



Department
for Culture
Media & Sport



Taking Part focus on: libraries

Statistical Release

April 2016



Introduction

This report

This report is one in a series of three *Taking Part, focus on* reports, presenting findings of the Taking Part survey. Taking Part is a continuous face to face household survey of adults aged 16 years and over and children aged 5 to 15 years old in England.

The *Taking Part, focus on* reports looks at specific topics in more detail, with each report covering one of the following areas:

- 1) Cross-sector participation
- 2) Libraries
- 3) Social media users

This *Taking Part, focus on libraries* report looks at who uses the library and why, as well as the most common reasons for changes in individual library use over time.

Alongside the *Taking Part, focus on* reports, a *Taking Part: longitudinal report* was also published on 28 April. This report focusses on data from people who have responded to the Taking Part survey three times. It looks how participation in and engagement with cultural and sporting activities changes over time at an individual level, as well as reasons for changes in participation.

Forthcoming statistical releases

The next adult and child Taking Part releases will be published on Thursday 21 July 2016, and will present data covering the period April 2015 – March 2016. Adult releases of Taking Part are published every six months, in July and December. Child release of Taking Part are published once a year, in July.

Another series of *Taking Part, focus on* reports will be published in October 2016. Like the current report, each 'short story' in this series will look at a specific topic in more detail, providing more in-depth analysis of Taking Part data than seen in the biannual adult or annual child report.

You can find out about upcoming releases in our Official Statistics Release Calendar [here](#) or, if you would like further information on these releases or the Taking Part survey, please contact the Taking Part team on TakingPart@culture.gov.uk.

Changes to Taking Part survey

In March 2016 we published a [strategy](#) outlining proposed developments to the Taking Part survey over the next five years, which will ensure the survey is fit for the future and supports the evidence needs of DCMS sectors.

Executive summary

In the year ending September 2015, **33.9 per cent** of all adults had used a public library service in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This is a significant decrease since data collection began in 2005/06.

In the year to September 2015, the vast majority (**94.8 per cent**) of adults who used the library in their own time or as part of voluntary work **physically visited a public library building or mobile library** to make use of library services. Over the same time period, **94.2 per cent** of adults who had used a library were **very satisfied** or **fairly satisfied** with their library experience. This is a significant increase from 2010/11 when the question was first asked.

Adults who live with children are significantly more likely to have used public library services at least once a year than adults who do not live with children. Amongst adults whose use of libraries has increased over a period of three interviews, **encouraging a child to read** was the main reason given for this increase (cited by **20 per cent** of those using library services more often).

In addition, adults who went to the library themselves when they were growing up were more likely to go to the library as adults: **82.2 per cent** of adults who said they had used a library in the last 12 months when interviewed between April 2014 and March 2015 had used the library when growing up. Among those who said they had not used the library in the last 12 months, this figure was **69.1 per cent**.

Among those whose use of libraries decreased over a period of three years, two of the most common reasons for using services less often were **buying or getting books elsewhere** (**17 per cent** of those using libraries less often) and **now reading E-books instead** (**12 per cent**).

Data used in this report

The analysis presented in this report is primarily taken from two different Taking Part data sets. This is because not all analysis variables are available in both data sets. The data sets that have been used are:

1. The 2014/15 annual data set, collected between April 2014 and March 2015. Analyses based on the 2014/15 data were published in the previous short story publication in November 2015. In this report, analyses based on data from the annual dataset are referenced using the letter **A** (for annual).
2. The 2015/16 quarter 2 biannual data set, collected between October 2014 and September 2015. Headline figures for participation in cultural sectors based on these data were published in December 2015. Analyses based on data from the biannual dataset are referenced using the letter **B** (for biannual).

The final section of this report presents data from the Taking Part longitudinal survey.

34%

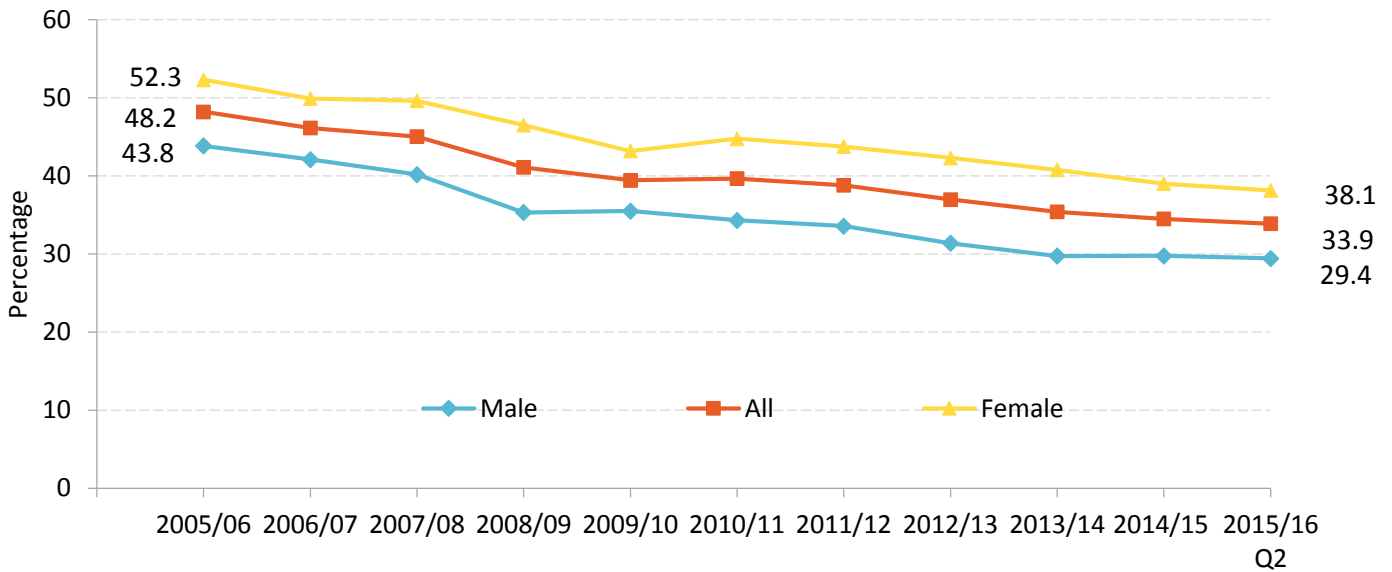
**of adults asked between
October 2014 and
September 2015 had used
the library in their own
time or for voluntary work
in the previous year**



Library use

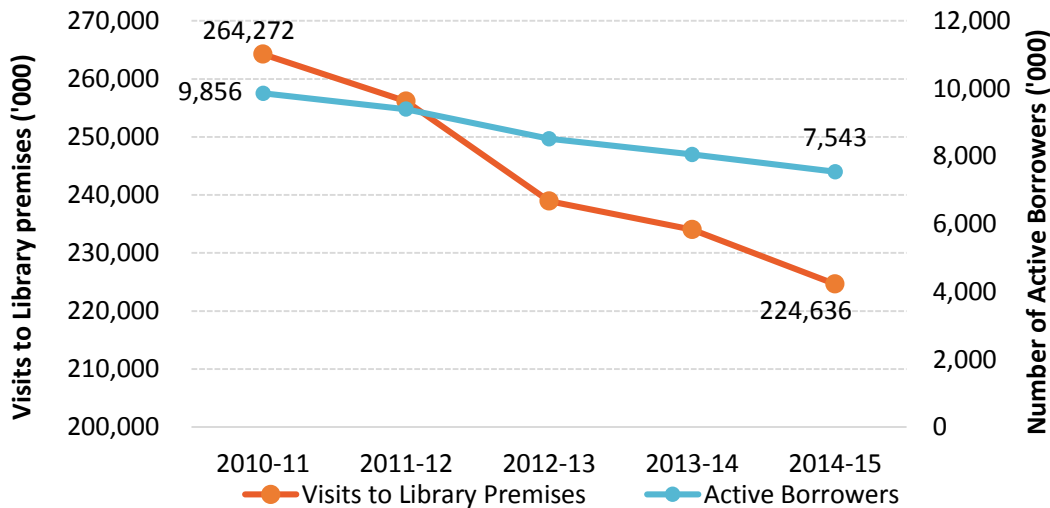
B This *Focus on* report looks at library use among adults (16+) in England. In the year ending September 2015, **33.9 per cent** of all adults had used a public library service in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This is a significant decrease from **48.2 per cent** in 2005/06, but a similar proportion to 2013/14.

Figure 1: Proportion of adults who had used a library in the last year by gender, 2005/06 to 2015/16 Q2



A similar trend is shown in data collected by the **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)** (Figure 2). During the four years between 2010/11 and 2014/15, **visits** to library premises in Great Britain have fallen by **15.0 per cent** and the number of active borrowers has fallen by **23.5 per cent**. CIPFA are not measuring quite the same thing as Taking Part, which measures the number of people who use the library, rather than the number of visits, but this decrease is still in line with, and of a similar scale to, the decline according to Taking Part data. Taking Part data show a 13.0 per cent reduction in the proportion of adults who used a library at least once a year between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

Figure 2: Trends in library use: 2010/11 to 2014/15, England

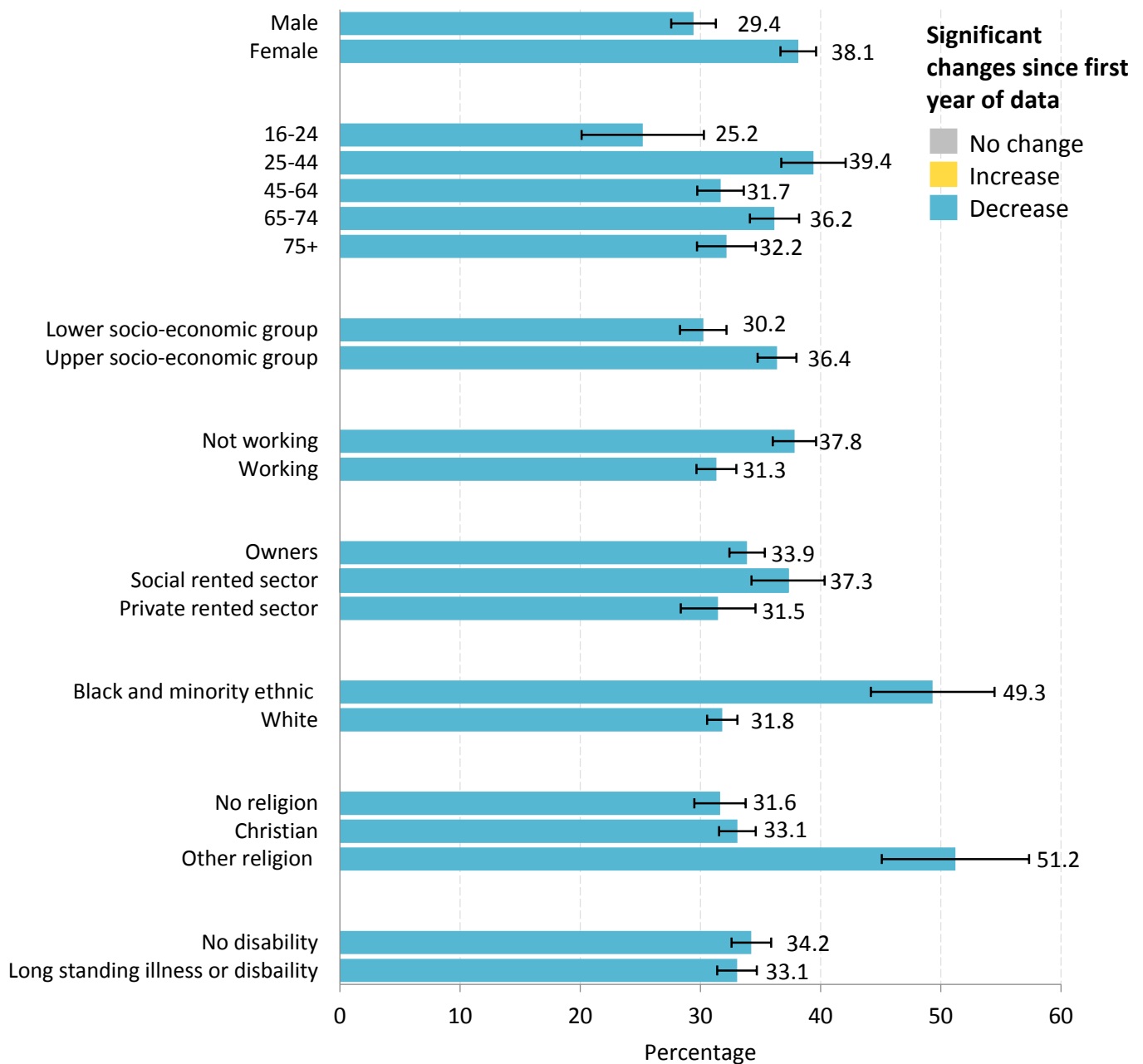


Source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Library use by demographic characteristics

B There have been significant decreases in library use between 2005/06 and the latest year (October 2014 to September 2015) across all demographics groups, as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Library users by demographics, 2015/16 Q2



Notes: confidence intervals shown as error bars, range between +/- 1.3 and +/- 6.1



Looking across all adult age groups, the largest decrease in the proportion of adults who use the library has been among 16 to 24 year olds: **51.0 per cent** of adults aged 16 to 24 used a public library in 2005/06, but only **25.2 per cent** in the year October 2014 to September 2015.

In the year ending September 2015, significantly more **women** used the library than men: **38.1 per cent** of women had used the library in the 12 months prior to interview, compared with **29.4 per cent** of men.

Significantly more non-working adults used a library than adults who are working. In the year ending September 2015, **37.8 per cent** of **non-working adults** used a library compared with **31.3 per cent** of **working adults**.

A significantly higher proportion of adults from the **black and minority ethnic** (BME) groups used a library in the year ending September 2015 than adults from the **white ethnic group** (**49.3 per cent** compared with **31.8 per cent**). Although there has been a significant decline in library use by adults in both groups since 2005/06, the gap between ethnic groups appears to be increasing: in 2005/06 there was a difference of **10.3 percentage points** between the two groups; in the latest year there was a difference of **17.5 percentage points**.

Significantly more adults from the **upper socio-economic group** used a library than adults from the **lower socio-economic group**, **36.4 per cent** compared with **30.2 per cent**.

There was no significant difference between the proportion of adults with **an illness or disability** (**33.1 per cent**) who used the library in the last 12 months and the proportion of adults with **no illness or disability** (**34.2 per cent**).

Library use and household composition

B Adults who live with children are significantly more likely to use public library services than adults who do not live with children.

In the year between October 2014 and September 2015, the proportion of households with **one or more children** who used a library at least once in the 12 months prior to interview was significantly greater than the proportion among households with **no children**.

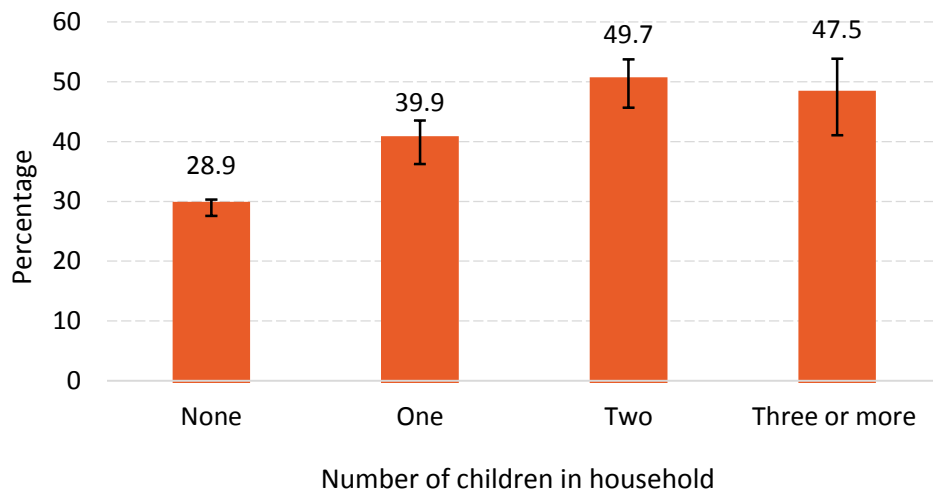
What does significant mean?

A significant increase or decrease at the 95% level means that there is less than a 5% chance (1 in 20) that the difference observed within the sampled respondents is not a real difference and representative of the English population as a whole.

What is a confidence interval?

A confidence interval is a range in which there is a specific probability that the true value of a number will lie. In this survey, 95% confidence intervals are used. This means that, had the sampling been conducted 100 times, creating 100 confidence intervals, then 95 percent of these intervals would contain the true value.

Figure 4: Library use by the number of children in the household, 2015/16 Q2



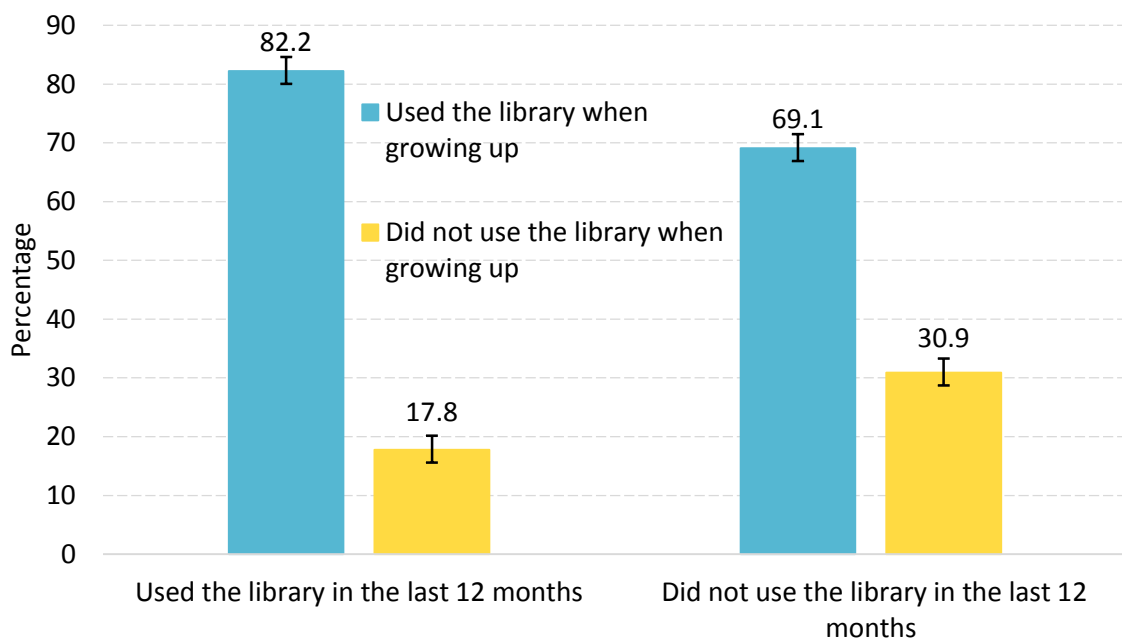
Notes: Confidence intervals, shown as error bars, range between +/- 1.4 and +/- 6.4

Library use in adulthood and when growing up

A In the year between April 2014 and March 2015, **73.7 per cent** of adults said that they went to the library **when they were growing up**.

Adults who went to the library when growing up were more likely to use the library as adults: **82.2 per cent** of adults who said they had used a library in the last 12 months also said they had used the library when growing up, compared with **69.1 per cent** of those who said they had not used the library in the last 12 months.

Figure 5: Library engagement in the last 12 months and library engagement when growing up



Notes: confidence intervals shown as error bars, range between +/- 2.2 and +/- 2.4



Significantly more women than men went to the library when growing up (**79.3 per cent** compared with **68.0 per cent** of men). This is consistent with the observation that a significantly greater proportion of women than men use the library now.

Still thinking about adults who went to the library when growing up; a significantly greater proportion of adults aged 25 to 44 said that they went to the library when growing up than adults aged 65 and above. As adults, those aged 25 to 44 are also significantly more likely to have used the library in the last 12 months than adults in other age groups.

Purpose of library use

A In the year between April 2014 and March 2015, the vast majority (**94.5 per cent**) of respondents who had used a library in the last 12 months, used the library **in their own time**.

9.6 per cent of adults used the library for **academic study**, while **2.6 per cent** used the library for **paid work** and **0.6 per cent** used the library for **voluntary work**.

94%
of adults used the
library in their own
time in 2014/15.

These percentages add up to more than 100 because the same adult could have used the library for more than one reason. These proportions have remained fairly stable since 2009/10.

The propensity to use the library for different reasons varied between demographic groups, however the most common purpose of library use among all demographic groups was **own time use**.

Among adults who used the library, a significantly greater proportion of adults aged 16 to 24 used it for **academic study** than among older adults: **43.5 per cent** of adults aged **16 to 24** who had used the library used it for academic study, compared with **5.9 per cent** of adults aged **25 to 44** and **2.9 per cent** of adults aged **45 to 64**.

There were no significant differences in the purpose of library use between men and women.

A significantly higher proportion of **non-working adults** who used the library in the last 12 months, used it for **academic study** than **working adults** (**11.3 per cent** compared with **8.2 per cent**).

A significantly higher proportion of adults from the **black and minority ethnic group** who used the library in the last 12 months, used it for **academic study** than adults from the **white ethnic group** (**20.2 per cent** compared with **7.5 per cent**).

Use of public library services

B Respondents who had used the library in their own time or as part of voluntary work were asked how they made use of library services.

In the year to September 2015, the majority (**94.8 per cent**) of adults who used the library in their own time or as part of voluntary work physically visited a public library building or mobile library to make use of library services (including loaning or browsing books, printing/using electronic resources, using computer facilities or taking part in an event such as a reading group or author visit).



17.9 per cent of adults used a computer outside the library to view a library website, catalogue or database, or to loan e-books.



Only **9.7 per cent** of adults accessed or received a library service by email, telephone, fax or letter and **0.9 per cent** received an outreach service (such as home delivery) or attended library events.

These proportions have remained consistent since this question was first asked in 2013/14.

Use of public library services by demographics

B In the year to September 2015, among adults who had used a library, a significantly greater proportion of adults aged 16 to 24 **used a computer outside the library to view a library website, catalogue or database, or to loan e-books** than among adults in older age groups (**24.4 per cent** of adults aged 16 to 24, compared with **12.2 per cent** of 65 to 74 year olds and **9.3 per cent** for adults above the age of 75).

A significantly higher proportion of women than men who used a public library in the last year **accessed or received a library service via email or telephone** (**10.8 per cent** of women compared with **8.2 per cent** of men).

Among men and women who had used a library, there was no significant difference between the proportion of men and the proportion of women who **visited a public library building or a mobile library** (**95.2 per cent** of women compared with **94.2 per cent** of men).

There were no significant differences in the use of public library services between **working adults** and **non-working adults**. In the year to September 2015, the same proportion of working and non-working adults **visited a public library building or mobile library** (**94.8 per cent**).

There were no significant differences in the use of public library services between adults from the **white ethnic group** and adults from the **black and minority ethnic group**.



Wi-Fi in Public Libraries

Arts Council England (ACE) is the development agency for libraries in England. As part of their responsibility to shape the future of libraries, ACE worked with DCMS and the Libraries Taskforce to provide free, faster Wi-Fi to libraries.

In 2015, a total of 70 local authorities successfully applied for DCMS funding to install or improve Wi-Fi in over 1,000 public libraries. In March 2016, ACE reported that there were 530 libraries with an upgrade to their Wi-Fi provision and 486 libraries had new installations of Wi-Fi: as a result, 99.2 per cent of English public libraries now offer free access to Wi-Fi, an increase from 72 per cent in March 2015.

More information on Wi-Fi in public libraries can be found [here](#):

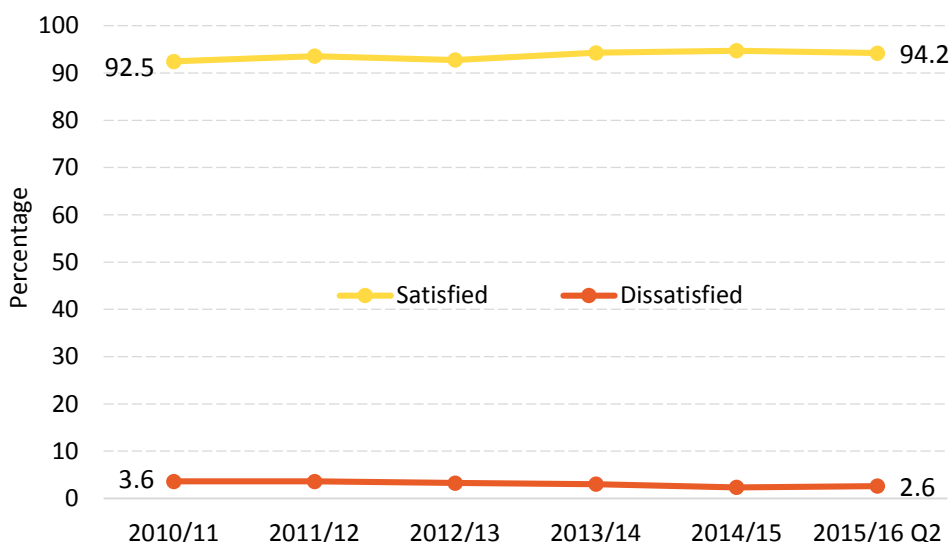
Satisfaction of library experience

B Respondents who had used a library in the last 12 months were asked how satisfied they were with the service they experienced.

In the year to September 2015, **94.2 per cent** of adults who had used a library were **very satisfied** or **fairly satisfied** with their library experience. This is a significant increase from 2010/11 when the question was first asked and **92.5 per cent** of adults were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their library experience.

Over the same period there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of adults who were very or slightly dissatisfied with their library experience.

Figure 6: Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with library experience, 2010/11 to 2015/16 Q2

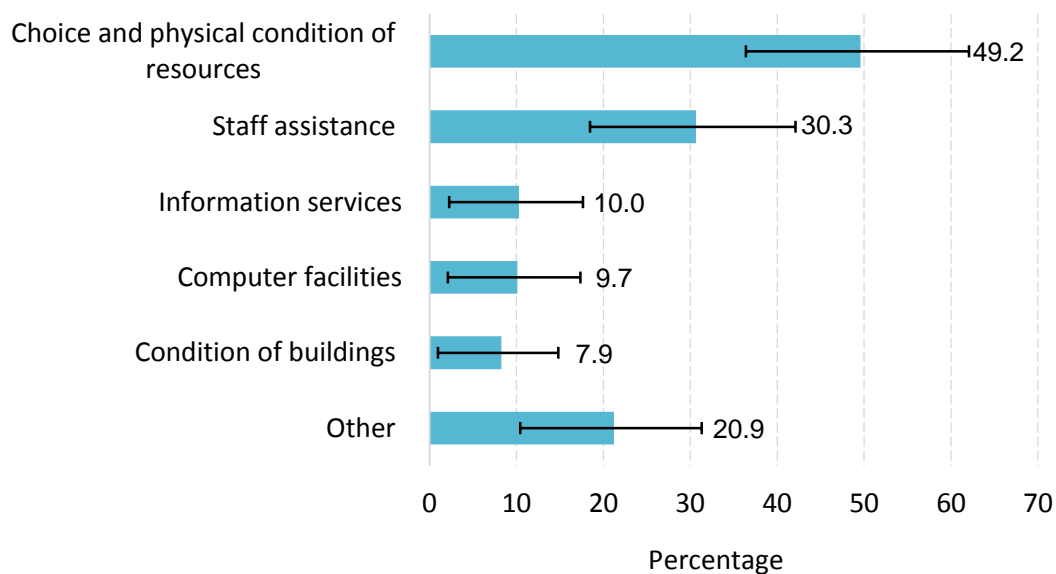


Respondents who were dissatisfied with their library experience were asked to say why they were dissatisfied.

In the year to September 2015, the most common reason for dissatisfaction was choice and physical condition of resources: of the 2.6 per cent of adults who were dissatisfied with their library experience, **49.2 per cent** stated that this was due to the **choice and physical condition of resources** (books, music, DVDs, etc.), this is a similar proportion to in 2010/11 (when the question was first asked).

30.3 per cent of the 2.6 per cent of adults who were dissatisfied with their library experience stated that this was due to unfriendly or unhelpful **staff assistance**, a similar proportion to in 2010/11.

Figure 7: Reasons for dissatisfaction with library experience, 2015/16 Q2



Notes: Confidence intervals shown as error bars, range between +/-6.9 and +/-12.8



Reasons for changes in library use

The Taking Part survey also has a longitudinal element whereby the same individuals are re-interviewed annually. Alongside the *Taking Part, focus on* reports, a *Taking Part: longitudinal report* was also published on 28 April. This longitudinal report looks at how participation in and engagement with cultural and sporting activities changes over time at an individual level, as well as reasons for changes in participation.

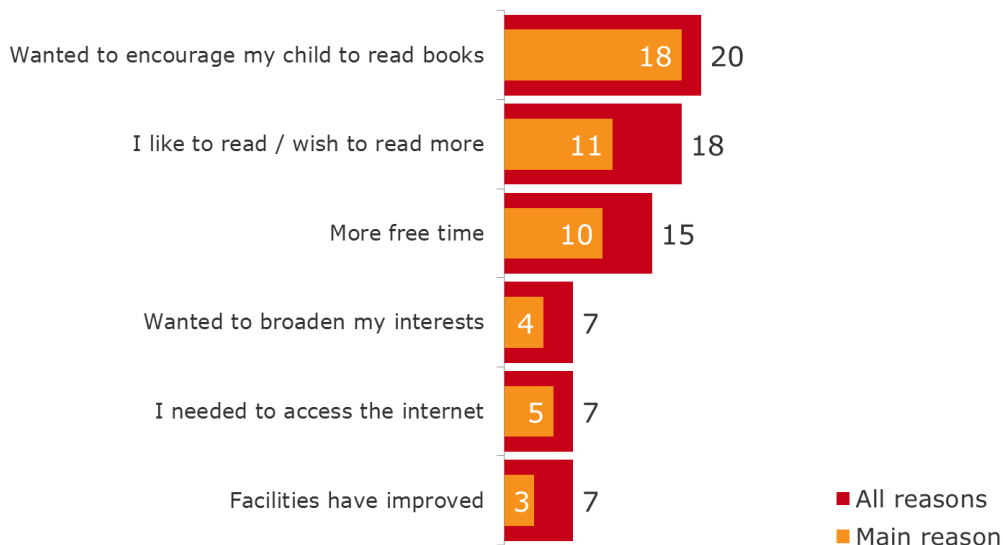
This section replicates some of the key findings in the longitudinal report that relate to libraries. A more detailed analysis of changes in individual engagement with libraries is presented in section 4 of the *Findings from the longitudinal survey waves 1 to 3* report.

Reasons for increased and decreased library use

Twenty one per cent of respondents **visited libraries less often** by interview 3, while **14 per cent visited more frequently**. New visitors (those who reported participation by interview 3, but not interview 1) made more frequent use of library services than former visitors (those who reported participation at interview 1, but not by interview 3). Almost one third (**32 per cent**) of new visitors reported using library services every month, compared to one in five (**21 per cent**) of former visitors.

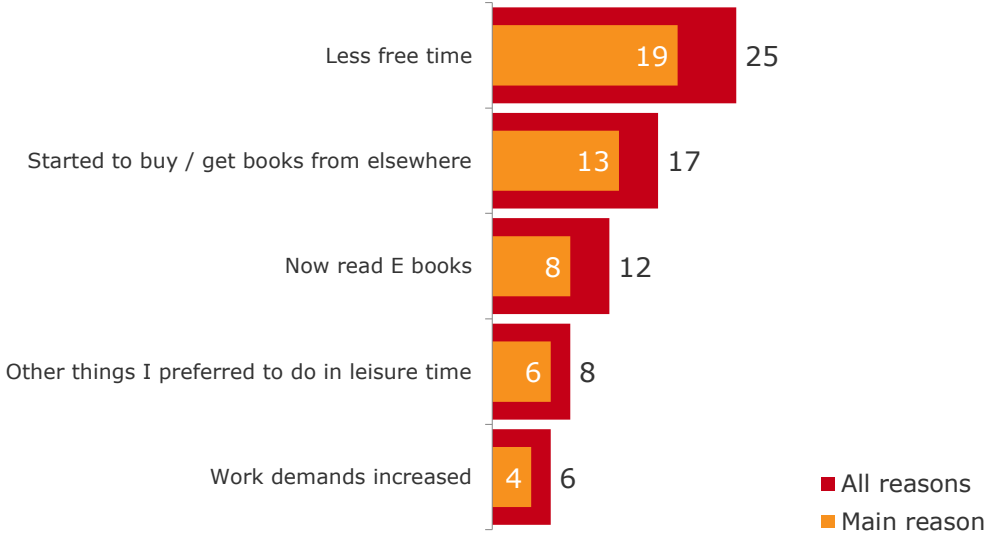
Longitudinal respondents who reported a change in the frequency of their library use over a period of three interviews (2-3 years) were asked why they used library services more or less often. The main reason for using libraries more often was to **encourage my child to read books**. This was cited by **20 per cent** of adults who reported using a library service more often. A further **18 per cent** of respondents said that their increased library usage was due to a **desire to read more** and 15 per cent of adults simply had **more free time**.

Figure 8: Reasons for increased usage of libraries



The most common reason for a decline in library use was **having less free time**, cited by **25 per cent** of adults whose frequency of use decreased between interview one and three. A further **17 per cent** of adults said that their reduced use of library services was due to **buying or getting books elsewhere** and **12 per cent** said that they were **now reading E-books instead**.

Figure 9: Reasons for decreased usage of libraries



Annex A: Further details

1. The Taking Part survey is commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and its partner Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs). For 2011 to 2016 these are Arts Council England, Historic England and Sport England.
2. Taking Part is a National Statistics output and as such has been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. National Statistics undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference. See the [Statistics Authority code of practice](#) for more information.

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. See the [UK Statistics Authority assessment](#) for more information.

3. The latest results presented here vary between analyses. In some sections, results are based on interviews conducted between October 2014 and September 2015. The total sample size for this period is 10,193. In other sections, results are based on interviews conducted between April 2014 and March 2015. The total sample size for this period is 9,817.
4. Statistical significance tests have been run at the 95% level. A significant increase at the 95% level means that there is less than 5% (1 in 20) chance that the difference observed within the sampled respondents was not also observed in the English population as a whole.
5. For more information see the [Taking Part survey](#) webpages, including previous publications. Versions of the [questionnaires](#) from all years of the survey are also available.
6. The fieldwork for the survey has been conducted by TNS-BMRB. For more information, see <http://www.tns-bmr.co.uk>.
7. The series of reports has been produced by Helen Miller-Bakewell, Wilmah Deda, Becky Woods and Niall Goulding (DCMS). Acknowledgement goes to colleagues within DCMS, Sport England, Historic England, Arts Council England and TNS-BMRB for their assistance with the production and quality assurance of this release.
8. The responsible statistician for this release is Helen Miller-Bakewell. For enquiries on this release, please contact Helen on 0207 211 6355.
9. For general enquiries telephone: 0207 211 6200 or email enquiries@culture.gov.uk.
10. To be kept informed about Taking Part publications and user events, please sign up to the Taking Part online newsletter [here](#). You can follow us on Twitter [@DCMSInsight](#).

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