

Part 1: Herefordshire Library Service – Overview, Facts and Figures 2016

In Herefordshire over 23% of local residents are active library members (have had a library transaction within the last two years). This includes customers who join to access the public computers, borrow inter-library loans, use online resources or access other library services, as well as those who borrow library resources. In 2015 over 18% of people in the county had at least one item on loan. This reduced to 17% following the temporary closure of Hereford Library.

There are eleven libraries across the county that Herefordshire Council supports or runs. The central library in Hereford is the largest site which holds 30% of the county's active library stock and also houses the county's local studies and special collections. Housed in an iconic Victorian building in Broad Street opposite Hereford Cathedral, it shares the building with Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. Libraries also operate in Ross-on-Wye, Leominster, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington, a satellite branch at Belmont, smaller community libraries in the rural hinterland and a countywide network of 12 community-run rural book schemes.

The libraries in the market towns also include Herefordshire Council Customer Services and other services. For example, Ross Library has the Job Centre Plus on site, Bromyard library is co-located within a Halo Leisure Centre, and in Ledbury the library is located in the Master's House development, sharing a site with other public and voluntary services to utilise a historic building in the heart of the town.

Smaller branch libraries and book schemes are run in partnership with the community. Leintwardine, Peterchurch and Weobley libraries are Community Libraries staffed by volunteers with ongoing support and training from professional library staff, including the provision of book stock and public computers. Belmont and Colwall Libraries are Partnership Libraries where the parish council contributes to the running costs of the site. They all form part of the public library service in Herefordshire, linked by the computerised Library Management System, with regular deliveries for reservations and new stock.

There are currently 12 community-run book schemes that operate from village halls, community centres and village shops, providing a focus for community activity. They are not linked to the Library Management System, but are supported by the county library service team and get a regular exchange of library books on a six or eight week basis. Many of these contribute to a wider 'hub' in their communities, operating alongside village coffee mornings while contributing to the resilience and sustainability of village markets and village shops.

As well as static libraries the county library service includes a number of other elements:

Delivered Services - provides a regular supply of books and talking books to people who are housebound and unable to access a library. The service delivers to around 160 individuals and 30 residential homes/sheltered housing centres and is often described as a lifeline for people who are at risk of feeling isolated and lonely. They also provide regular deliveries to the libraries and the 12 community-run book schemes.

The Schools Library Service - supports local schools by providing books and project material to support learning and reading for pleasure. Last year over 90 primary and high schools subscribed to the Herefordshire Libraries service to schools. The schools service is effectively cost neutral with the schools paying for the library service they receive.

Stock and Reader Services - is responsible for the county library service strategy and development. This team includes the professional librarians who are responsible for library services for children and young people, local

studies, digitisation projects, bibliotherapy, work with special groups, new libraries and refurbishment projects, funding bids, community outreach, partnerships, reader development, community libraries, community-run book schemes, training and support for volunteers, and work with library Friends groups.

The team also provides strategic and operational support and training to the frontline library staff, partners and volunteers. They select and process all the library stock, manage the library IT and library management systems, library budgets, contracts and performance management, compile reports and statistics and report annually to CIPFA and other government bodies. They also deliver the service to Readers Groups and Inter-Library Loans.

Statutory service

Libraries are a statutory service and local authorities have a duty under the **1964 Public Libraries & Museums Act** to provide “a comprehensive and efficient library service” to local people. The meaning of “comprehensive and efficient” is not defined, though the act does state the main services that library authorities must deliver in order to comply with the “comprehensive and efficient” requirement. In summary, they must:

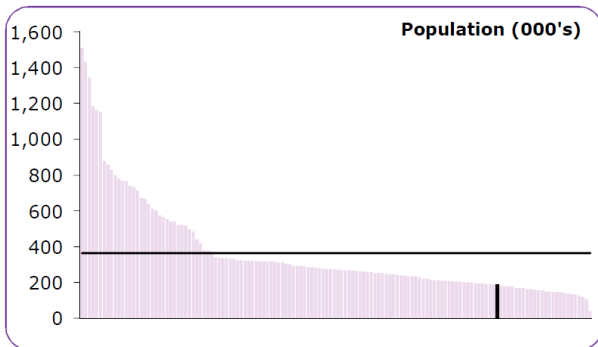
1. Ensure access to sufficient quantity, range and quality of library stock and other resources to meet the general requirements and special requirements (e.g. audio books or large print) of both adults and children; by keeping adequate library stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means.
2. Encourage and promote adults and children to make full use of the library service; provide advice and information to support library use; and provide access to bibliographic information (e.g. the library catalogue).
3. Ensure full co-operation by any persons delivering the library service on behalf of the local authority and any other service delivered within the library area.

Herefordshire Libraries – Facts and Figures

Herefordshire in comparison to other library authorities in the UK

Libraries provide many other services as well as access to books, but surveys have indicated that borrowing books is still the main reason customers' visit libraries, although they may combine it with other services when they are there. To meet customer's general requirements the library service provides fiction and non-fiction titles for all age groups covering a wide range of subjects. Meeting special requirements includes the provision of large print and audio books. Specialist topics and academic works are provided through Inter-Library Loan arrangements, while many reference titles are now available 24/7 as online resources.

The following tables are taken from the CIPFA report for 2014-15, which is the latest published report available (published January 2016). These tables show where Herefordshire comes in comparison with all other library authorities in England.



Population

Herefordshire is the 26th smallest of the 138 authorities compared here (in terms of population).

Figure 1

Number of libraries

The chart on the left (Fig 2) compares the number of libraries with the other authorities in the comparison. Herefordshire has 10 statutory libraries compared to an average of 21. The chart on the right (Fig 3) shows the number of libraries per 100,000 population.

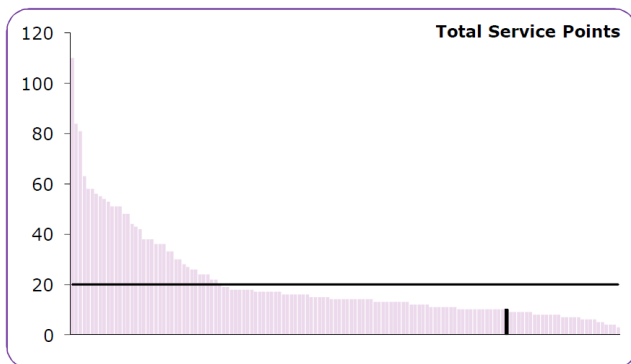


Figure 2

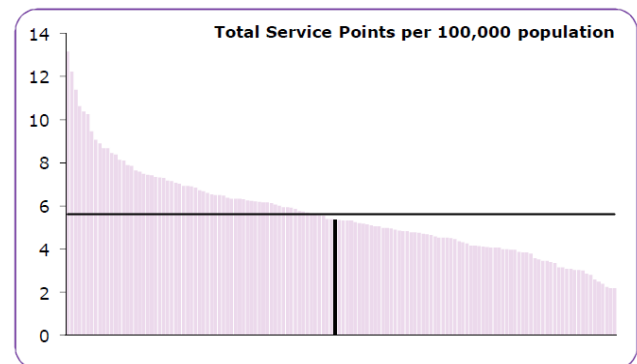


Figure 3

Expenditure

The chart on the left (Fig 4) shows revenue expenditure per 1,000 population. The chart on the right (Fig 5) shows net expenditure which is revenue expenditure and income combined as a key cost indicator.

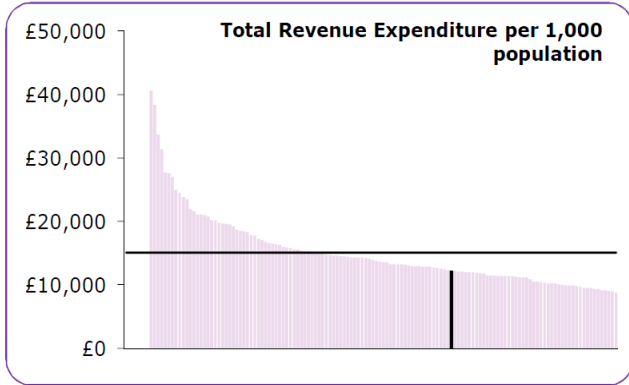


Figure 4

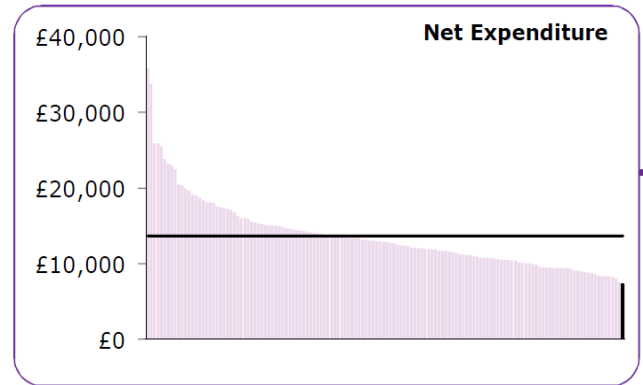


Figure 5

Library visits

The number of visits per 1,000 population (Fig 6) is another measure of engagement and offers a more complete picture of library usage as it will include other reasons for visiting the library as well as borrowing; although it does not include visits to the building for other purposes (e.g. DWP, Halo, Registrars, CAB, etc.)

Opening Hours

One of the factors that may limit the number of potential library visits is the number of hours libraries are open. The chart on the right (Fig 7) shows the opening hours in the service point that issues the most items. In Herefordshire, the busiest library is Hereford Library.

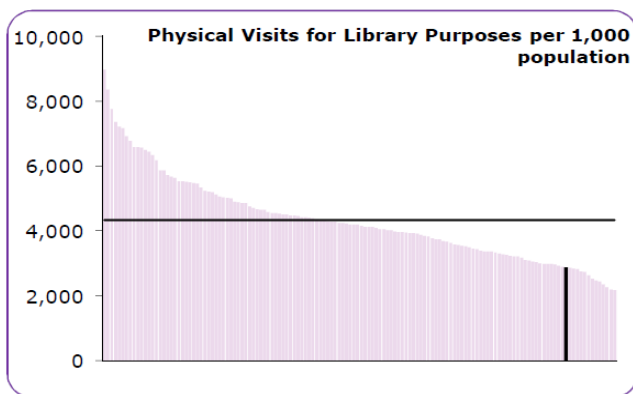


Figure 6

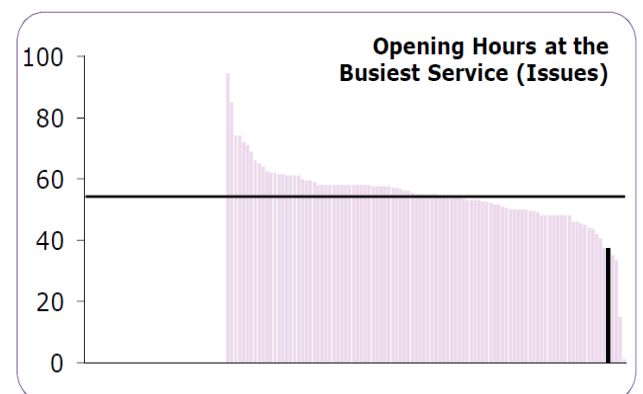


Figure 7

Library stock - issues, stock levels, cost, and turnover

The charts below show Herefordshire's position next to other library authorities in terms of the number of books issued per 1,000 population (Fig 8), and the total book stock available per 1,000 population (Fig 9).

Herefordshire purchases library stock from specialist contract suppliers and negotiates stock discounts through a competitive tender process as part of a regional consortium with four neighbouring authorities. Fig 10 shows the average cost per book acquired: Herefordshire average: £6.02, National average: £7.03

The stock turn chart (Fig 11) shows the average number of times each item was issued during the year. This is an indication of how hard the library stock is working. It may also be also an indication of stock quality and whether the titles provided meet local demand.

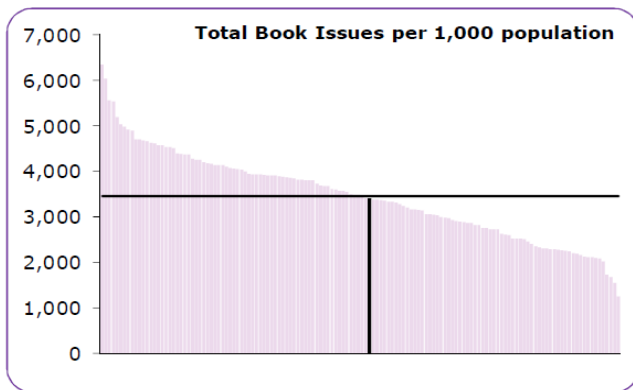


Figure 8

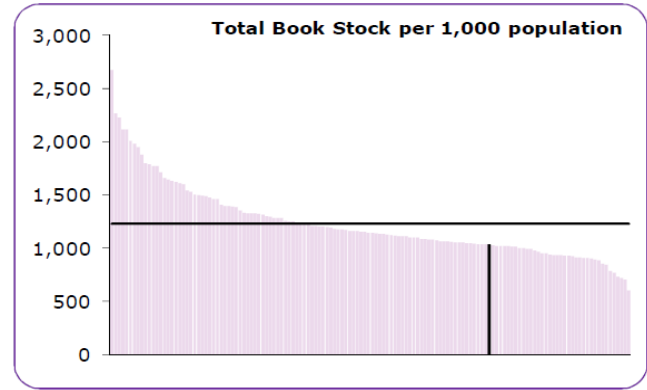


Figure 9

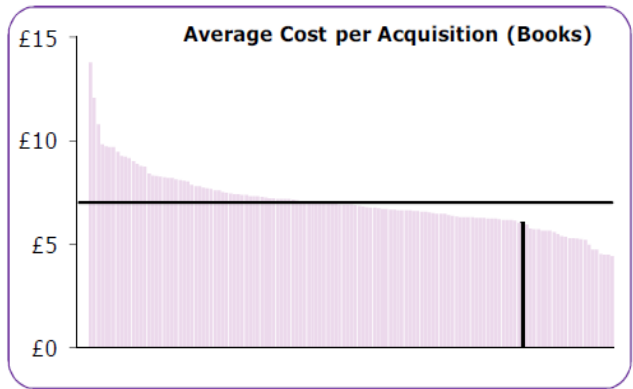


Figure 10

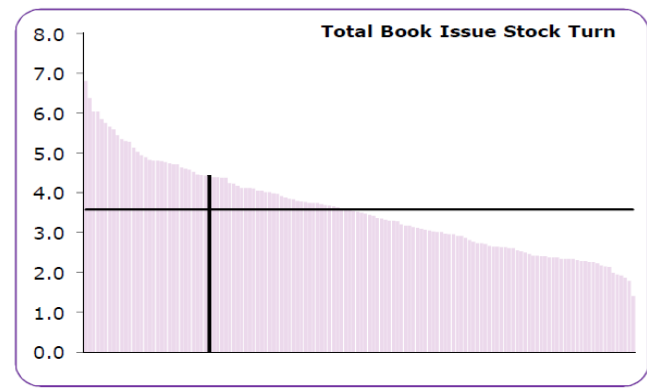


Figure 11

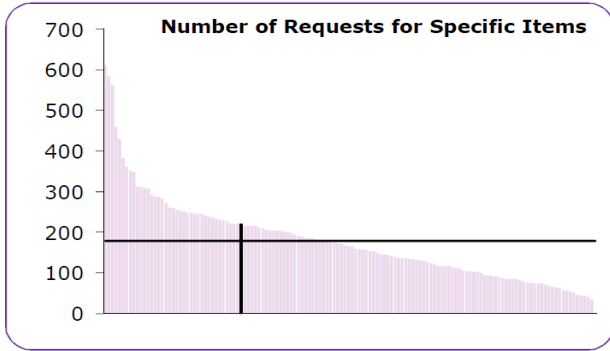


Figure 12

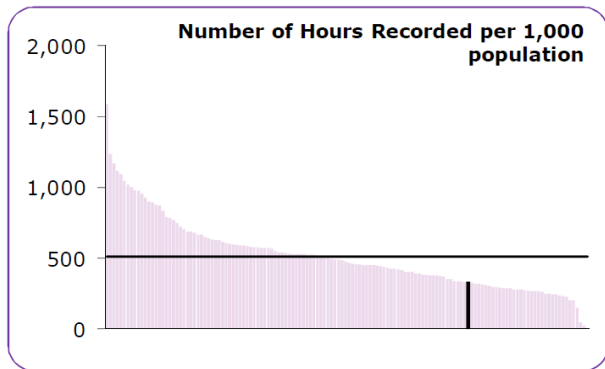


Figure 13

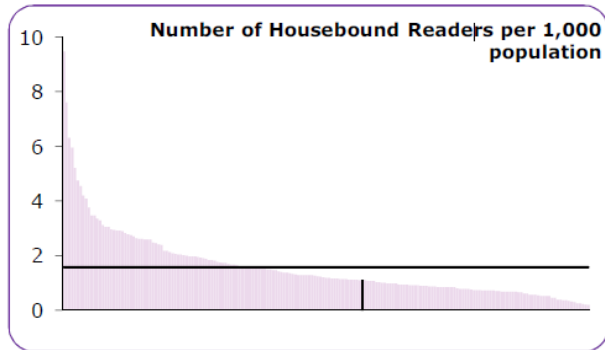


Figure 14

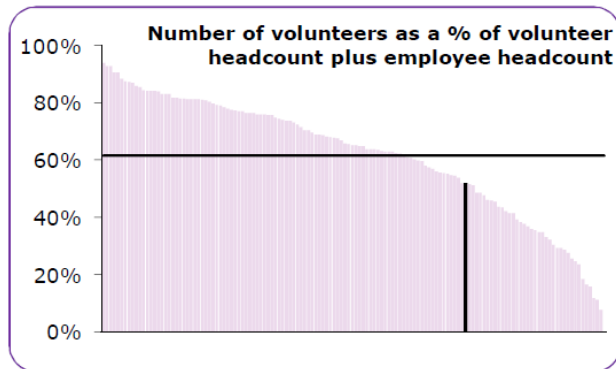


Figure 15

Request service

Herefordshire uses library stock as a county-wide resource and reservations for lending items on the library catalogue are free to library members.

Fig 12 shows that in 2014-15 there were 41,269 reservations for items in stock in Herefordshire libraries. 64% were reserved online.

(In 2015-16 there were 39,018 reservations for items in stock in Herefordshire libraries; 67% were reserved online).

Computer usage

The use of public computers in libraries is another key indicator of library usage. This chart shows the number of hours recorded on public library computers per 1,000 population. (It does not include wifi usage).

Housebound readers

Herefordshire Libraries runs a delivered service to Housebound customers, residential homes and sheltered housing schemes. This chart shows the number of Housebound Readers per 1000 population compared to other authorities in England.

Volunteers

Many library authorities use volunteers to support library services. This chart compares the number of volunteers and paid employees.

In Herefordshire 50% of staffing hours are provided by volunteers.

Herefordshire Library and Customer Services annual statistics

The following Library statistics are taken from Herefordshire Libraries Alto Library Management System. The Customer Services statistics are taken from Herefordshire Council Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management system.

Where possible, the following statistics have been taken from the most recent financial year (2015-16). Because of the temporary closure of Hereford Library, in some cases that may not give an accurate picture of library usage: for example, use of public computers in libraries. In such cases the previous years' figures have been included for comparison, or a two-year data range has been used which more accurately reflects typical usage.

Herefordshire Library Service

On 11th September 2015, Hereford Library, the county's busiest library, closed for emergency building work. Opening hours at Belmont Library were extended and a temporary pop-up library opened at Hereford Town Hall on 24th November 2015. The temporary site holds a small selection of book and other resources and acts as an access point to the whole county library stock. There are no public computers available. Because of this, the figures for 2015-16 are not typical of annual library usage and should be treated with caution. We have included figures for 2014-15 for Hereford and Belmont (in italics) for comparison.

Library	Hours open per week (2016)	Visits per year	Visits per hour*	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Hereford / Town Hall	37.0	96,692	50	101,493	8,677	18 / 0	11,594	7,824
<i>Hereford 2014-15</i>	<i>37.0</i>	<i>184,434</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>175,638</i>	<i>11,840</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>25,359</i>	<i>15,555</i>
Leominster	35.5	102,211	55	109,912	6,984	12	11,775	8,424
Ross-on-Wye	35.5	103,683	56	97,997	7,093	11	10,139	6,991
Ledbury	32.5	110,450	65	57,545	3,870	5	4,311	3,126
Belmont	38	34,697	22	45,877	4,084	2	2,105	1,031
<i>Belmont 2014-15</i>	<i>22.5</i>	<i>22,527</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>26,100</i>	<i>2,390</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1,028</i>	<i>849</i>
Kington	18	20,769	22	17,037	1,880	7	2,265	3,302
Bromyard	24	12,448	9	17,560	1,769	7	2,114	1,459
Colwall	15.5	11,138	15	13,241	1,482	5	1,324	1,194
Leintwardine	9.5	2,769	7	5,183	563	1	77	49
Weobley	6.0	2,491	8	4,454	482	3	152	355
Peterchurch	10.0	1,890	4	3,108	429	0	n/a	n/a
Delivered Services	n/a	1,607	n/a	22,218	2,161	0	n/a	n/a
Stock Unit	n/a	n/a	n/a	15,968	315	0	n/a	n/a
Herefordshire	261.5	500,845	314	511,593	39,789	71	45,856	33,755

Table 1: Opening hours, visits, items loaned and reserved, and computer usage for 2015-16

*Visits per hour based on average hours open per week 2015-16 (some sites increased opening hours part way through the year)

In 2015-16 (March-April) libraries in Herefordshire received over 500,000 physical visits and loaned out over 511,000 items. There were nearly 46,000 computer sessions on library public access computers. Nearly 40,000 items were requested; 67% of these were reserved online.

Herefordshire library stock and borrower profiles

Library stock is used as a countywide resource which circulates around all sites. Customers can reserve any lending item on the library catalogue free of charge and have it delivered to any Herefordshire library. The following figure shows where most of the active library stock is located. Active stock means it has been issued in the past two years. This chart shows the proportions in March 2015, before the temporary closure of Hereford Library.

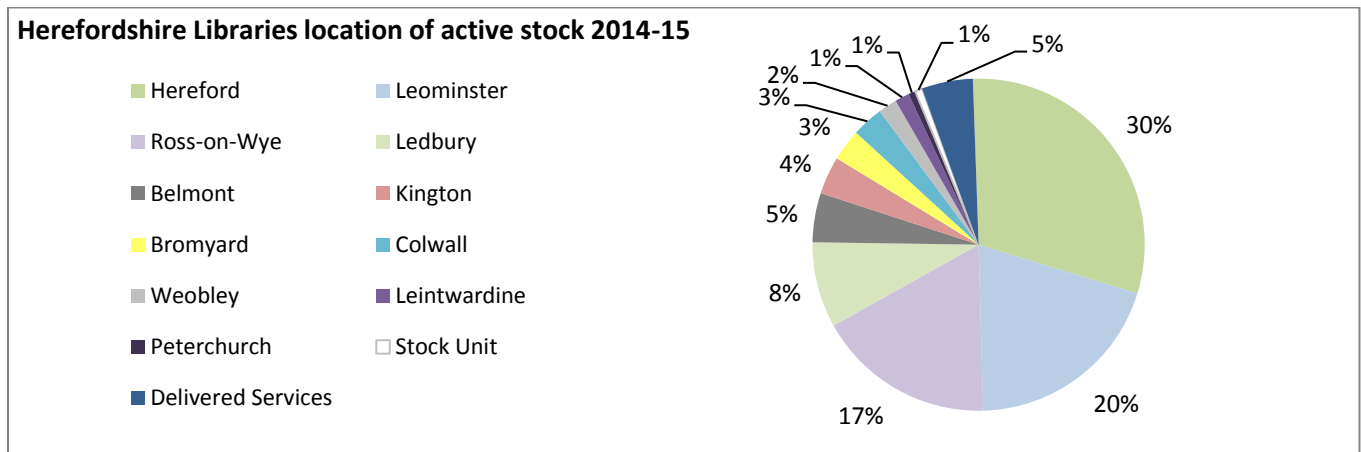


Figure 16

Figure 17 below shows the library loans by the different types of borrower. This is based on people who borrow items, so it doesn't include all the other reasons people visit the libraries. The largest group is adults, although there is significant use by children, particularly if you combine individual borrowing with loans to schools. There are also a large number of Access borrowers, which will include customers with visual impairment, learning disabilities, dementia, dyslexia, or other conditions which make it difficult to read a physical book.

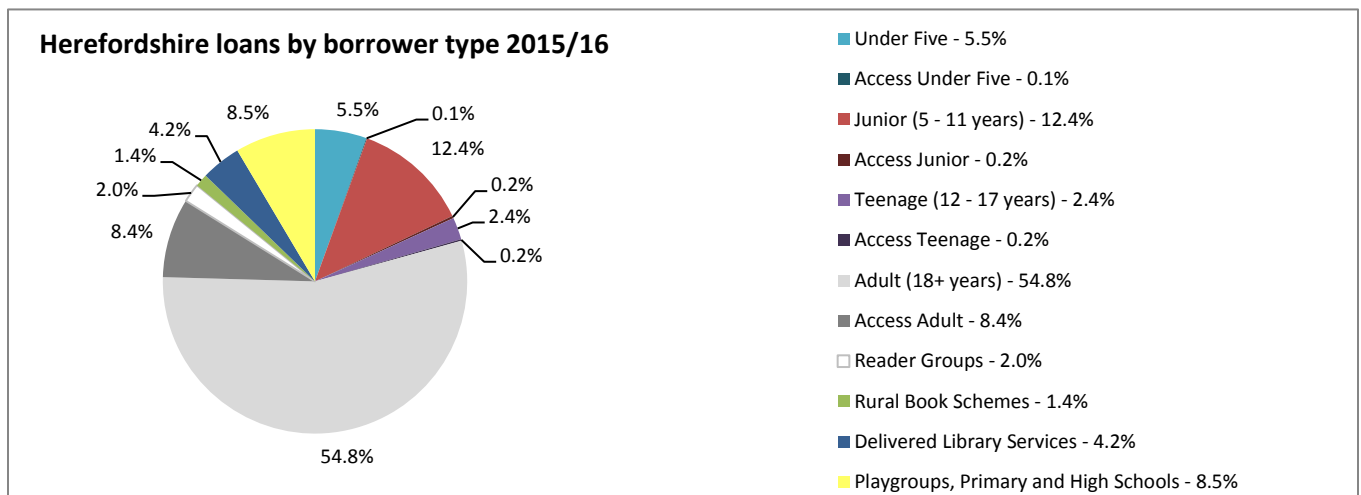


Figure 17

If the figures are broken down further, it shows that libraries are a whole-of-life service, but they are particularly important at certain times in people’s lives.

Most regular library users are first introduced to libraries as children: by parents, grandparents or schools. Research has shown that under-fives who regularly visit libraries have a significant advantage when they start school, and this advantage can continue right through primary and into high school. A significant number of teenagers do use libraries, but many drift away at this point as they move on to jobs or further and higher education. They come back when they need the library again: for studying, applying for jobs, looking for information or advice, gaining new skills, and most commonly when they have children of their own. As adults, some people use libraries very regularly, often on a weekly basis. Others drop in and out of library usage depending on their needs and available time. They may only come in a few times a year for particular purposes for a while until they have more time, or their needs change, but they still need and value the services the library provides and they likely to use the library more as they get older.

The chart below (Figure 18) shows the age breakdown of Herefordshire library members who have borrowed at least one book in the past year. It doesn’t include group members like playgroups, rural book schemes, readers groups, etc., or the few people who don’t have a date of birth on their record, but it does show that the full spectrum of the population uses libraries in Herefordshire, but some age groups use it more than most: specifically young children and older people.

Library use and borrowing by age

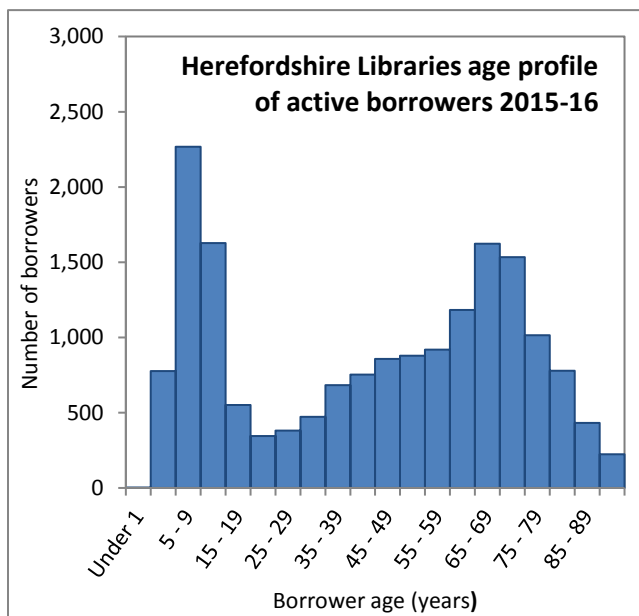


Figure 18

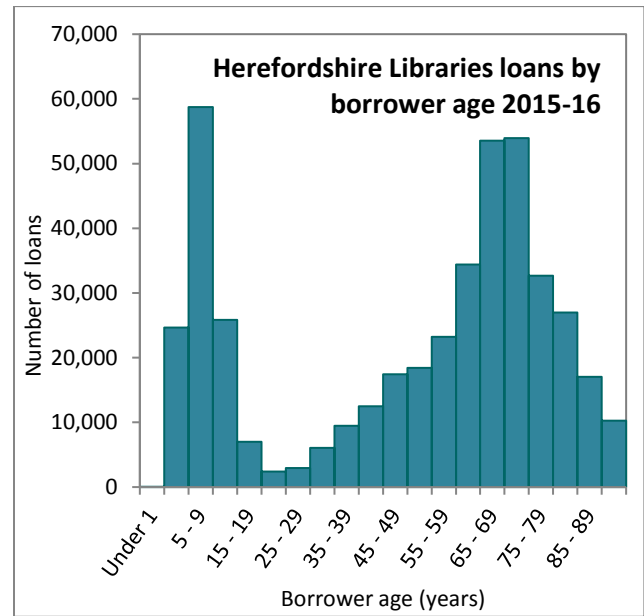


Figure 19

Borrowing books is still the main reason people visit libraries. Over half a million items were borrowed from Herefordshire libraries last year. The library loans by borrower age graph (Figure 19) shows how many items each age group borrowed. All age groups borrowed books and other items, but the groups that borrowed multiple items per person were children and over 65s. Other age groups also borrow books, but they are more likely to use

the library for other reasons as well - accessing customer services or DWP, using the public computers, studying and homework support, or parents/carers accompanying younger children.

The age profile of customers who use the public computers, however is quite different. The chart below (Fig 20) shows the age breakdown of Herefordshire library members who have used a library computer or library wi-fi in the last two years. The profile shows that members from all age groups use library ICT, with the highest use by young adults. The figures are taken from the libraries Netloan public computer management system. The site with the highest level of public computer use is Hereford Library, but the present temporary site doesn't have any public computers so a two-year sample was taken to demonstrate the standard pattern of usage.

Computer and wifi use by age

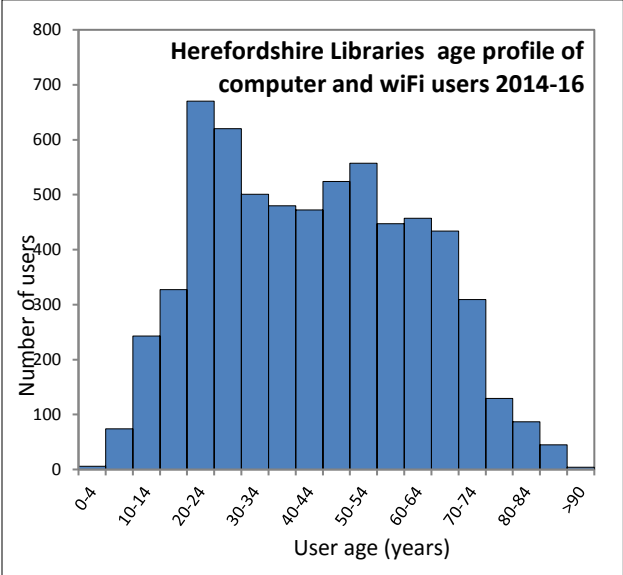


Figure 20

Mosaic Public Sector profiles

Mosaic Public Sector is a customer segmentation tool that classifies households and postcodes into one of 15 groups based on the likelihoods of the people living in them to have particular characteristics. It is unlikely that a household in a particular group will have every characteristic typical to that group, but it gives an insight into likely preference and behaviours that are not available elsewhere.

The charts below show the profile of Herefordshire residents who used Herefordshire libraries in 2014-16 compared to the profile of the county's population (it only includes people resident in Herefordshire, not those customers who live outside the county). Herefordshire library users have a broadly similar profile to the county population as a whole. Across Herefordshire by far the most prevalent group is A: *Country Living* and this is reflected in the profile of library users; however there is a notable difference between the profiles of members who borrow books and those who use library computers.

Significant groups in Herefordshire

A: Country Living – these are homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Some people are landowners or farmers, others run small businesses from home, some are retired and others commute distances to professional jobs.

Other significant groups are:

D: Rural Reality - people who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.

F: Senior Security - The most elderly group (average age of 75); living independently with property equity. Some are living with their long-time spouse, but a larger number are now living alone, and women outnumber men.

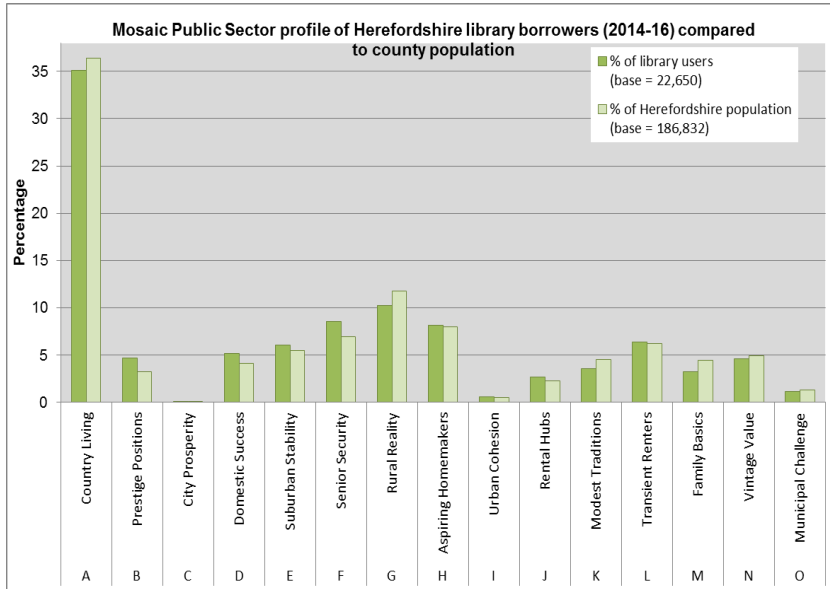
L: Transient Renters – generally single people, typically in their 20s and 30s, who pay modest private-sector rents for low cost homes. Many work full-time, however their lower skilled jobs mean that incomes are often limited.

M: Family Basics - families with children who have limited budgets and can struggle to make ends meet. Homes are low cost and are often found in suburban areas with fewer employment options. Some own their own homes, but more than half rent from social landlords. Families have the support of tax credits, but significant levels of financial stress still exist.

N: Vintage Value - elderly people (particularly women) who mostly live alone, either in social or private housing, often built with the elderly in mind. Levels of independence vary, but with health needs growing and incomes declining, many require an increasing amount of support.

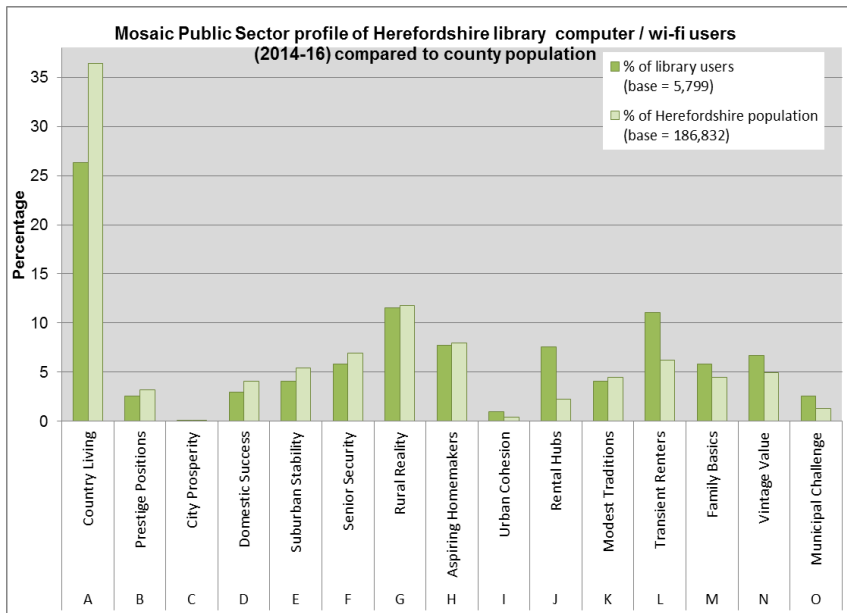
O: Municipal Challenge - long-term social renters living in low-value flats in urban locations, or small terraces on outlying estates - limited employment options and correspondingly low household incomes.

Mosaic profile of Herefordshire - library borrowers



The Mosaic Public Sector Profile of Herefordshire library members shows that people on lower incomes are more likely to use library computers and wi-fi. There is a higher proportion of *Rural Hubs*, *Transient Renters*, *Family Basics*, *Vintage Value* and *Municipal Challenge* groups, compared to the county population as a whole.

Mosaic profile of Herefordshire - users of library computers and wi-fi



Library branch profiles

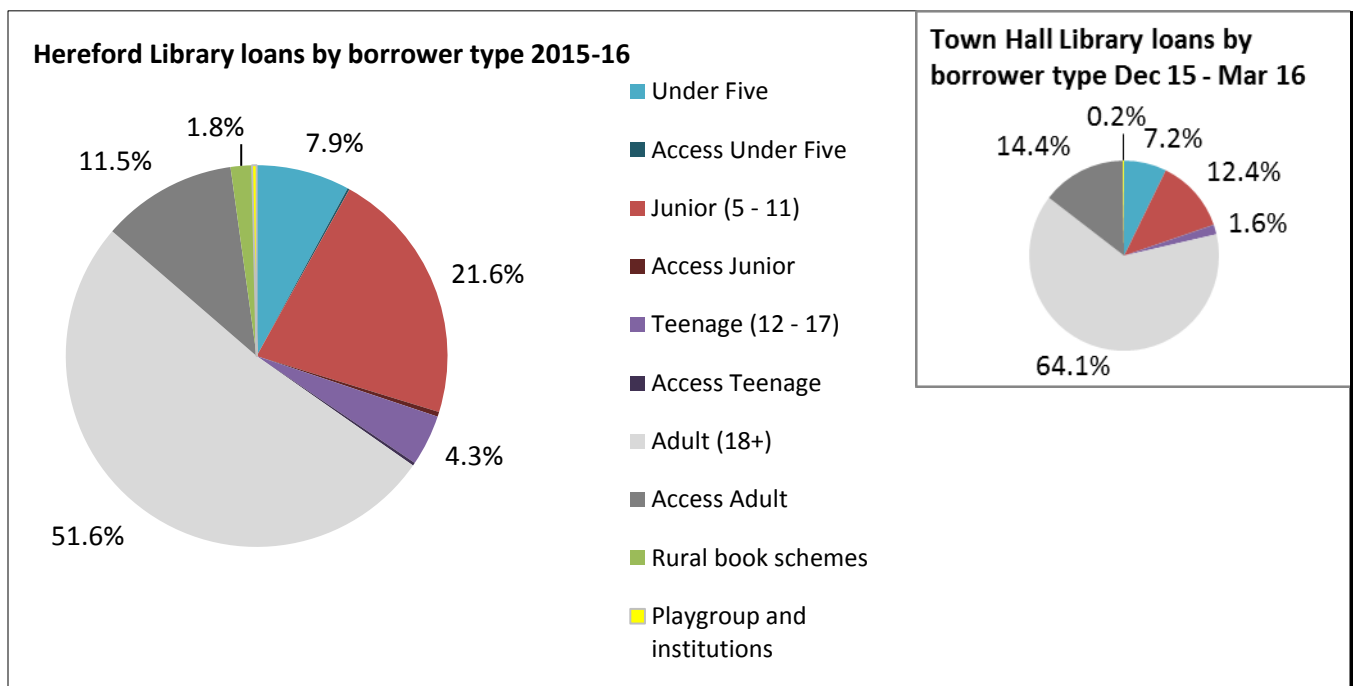
The following reports show the user profile for each library. What they demonstrate is that each library reflects their individual community and they are all slightly different.

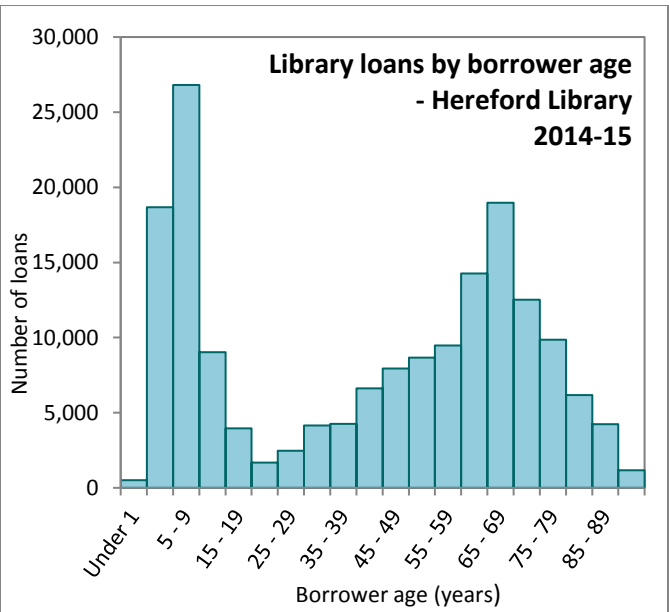
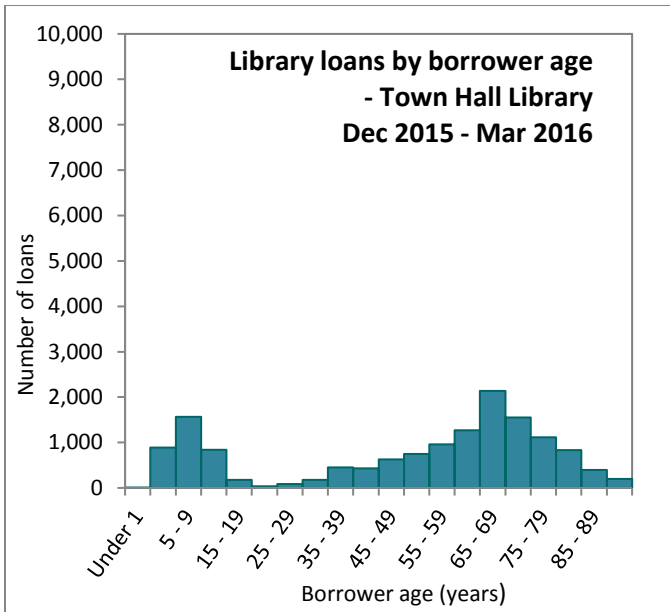
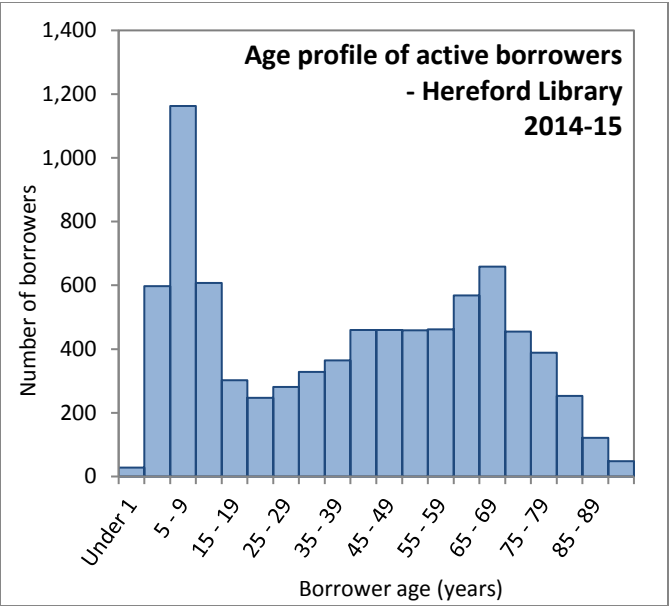
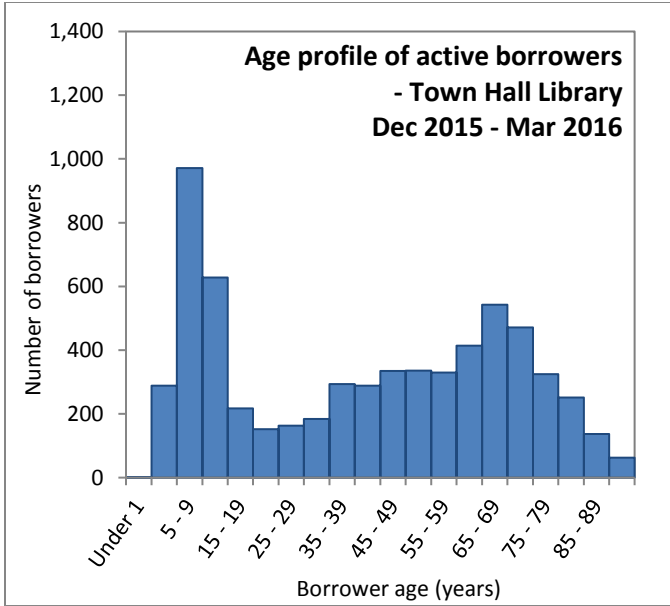
Hereford Library

Hereford Library is the largest library in the county. It holds 30% of the active library stock and houses the main reference and local studies collections. There is heavy use by all groups, including a large number of Junior, Under-fives and Access borrowers and a significant number of teenagers relative to the population. Hereford Library also supports local Playgroups and Rural Book Schemes in the centre of the county. Hereford has a younger age profile than the county as a whole. This may reflect the heavy usage of public computers and parents who bring young children to the library. Usage by older groups is proportionally lower than average in the county; one factor may be lack of parking nearby. Some customers who borrow items from Hereford Library return them to Belmont or Peterchurch Libraries where parking is available.

Hereford Library closed for essential building work on 11th September 2015. On 24th November a temporary pop-up library opened at Hereford Town Hall, offering a limited service with access to the whole county library stock through the free reservation system. The following tables show Hereford Library usage for 2014-15 and Hereford Town Hall Library usage for 2015-16 for comparison.

Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Hereford / Town Hall	37.0	96,692	50	101,493	8,677	18 / 0	11,594	7,824
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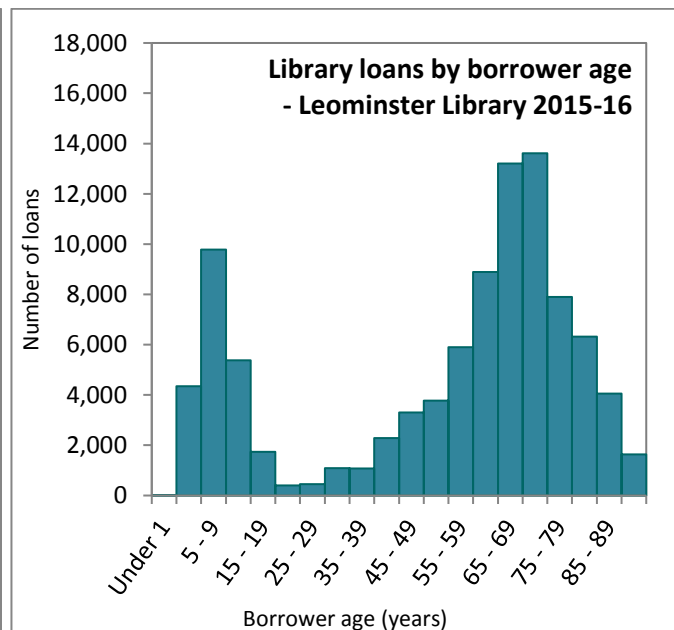
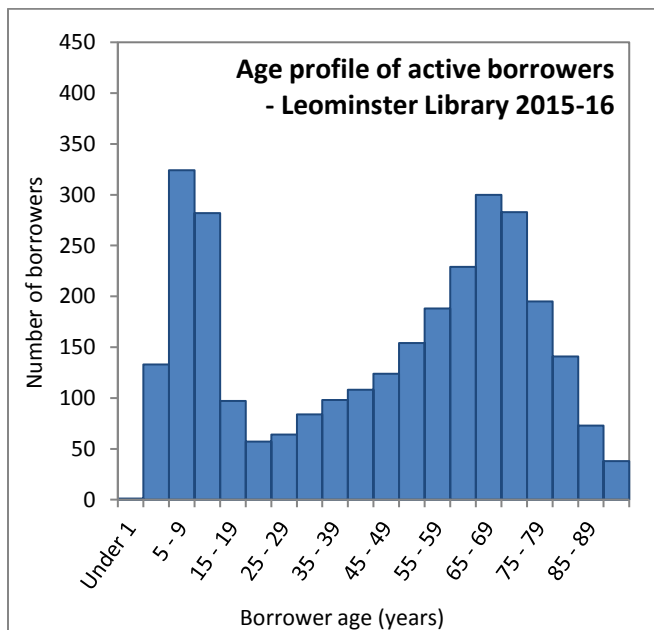
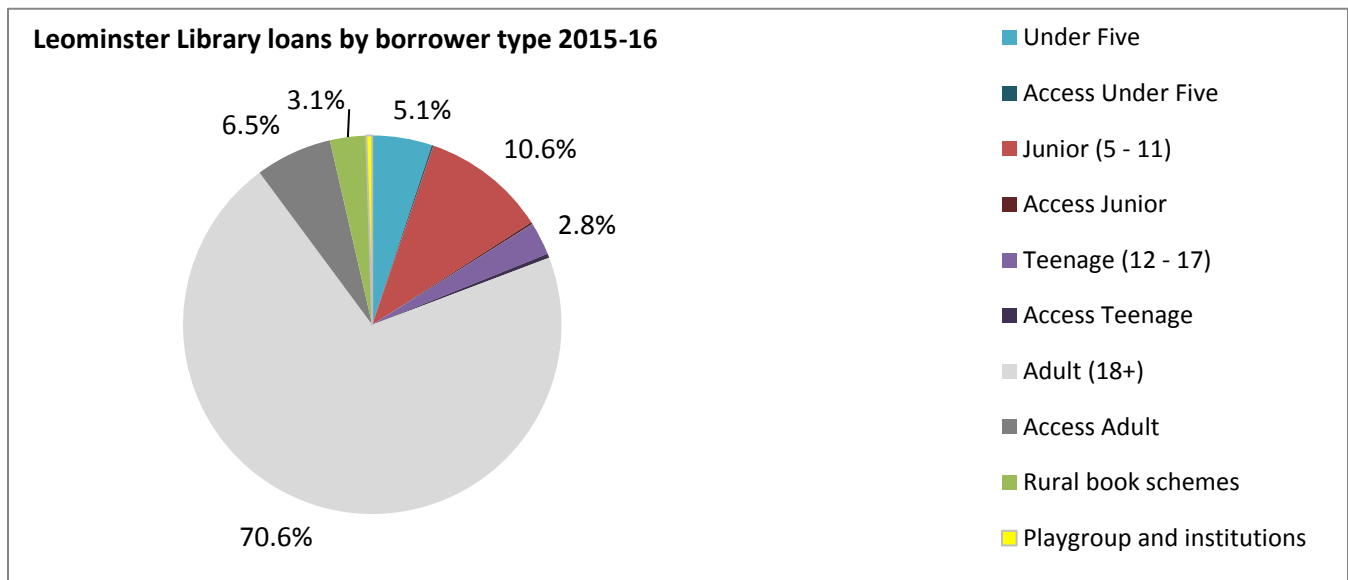




Leominster Library

Leominster is the largest library in the north of the county. It holds 20% of the active library stock. Leominster has significant usage by children and Access Borrowers, but the largest group of library users is adult. Leominster also supports Rural Book Schemes in the north and west of the county. It is used by all age groups, particularly over 60s. Leominster Library also includes Herefordshire Council Customer Services and other services. It also has exhibition space and meeting rooms for hire.

Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
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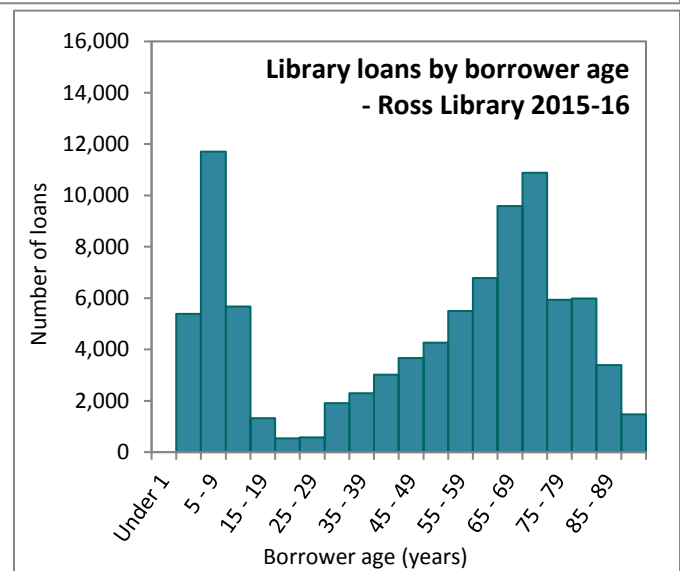
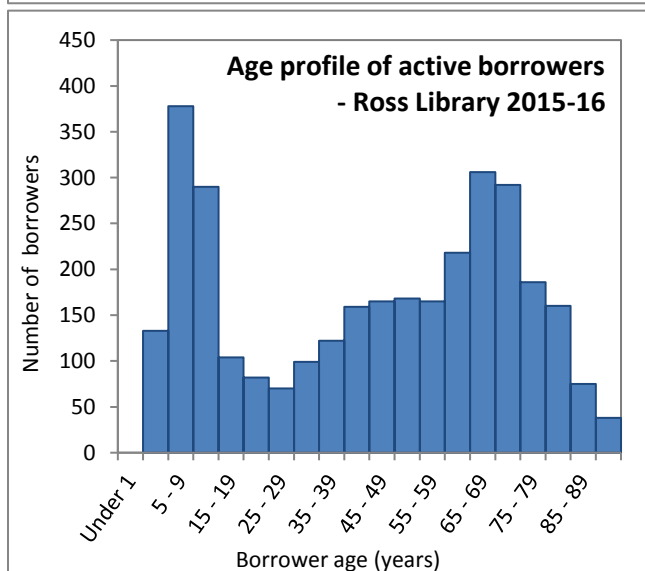
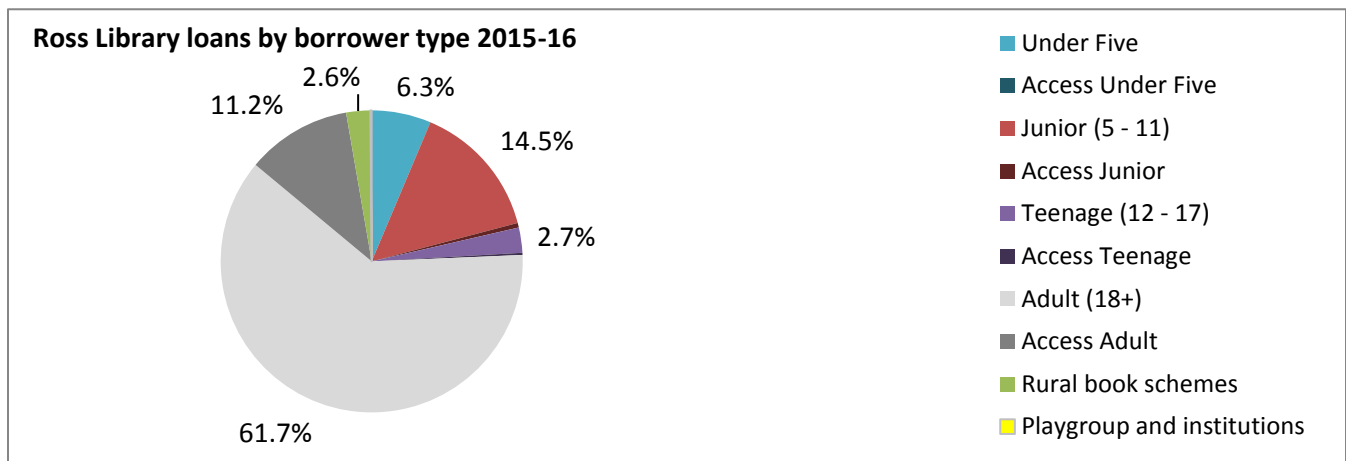


Ross Library

Ross Library is the largest library in the south of the county. It is comparable to Leominster in terms of usage, although Ross only holds 17% of the active library stock compared to Leominster's 20%. Ross has a similar number of library members as Leominster, but a different customer profile. Although adults still form the largest group of borrowers, there are large groups of children and teenagers, and a significant number of Access borrowers. Ross also supports the Rural Book Schemes in the south of the county and currently supports the Rural Book Schemes in the centre of the county while Hereford Library is closed. Ross Library includes Herefordshire Council Customer Services. Other services on site include the DWP Job Centre Plus and Registrars Service. It also has exhibition space for hire.

The age profile shows high usage by children and Access members, and a larger proportion of young adults than some other sites. This may be influenced by the presence of the DWP onsite, but is also a reflection of the local population profile.

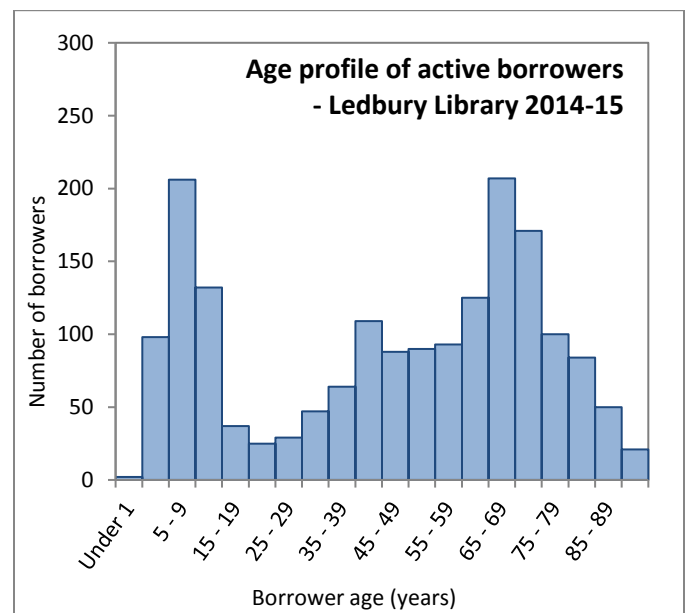
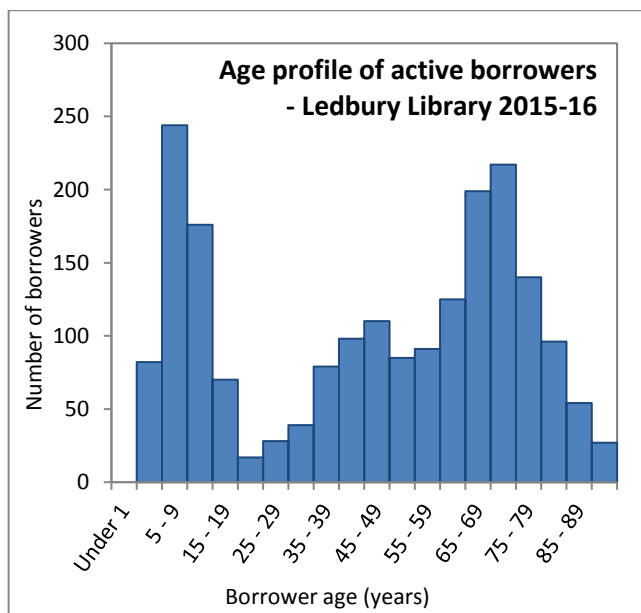
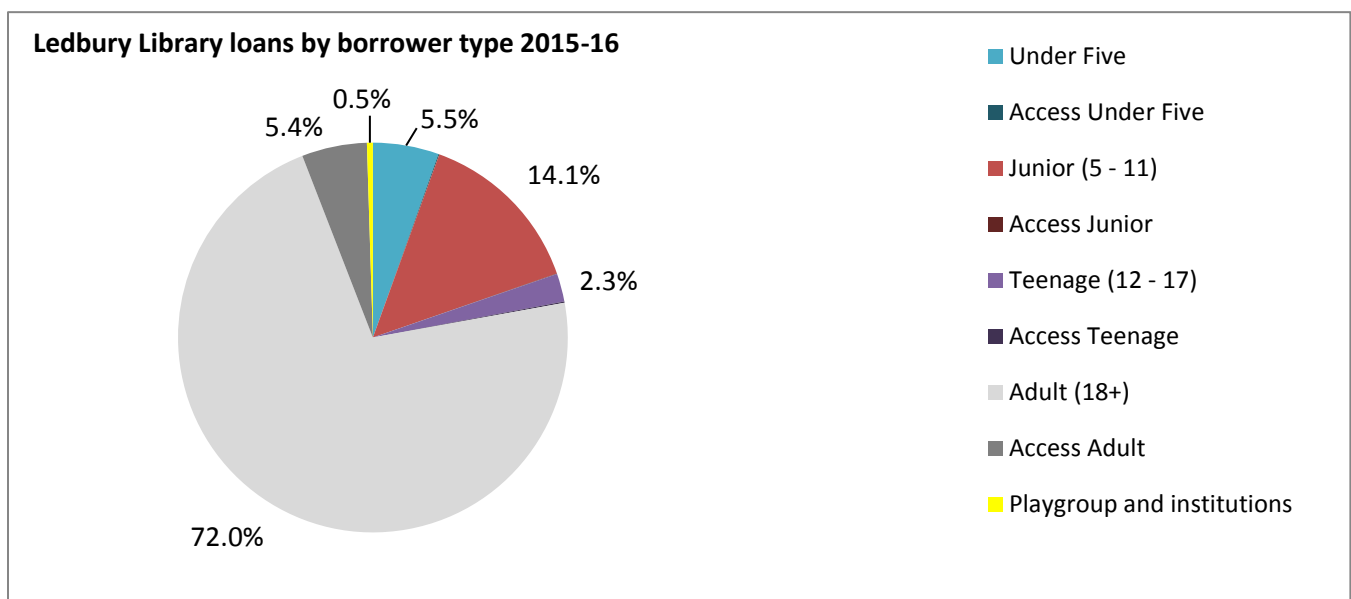
Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Ross-on-Wye	35.5	103,683	56	97,997	7,093	11	10,139	6,991

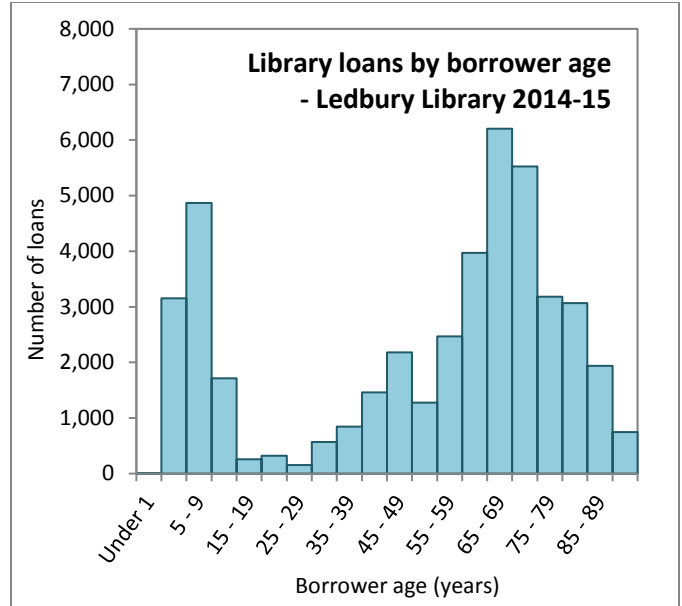
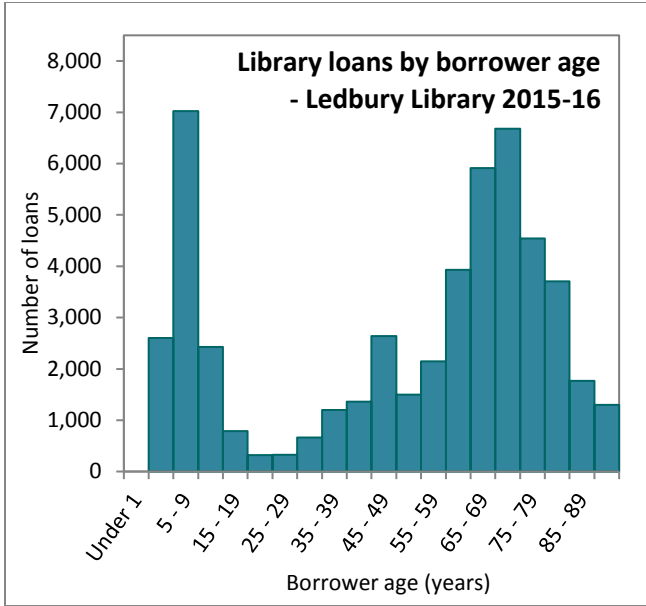


Ledbury Library

In March 2015 Ledbury Library relocated to The Master's House, a unique medieval hall renovated as part of an HLF funded project. The charts below show the borrower profile in the old building 2014-15 and in the new site 2015-16. Ledbury Library also includes Herefordshire Council Customer Services.

Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Ledbury Library 2015-16	32.5	110,450	65	57,545	3,870	5	4,311	3,126
<i>Ledbury Library 2014-15</i>	<i>24.7</i>	<i>48,308</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>50,202</i>	<i>4,264</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3,074</i>	<i>1,328</i>





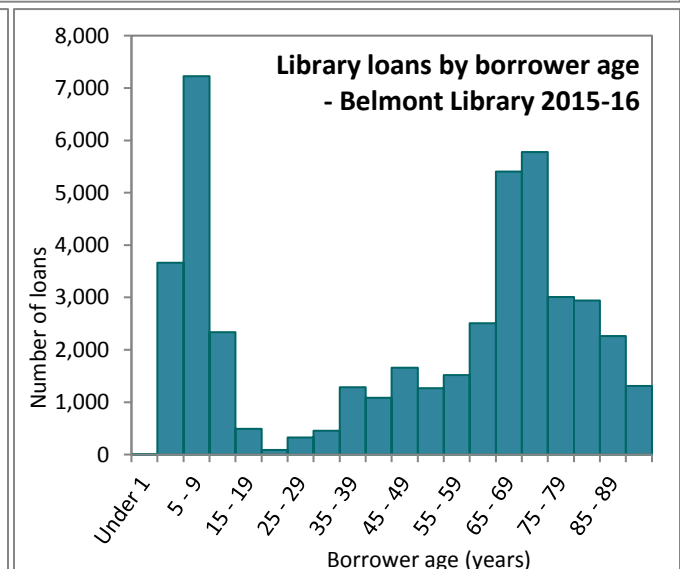
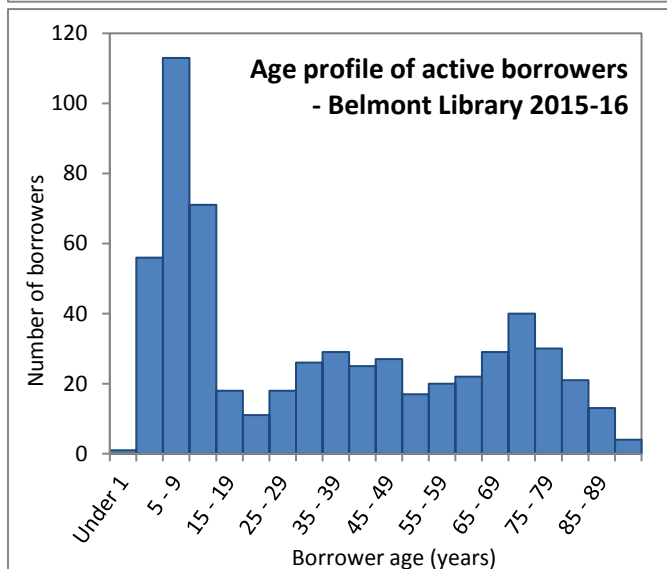
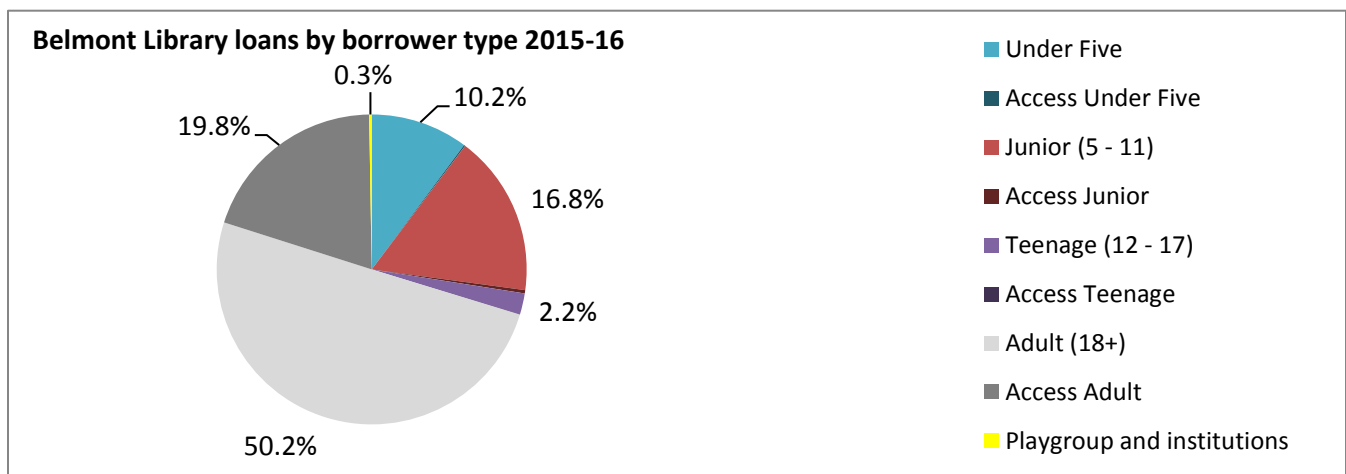
The tables above shows how library usage has changed since Ledbury Library moved to The Master’s House. Library usage in all age groups has increased since moving to the new building. Loans have increased by 7,343. Vists are up 129% and with Hereford closed this is now the most visited library in the county. Notably, usage by children and teenagers has grown significantly.

Belmont Library

Belmont Library is a Hereford satellite branch, located in Belmont Community Centre in the middle of a large residential development. The library membership has a noticeably younger age profile than the rest of the county with particularly high usage by children and Access members. Previous Impact Surveys have shown there is significant crossover with Hereford Library members and many Hereford borrowers use Belmont library to return items rather than travelling into the city centre.

On 11th September 2015, Hereford Library, the county's busiest library, closed for emergency building work. Opening hours at Belmont Library were extended and a temporary pop-up library opened at Hereford Town Hall. We have included figures for 2014-15 for Belmont (in italics) for comparison.

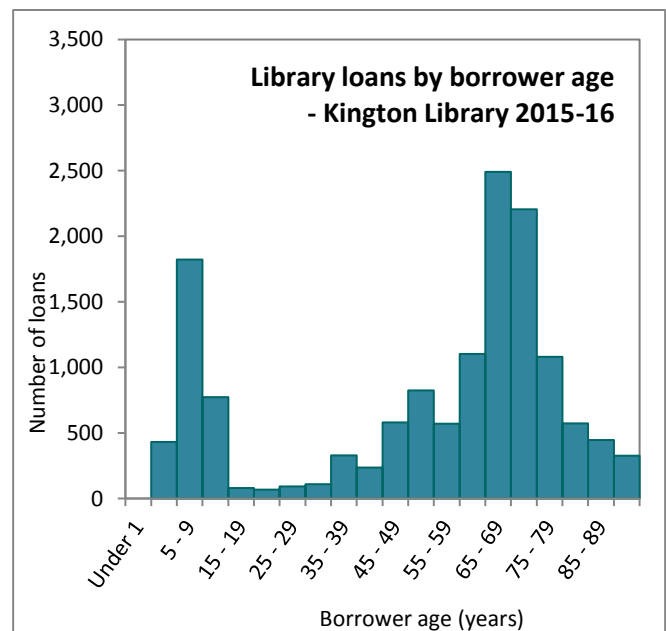
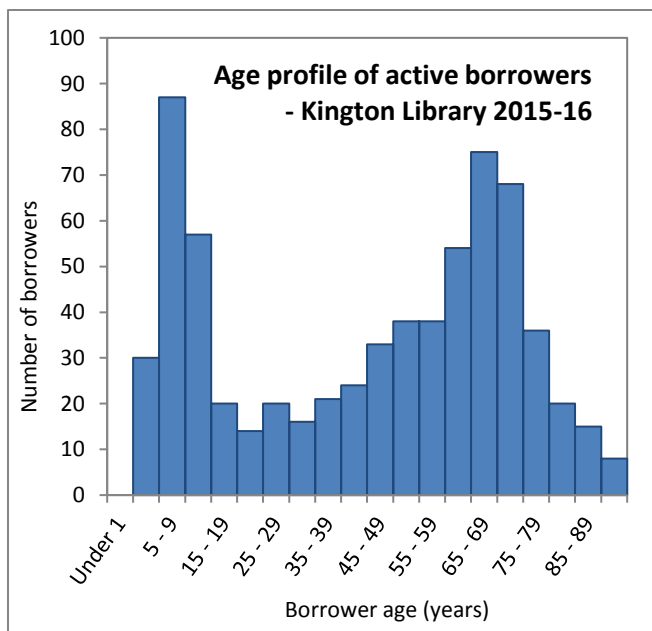
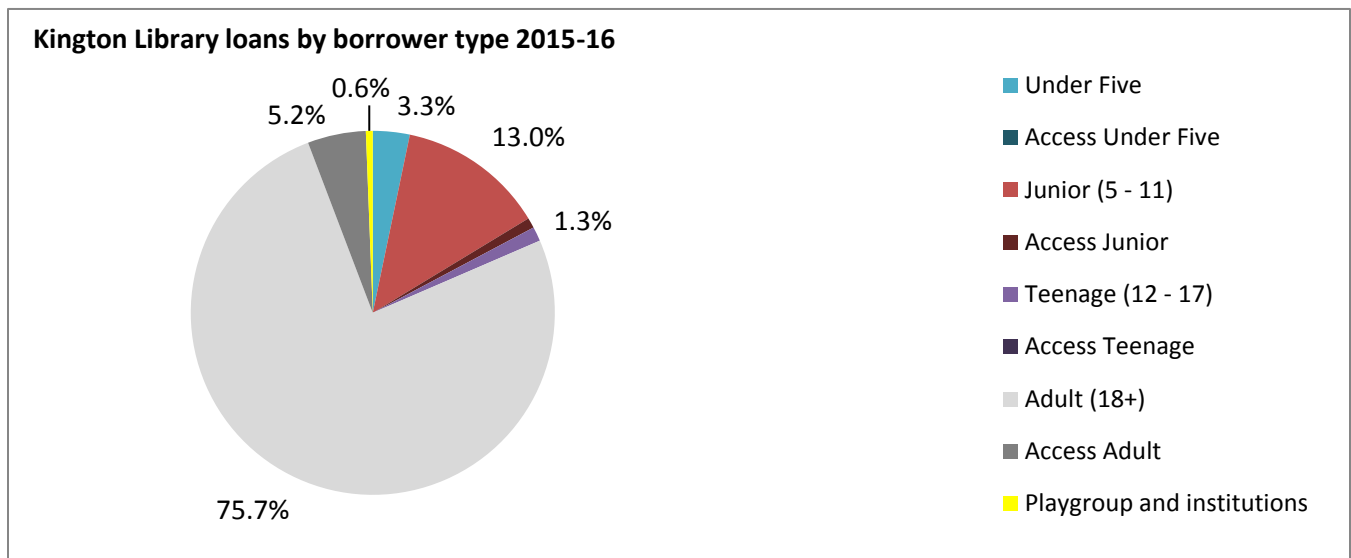
Library	Hours open per week (2016)	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Belmont	38	34,697	22	45,877	4,084	2	2,105	1,031
<i>Belmont 2014-15</i>	<i>22.5</i>	<i>22,527</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>26,100</i>	<i>2,390</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1,028</i>	<i>849</i>



Kington Library

In May 2015 Kington Library became part of the Kington Wellbeing Centre. The profiles shown, which date from before this development, show heavy usage by children and older customers. Over sixties borrowed most books with a dramatic peak between ages 65 - 70. Kington Library also includes Herefordshire Council Customer Services and other services.

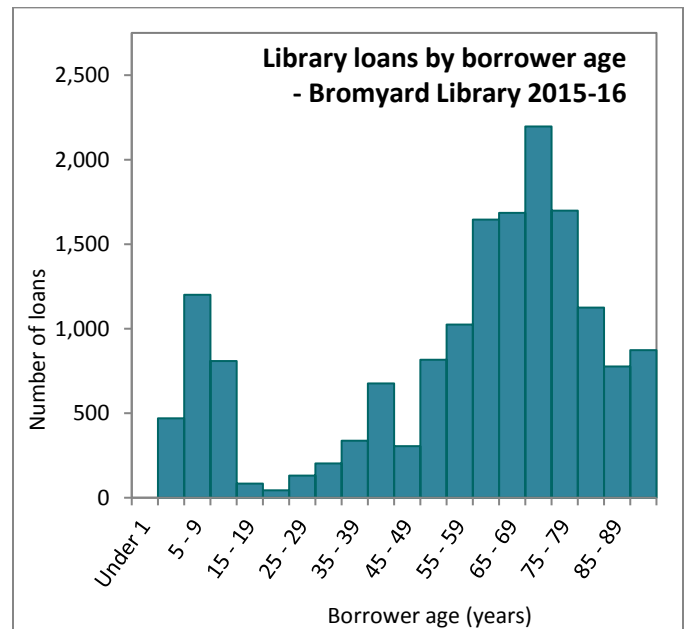
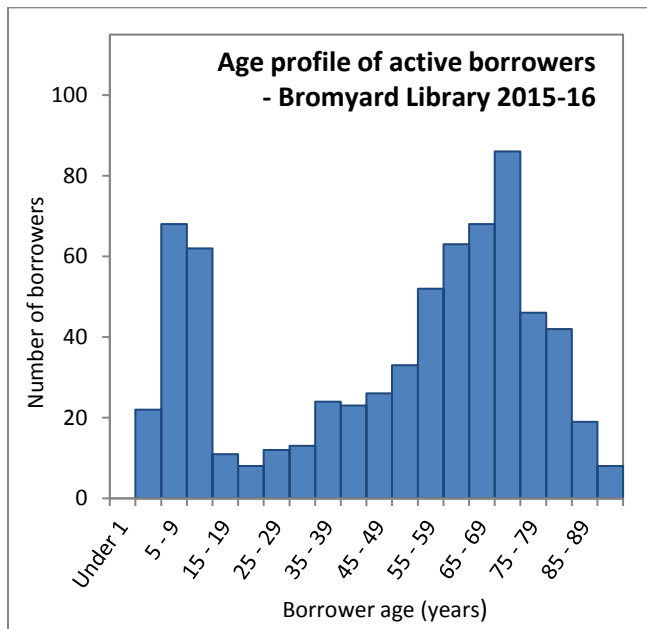
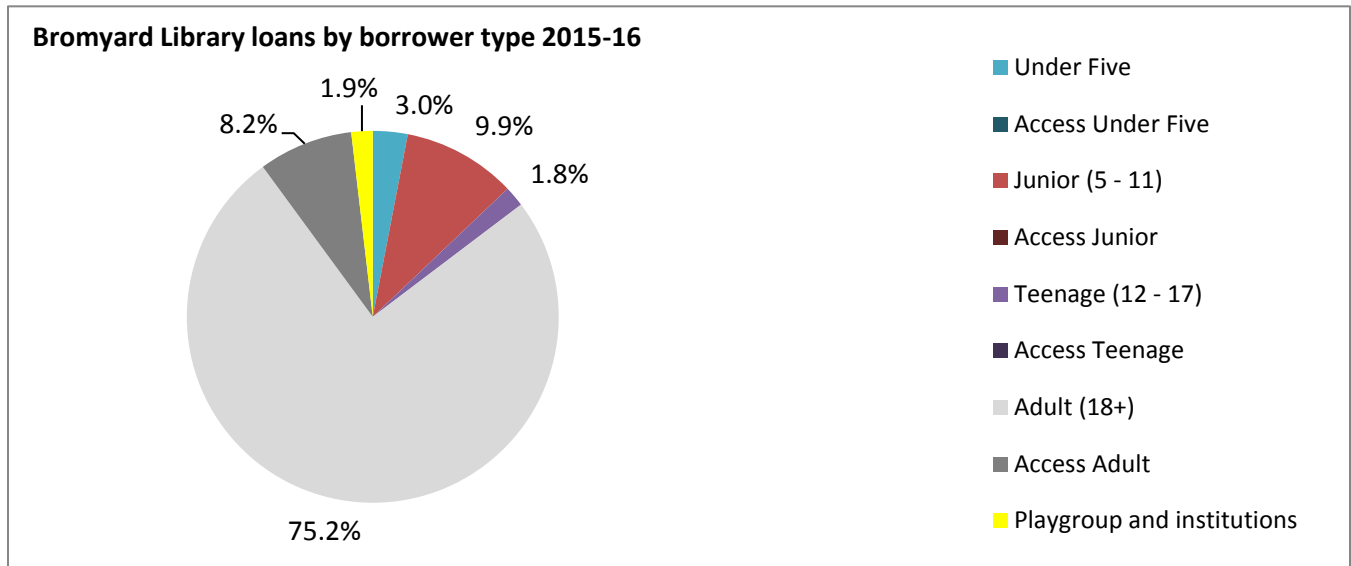
Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Kington	18.0	20,769	22	17,037	1,880	7	2,265	3,302



Bromyard Library

Bromyard Library is co-located with Halo Leisure in the Bromyard Centre. Bromyard Library also includes Herefordshire Council Customer Services.

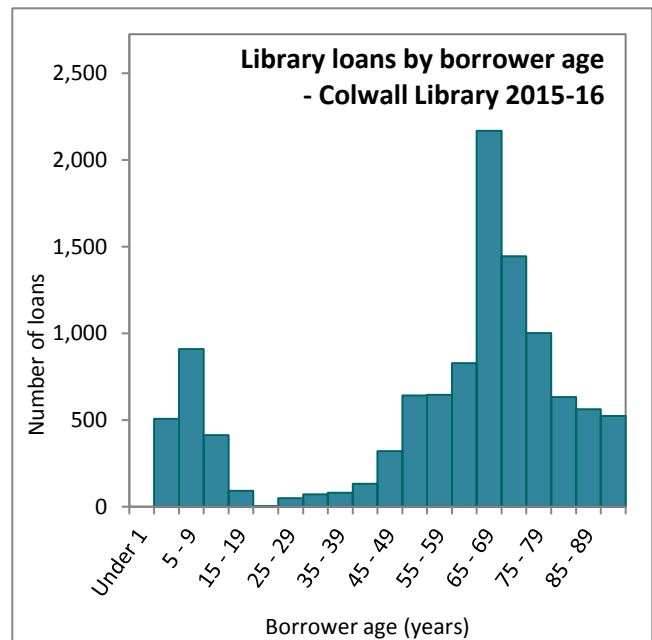
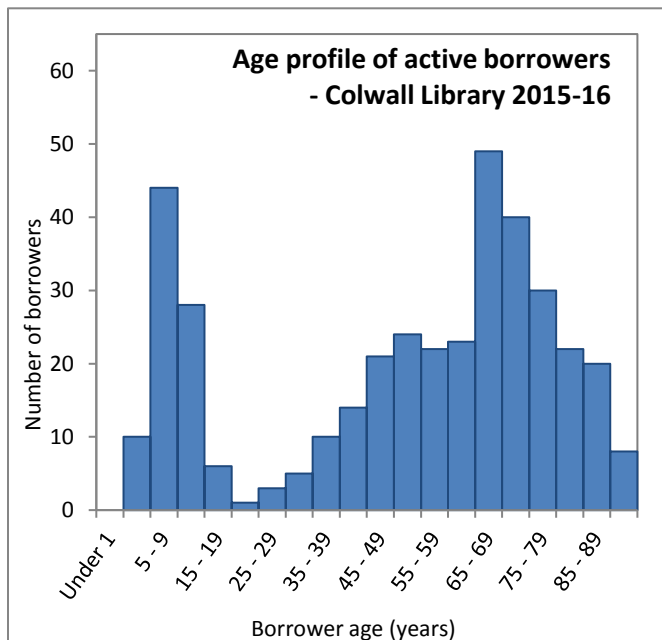
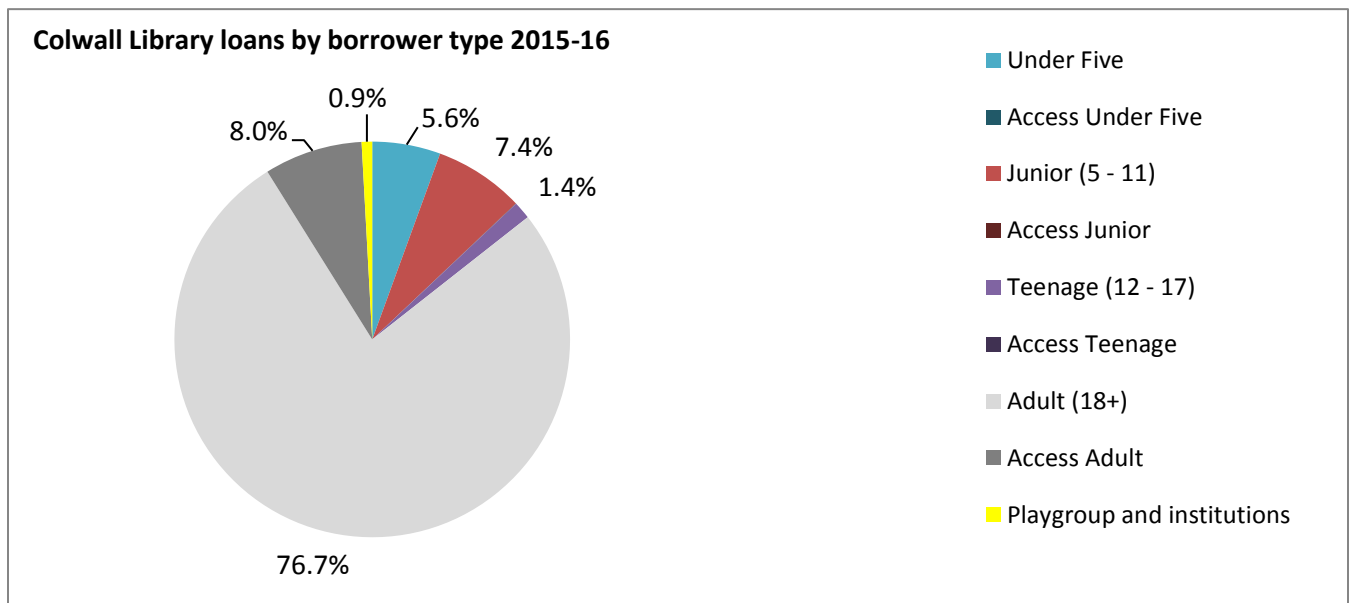
Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Bromyard	26.1	12,448	9	17,560	1,769	7	2,114	1,459



Colwall Library

Colwall Library is a Community Library run through a partnership between the local community and Herefordshire Council. The village has a higher proportion of older residents than the county average and this is reflected in the library usage.

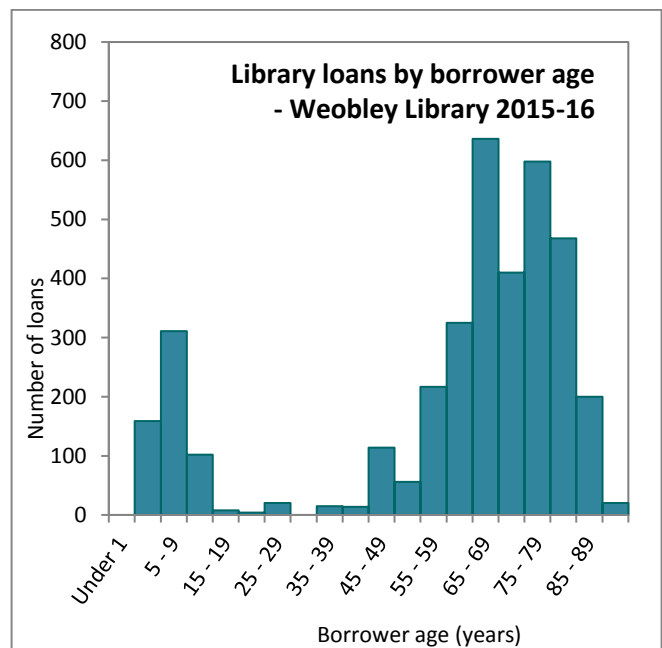
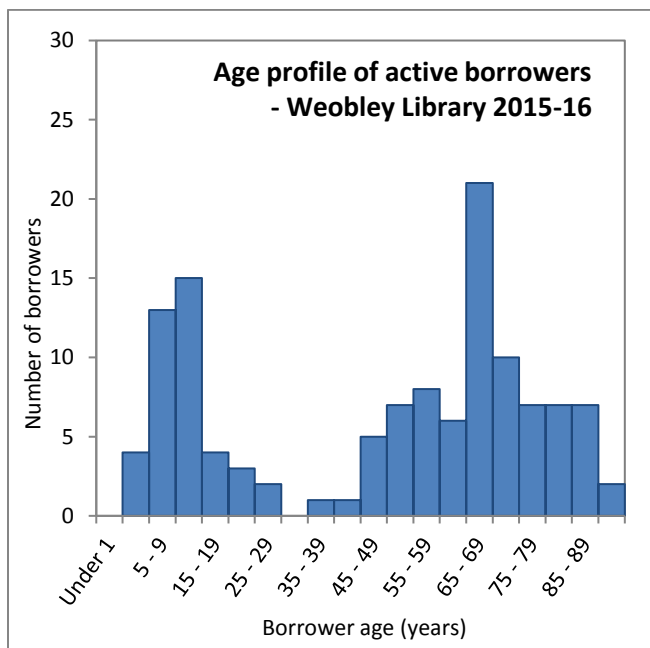
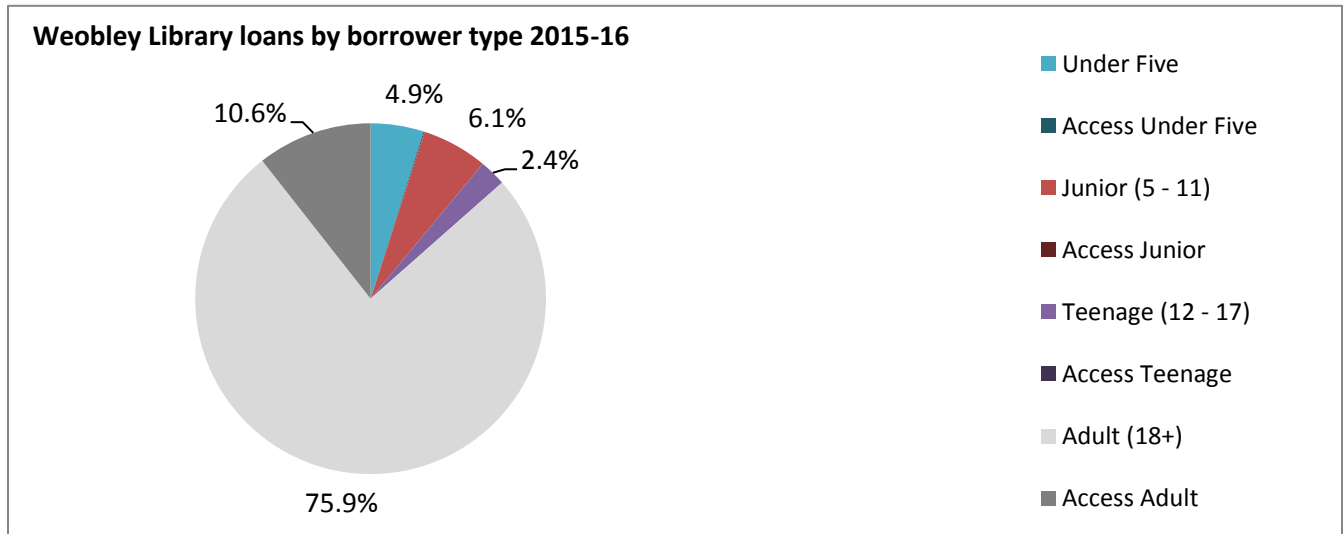
Library	Hours open per week (2016)	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Colwall	15.5	11,138	15	13,241	1,482	5	1,324	1,194



Weobley Library

Weobley Library is a Community Library where the frontline service is delivered by volunteers supported by Herefordshire Library Service. The library has a similar borrower profile to larger sites and is well used by children and older people.

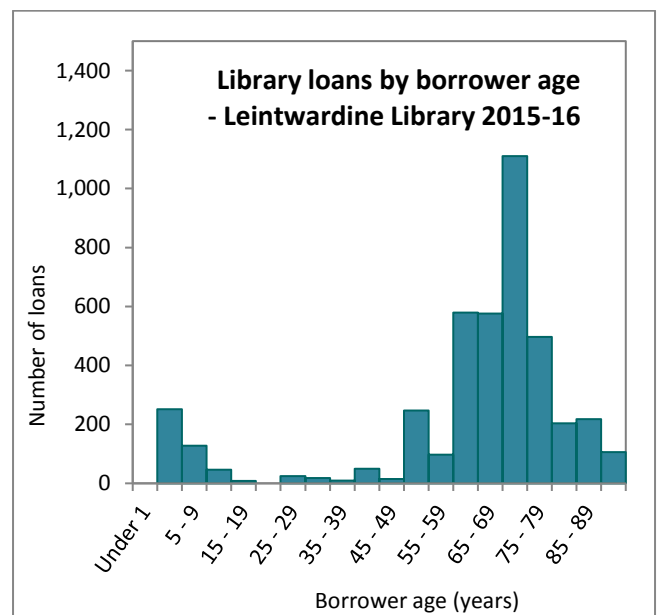
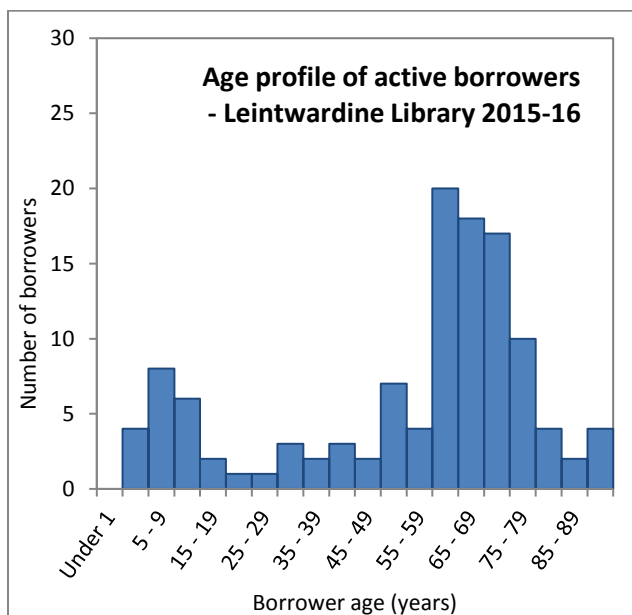
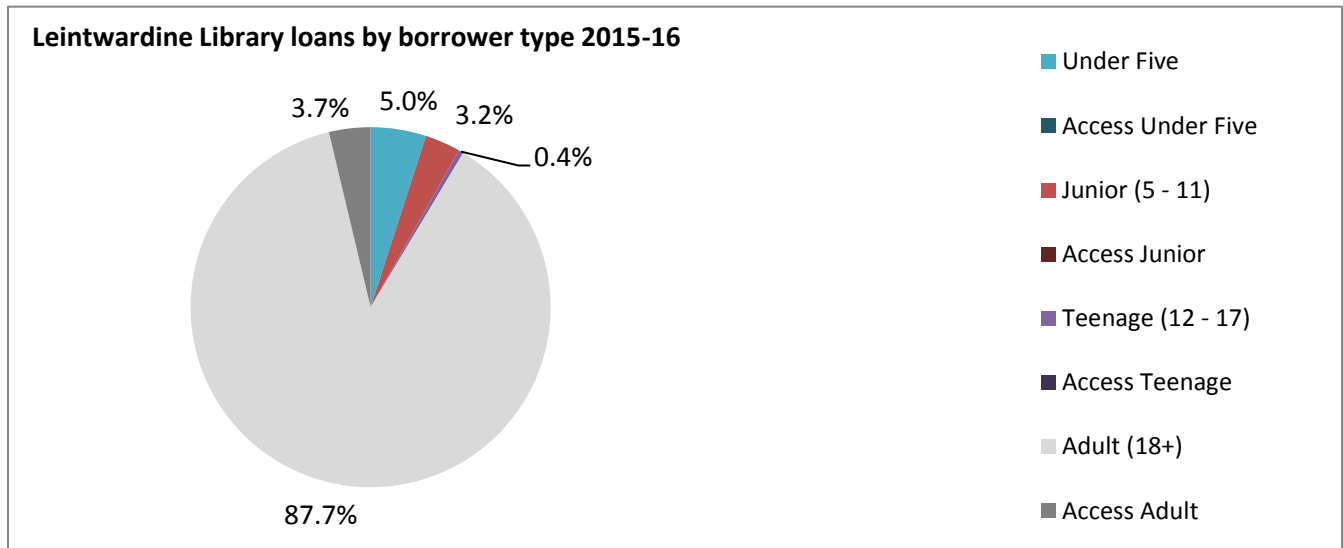
Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Weobley	6.0	2,491	8	4,454	482	3	152	355



Leintwardine Library

Leintwardine Library is a Community Library where the frontline service is delivered by volunteers supported by Herefordshire Library Service. There are fewer loans to children and young adults compared to larger sites, but significant usage by older age groups.

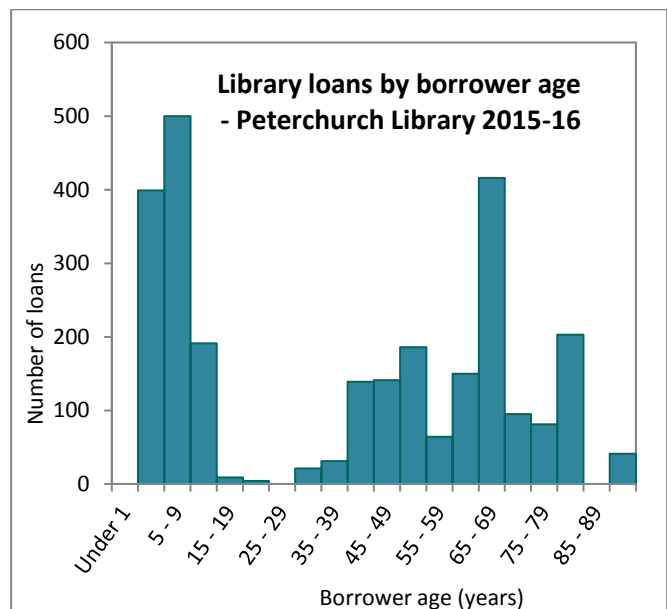
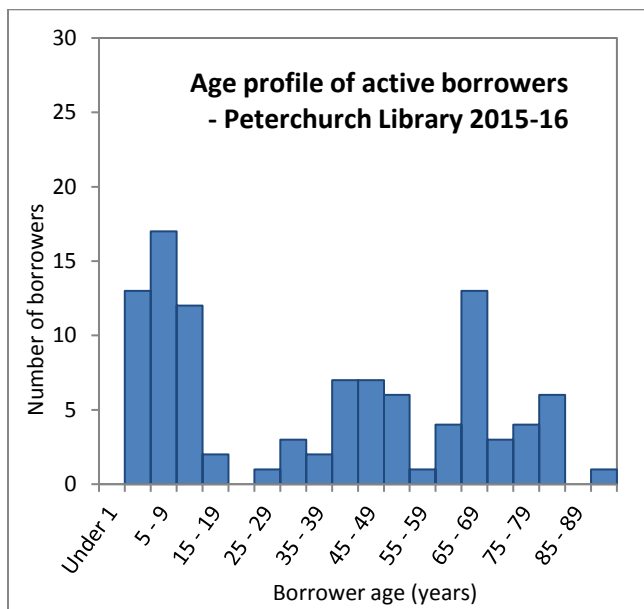
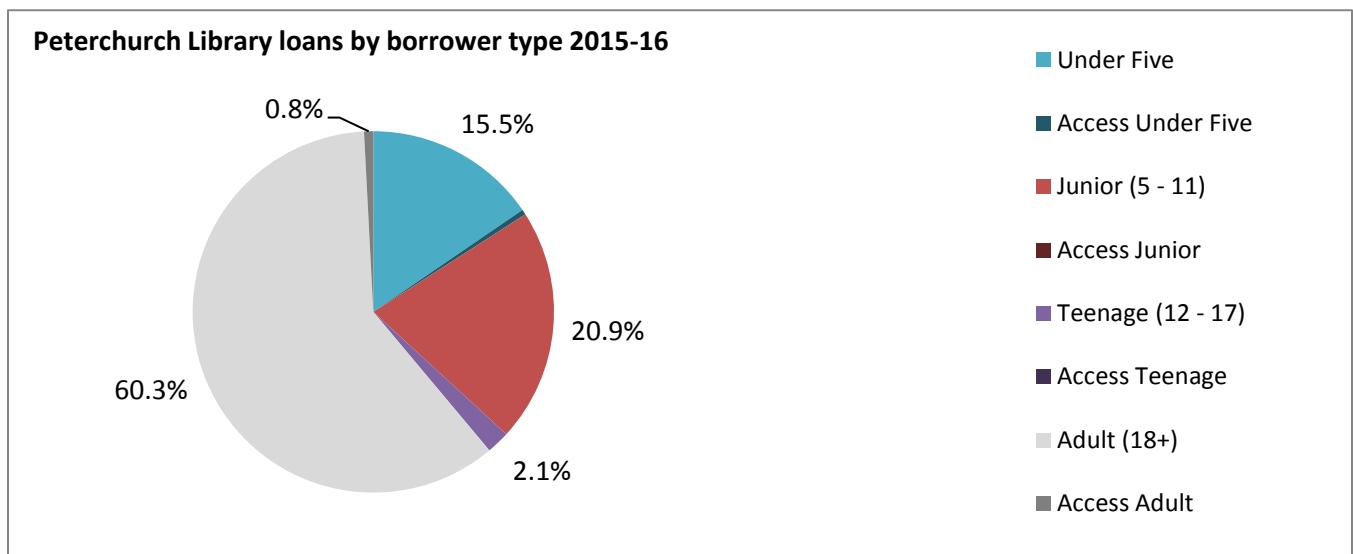
Library	Current Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Leintwardine	9.5	2,769	7	5,183	563	1	77	49



Peterchurch Library

Peterchurch Library is a Community Library where the frontline service is delivered by volunteers supported by Herefordshire Library Service. Although it is Herefordshire’s smallest library, the user profile shows it serves all age groups, with a particular emphasis on children’s borrowing.

Peterchurch Library	Hours open per week	Visits per year	Visits per hour	Loans per year	Items reserved per year	No. of public computers	Computer sessions per year	Computer hours per year
Peterchurch	10.0	1,890	4	3,108	429	0	n/a	n/a



Part 2: Customer Services market towns – Overview, Facts and Figures 2016

Herefordshire Council has five combined customer service and library sites located in the market towns. These include the Kington Library and Wellbeing Centre, Leominster Library and Customer Services, Bromyard Library and Customer Services, Ross-on-Wye Library and Customer Services and Ledbury Library and Customer Services. The teams at these sites provide both the front facing library service and Herefordshire Council customer service functions. This report focuses on the Customer Services aspects at the market town sites as a compliment to the Facts and Figures report for Herefordshire Libraries.

Customers can access a range of services under one roof meaning that they don't have to visit several locations. They also have public computers and free Wi-Fi, providing access to online services. Each site is unique with varying opening times; some are co-located with other organisations such as Department of Work and Pensions and they also offer a range of other services and facilities.

The market town Customer Service centres receive approximately 33% of Herefordshire Council's customer front-facing contact.

Customer Service Centres	Hours open per week	Face to Face enquiries	Payments	Total
Leominster	35.5	6,764	4,721	11,485
Ross-on-Wye	35.5	5,529	2,378	7,907
Ledbury	32.5	2,422	2,683	5,105
Kington	18	478	1,823	2,301
Bromyard	24	1,588	1,609	3,197
Total		16,781	13,214	29,005

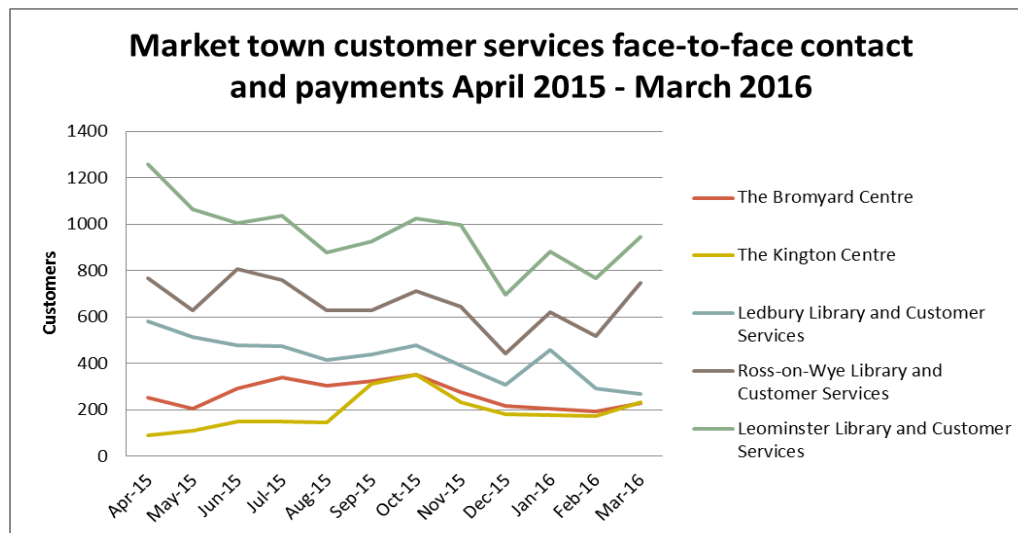
Table 1: Customer front-facing visits to market town customer service sites financial year 2015-16

Table 1 shows a breakdown of customer service contact in the market towns focusing on face-to-face enquiries and payments taken. Enquiries relating to blue badge, council tax and benefits can be lengthy enquiries and a new housing benefit and council tax reduction applications can, depending on the customers circumstances take up to an hour, whilst a payment can be a quick transaction taking a couple of minutes.

Customer services cover a wide range of enquiries most notably the below:

- Blue badge applications and renewals
- Building control
- Council tax and business rates
- Environmental health and trading standards
- Housing benefit
- Licensing
- Parking permits and parking ticket appeals
- Payments for council services

- Planning application files
- Scanning information through to Homepoint
- Signposting to elections, registrars, healthy lifestyle trainers and social care
- Signposting to non-council services including DWP, Age UK, WISH, HMRC, housing associations, CAB etc.
- Transportation enquiries – school transport and public bus passes, railcards
- Waste and recycling enquires
- A wide range of information, leaflets, and general advice on all council services – includes Core Strategy and Local plan documents



Graph 1: Market town customer services face-to-face contact and payments taken April 2015 – March 2016

Graph 1 shows the market towns customer service performance from April 2015 – March 2016, the chart shows customer services busiest time of the year are April/March to coincide with council tax billing and the new financial year. December shows a dip in customers for all the sites and this is explained by the sites closing for a week over the Christmas period.

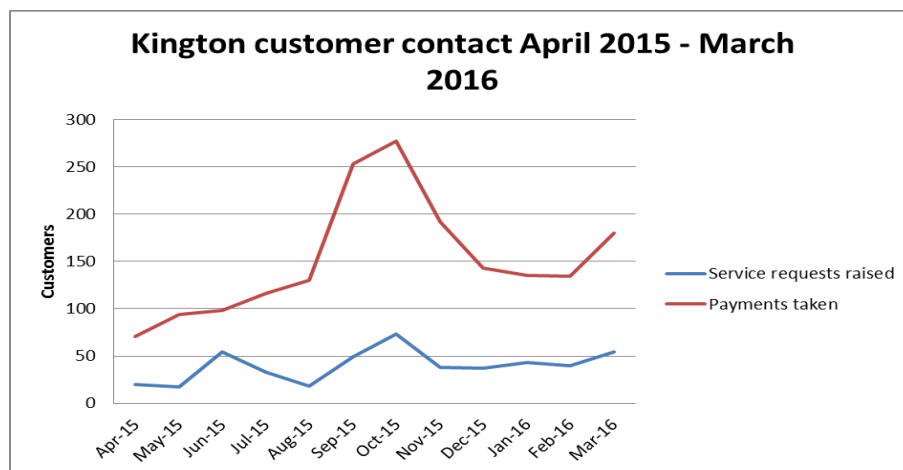
The Kington Centre

In March 2015 the Kington Centre underwent a refurbishment to accommodate well-being which was funded by Public Health to deliver a comprehensive Library, Customer Service and well-being service in its widest sense. The Kington Centre is open for a total of 24 hours per week delivering these services to the local community.

The centre works closely with internal and external partners - for example the Healthy Lifestyle Trainer Service, local organisations and groups within the community, bringing together all aspects of well-being under one roof.

The library and customer service centre houses a wide range of library books and media, and acts as a gateway to access books and other material from the whole county library. It also offers advice and support on all council services and signposting on all aspects of well-being.

Graph 2 shows the trend of customer contact at the Kington centre for April 2015 - March 2016. This shows a steady increase in both service requests and payments taken since the refurbishment.



Graph 2 Kington customer contact April 2015 – March 2016 requests raised and payments taken

Chart 1 shows where customers using customer services at The Kington Centre came from during the April 2015 – March 2015 period. Roughly 61% of customers are from Kington. Customers from HR3, the locality surrounding Kington are the second biggest users of The Kington Centre. 19.54% of customers did not provide address details when making their enquiry,

Kington customer services by postcode April 2015 - March 2016

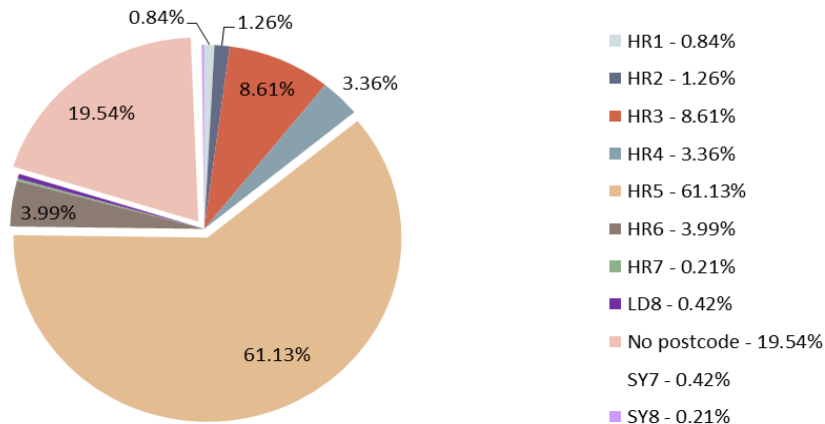


Chart 1 Kington customer by postcode April 2015 – March 2016

Chart 2 shows the types of requests our customers are enquiring about during the April 2015 – March 2016 period. 36% of customers want assistance with regards to benefits – this might include providing supporting evidence, bringing in completed forms or querying correspondence received. 31% of our customers are enquiring about transport; this could include making a bus pass application and making an enquiry about a bus timetables. 9% of our customers are visiting to apply for a blue badge and bring in documentation.

Kington customer services enquiry type April 2015 - March 2016

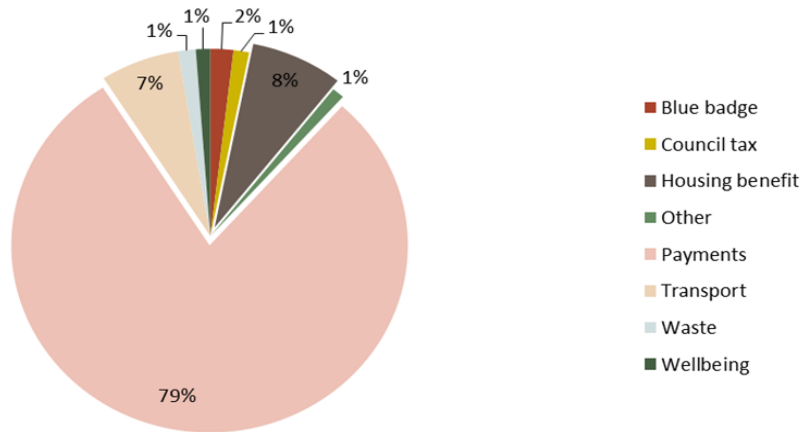


Chart 2 Kington customer services enquiry type April 2015 – March 2016

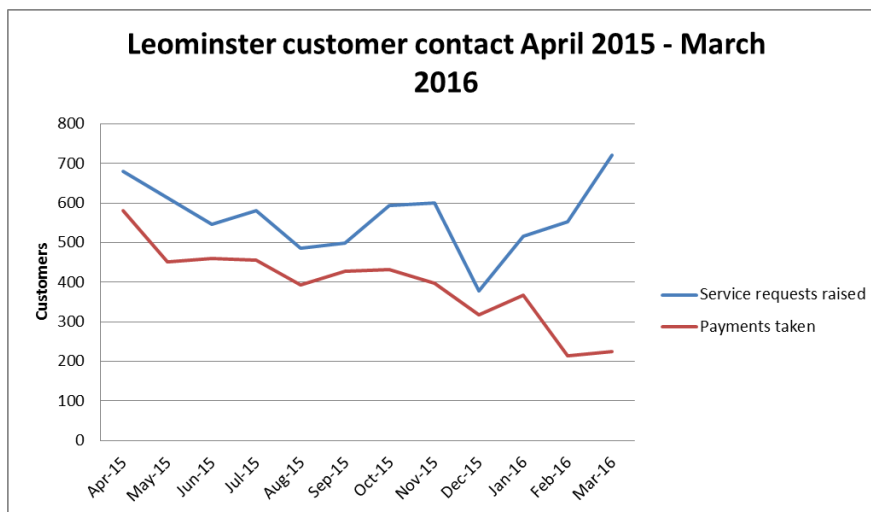
Leominster Library and Customer Services

Leominster Library and Customer Services is located within the north of the county, this site is open a total of 35.5 hours per week. Leominster Library and Customer Services offer a comprehensive library service with the option of the public using self-serve terminals to issue/discharge and manage their library account for themselves.

Leominster Library and Customer Services work closely with internal and external organisations, offering the Healthy Lifestyle Trainer service, a registrar service, WISH (Well-being Information Signposting Herefordshire) and many external services for example adult and child counselling services and offering a successful Early Hurly Burly early years music development session for the under 4's.

Several organisations run regular sessions in the exhibition space or rent the meeting rooms that are available.

Graph 3 for Leominster shows that during the period of April 2015 – March 2016 there was an increase in customers accessing customer services; however we have seen a decrease in customers coming to the site to make payments. This could be because we no longer take cash and customers have more ways to pay items like their council tax bills.



Graph 3 Leominster customer service contact April 2015 – March 2016

Chart 3 shows that from April 2015 – March 2016 around 74% of customers were from Leominster. The chart does show that the site does attract customers from outside Leominster (not including customers that didn't provide a postcode), approximately 14% of customers come from outside the Leominster postcode region.

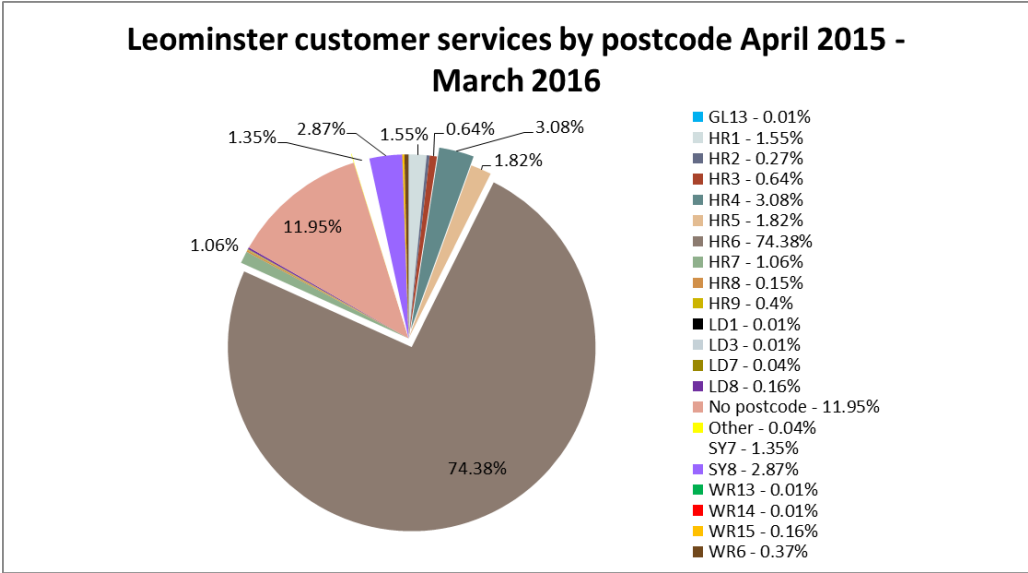


Chart 3 Leominster customers by postcode March 2015 – April 2016

Chart 4 for the April 2015 – March 2016 period shows that 41% of customers are making a payment; types of payments include council tax, overpayment of housing benefit, social care payments and for services such as licensing. 29% of customers are seeking advice on housing benefit and 10% with an enquiry about council tax. Enquiries relating to council tax may include supporting evidence, change of address, single person discount and queries relating to council tax bills.

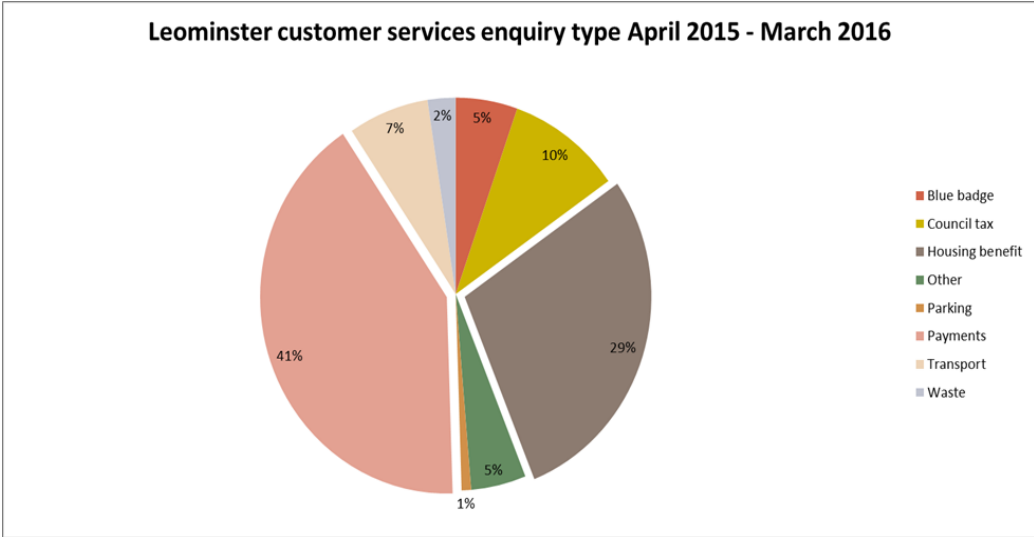


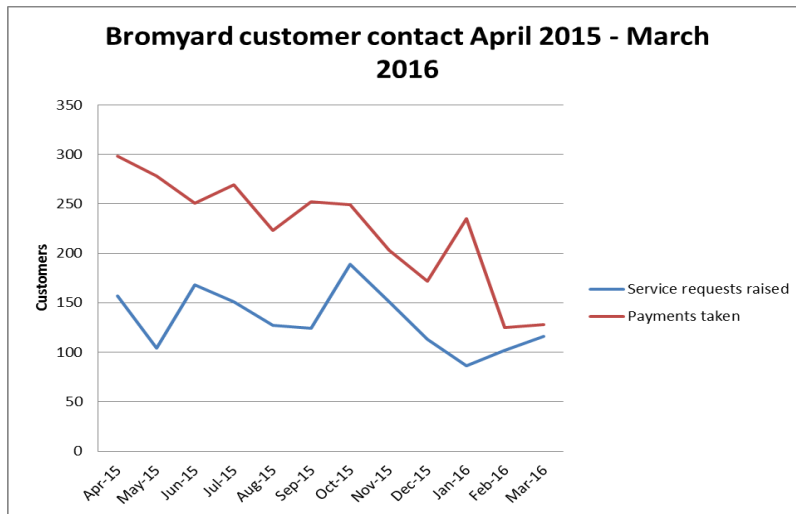
Chart 4 Leominster customer service enquiry type April 2015- March 2016

Bromyard Library and Customer Service Centre

The Bromyard Library and Customer Service Centre is located within the Halo Leisure Centre in Bromyard, the site delivers both a comprehensive library service and customer service offering a full range of council services. The Bromyard Centre is one of our smaller sites and is open 24 hours in total per week.

The local community are able to use the leisure facilities and also access both the library and customer services at one point of contact. Having these facilities under the same roof gives the local community the opportunity to access all aspects of well-being whether it is from books on prescription within the library, accessing council services, being signposted to organisations using WISH (Well-being Information Signposting Herefordshire) or using the Halo facilities available.

Graph 4 shows the level of contact at Bromyard customer services, payments have reduced at the site with the increased choice that customers have in making their council payments. The site has also had a refurbishment which could account for the fluctuating amount of customer contact at the site.



Graph 4 Bromyard customer service contact April 2015 – March 2016

Chart 5 over the period of April 2015 – March 2016 shows about 43% of customers come from HR7; this is the Bromyard locality, roughly 5.6% of customers come from WR6 which is on the county border of Worcester.

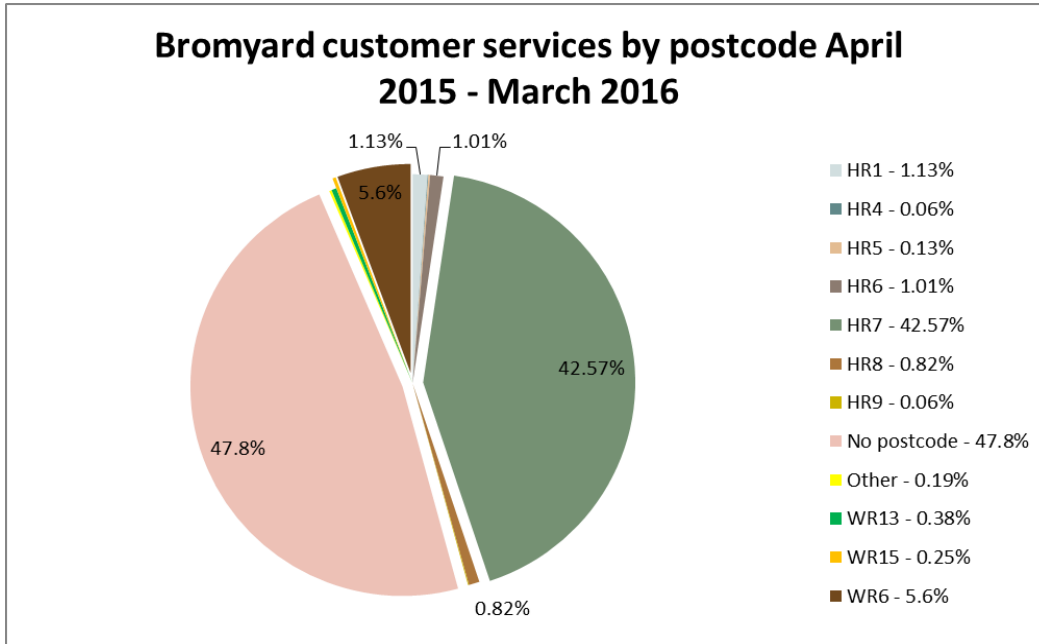


Chart 5 Bromyard customer by postcode March 2015 – April 2016

Chart 6 during the period of April 2015 – March 2016 shows that around 50% of customers are making a payment and roughly 15% of customers have a general enquiry. A general enquiry might relate to details about a council service, opening times or even council led initiatives. Housing benefit and council tax enquiries total to approximately 15%, these enquiries can be lengthy taking more time than most other enquiry types.

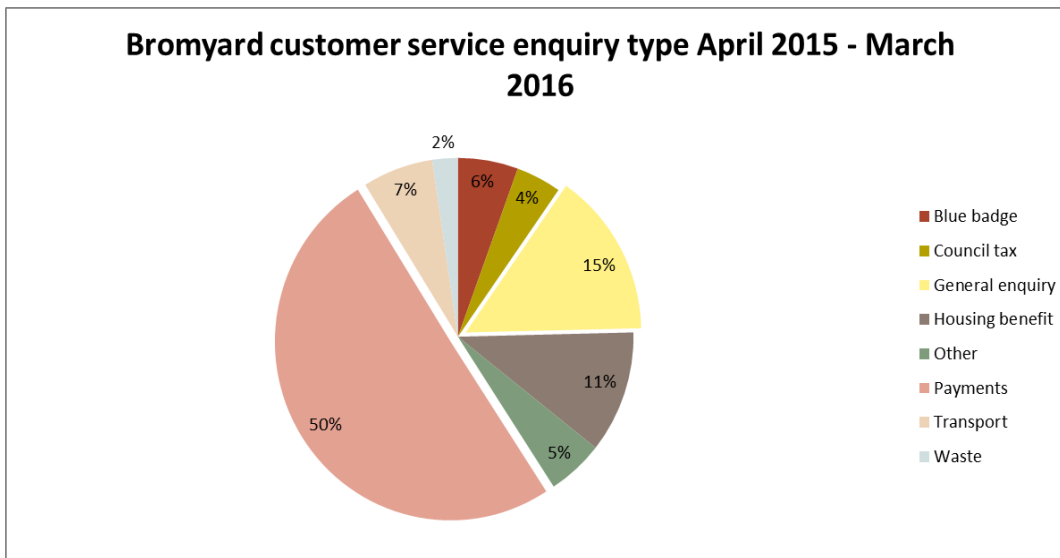


Chart 6 Bromyard customer service enquiry type April 2015- March 2016

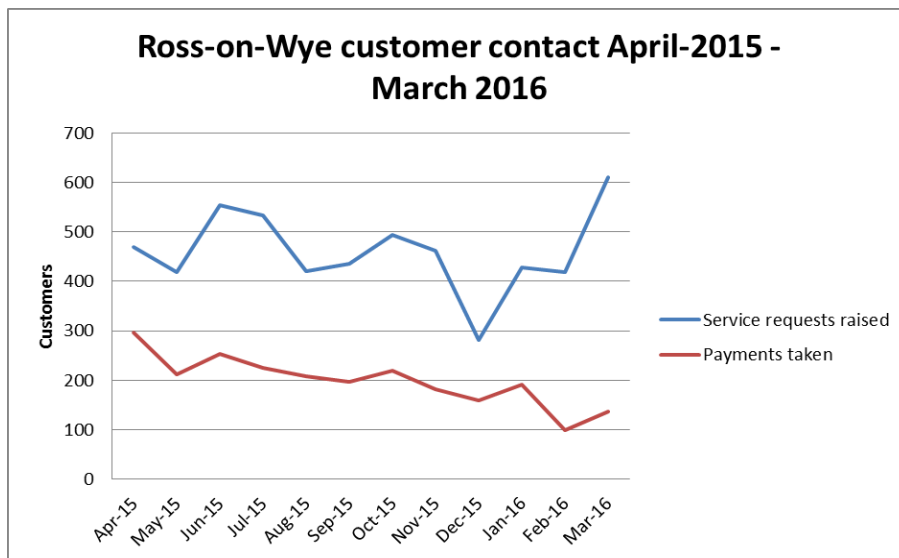
Ross Library and Customer Services

Ross Library and Customer Services are located within the south of the county. The site is open a total of 35.5 hours in total per week. The site offers a comprehensive Library and Customer Services and what is unique to this site is the Job Centre Plus for the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) being located within the building.

Having the Job Centre Plus in the same location is a positive for the community accessing those services, there is a sharing of customers who also access customer services, the library service and Job Centre customers using the public access PCs for their job search. Ross Library and Customer Services have also provided work experience for Job Centre Plus customers, enhancing their work experience and helping in their search for employment. Currently with the rollout of Universal Credit there is a sharing of knowledge between Job Centre Plus staff and Ross Library and Customer Services staff.

Ross Library and Customer Services works closely with internal and external partners and meeting room space is hired by a range of organisations including HMRC, WISH (Well-being Information Signposting Herefordshire), Healthy Lifestyle Trainer Services are to name but a few. The Registration Services provides their service from the site twice a week as well as other internal services utilising the space.

Graph 5 during the period of April 2015 – March 2016 shows that Ross-on-Wye had an increase in enquiries particularly during the March period; this may be due to council tax billing. Similar to the other market town sites there is the trend in a decrease in payments made by customers.



Graph 5 Ross-on-Wye customer service contact April 2015 – March 2016

Chart 7 over the time of April 2015 – March 2016 shows around 86% of customers accessing the service are from the Ross-on-Wye area, whilst about 2.51% come from HR2 – South Hereford.

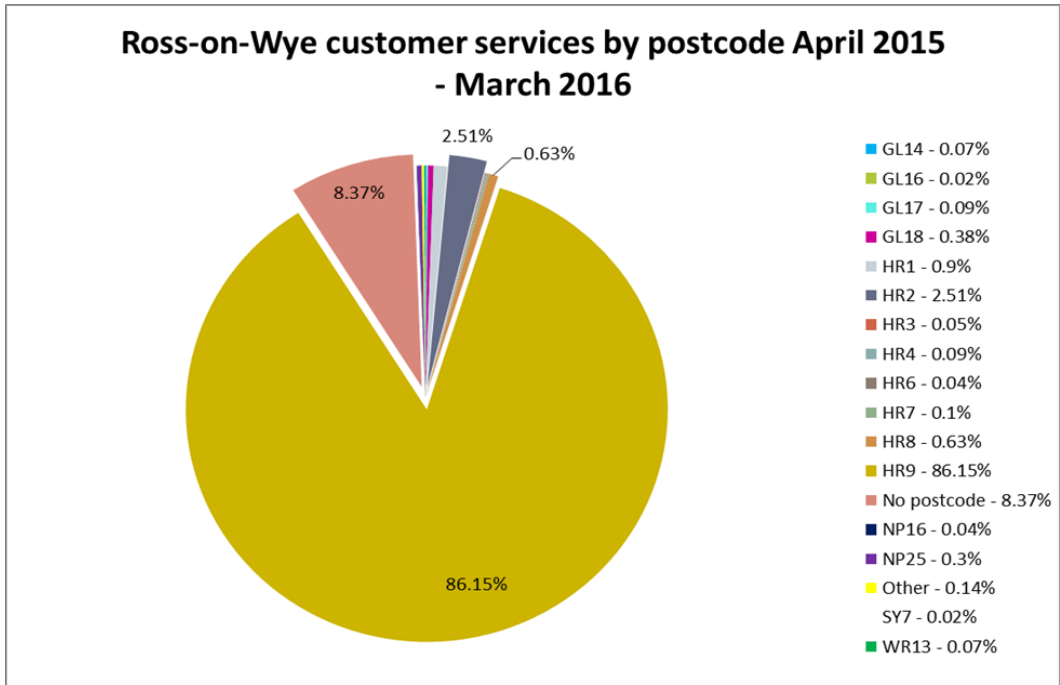


Chart 7 Ross-on-Wye

customer by postcode March 2015 – April 2016

Chart 8 for the April 2015 – March 2016 period shows that there is a full range of council services being accessed by customers at Ross-on-Wye. The majority of customers are either making payments - 30%, accessing housing benefits services - 29%, council tax 10%, transportation enquiries - 9%, and blue badge – 8%.

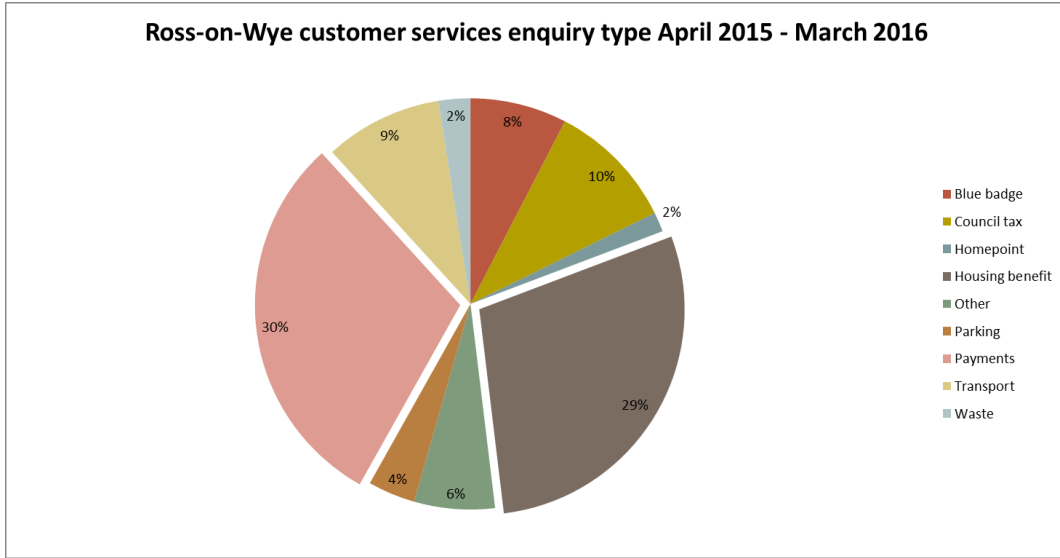


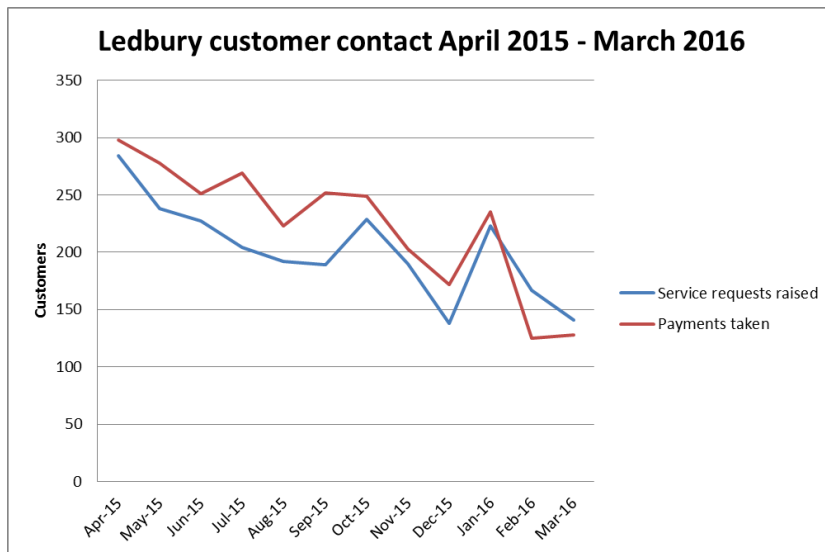
Chart 8 Ross-on-Wye customer service enquiry type April 2015- March 2016

Ledbury Library and Customer Services

Ledbury Library and Customer Services are located within the medieval restored award winning building of The Master's House. The library and customer services part of the site is open a total of 32.5 hours per week. The services this site offers are unique as it brings together heritage, culture, voluntary services, as well as library and customer services. Partner organisations include Age UK, Ledbury Poetry Festival, John Masefield Society Archive and office space for the Victoria County History. Different departments within the council are also co-located within the building, making it a multi-functional space. The customer service team also sell local theatre tickets on behalf of the Market Theatre in Ledbury and for the events organised by the Heritage Coordinator, Library services and the site Friends groups.

Customers access advice on housing benefit, council tax and blue badges through an appointments system available from 9.30am – 1pm, whilst other customer service enquiries and payments are available on a drop in basis throughout the day.

Meeting room and exhibition space is hired by a range of organisations including WISH (Well-being Information Signposting Herefordshire), Active Here, Age UK and has been used by a local recruitment company to name but a few.



Graph 6 Ledbury customer contact April 2015 - March 2016

Graph 6 shows the period April 2015 – March 2016 and there is similar trend with the reduction in payments due to the increased options of payment methods for customers. Ledbury operates an appointments system for customers that are available between 9.30am – 1pm, the fluctuation of enquiries made could be a result of the introduction of an appointments system

Chart 9 for April 2015 – March 2016 shows that approximately 50% of customers come from the HR8 region which is the Ledbury locality, around 23% in total come from HR9 and WR13. This shows that catchment area that Ledbury covers.

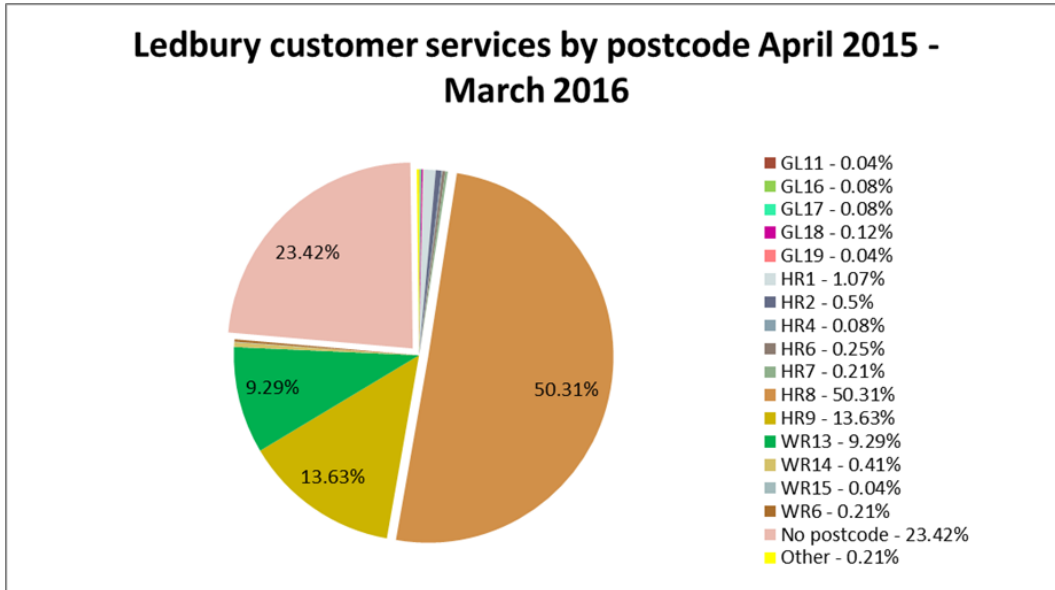


Chart 9 Ledbury customer by postcode March 2015 – April 2016

Chart 10 for April 2015 – March 2016 shows that approximately 53% of customers are making a payment at the Ledbury. Around 16% of customers are accessing a full range of council services.

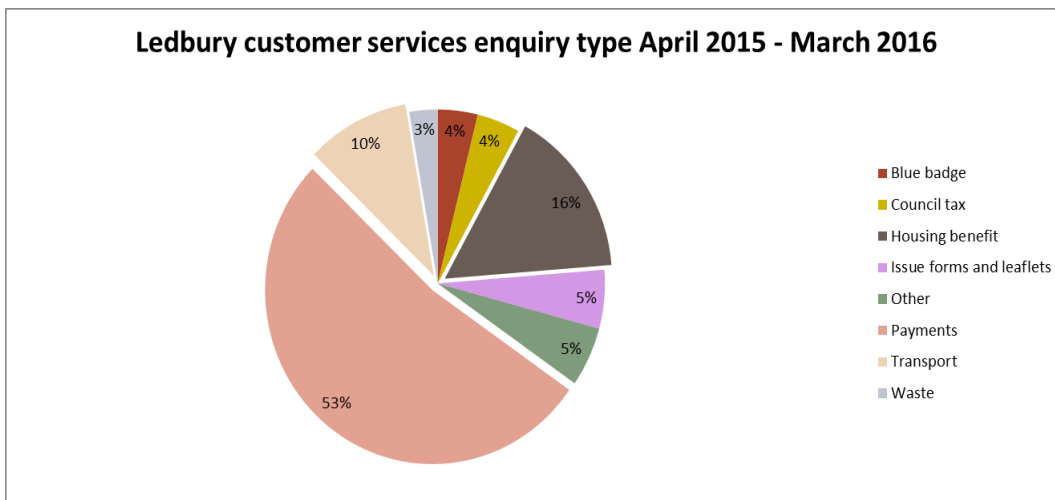


Chart 10 Ledbury customer service enquiry type April 2015 - March 2016