

Proposed transformation of Kensal Library

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

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Introduction

Background

The Libraries and Archives Service at Kensington and Chelsea is taking steps to improve and develop its offer, with a focus on the usage of Kensal Library. The Council is beginning the conversation with local people and users of Kensal Library to hear their views on how the library could be improved, specifically around how a local community or voluntary group could partner with the Council to expand the offer available at the library. Our social investment policy aims to ensure that we use our local resources – including library buildings – to provide the maximum benefit for our communities. We want to continue to provide a high-quality service and meet our responsibilities as a Council service, to contribute to the priorities and commitments to local residents.

Consultation methodology

The Council launched a survey on 11 January, running to 21 February 2021, to gather stakeholders' views on the proposals. In addition two focus groups were held with residents, who had volunteered to participate via the survey.

To ensure those that without access to the internet were able to participate, paper copies of the survey were available on request and for those with other support needs a telephone number was available to request support.

The consultation was promoted via a variety of channels, including social media, the Council's website, newsletters and contacting members and users of Kensal library.

Report

A total of 73 surveys were returned by the deadline and a total of eight stakeholders attended across the two focus group sessions. This report contains an analysis of survey responses and a summary of feedback from focus groups. Where graphs are shown, percentage figures are used. A separate appendix report is also available on request, containing data tables and all comments made by respondents to the survey.

Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank all residents and stakeholders that took the time to feedback their views.



Results at a glance

Feedback from the survey

Use of Kensal Library

- Almost half (47 per cent) of respondents visited Kensal Library at least once a week (when it was open) and over a fifth (22 per cent) visited at least once a month.
- The most common services or activities respondents used were: borrowing books/other items (86 per cent), using the computers (56 per cent) and accessing information (51 per cent).
- The most commented on themes for future uses of the library were art/craft/culture events/activities and children's activities.

Use of other libraries

- Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) also visit North Kensington Library and 42 per cent visit Kensington Central Library.

Opening hours and timings of activities

- Almost half (47 per cent) of respondents did not feel the previous opening hours of Kensal Library met the needs of the community. Suggestions to change this included: opening every day/Wednesdays, being open all day, earlier opening times and evening opening.
- Respondents indicated the types of services that they would like to see at various times of the day or week. Health and wellbeing activities were popular in a number of these slots.

Partnering proposal

- Over half (58 per cent) supported the proposal for Kensal Library to partner with a community group (16 per cent did not support).
- A third (33 per cent) supported the proposal to partner with a local organisation (29 per cent did not support this).
- The most supported types of organisation to partner with were: Community services (71 per cent), advice services (63 per cent) and education services (63 per cent).
- The most important partnering principles to respondents were: Using the library space to run interactive activities for all sections of the community (64 per cent) and providing opportunities for communities who need it most to access literacy, learning and skills support for their local library (64 per cent).



Results at a glance

Feedback from focus groups

Use of the library

Participants had used Kensal Library, when it was open, for a range of services including book borrowing, for the children's homework club, reading, computers and printing, talks, art activities, parties and exhibitions

Other services participants would like to see

Participants suggested a range of services they would like to see offered at Kensal Library, these included: room hire, support for people whose first language is not English, after school/home work clubs, activities for children (e.g. Lego club), a more diverse range of books, wider selection of books/more books, foreign language books, creative writing and poetry, training courses and digital skills.

Partnering proposal

Participants were generally in favour of the proposed partnership. This was often on the condition that the partnership would be with a community/voluntary organisation rather than a business and that it would not see a reduction of library services. Participants felt it could bring in more people to the library.

The concerns with the proposal related to any reduction in library services or taking up room within the library that could be used for library services.

Organisation/services participants would like to see the Council partner with

Participants suggested a range of services or organisations they would like to see the Council partner with, these included: services for young people, services offering wellbeing services, arts and culture, training and education, coding and digital skills.

Level of community involvement in the decision making process

Participants were keen to see the community having a full say in the selection process of an organisation. Suggestions included organisations presenting their partnership ideas to residents for residents to have a full say in their selection. One participant went on to suggest a voting process similar to the Grenfell Projects Fund participatory budget event.



Section 1:

Stakeholder survey

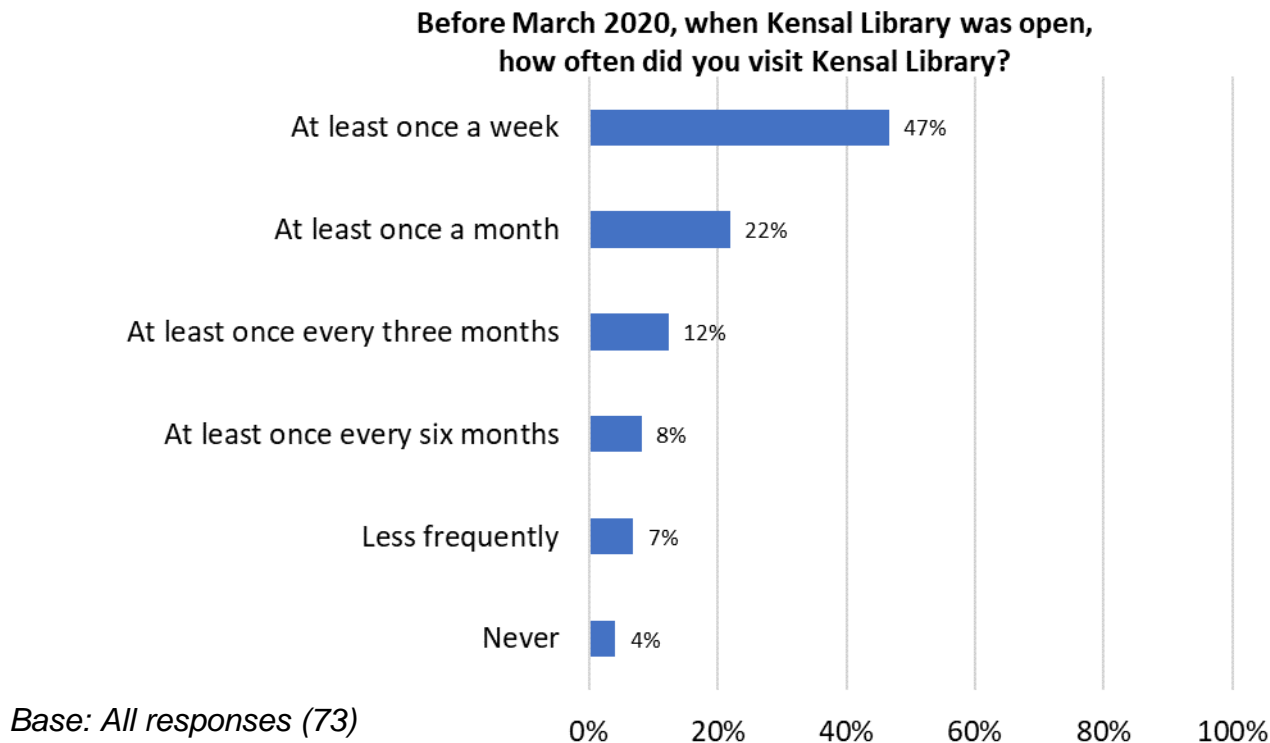


Survey findings: Use of Kensal Library

Respondents were asked how often they visited Kensal Library (before March 2020, when the library was open).

- Almost half (47 per cent) of respondents indicated that they visited ***'at least once a week'***.
- Over a fifth (22 per cent) visited ***'at least once a month'***.
- A total of four per cent of respondents to the survey had ***'never'*** visited Kensal Library.

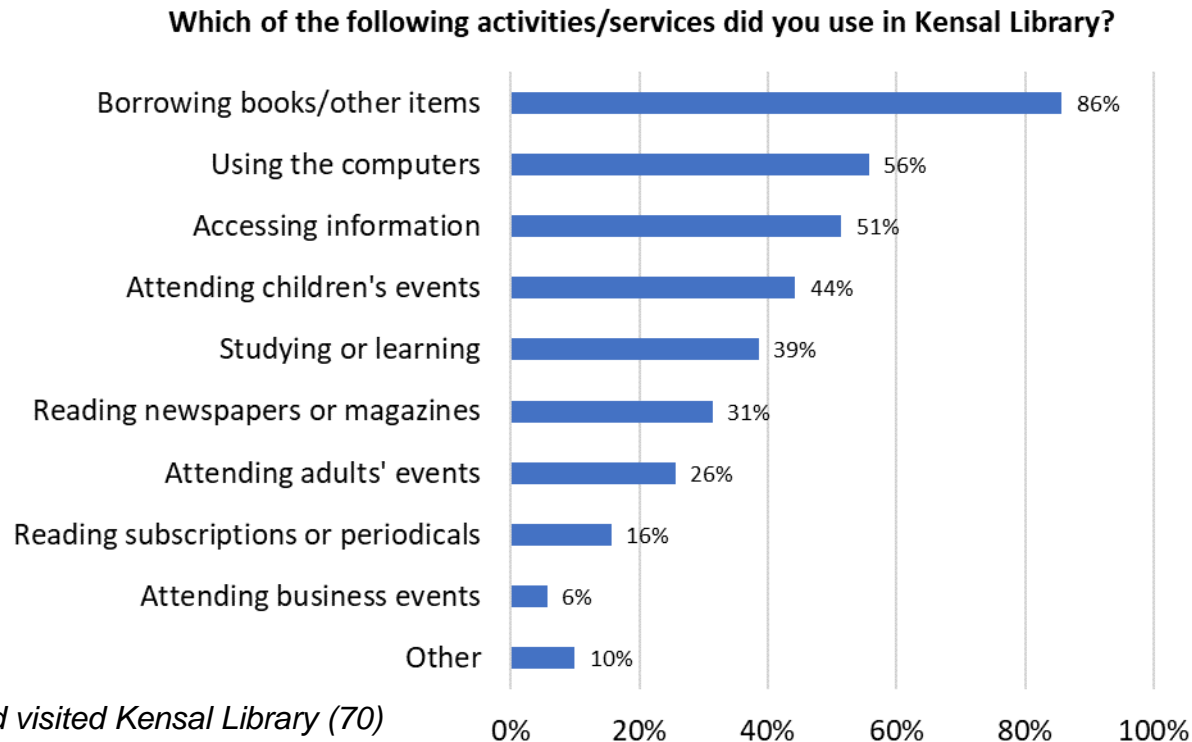
Those that had never visited Kensal Library (three respondents) were asked why not. Two indicated that they ***'tend to use a Kindle or other electronic device'*** and one indicated that the ***'opening hours do not suit their needs'***. One respondent went on to comment *"I work full time and it is always closed when I am free."*



Survey findings: Use of Kensal Library

Respondents that had visited Kensal Library were asked which activities or services they use in Kensal Library.

- The majority (86 per cent) use the library for **'borrowing books/other items'**.
- Over half (56 per cent) **'use the computers'** and over half (51 per cent) use the library to **'access information'**.
- A total of 44 per cent use the library to **'attend children's events'**, with slightly less (39 per cent) using the library for **'studying and learning'**.
- One in ten (10 per cent) use the library for **'other'** purposes. These are explored in more detail overleaf.



Survey findings: Other reasons for using the library

Respondents that indicated that they used Kensal Library for other activities, were asked to detail these activities. Comments made have been themed and the themes with two or more comments are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen overleaf, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

The most commented on reasons were in relation to **adult education/ICT training/classes** (four comments) and **reading with children/children's books** (four comments).

Theme*	Comments
Adult education/ICT training/classes	4
Reading with children/children's book	4
Use of computers/access to printing	3
Homework support/studying	2
Socialising	2

**Themes shown with two or more mentions*



Survey findings: Other reasons for using the library

"I belong to Abundance Art which is an art group with main offices in Canal House. I miss this class which used to take place on a Tuesday."

Adult education/ICT training/classes

"I pick up a local seven year old from school once a week and often go to the library with her to read a couple of books before walking up to Meanwhile Gardens."

Reading with children/children's books

"Homework help/training adults in ICT and English or maths."

Adult education/ICT training/classes



"Chatting to people and socialising with whoever is there, reading stories to my daughter and any other kids who want to listen."

Reading with children/children's books

"Using the photocopier, scanner and printer. Picking up a free newspaper."

Use of computers/access to printing

"Socialising with my neighbours and friends especially those with children."

Socialising

"Homework support"

Homework support/studying



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Survey findings: Future services

Respondents were asked what services or activities they would like to see offered in Kensal Library in the future. Comments made have been themed and the themes with four or more comments are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen overleaf, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

The most commented on topics were in relation to **art/craft/culture events/activities** (eight comments) and **children's activities** (eight comments).

Theme*	Comments
Art/craft/culture events/activities	8
Children's activities	8
Training/classes (including digital skills)	6
Books/larger selection	5
Continue as is	5
Book club/poetry	4
Careers advice/support	4
Health and wellbeing services	4
Homework help/clubs	4
More events	4

**Themes shown with four or more mentions*



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Survey findings: Future services

“Arts and crafts with kids.”

Art/craft/culture events/activities

“Continuing Wellbeing, arts activities for families.”

Art/craft/culture events/activities

“Online courses. Workshops. Children's reading groups.”

Training/classes (including digital skills)

“Digital inclusion classes in conjunction with local community groups to support equality and inclusion.”

Training/classes (including digital skills)

“Bring back storytelling sessions for children. Live theatre. Health checks drop in session for adults and the families.”

Children's activities

“Reading club for kids.”

Children's activities

“Wider variety of books.”

Books/larger selection

“I think Kensal Library should continue to operate as it is- as a repository of knowledge, a place to learn and a community hub.”

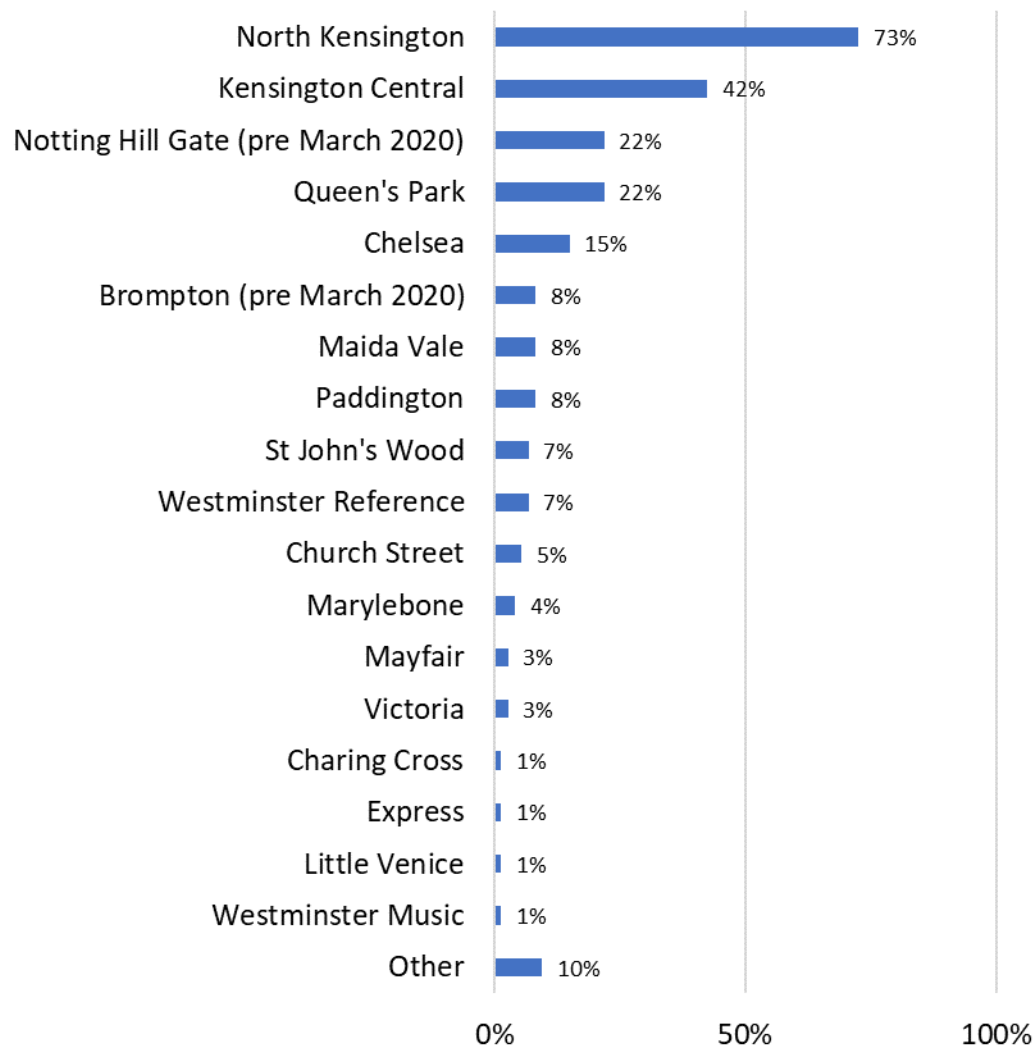
Continue as is



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Survey findings: Other libraries visited

Which, if any, other libraries do you visit in the local area?



Base: All responses (73)

Respondents were asked which other libraries they visited in the local area, respondents were able to select all libraries they visit from the list.

- Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of respondents visit North Kensington Library.
- A total of 42 per cent visit Kensington Central Library.
- Just over a fifth (22 per cent) visited Notting Hill Gate Library (pre March 2020) and the same percentage visit Queen's Park Library.
- One in ten (ten per cent) indicated they visit other libraries. These included: Hammersmith Library (two), Shepherd's Bush (two) and Kilburn (one).

One respondent commented it would be helpful if libraries in different boroughs could link up:

"It would be very useful if the libraries could link up whereby we could use just one card. I have library cards for Westminster, Brent, Camden and Ealing."



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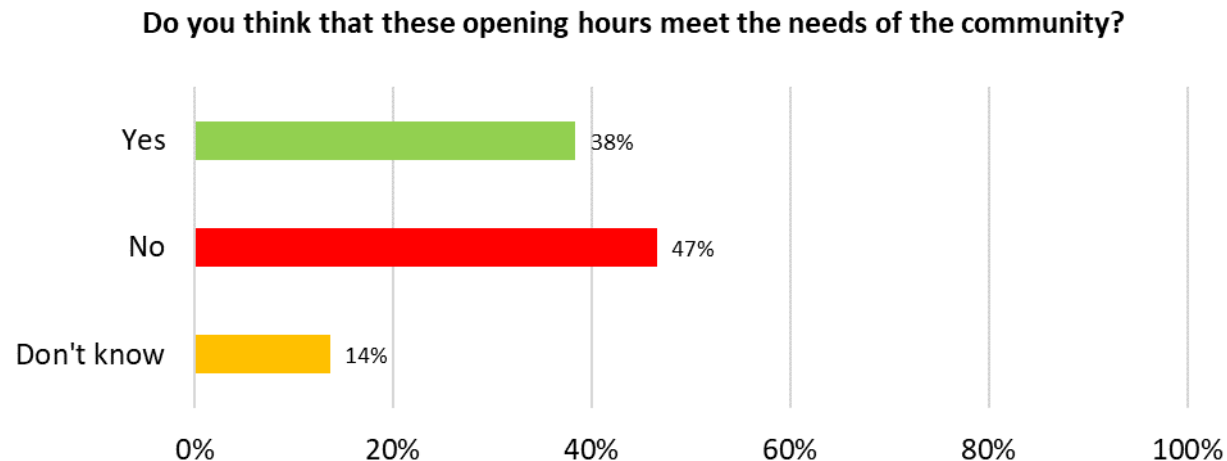
Survey findings: Opening hours

Kensal Library was previously open during the following times: Monday 1pm-6pm, Tuesday 1pm-6pm, Wednesday Closed, Thursday 1pm-6pm, Friday 9:30am-5pm, Saturday 9:30am-1pm, 2pm-5pm and Sunday Closed.

Respondents were asked if they thought these opening hours met the needs of the community.

- A total of 38 per cent thought the opening hours met the needs of the community.
- However, almost half (47 per cent) did not and 14 per cent did not know.

Those that did not feel the opening hours met the needs of the community were asked what they would like to see. This is explored overleaf.



Survey findings: Suggested opening hours

Respondents that were not in favour of the previous opening hours were asked to detail what they would like to see. Comments made have been themed and the themes with three or more comments are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can be seen overleaf, with the full list of themes and comments made can be found in appendix two.

The most commented on topics were **open every day/Wednesdays** (11 comments), **all day (e.g. 9am to 6pm)** (10 comments) and **earlier opening times (e.g. 9am or 9.30am)**.

Theme*	Comments
Open every day/Wednesdays	11
All day (e.g. 9am to 6pm)	10
Earlier opening times (e.g. 9am or 9.30am)	10
Evening opening	9
Longer hours on Saturdays	7
Sunday opening	5
Consistent hours	3

**Themes shown with three or more mentions*



Survey findings: Suggested opening hours

"I feel the library should be open as much as possible - ideally every day.."

Open every day/Wednesdays

"Children want to use the computers to complete assignments and carry out online research and learning so Wednesday should be open times moving forward."

Open every day/Wednesdays

"All weekday mornings and at least on a Sunday afternoon."

Earlier opening times (e.g. 9am or 9.30am)

"There needs to be a late evening at least once in the week."

Evening opening



"Ideally everyday 9am to 7pm."

All day

"Normal business hours, plus Saturday opening."

All day

"All day Saturday!"

Longer hours on Saturdays

"At least one evening open would be very good. Also I would like to see the library open on Sunday as there is very little entertainment in the Kensal area."

Sunday opening



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Survey findings: Services at Kensal Library

Respondents were asked, apart from core library services (such as book borrowing and using computers), which services they would like to see offered and when. Respondents were able to indicate that they would like to see services offered at more than one time, therefore results may total more than 100 per cent for some services.

The most popular services respondents would like to see on **weekday mornings** were:

- Baby and toddler events (60 per cent)
- Careers and employment advice (48 per cent)
- Health and wellbeing events (47 per cent)

The most popular services respondents would like to see **on weekday afternoons** were:

- Health and wellbeing events (52 per cent)
- Digital skills support (52 per cent)
- Help with reading (45 per cent)

The most popular services respondents would like to see on **weekends** were:

- Health and wellbeing events (56 per cent)
- Art and music shows (56 per cent)
- Cultural heritage events (55 per cent)

The most popular services respondents would like to see on **evenings** were:

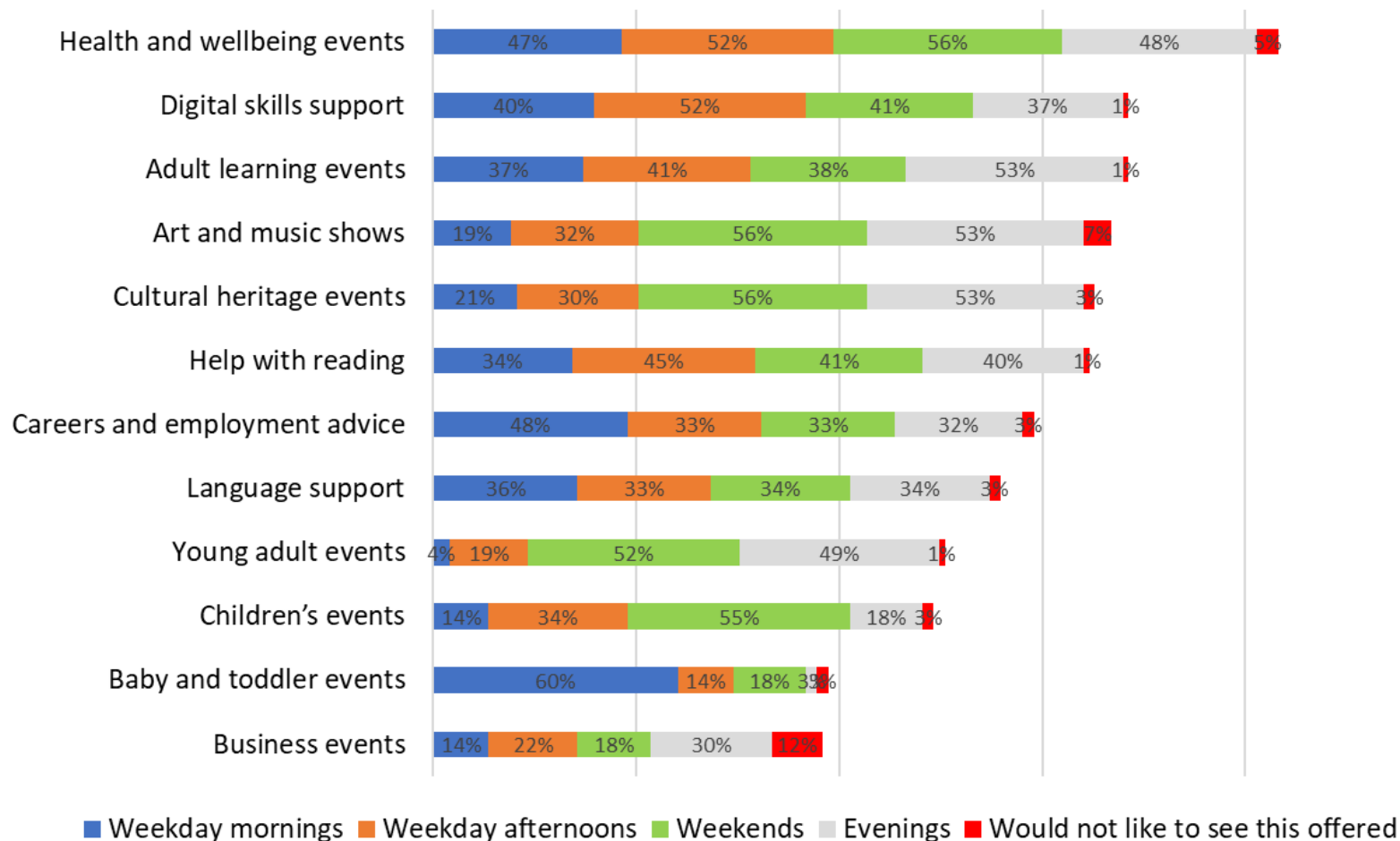
- Art and music shows (53 per cent)
- Cultural heritage events (53 per cent)
- Adult learning events (53 per cent)

A graph detailing all results can be seen overleaf.



Survey findings: Services at Kensal Library

Apart from core library services, please indicate which of the following services you would like to see offered at Kensal Library and at what times during the week?



Base: All responses (73)



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Survey findings: Kensal Library proposal

Respondents were given details of the proposal for Kensal Library to partner with a community group or local organisation, and asked whether they supported the proposal.

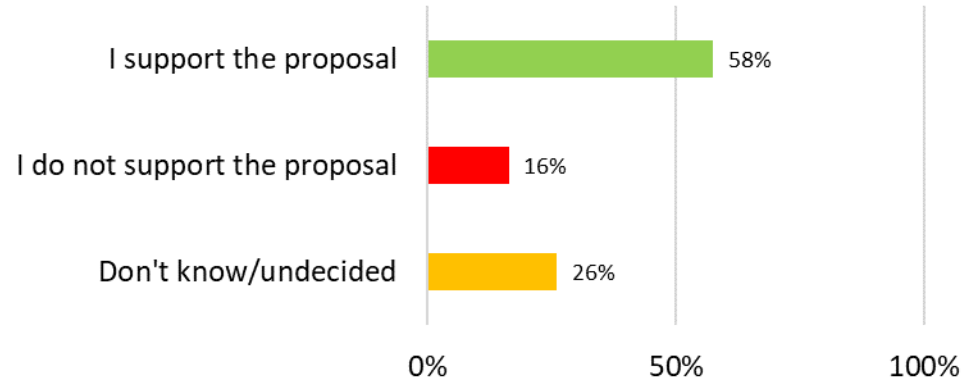
Partnering with a community group

- Over half (58 per cent) supported the proposal to partner with a community group.
- However, 16 per cent did not support this.
- Over a quarter (26 per cent) did not know or were undecided.

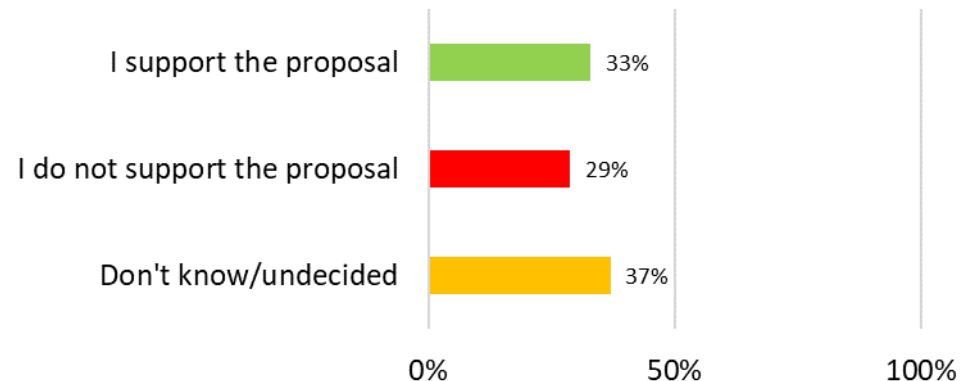
Partnering with a local organisation

- A third (33 per cent) supported the proposal to partner with a local organisation.
- However, almost as many (29 per cent) did not support this.
- Over a third (37 per cent) did not know or were undecided.

Do you support the proposal of Kensal Library partnering with a community group e.g. a voluntary group?



Do you support the proposal of Kensal Library partnering with local organisations e.g. a local business?



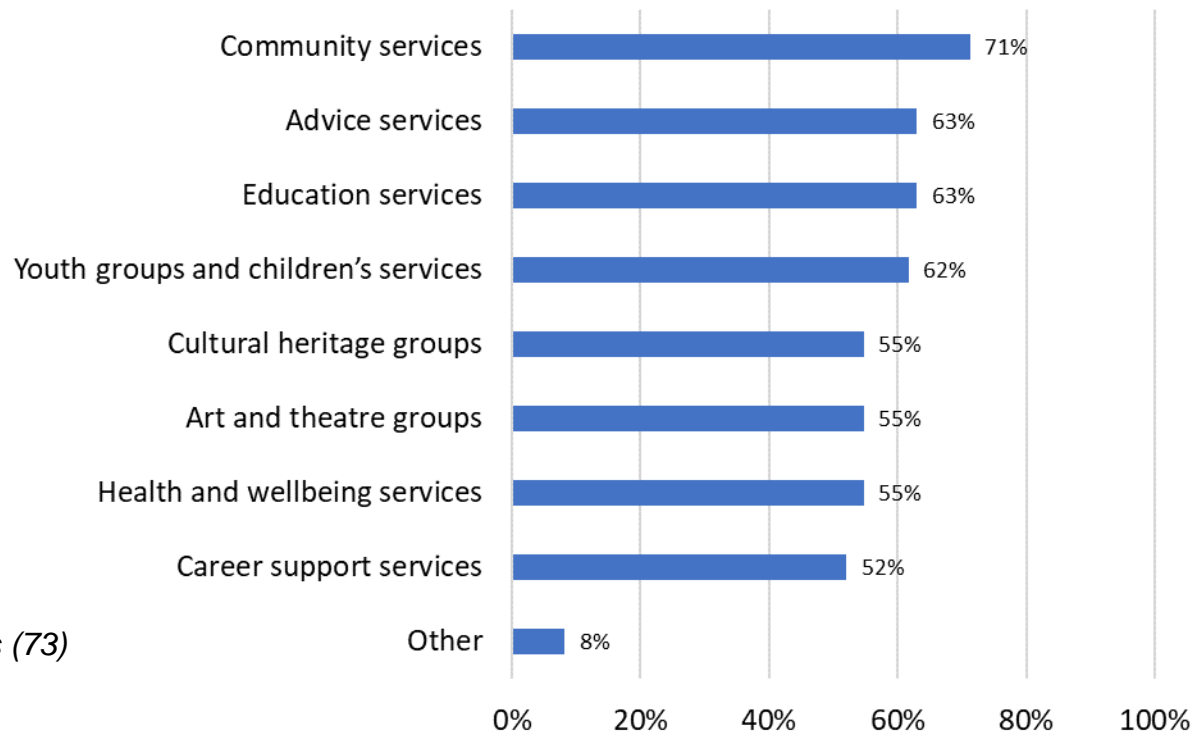
Base: All respondents (73)

Survey findings: Organisation to partner with

Respondents were asked what type of organisation they would like to see the library partner with. Respondents were able to select more than one option if they wished.

- A total of 71 per cent would like the library to partner with '**community services**'.
- Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) would like to see the library partner with '**advice services**', with the same percentage in favour of the library partnering with '**education services**'.
- Eight per cent would like to see partnering with other types of organisations, this is explored overleaf.

If you are in favour of the Library partnering with a community group or local organisation, what type of organisation would you like to see the library partner with?



Survey findings: Other organisations to partner with

Respondents that indicated 'other' organisations to partner with were asked to detail their response. Eleven respondents made comments. With a low number of responses it is difficult to theme responses. Some examples of responses can be seen below, with the full list of comments made can be found in appendix two.

“At the end of the day this is a library, where you should be able to sit and read all day long if you’re, e.g. seeking refuge or education or just peace”

“I would like to see the library link up with Open Age. Thank you.”

“Local voluntary and community organisations, residents associations, shelters for homeless people, The Curve, Grenfell services, English Trust.”

“The library is tiny, there’s not even enough space for books, how will you fit anything else in?”



“How are they going to help lots of these places struggling to stay afloat themselves why would they partner with a library?”

“RBKC would do well to look into the libraries of Amsterdam and Rotterdam to see how they use and value their libraries and the array of services and creatives they partner their libraries with. There is huge potential. There is no reason to limit partnering to any number. Make use of the space and the service and engage people all over. Bring life and love to our libraries and treat them as more than just another Council asset to be cut up and assessed and potentially gotten rid of”

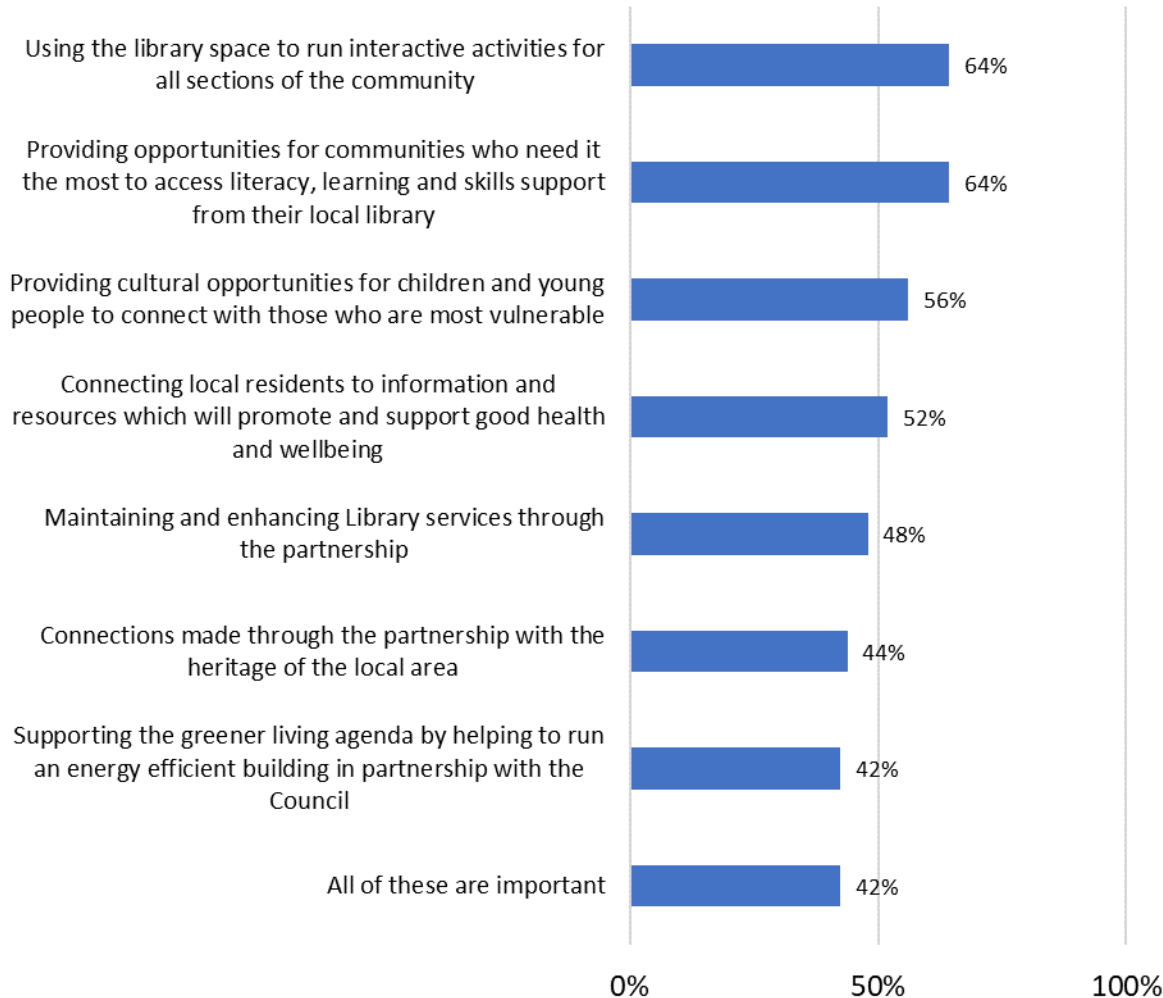
“Weight watchers or similar organisations for losing weight”



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Survey findings: Partnering principles

Which of the following principles are important to you?



Respondents were asked which of the Council's partnering principles were important to them. Respondents were able to select as many as applied.

- Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) felt ***'using the library space to run interactive activities for all sections of the community'*** was important to them.
- The same percentage felt ***'providing opportunities for communities who need it the most to access literacy, learning and skills support from their local library'*** was important to them.
- Over half (56 per cent) felt ***'providing cultural opportunities for children and young people to connect with those who are most vulnerable'*** was important to them.

Base: All responses (73)



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Survey findings: Community projects

Respondents were asked if they were aware of community projects that would benefit from support from Kensal Library. The majority of comments are individual and therefore difficult to theme. Examples of comments made can be seen below, with the full list of comments made can be found in appendix two.

“Renegade Theatre are a local theatre company running drama workshops for kids, and recently completed an oral history/photography project about the Wornington Green estate. St Mark's Housing Co-Op are a housing co-operative based predominantly in the local area for nearly 40 years.”

“Abundance Arts - Community Together Wellbeing Arts Social - connecting people with learning and creativity.”

“Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Project Ltd.”



“I am not aware of any specific projects but I think it would be very good to remind residents of the importance of recycling.”

“Maybe something to do with the youth in the area.”

“Possibly Age UK Kensington and Chelsea, Open Age or/and Nova.”

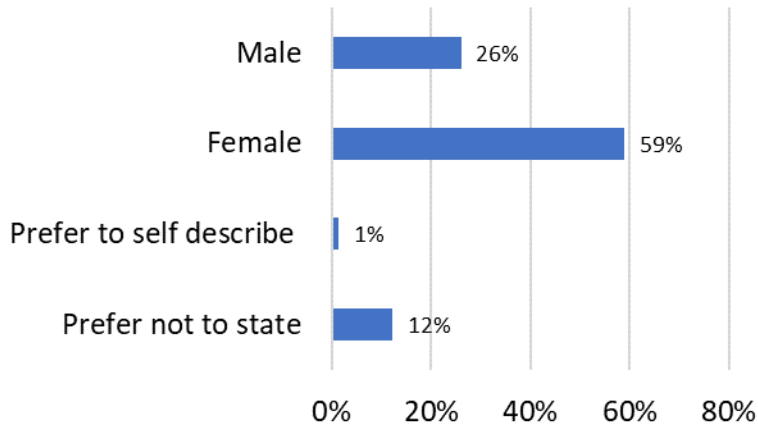
“Youth groups, The Curve, Grenfell groups.”



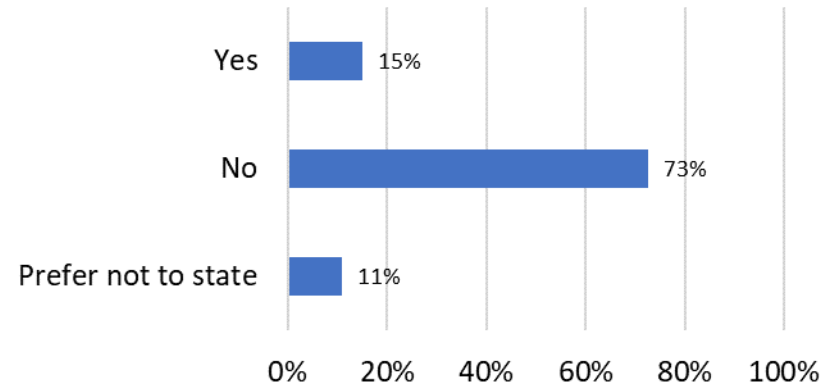
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Survey findings: Profile of respondents

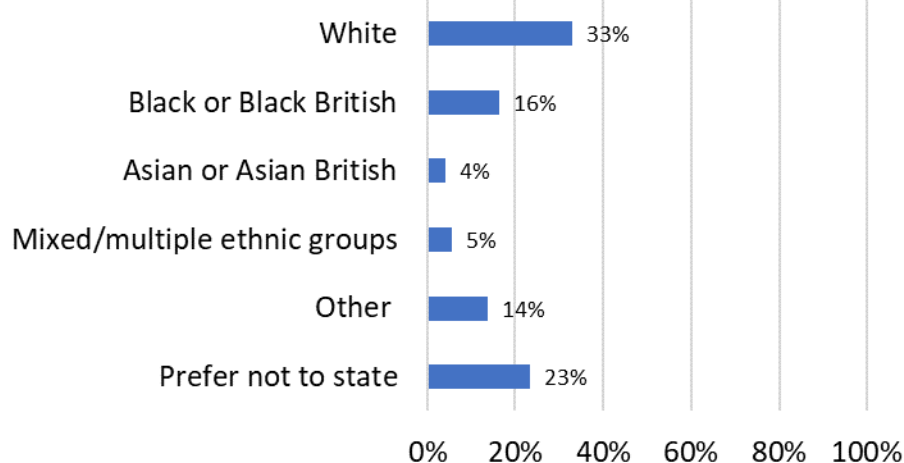
What is your sex?



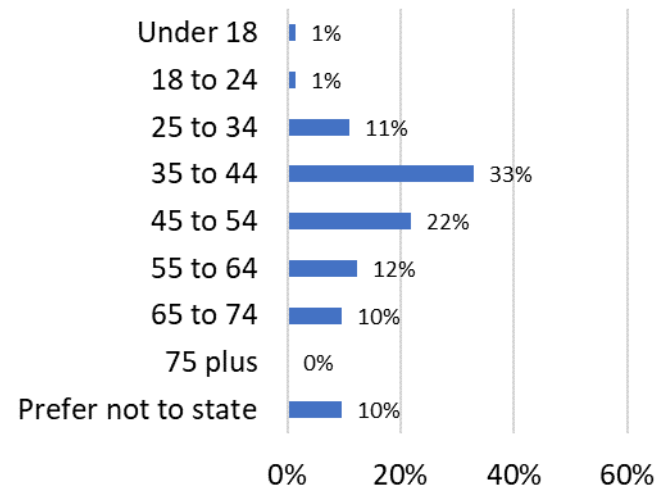
Do you have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities?



How do you describe your ethnic origin?



Which age group do you belong to?



Base: All responses (73)

Section 2: Focus Groups



Focus Groups

In addition to the feedback survey, the Council organised two focus groups sessions in order to explore residents and service users' feedback in more detail.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, both sessions were held virtually via Zoom with a total of eight participating (four in each session). The below is a summary of feedback from both sessions, more detail on the focus groups can be found in appendix three.

Use of the library

All participants had used Kensal Library, when it was open. They had used it for a range of services including book borrowing, for the children's homework club, reading, computers and printing, talks, art activities, parties and exhibitions. Participants spoke very positively about the staff too.

Other services participants would like to see

Participants suggested a range of services they would like to see offered at Kensal Library, these included: room hire, support for people whose first language is not English, after school/home work clubs, activities for children (e.g. Lego club), a more diverse range of books, wider selection of books/more books, foreign language books, creative writing and poetry, training courses and digital skills.

Participants felt additional services would encourage better use of Kensal Library.

Partnering proposal

Participants had questions about how the partnership would work and what impact it might have on Kensal Library services. Once participants were reassured about the proposed partnership, participants were in favour of the proposed partnership. This was often on the condition that the partnership would be with a community/voluntary organisation rather than a business and that it would not see a reduction of library services.

Participants felt it could bring in more people to the library, but would depend on what service came in. Participants also felt it could help to safeguard the future of the library.

The concerns with the proposal related to any reduction in library services or taking up room within the library that could be used for library services.



Focus Groups

Organisation/services participants would like to see the Council partner with

Participants suggested a range of services or organisations they would like to see the Council partner with, these included: services for young people, services offering wellbeing services, arts and culture, training and education, coding and digital skills.

Some participants would like to see an organisation coming in offering services that are not on offer locally.

Level of community involvement in the decision making process

Participants were keen to see the community having a full say in the selection process of an organisation. Suggestions included organisations presenting their partnership ideas to residents for residents to have a full say in their selection. One participant went on to suggest a voting process similar to the Grenfell Projects Fund participatory budget event.

One participant felt that if the community had a say in selection, they would more likely buy in to the decision and using the services.

