

Young People and Public Library Usage 2010



Findings from the 2010 Young Persons'
Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS)

**DCAL Research Findings
3/2012-13**

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Executive summary

- Nearly two out of every five (37%) of the young people surveyed had been to a public library at least once in the year prior to the survey.
- The proportions who visited a public library at least once a year decreased with age, from 51% of those aged 12 years and under to 24% of those aged 16 and over.
- A fifth (20%) of all the young people surveyed visited a public library at least once a month.
- Nearly a half (49%) of the young people had never been to a public library.
- The majority (69%) of the young people who visited a public library in the previous year did so to borrow / return / renew books.
- The most frequently cited benefits of visiting a public library for those who had visited in the last year were “improved my knowledge” and “helped with studies for school / homework (39% and 35% respectively).
- A higher proportion of girls than boys said that visiting a library helped with studies for school / homework (41% and 27% respectively).
- A fifth (20%) of the young people had enjoyed their last visit to a public library a lot while 5% had not enjoyed their visit at all.
- Boys and girls experienced similar degrees of enjoyment when visiting a public library within the previous year.
- A higher proportion of young people with a limiting longstanding illness experienced a lot of enjoyment at their last visit to a public library when compared with those with no limiting longstanding illness (31% and 18% respectively).
- The most frequently cited feature that would encourage young people to visit a public library more often was a better selection of books (41% of the young people surveyed).

Introduction

This report has been prepared by the Research and Statistics Branch of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). It presents findings from the 2010 Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS) which is a school based survey carried out among 11-16 year olds and covers a wide range of topics relevant to the lives of young people today.

The main aim of YPBAS is to gain an insight into, and understanding of, the behaviour and lifestyle of the young people in Northern Ireland. It also aims to influence various government policies and practices relating to young people and to facilitate access to research findings and expertise.

This report focuses on the responses to the questions related to public library usage which were commissioned by DCAL. More information about the survey and the methodology used to analyse the responses is included in the technical notes in Appendix 1.

In keeping with government policy, no hard copies of this report have been produced. Requests or enquiries concerning this publication should be directed to:

Marlene Carmichael
Research and Statistics Branch
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

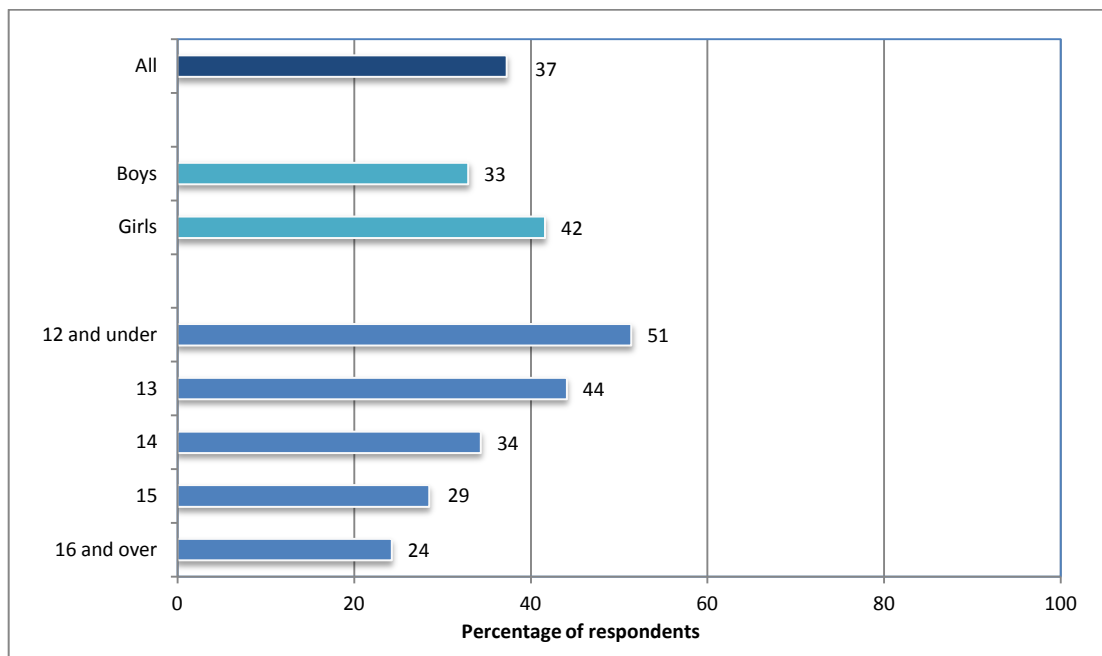
Tel: 028 90 515101

Email: marlene.carmichael@dcalni.gov.uk

Frequency of visits to a public library

Nearly two out of every five (37%) of all the young people surveyed had been to a public library¹ at least once in the year prior to the survey (Figure 1 and Table 1). A third (33%) of boys and 42% of girls had visited a public library in the previous 12 months. The proportions of the young people who visited a public library at least once a year decreased with age, from 51% of those aged 12 years and under to 24% of those aged 16 and over.

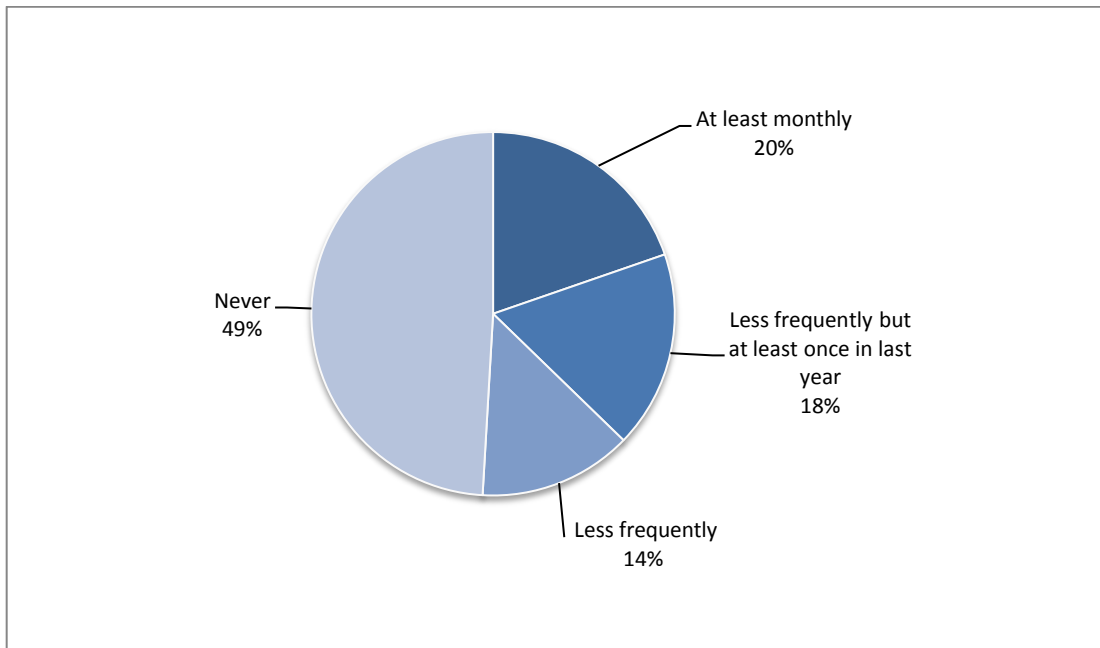
Figure 1 Visits to a public library at least once within the last year



A fifth (20%) of all the young people surveyed visited a public library at least once a month, 18% visited less frequently but at least once a year and 14% visited less than once a year (Figure 2 and Table 2). However, nearly a half (49%) of the respondents had never been to a public library.

¹ Excludes school libraries

Figure 2 Visits to a public library at least once within the last year



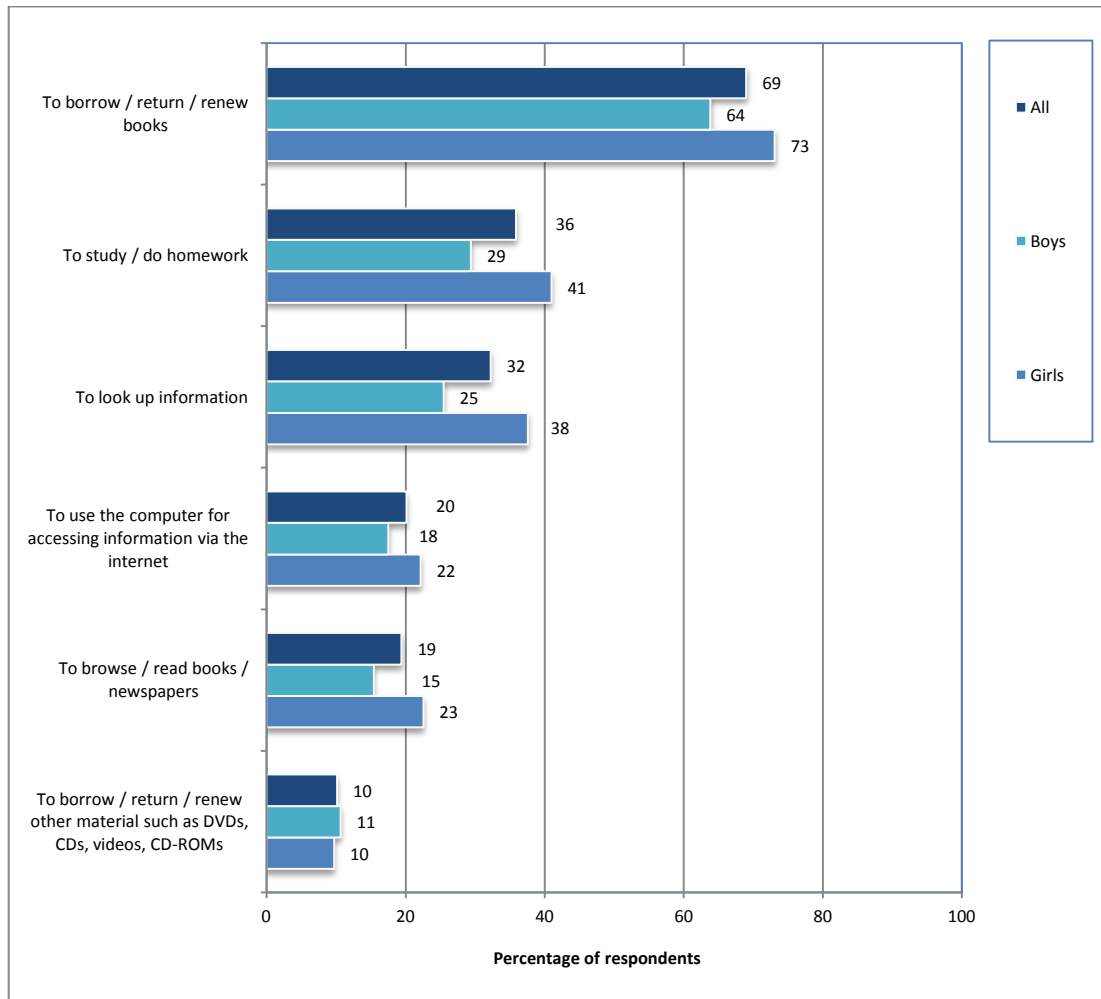
Reasons why young people visited a public library

The majority (69%) of young people who visited a public library in the previous year did so to borrow / return / renew books. The next two most frequently cited reasons were to study / do homework and to look up information (36% and 32% respectively).

A lower proportion of boys than girls had visited a library to borrow / return / renew books. This reason for visiting a library was given by 64% of boys and 73% of girls (Figure 3 and Table 3a).

Just less than three-quarters (73%) of the respondents aged 14 years and under had visited a public library in the last year to borrow / return / renew books compared with just under three-fifths (58%) of those aged 15 and over (Table 3b).

Figure 3 Most frequently cited reasons why young people visited a public library in the previous year



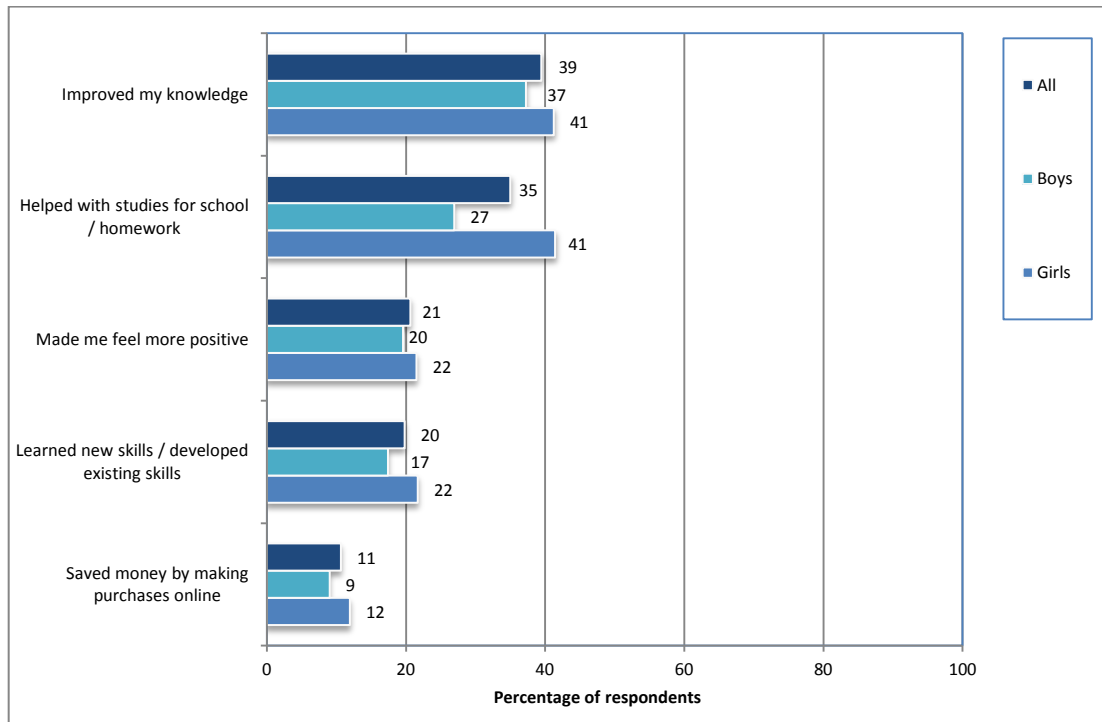
Benefits of visiting a public library

The two most frequently cited benefits experienced by the young people who had visited a library in the year prior to the survey were “improved my knowledge” and “helped with studies for school / homework (39% and 35% of respondents respectively) (Figure 4 and Table 4a).

A higher proportion of girls than boys said that visiting a library helped with studies for school / homework (41% and 27% respectively).

More than four out of every ten (43%) young people aged 14 years and under thought that visiting a library improved their knowledge compared with around three out of every ten (31%) aged 15 years and over (Table 4b).

Figure 4 Most frequently cited benefits of visiting a public library



Levels of enjoyment when last visiting a public library

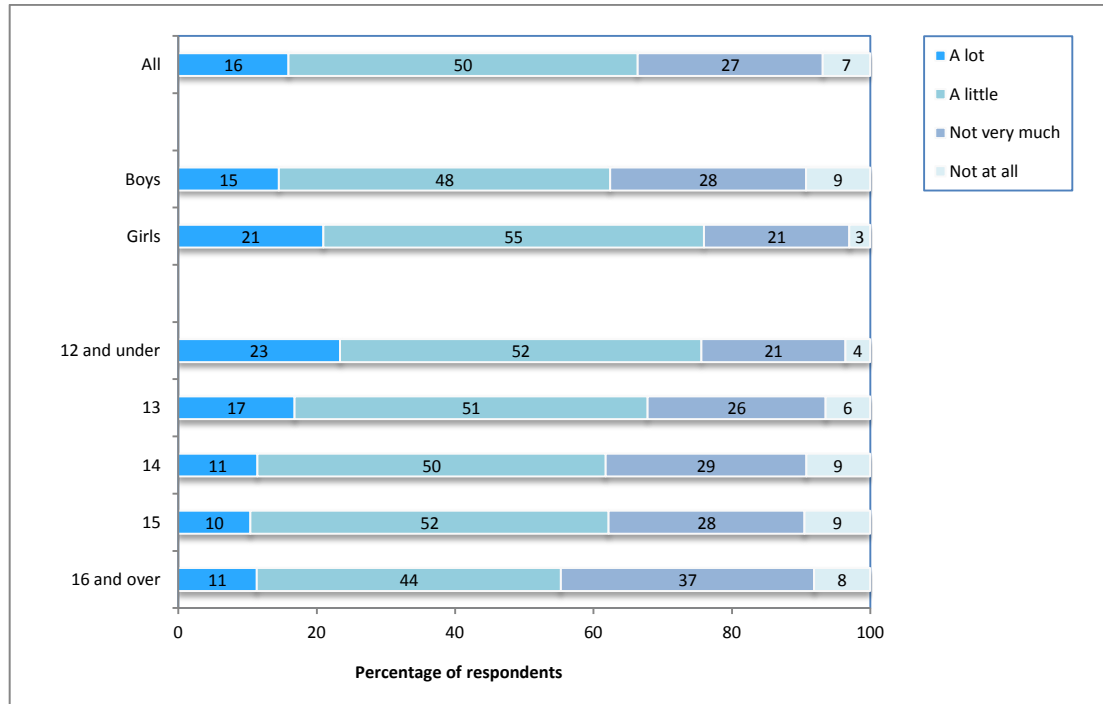
Over a half (53%) of the young people who had visited a public library in the previous year had enjoyed their last visit a little while a fifth (20%) had enjoyed it a lot (Figure 5 and Table 5). However, just over a fifth (22%) had not enjoyed their last visit very much while one in twenty (5%) had not enjoyed their visit at all.

Comparison of boys and girls showed similar degrees of enjoyment when visiting a public library within the previous year.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of the young people aged 13 years and under who had been to a library during the previous year had enjoyed their visit a lot, while 15% of those aged 14 years and over had experienced the same level of enjoyment.

A higher proportion of young people with a limiting longstanding illness had experienced a lot of enjoyment at their last visit to a public library compared with those with no limiting longstanding illness (31% and 18% respectively).

Figure 5 Levels of enjoyment during last visit to a public library in previous year



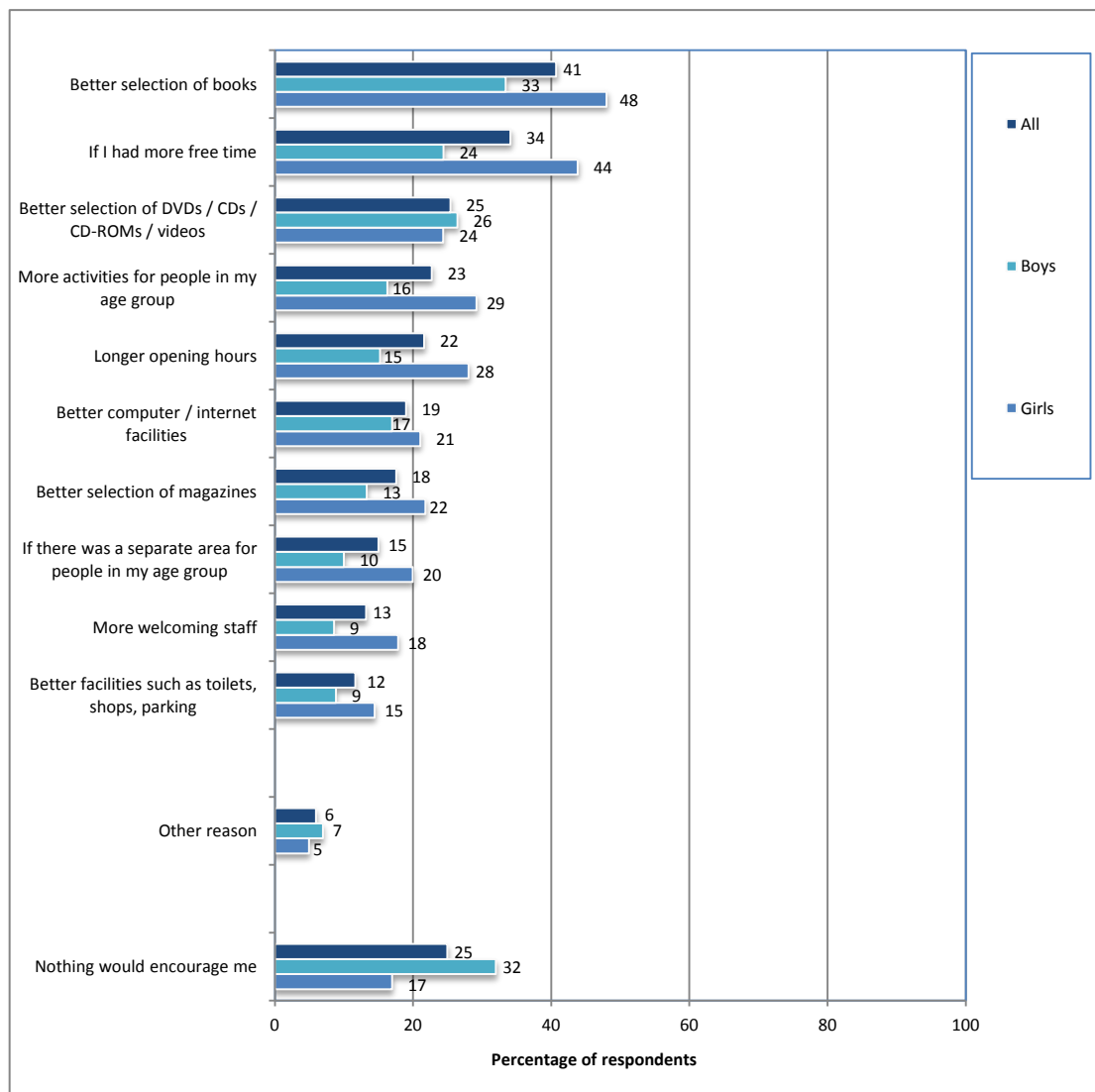
Features which would encourage more frequent visits to a public library

The most frequently cited feature that would encourage young people to visit a public library more often was a better selection of books (41% of the young people surveyed) (Figure 6 and Table 6). Just over a third (34%) of those surveyed said they would visit more frequently if they had more free time and a quarter (25%) said a better selection of DVDs / CDs / CD-ROMs / videos would encourage them to go more often.

Nearly a half (48%) of girls and a third (33%) of boys said that a better selection of books would encourage them to visit a library more frequently. A higher proportion of girls than boys also said that if they had more time they may visit a public library more often (44% and 24% respectively). On the other hand, a higher proportion of boys than girls said that nothing would encourage them to visit a library more frequently (32% and 17% respectively).

The proportion of young people who said that a better selection of books would encourage them to visit a library more often decreased with age from 53% of those aged 12 years and under to 28% of those aged 16 years and over (Table 6b). As the age of respondents increased, so too did the proportion who said that nothing would encourage them to use a public library more often. The proportions ranged from just over a tenth (12%) of those aged 12 years and under, to just over a third (34%) of those aged 16 years and over.

Figure 6 Most frequently cited features that would encourage young people to visit a public library more often



APPENDIX 1

TECHNICAL NOTES

Questionnaire

The Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency was commissioned by a consortium of government departments and public bodies to design, conduct and report on a study of the behaviour and attitudes of young people in Northern Ireland. As in 2007, two versions of the questionnaire were used to accommodate demand for topics on the survey.

Sample

A representative sample of 175 schools was selected from a list of all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and 77 of these participated in the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude survey (YPBAS). Each school was randomly assigned a version of the questionnaire in autumn 2010. One class in each of the five year groups (years 8-12) was then randomly selected to take part in the study. A total of 4,070 pupils were surveyed using Version A and 3,546 pupils using Version B of the questionnaire. DCAL's questions relating to public library usage were included in Version A.

Further details of the methodology and copies of the questionnaires can be found at:

<http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/YPBAS%202010%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

Results

The results presented in this report are based on data which has been weighted by year group, gender and religion in order to reflect the composition of the Northern Ireland post-primary population. Since a three stage sample design was used: schools, classes and pupils, the required assumption of random sampling was not met for significance testing. Therefore, only

differences of at least 10 percentage points between categories of the young people who responded are quoted in the text.

The following should be noted when interpreting figures and tables:

- Figures less than 0.5% are denoted by '0'.
- Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
- Percentages may not add to 100% for questions where multiple responses are allowed.
- Detailed tabulations are not provided where the number of young people responding is too small to allow meaningful analysis.
- The base number of responses to each question, which is shown in each table, is the unweighted total, and may vary due to some of the young people surveyed not answering certain questions.

APPENDIX 2 DATA TABLES

Table 1 Visits to a public library at least once within the last year

Profile of respondent	Percentage of respondents	Base
All	37	3,950
Boys	33	1,719
Girls	42	2,230
12 and under	51	951
13	44	808
14	34	768
15	29	770
16 and over	24	653
Protestant	38	1,091
Catholic	36	2,550
Other	37	263
Entitled to free school meals	35	754
Not entitled to free school meals	38	3,188
Has a limiting longstanding illness	42	410
Does not have a limiting longstanding illness	37	3,489

Table 2 Frequency of visits to a public library

	Percentage of respondents visiting a library:				Base
	At least monthly	Less frequently but at least once in last year	Less frequently	Never	
All	20	18	14	49	3,950
Boys	16	17	12	55	1,719
Girls	23	18	15	43	2,230
12 and under	34	18	14	35	951
13	24	21	15	41	808
14	17	18	14	52	768
15	12	17	13	59	770
16 and over	9	15	13	63	653
Protestant	19	19	13	50	1,091
Catholic	20	16	14	49	2,550
Other	18	19	14	49	263
Entitled to free school meals	21	14	13	51	754
Not entitled to free school meals	19	18	14	49	3,188
Has a limiting longstanding illness	24	18	13	45	410
Does not have a limiting longstanding illness	19	18	14	50	3,489

Table 3 **Reasons for visiting a public library in the last year**
a) by gender

Reason	Percentage of respondents mentioning each factor		
	All	Boys	Girls
To borrow / return / renew books	69	64	73
To study / do homework	36	29	41
To look up information	32	25	38
To use the computer for accessing information via the internet	20	18	22
To browse / read books / newspapers	19	15	23
To borrow / return / renew other material such as DVDs, CDs, videos, CD-ROMs	10	11	10
To use photocopier / fax	9	6	11
To use the computers for communication via the internet / email	8	6	9
To use the computers for IT classes	7	7	8
To use other facilities (e.g. café, toilet, shop etc.)	7	7	7
To attend an event / exhibition	4	5	4
To use the computers for making online purchases	2	1	2
Other reason	8	9	7
Base	1,489	559	930

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 3 **Reasons for visiting a public library in the last year**
b) **by age**

Reason	Percentage of respondents mentioning each factor					
	All	12 and under	13	14	15	16 and over
To borrow / return / renew books	69	76	70	73	59	56
To study / do homework	36	39	36	34	30	38
To look up information	32	35	32	34	29	28
To use the computer for accessing information via the internet	20	18	22	23	19	19
To browse / read books / newspapers	19	23	21	21	14	11
To borrow / return / renew other material such as DVDs, CDs, videos, CD-ROMs	10	9	13	10	10	7
To use photocopier/ fax	9	7	8	12	8	13
To use the computers for communication via the internet / email	8	8	8	9	7	5
To use the computers for IT classes	7	9	8	7	6	5
To use other facilities (e.g. café, toilet, shop etc.)	7	5	7	8	6	9
To attend an event / exhibition	4	5	2	7	4	4
To use the computers for making online purchases	2	1	3	1	2	0
Other reason	8	7	7	11	9	7
Base	1,489	491	356	262	220	160

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 4 a) **Benefits experienced from visiting a public library in the last year by gender**

Benefit	Percentage of respondents mentioning each benefit		
	All	Boys	Girls
Improved my knowledge	39	37	41
Helped with studies for school / homework	35	27	41
Made me feel more positive	21	20	22
Learned new skills / developed existing skills	20	17	22
Saved money by making purchases online	11	9	12
Developed my confidence	7	7	8
Opportunities to interact with others	7	7	7
I was able to communicate better with family / friends	7	6	7
Improved health	3	4	3
I benefited in some other way	15	16	14
I didn't feel there were any benefits	19	21	17
Base	1,467	552	915

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 4 **Benefits experienced from visiting a public library in the last year**
b) **by age**

Benefit	Percentage of respondents mentioning each benefit					
	All	12 and under	13	14	15	16 and over
Improved my knowledge	39	43	44	40	29	33
Helped with studies for school / homework	35	35	34	35	33	39
Made me feel more positive	21	27	20	23	13	12
Learned new skills / developed existing skills	20	26	22	20	12	9
Saved money by making purchases online	11	10	9	14	11	9
Developed my confidence	7	8	7	10	6	4
Opportunities to interact with others	7	5	7	9	5	9
I was able to communicate better with family/ friends	7	9	7	7	3	5
Improved health	3	5	3	5	1	0
I benefited in some other way	15	9	17	19	18	17
I didn't feel there were any benefits	19	15	19	21	23	23
Base	1,467	485	346	258	218	160

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 5 Levels of enjoyment when last visiting a public library

Profile of respondent	Percentage of respondents who enjoyed their last visit:				
	A lot	A little	Not very much	Not at all	Base
All	20	53	22	5	1,476
Boys	18	50	25	7	552
Girls	21	55	21	3	924
12 and under	27	53	18	3	482
13	20	53	23	5	353
14	15	56	23	7	261
15	14	55	23	8	221
16 and over	16	46	33	5	159
Protestant	18	56	22	4	412
Catholic	20	52	23	5	934
Other	19	49	26	5	100
Entitled to free school meals	20	49	26	5	266
Not entitled to free school meals	20	54	22	5	1,206
Has a limiting longstanding illness	31	42	20	8	170
Does not have a limiting longstanding illness	18	55	23	4	1,290

Table 6 a) **Features that would encourage young people to visit a library more often by gender**

	Percentage of young people citing each feature		
	All	Boys	Girls
Better selection of books	41	33	48
If I had more free time	34	24	44
Better selection of DVDs / CDs / CD-ROMs / videos	25	26	24
More activities for people in my age group	23	16	29
Longer opening hours	22	15	28
Better computer / internet facilities	19	17	21
Better selection of magazines	18	13	22
If there was a separate area for people in my age group	15	10	20
More welcoming staff	13	9	18
Better facilities such as toilets, shops, parking	12	9	15
Fines were less expensive	9	7	11
Safer neighbourhood / better location	7	6	9
If there were fewer people there	6	5	7
Better public transport links / access to transport	5	4	7
Better facilities for people with disabilities	4	4	5
Other reason	6	7	5
Nothing	25	32	17
Base	3,873	1,679	2,193

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 6 **Features that would encourage young people to visit a library more often**
b) **by age**

	Percentage of young people citing each feature					
	All	12 and under	13	14	15	16 and over
Better selection of books	41	53	46	42	31	28
If I had more free time	34	36	38	34	30	32
Better selection of DVDs / CDs / CD-ROMs / videos	25	25	28	28	23	23
More activities for people in my age group	23	22	24	24	23	20
Longer opening hours	22	30	24	19	16	16
Better computer / internet facilities	19	19	20	21	17	17
Better selection of magazines	18	17	20	21	15	14
If there was a separate area for people in my age group	15	13	17	17	13	16
More welcoming staff	13	15	13	15	13	11
Better facilities such as toilets, shops, parking	12	13	13	11	11	10
Fines were less expensive	9	9	10	10	7	8
Safer neighbourhood / better location	7	9	9	7	7	4
If there were fewer people there	6	7	6	5	5	6
Better public transport links / access to transport	5	6	6	6	4	5
Better facilities for people with disabilities	4	7	6	4	3	2
Other reason	6	8	6	5	4	5
Nothing would encourage me	25	12	21	26	33	34
Base	3,873	929	794	754	753	643

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

APPENDIX 3 THE LIBRARY USAGE QUESTIONS IN THE SURVEY

I1. How often do you go to a Public Library? (this does NOT include school libraries)

(Tick one box only)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Several times a week | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Once a week | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Once every 2-3 weeks | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Monthly | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Once every 2-3 months | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Once every 4-6 months | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Once in the last 12 months | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Less frequently | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to Question I2 |
| Never | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Go to Question I5 |

I2. Why do you go to a Public Library? (this does NOT include school libraries)
(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|----|
| To borrow/ return/ renew books | 1 |
| To borrow/ return/ renew other material such as DVDs, CDs, Videos, CD-ROMS | 2 |
| To look up information | 3 |
| To study/ do homework | 4 |
| To browse/ read books/ newspapers | 5 |
| To use the computer for accessing information via the Internet | 6 |
| To use the computers for communication via Internet/e-mail | 7 |
| To use the computers for making online purchases | 8 |
| To use the computers for IT classes | 9 |
| To attend an event/ exhibition | 10 |
| To use photocopier/ fax | 11 |
| To use other facilities (e.g. café, toilet, shop etc.) | 12 |
| Other reason | 13 |

I3. How did you benefit from going to a public library?
(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|----|
| Made me feel more positive | 1 |
| Learned new skills/ developed existing skills | 2 |
| Improved my knowledge | 3 |
| Helped with studies for school/homework | 4 |
| Improved health | 5 |
| I was able to communicate better with family/ friends | 6 |
| Developed my confidence | 7 |
| Saved money by making purchases online | 8 |
| Opportunities to interact with others | 9 |
| I benefitted in some other way | 10 |
| I didn't feel there were any benefits | 11 |

I4. Thinking about the last time you visited or used a Public Library, how much did you enjoy it? (this does NOT include school libraries)
(Tick one box only)

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| A lot | 1 |
| A little | 2 |
| Not very much | 3 |
| Not at all | 4 |

**I5. What would encourage you to visit or use a Public Library more often?
(this does NOT include school libraries)
(Tick all that apply)**

Better selection of books	1
Longer opening hours	2
Better facilities for people with disabilities	3
Better selection of DVDs/ CDs/CD-ROMs/ Videos	4
Better selection of magazines	5
If I had more free time	6
More activities for people in my age group	7
If there was a separate area for people in my age group	8
Better public transport links/ access to transport	9
Better computer/ Internet facilities	10
If there were fewer people there	12
Better facilities such as toilets, shops, parking	13
Safer neighbourhood/better location	14
More welcoming staff	15
Fines were less expensive	16
Nothing	17
Other reason	18