information** on what services libraries offer (68%)



Improving the **range and quality** of books (66%)



Being able to look for or reserve books **online** (66%)



Offering **more events** (66%)

... and non-library users



Providing **other council services** in library buildings (42%)



Offering **more events** (42%)



Providing **better information** on what services libraries offer (41%)


“ users more likely than non-users to say that the suggested improvements would increase library use. ”

ATTITUDES TO POSSIBLE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN ENGLAND


2016

Most popular improvements for other groups:


Frequent users

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(68%)**


Men

 Offering more events **(49%)**


Women

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(58%)**


Households with children

 Offering more events **(63%)**


Households without children

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(49%)**


15-24 year olds

 Being able to look for or reserve books online **(60%)**


25-34 year olds

 Offering more events **(63%)**


35-54 year olds

 Offering more events **(59%)**


55+ year olds

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(48%)**


Full time employed

 Offering more events **(56%)**


Part time employed

 Offering more events **(61%)**


Not working

 Offering more events **(59%)**


Retired

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(46%)**


Social grade A⁷

 A café or coffee shop on site **(61%)**


Social grade B

 Offering more events **(57%)**


Social grade C1

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(60%)**


Social grade C2

 Providing other council services in library buildings **(48%)**


Social grade D

 Offering more events **(53%)**


Social grade E

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(52%)**

Prolific readers

 Providing better information on what services libraries offer **(62%)**

Those that rarely/never read books

 Providing other council services in library buildings **(40%)**

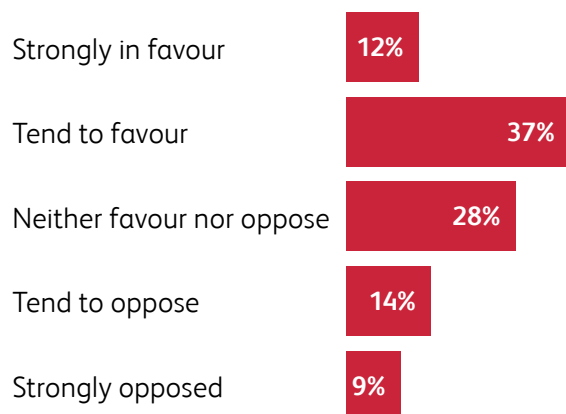
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ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS IN RELATION TO THE LIBRARY SERVICE IN ENGLAND

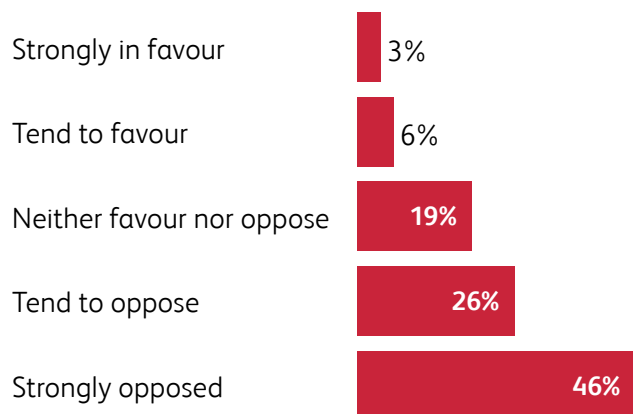
In 2016 we introduced a question to gauge people's opinions on volunteer involvement with public libraries.

Use of volunteers to add value to the services paid staff offer



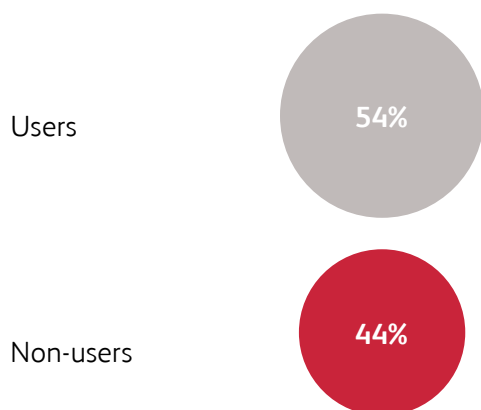
ALMOST
1/2 of people in favour of
volunteers adding value
to the services that paid
library staff offer

Use of volunteers to replace all paid staff

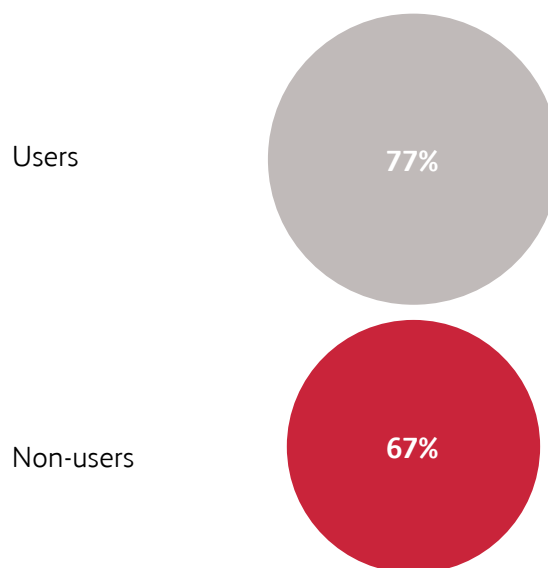


BELOW
1 IN 10 people in favour of
volunteers replacing all
paid staff

In favour of volunteers adding value to work of paid staff



Opposed to volunteers replacing all paid staff



APPENDIX

Statistically significant differences and changes over time

1) OVERVIEW

Differences over time

LIBRARY USE

- Decline (50% 2011, 46% 2016) = -4 percentage points

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline (52% 2011, 46% 2016) = -6 percentage points

2) GENDER

Differences between groups

LIBRARY USE

- Women (53%) higher than men (39%)
= 14 percentage points

IMPORTANCE TO COMMUNITY

- Women (76%) higher than men (67%)
= 9 percentage points

Differences over time

LIBRARY USE

- Decline among men (46% 2011, 39% 2016)
= -7 percentage points

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline among women (57% 2011, 46% 2016)
= -11 percentage points

IMPORTANCE PERSONALLY

- Decline among women (48% 2011, 42% 2016)
= -2 percentage points

3) HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Differences between groups

LIBRARY USE

- Households with children (55%) higher than households without (42%) = 13 percentage points

IMPORTANCE PERSONALLY

- Households with children (48%) higher than households without (36%) = -12 percentage points

Differences over time

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline among households with children (59% 2011, 48% 2016) = -11 percentage points

4) AGE

Differences between groups

IMPORTANCE TO COMMUNITY

- 35-54 year olds (74%) higher than 15-24 year olds (62%)
= -12 percentage points
- Over 55s (74%) higher than 15-24 year olds (62%)
= -12 percentage points

IMPORTANCE PERSONALLY

- 25-34 year olds (46%) higher than 15-24 year olds (34%)
= -12 percentage points

Differences over time

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline among over 55s (52% 2011, 43% 2016)
= -9 percentage points

IMPORTANCE TO COMMUNITY

- Decline among over 55s (81% 2011, 74% 2016)
= -7 percentage points

5) WORKING STATUS

Differences between groups

IMPORTANCE TO COMMUNITY

- Retirees (78%) higher than full-time employees (70%)
= -8 percentage points
- Retirees (78%) higher than those not working (68%)
= -10 percentage points

Differences over time

LIBRARY USE

- Decline among those not working (60% 2011, 49% 2016) = -11 percentage points

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline among part-time employees (62% 2011, 41% 2016) = -21 percentage points

IMPORTANCE PERSONALLY

- Decline among those not working (47% 2011, 38% 2016) = -9 percentage points



6) SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP⁸

Differences between groups

LIBRARY USE

- ABC1 (54%) higher than C2DE (37%)
= 17 percentage points
- AB (56%) higher than C1C2 (45%)
= 11 percentage points
- AB (56%) higher than DE (36%) = 20 percentage points
- C1C2 (45%) higher than DE (36%) = 9%

IMPORTANCE TO COMMUNITY

- AB (78%) higher than DE (68%) = 10 percentage points

Differences over time

LIBRARY USE

- Decline among DE (44% 2011, 36% 2016)
= -8 percentage points

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline among ABC1 (53% 2011, 46% 2016)
= -7 percentage points
- Decline among AB (44% 2011, 39% 2016)
= -5 percentage points

7) READERSHIP

Differences between groups

LIBRARY USE

- Prolific readers (61%) higher than other readers (33%)
= 28 percentage points

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Prolific readers (31%) higher than other readers (21%)
= 30 percentage points

Differences over time

FREQUENCY OF USE

- Decline among prolific readers (40% 2011, 31% 2016)
= -9 percentage points

⁸ Tests carried out for: ABC1 / C2DE; AB / C1 / C2 / DE; AB / C1C2 / DE



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The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

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