



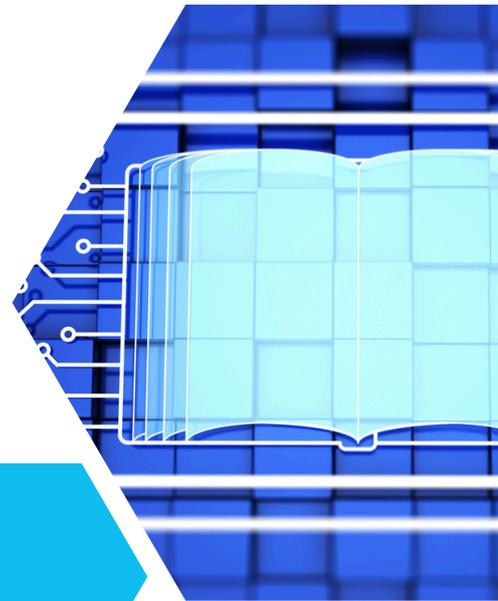
**MAKING  
LIFE  
BETTER**

HLH LIBRARIES

# NON-USER SURVEY REPORT

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**2025**



# Findings and Action Plan

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HLH Libraries conducted a survey with non-service users during March 2025. The aim of the survey was to identify the reasons why some people are not using their local library and to determine what the service can do to encourage future use. Surveys were carried out online, at local leisure centres, visitor attractions, community centres, and at community events.

A total of 755 people responded to the survey, 184 of which said that they had used their library within the past 12 months. Those that had not (571 respondents) formed the basis for the non-user sample.

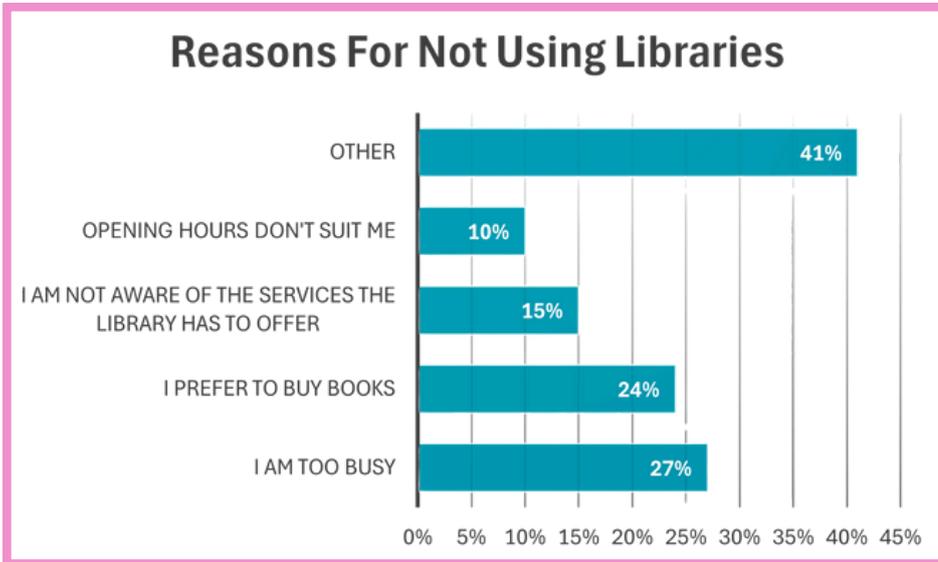


# Key Findings

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- ❶ Only 10% (57) of non-users said they did not intend to use any of the services offered by High Life Highland Libraries in the future.
- ❷ Almost half (267) of non-users said that if they were to use libraries in the future, they would make use of services offered within library buildings as well as remotely (i.e. to make use of the libraries' online resources). This was in comparison to 28% (153) that said that they would only be interested in services within the library buildings and 24% (134) that said that only online resources would interest them.
- ❸ The main reasons stated by respondents for not using their local library were being too busy (27%-157) and preferring to buy their own books (24%-140).
- ❹ 41% (242) of respondents selected 'other' as their reason for not using their local library. Some of the reasons given included lack of parking or having to pay for parking, no longer having a mobile library visiting, not living near a library, currently reading on a kindle or online, their library having a poor selection of books, not being a reader, ill health, and having a disability such as sight impairments, arthritis, and dyslexia.
- ❺ Some respondents believed that the service still charge fines for overdue books and cited this as a barrier to using the service.
- ❻ Some respondents did not class themselves as a library user even though they stated that they make use of the library's online services such as e-books, e-audiobooks and digital newspapers.
- ❼ 23% (129) respondents said that they did not use other services provided by High Life Highland.

# Reasons for not using Libraries



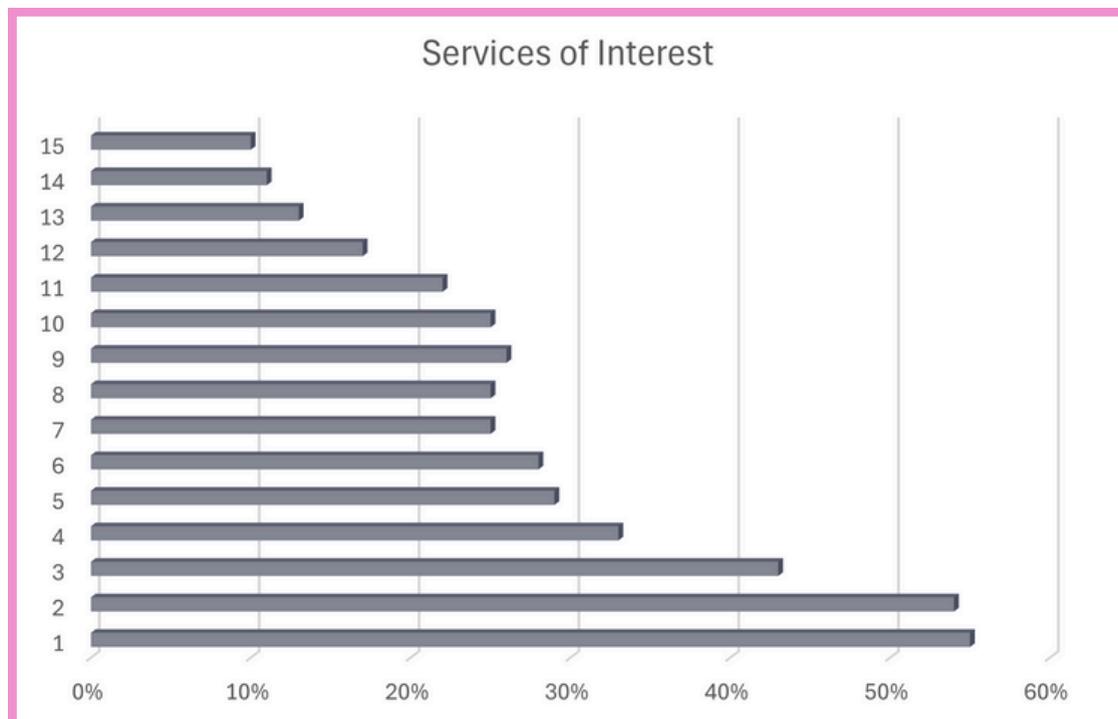
'Other' reasons for not using libraries...



Respondents were asked what their reasons were for not using their local library. The most common reasons given were being too busy (27%-157) and preferring to buy their own books (24%-140).

# Services of Interest

Respondents were asked which services would be of interest to them if they were to use libraries in the future. Trends here were similar to people already using the service, with **e-book/e-audio book provision (55%-312)**, **book/magazine borrowing (54%-305)** and **digital newspaper/magazine provision (43%-247)** being the main services of interest to them. Other services of significant interest to non-users included **accessing computers and printing facilities (29%-165)**, **accessing wi-fi (25%-142)** and **attending events (26%-146)**.



1. E-books & E-Audio books
2. Borrowing books & Magazines
3. Digital Magazines & Newspaper
4. Online Learning & Online Local History
5. Access to Computers & Printing Facilities
6. Accessing Hot Drinks
7. Learning Languages Online
8. Accessing Wi-Fi
9. Attending Activities such as Book Groups, Craft Groups or Digital Learning
10. Using Comfortable Seating for Relaxation or Socialising
11. Study Spaces
12. Attending Family Activities such as Bookbug/Lego Club
13. Attending Summer Activities
14. Accessing Online Comics or Graphic Novels
15. None of the Above - do not intend to use libraries in the future.

# Other High Life Services Used

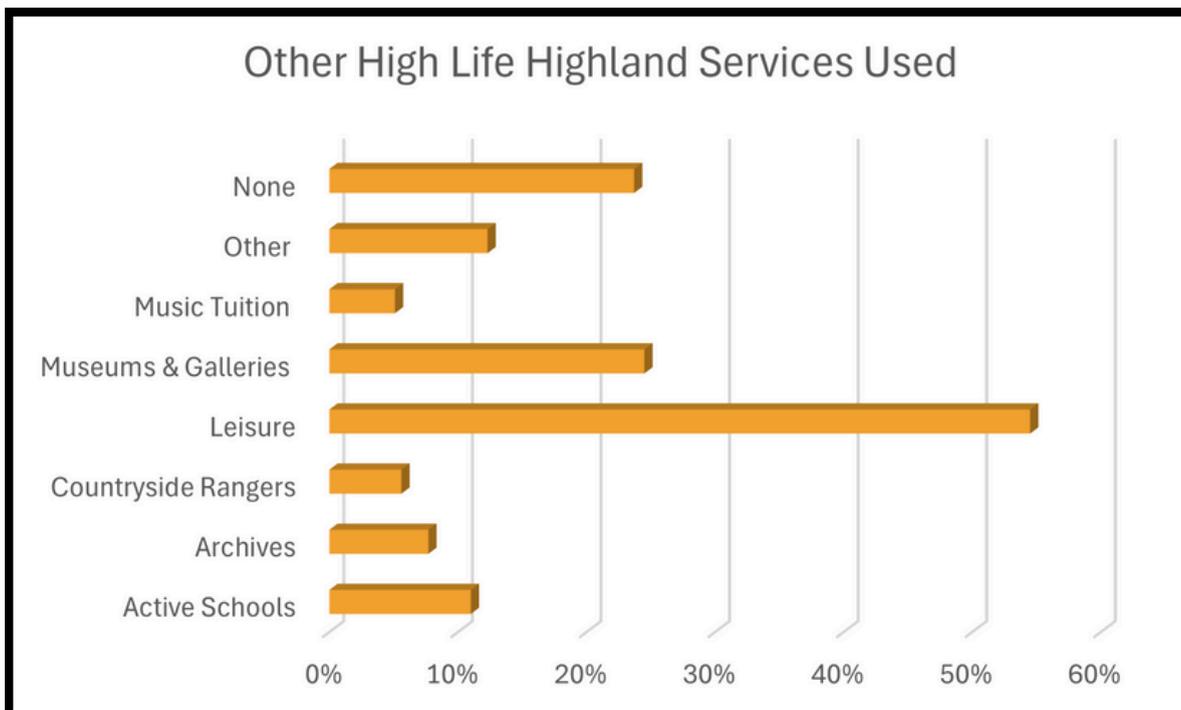
Respondents were asked which other HLH services they accessed, the two most used were HLH Leisure facilities at over 54% and Museums and Galleries at over 24%.



**Leisure 54%**



**Museums & Galleries 24%**



Community Centres, Botanic Gardens, adult music tuition and free bus journeys accounted for 11.7% (67) of respondents using other services.

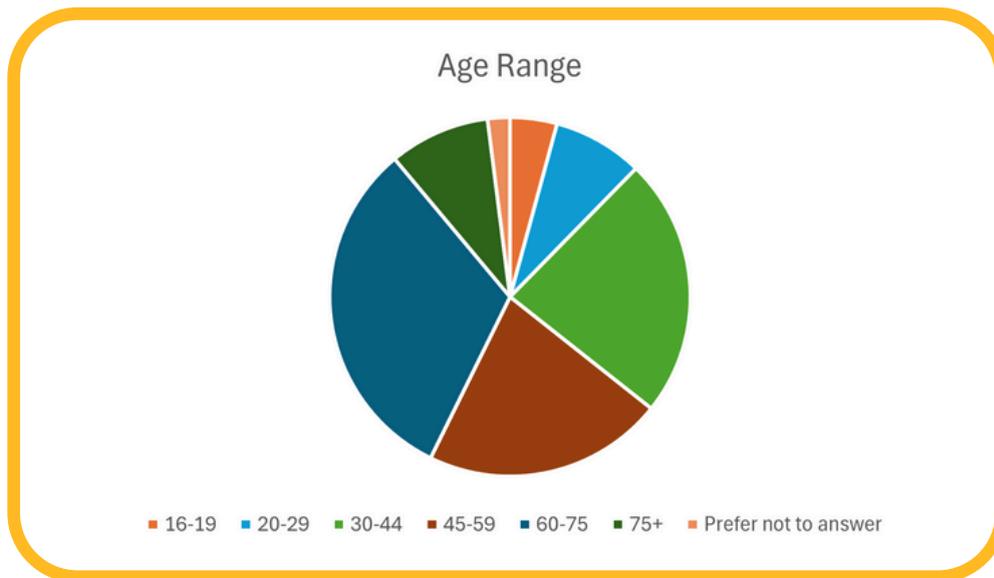
# Non-user Characteristics

Respondents were grouped into the following age categories:

16-19      20-29      30-44      45-59      60-75      75+

The 16-19 age group had the fewest respondents, whereas individuals aged 60-75 made up approximately one-third of the total participants.

## Age

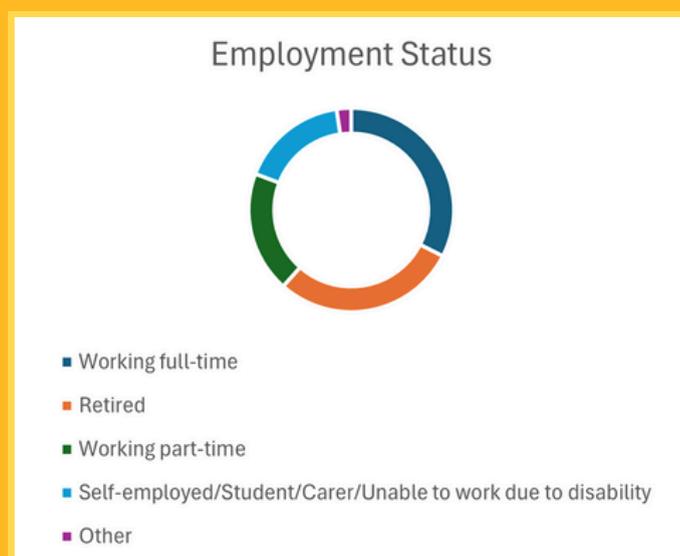


Respondents were asked if they had any difficulties, including hearing 9% (52), eyesight 8.2% (47), mental health/depression 8.4% (48), learning difficulties 6.1% (35) and memory loss 1.7% (10). 33.8% (193) said they had none. Other difficulties included Autism, Dyslexia and Epilepsy.

## Employment Status

Respondents who answered 'other' fell into one of the following categories:

- On maternity leave
- Travelling
- Volunteering
- Recovering from illness



# Action Plan

It was clear from the findings that accessibility issues remain a barrier to some customers accessing services. The following key actions will be implemented:



**01. Promote widely the new housebound service offered by libraries.**



**02. Promote widely to rural communities the revised mobile library service.**



**03. Promote widely the 24-hour access to digital services offered by libraries.**

It was clear from the findings that for some customers there were concerns around accumulating overdue charges on late book returns. In line with national policy and to reduce inequalities, High Life Highland Libraries no longer implement overdue charges for the late return of items. The following action will be implemented:



**04. Promote widely the benefits of library membership with the key message that the service no longer implements fines for the late return of items.**

Feedback from the library staff that surveyed non-users suggests that the consultation was of significant value in engaging with those not currently using the service, raising awareness of the services provided by High Life Highland, and signing up new customers. The following action will be implemented:



**05. Use community events and other HLH buildings to initiate sign-up campaigns, with library staff present to promote the service and engage with potential customers.**

# High Life Highland Libraries



Making Life Better