

Equality impact assessment: library closures

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Introduction

The Moray Council is required to find £30 million of annual budget savings by 2016/17, representing 11% of its total budget. These savings are in addition to £15 million of annual savings achieved during the previous 3 years. In 2012 a public consultation was held to seek the views from the public on what services they would like to protect and where savings could be made.

On 13 February 2013 38 a report was put before the Moray Council with savings proposals for 2013/14, amounting to an estimated £4.5 million. Additional proposed savings for the 2014/15 budget were also identified, amounting to an estimated £9.4 million.

The report included a proposal to close libraries in: Cullen, Findochty, Portknockie, Burghead, Hopeman, Dufftown and Rothes and reduce mobile libraries from 2 to 1. These were accompanied by reductions in: management, learning centre staff and the purchase of books and other materials. The full year effect of these savings were estimated at £357,000. At the Moray Council meeting on 13 February 2013 it was decided to hold off the decision on the libraries after an initial screening for equality impacts of these proposals concluded that a consultation was needed with library users in the potentially affected areas in order to establish:

- Which groups protected under the Equality Act 2010 would be affected
- What the impacts would be on those groups
- What mitigating actions could be put in place to eliminate or reduce the impacts.

The initial screening identified the following themes in relation to potential impacts:

- Rural isolation
- Educational attainment
- Welfare reform and the need to have internet access

The consultation would assist in exploring these issues further and in identifying additional impacts on vulnerable groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. The differences between this consultation and the one carried out in 2012 are

- The 2012 consultation informed the Moray Council on the public's general priorities in relation to the overall budget
- The 2012 consultation can assist in setting priorities in relation to the overall budget but cannot identify potential impacts on groups protected by the Equality Act 2012
- The 2012 consultation was a general consultation to which any member of the public could contribute
- The consultation on the libraries, on the other hand, focus specifically on the areas within Moray that will be affected by the proposed closures

- The consultation on the libraries aims to engage with those groups protected under the Equality Act 2010 who may be affected by the closures
- The consultation on the libraries seeks to identify impacts on those groups, rather than priorities among the general public
- The consultation on the libraries seeks to identify possible mitigating actions which can alleviate the impacts should the proposals go ahead

This report gives an analysis of the consultation. It will discuss the themes identified in the initial screening as well as additional issues that arose from the consultation.

At present there are 15 libraries and 2 mobile libraries in Moray. The total number of library borrowers in 2011-2012 was 26,384. The number of borrowers of the potentially affected libraries in 2011-2012 was 4,441. The total number of visitors to the potentially affected libraries was 38,422 against 644,126 for the service. There were 1,602 individual computer users against 20,544 for the service.

1 Consultation process

1.1 Initial screening

The initial screening highlighted the potential for adverse impacts on several groups protected by the Equality Act 2010.

- Age
 - 65+. Potential impact in relation to social isolation, rural isolation, access to library services, access to IT (including benefits), access to courses
 - Pre-school (0-3; 3-5). Potential impact on educational attainment
 - School age (primary; secondary) Potential impact on educational attainment
 - 18 – 65. Potential impact in relation to access to IT (benefits), access to courses and essential skills training, job clubs
 - People who care for elderly relatives. Potential impact in relation to social isolation, rural isolation, respite
- Gender, parents of pre-school and school age children. Potential impact in relation to pre-school and school age children.
- Disability
 - People with disabilities. Impact in relation to access to library services, access to IT (benefits), access to courses.
 - Carers. Potential impact in relation to social isolation, rural isolation, respite
- Race. Potential impact in relation to ESOL, access to IT, access to courses
- Sexual orientation, unknown impact

- Gender reassignment, unknown impact
- Pregnancy and maternity. Potential impact in relation to pre-school age.
- People on benefits insofar as they belong to any of the above groups.

The Moray Council's Community Support Unit developed the consultation process in partnership with the Equal Opportunities Officer, and carried out the consultation.

1.2 Stakeholder selection

Because of the scale of the proposals and the potential impacts it was decided that a consultation with users who belong to any of the protected groups was required before a decision can be made.

The Equal Opportunities Officer worked with the Community Support Unit on the consultation about library closures. The parameters of the consultation were

- Focus on equality issues
 - How will the various equality groups be affected by closures
 - What mitigating actions can be taken
- Focus on potentially affected areas only
- Focus on library users of the potentially affected libraries only

The following stakeholders/stakeholder groups were identified and contacted:

- Moray Disability Forum
- Moray Access Panel
- North East Sensory Services
- Learning And Disability Citizens Leaders
- Learning And Disability Partnership Forum
- Moray Mental Health Group
- Autism Citizen Leaders
- Carers Forum
- Older Persons Reference Group
- Local authority day care services
- Private care homes
- Quarriers carers
- Crossroads carers
- Lunch clubs
- BALL groups
- Older people development officer
- Telehealth Care Group
- Patient Participation Forum
- Moray Handy Person Services
- Local authority home care services

- Age focus group
- ESOL learners
- Essential skills learners
- Job centre Plus
- Skills Development Scotland
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Digital Highlands and Islands
- Moray Council welfare rights and benefit officers
- Community Learning and Development Youth Team
- Homebound library users
- North of Scotland Home Education
- Moray Citizens Panel
- Pre-school providers
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- Primary Parent Teachers Councils
- Secondary Parent Teachers Councils
- Scottish Child Minders Association (SMCA)
- Users at potentially affected libraries
- 2012 Summer Reading Challenge participants

A full list of consultees and number of received is attached in **appendix I**.

A total of 1,760 questionnaires were returned. Of these 969 were from users of the potentially affected libraries and another 279 could not be linked to a particular library. The remaining 512 questionnaires related to other libraries.

1.3 Methods used

Information was gathered using questionnaires, focus groups meetings with targeted stakeholders and face-to-face meetings. The questionnaires were made available in large print for those with visual impairments or those who required extra space as a result of difficulties with fine motor skills.

A summary of the consultation process was sent to members of the Scottish Councils Equality Network (SCEN) for peer group review.

1.4 Analysis

For the potentially affected areas it was decided to use open questions in order to ensure that identified effects came from the potentially affected communities and were not prompted by the questionnaire. The responses were recorded verbatim and then categorised, according to the quantitative research methods deployed under the name “grounded theory”

(<http://www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/events/whatis/gt.pdf>).

The features of this approach include:

- simultaneous collection and analysis of data

- creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data and not by pre-existing conceptualisations (theoretical sensitivity)
- inductive construction of themes and categories

One of the Moray Council's Research and Information Officers carried out the analysis in partnership with the Equal Opportunities Officer.

In this consultation, the focus group meetings helped to identify most of the issues. As more questionnaires were being processed some additional issues were identified, such as concern about capacity of the remaining static or mobile libraries and people's independence.

The full analysis of the survey is attached in **appendix III**.

2 Context:

2.1 library provision in Scotland

The following is given as background information. It is not within the remit of an equality impact assessment to comment on the adequacy of library provision. However, clarity of vision regarding adequate library provision can also assist in formulating a justification for any decisions made about the proposed closures.

In 2006 Scottish Government through the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) as advisory body to Scottish Ministers, Scottish Government and SLIC members (including local authorities), agreed the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix for Scotland (PLQIM). Its purpose is to assist in the definition of adequacy under the legislation and PLQIM will help inform the Council as to any future library closures. PLQIM helps define the key obligations in relation to: access to information; personal and community participation; meeting readers' needs; and providing positive learners' experiences. SLIC as the government's advisors on libraries has been recently required to re-examine PLQIM to ensure that it reflects current practice and priorities. The revised PLQIM is due to be published in January 2014.

In addition to the statutory duty to provide adequate library facilities for those resident in its area,¹ the Moray Council also has a duty to ensure best value and can exercise its power of wellbeing in relation to the provision of library services.²

¹ s 163(2) Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

² Ss 1& 20 Local Government in Scotland Act 2003

Clarity as to what constitutes an adequate library service is further embedded by standards being set through benchmarking against current widespread practice via PLQIM. In a modern context this translates to the following minimum requirements:

- a strategic network of libraries, easily accessed within reasonable travelling distance for all in the community and open at times communities can easily access them
- Provision of reading material for all
- Information services including information and heritage through physical collections and online services.
- Access to a range of learning opportunities, in particular those to get people on-line and using government services
- Properly trained and supported staff to support activities

Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix recommends that Councils ensure that libraries are “sited where the public can access them easily as part of their daily life.” There is no statutory duty to provide a static library in every community. To ensure that the Council remains within its statutory remit, they should ensure that where there is no static provision, library services can be equitably accessed by all.

Libraries run by communities or volunteers would not be part of the statutory provision.

SLIC published its vision paper on libraries for the 21st century in June 2013. It defines the purpose of public libraries as:

“... neighbourhood networks connecting people to the information and resources they need: to succeed in learning and gain new skills; to delight in our culture and be inspired to create; to participate in strong communities; to make healthy choices and live well, and to engage in the digital world throughout life.”

The appendix to this document identifies the role of libraries in contributing to national and local outcomes.

The Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix (PLQIM) uses the following performance indicators

- Access to information
- Community & Personal Participation
- Meeting Readers' Needs
- Learners' Experiences
- Ethos & Values
- Organisation & Use of Resources & Space
- Leadership

2.2 Digital Participation

“Digital Participation describes people’s ability to gain access to digital technology and understand how to use it creatively. Increased digital participation can improve people’s quality of life, boost economic growth and allow more effective delivery of public services.

Scotland’s libraries have a crucial role to play in delivering access to IT and in developing the skills and confidence of people who do not currently use the internet.

In addition to having access to digital technology, people also need to have the confidence and skills to use it. Libraries in particular play an important role, not only in providing the physical access and an increasing range of online services but by having library staff on hand to provide advice and support to new computer users.”

2.2.1 Scotland’s Digital Future: A strategy for Scotland. Scottish Government 2011 onwards

“Having access to the internet is an essential component of 21st century life. The benefits that are derived from being online – and the disadvantages that come from a lack of access – are now so significant that the twin challenges of improving the UK’s digital infrastructure and increasing digital participation have become critical policy issues.

The advantages offered by online access are well documented and include:

- Improved educational attainment
- Better job prospects and flexibility
- Better access to public services, including health & welfare
- Cheaper goods and products
- More choice and convenience
- Access to advice, information and knowledge
- Improved communication and engagement with family and friends
- Enhanced democratic and civic participation

The gap between the benefits of being online and the disadvantages of being offline is growing even more quickly.

For those citizens who are online and who are confident users of digital technology, the move towards increased online delivery is good news - making it cheaper, easier and faster to gain access to services.

However, as the benefits accrue to those who are online, those without access or the associated skills will be left further and further behind.”

2.2.2 “Across the Divide” Carnegie Trust 2013

Supported access is essential to bridge the digital divide where 25%-30% of the population are now increasingly disadvantaged because they lack the necessary information literacy skills – and that percentage tends to be the most vulnerable in society, older people, unemployed, those on low incomes, those with poor qualifications.

2.3 Welfare reform

The information in this section was gathered with the assistance from JobCentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, Moray Council Benefit Manager, Moray Council Trading Standards Manager. The responsibility for the factual accuracy remains with the author of the report.

Digital by default. During 2013 Jobcentre Plus (JCP) customers in receipt of or eligible for Universal Credit (October 2013), Personal Independence Payment (June 2013) and Carer's Allowance will be signposted to the online services for making a claim and updating their circumstances. The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) aim is for digital to become the main channel to claim benefits and search for jobs. The changes will be phased in over 2 years.

Gov.uk will become the main website for benefit claims and job searches.

The changes will affect anyone on the above benefits who are not in work, or in part-time work and in receipt of tax credit (which will be replaced by Universal Credit). The issues arising from this are:

- Not all customers have access to a pc or laptop at home
- Not all customers have access to broadband
- There are some areas in Moray with no or inadequate broadband provision.
- Customers who have to travel to access the internet are unlikely to have their fares/travel expenses reimbursed by DWP.
- Outreach service to assist customers with their claims will take at least 18 months to develop, if approved by DWP.
- Current firewall protection at DWP prevents outreach services through iPads, laptops or mobile phone connections.
- The process of applying for benefits can take a considerable amount of time.

Table 1 gives an overview of benefit recipients by ward. These follow the boundaries of the Census Area Statistics Wards 2003. The nearest libraries for each ward have been added, although it has to be stressed that, where more than one library is listed for a ward, these are NOT in order of proximity. The wards potentially affected by closures are highlighted. The mobile libraries are not included in the table because these do not provide internet access.

Table 1: benefit recipients by ward.

2003 CAS Ward	Disabled		Bereaved		Key out-of-work benefits		Incapacity Benefits		Lone parents		Carers		Income-related benefits		JSA		Nearest libraries
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Elgin - Bishopmill West	25	1.0	0	0.0	145	6.0	95	3.9	5	0.2	20	0.8	5	0.2	33	1.4	Elgin
Elgin - Bishopmill East	40	1.8	10	0.5	245	11.1	155	7.0	30	1.4	25	1.1	5	0.2	61	2.8	Elgin
Elgin - Cathedral	25	1.1	0	0.0	325	14.6	200	9.0	45	2.0	25	1.1	10	0.4	77	3.5	Elgin
Elgin - Central West	10	0.5	5	0.3	140	7.2	100	5.1	5	0.3	10	0.5	5	0.3	26	1.3	Elgin
New Elgin West	20	0.9	5	0.2	180	8.5	125	5.9	15	0.7	15	0.7	5	0.2	31	1.5	Elgin
New Elgin East	30	1.3	10	0.4	265	11.3	170	7.3	30	1.3	25	1.1	5	0.2	61	2.6	Elgin
Forres East	10	0.5	5	0.2	125	6.2	65	3.2	5	0.2	20	1.0	10	0.5	37	1.8	Forres
Forres Central	25	1.1	5	0.2	345	15.3	190	8.4	30	1.3	25	1.1	20	0.9	114	5.0	Forres
Finderne	15	0.5	5	0.2	125	4.2	65	2.2	10	0.3	30	1.0	10	0.3	46	1.5	Forres
Forres West and Altyre	30	1.4	10	0.5	250	11.6	130	6.0	20	0.9	40	1.9	10	0.5	60	2.8	Forres
Burghsea	30	1.3	10	0.4	160	6.8	120	5.1	5	0.2	30	1.3	0	0.0	35	1.5	Hopeman, Burghead, Lossiemouth, Forres, Elgin
Heldon and Laich	20	1.0	5	0.2	120	6.0	75	3.7	5	0.2	20	1.0	5	0.2	35	1.7	Lossiemouth, Elgin, Hopeman, Burghead
Lossiemouth East	20	0.9	0	0.0	165	7.7	105	4.9	15	0.7	10	0.5	5	0.2	44	2.0	Lossiemouth
Lossiemouth West	45	1.5	5	0.2	210	7.0	120	4.0	30	1.0	40	1.3	5	0.2	56.0	1.9	Lossiemouth
Lhanbryde and Birnie	50	2.4	10	0.5	385	18.2	265	12.5	45	2.1	50	2.4	5	0.2	98	4.6	Elgin, Aberlour, Fochabers, Keith
Innes	25	1.1	0	0.0	115	5.3	80	3.7	10	0.5	25	1.1	0	0.0	35	1.6	Fochabers. Elgin
Lennox	25	1.5	5	0.3	165	9.8	115	6.8	10	0.6	20	1.2	5	0.3	34	2.0	Fochabers. Elgin
Buckie West	25	1.2	5	0.2	260	13.0	165	8.2	20	1.0	25	1.2	10	0.5	77	3.8	Buckie
Buckie Central	10	0.5	5	0.3	220	11.8	120	6.4	30	1.6	25	1.3	5	0.3	74	4.0	Buckie
Buckie East and Findochty	25	1.3	5	0.3	165	8.8	105	5.6	15	0.8	25	1.3	10	0.5	49	2.6	Buckie, Findochty, Portknockie, Cullen
Rathford	20	1.0	5	0.3	170	8.7	105	5.4	15	0.8	35	1.8	5	0.3	43	2.2	Buckie, Findochty, Portknockie, Cullen
Fife - Keith and Strathisla	25	1.2	5	0.2	180	9.0	105	5.2	20	1.0	30	1.5	10	0.5	31	1.5	Keith
Keith	20	1.1	5	0.3	160	9.0	95	5.4	5	0.3	20	1.1	5	0.3	46	2.6	Keith
Rural Keith and Rothes	25	1.4	5	0.3	175	9.9	105	5.9	15	0.8	10	0.6	0	0.0	42	2.4	Keith, Aberlour, Rothes
Speyside	25	1.2	5	0.2	135	6.6	100	4.9	10	0.5	20	1.0	5	0.2	20	1.0	Aberlour, Dufftown
Glenlivet	25	1.4	5	0.3	140	7.6	95	5.1	5	0.3	15	0.8	5	0.3	20	1.1	Tomintoul, Aberlour, Dufftown
Total	645		135		5070		3170		450		635		165		1285		

Source: Nomis

Table 2 gives an overview of the number of benefit recipients that may be affected by library closures, as indicated in the highlighted cells of table 2. This gives an indication of the total number of people that are potentially affected by the proposed library closures in relation to the need to have internet access in order to secure their benefits. There is the proviso that some of these potentially affected people are currently accessing a library which is not under threat.

Table 2: number of benefit recipients in potentially affected wards

2003 CAS Ward	Disabled	Bereaved	Key out-of-work benefits	Incapacity Benefits	Lone parents	Carers	Income-related benefits	JSA	Total
	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	
Burghsea	30	10	160	120	5	30	0	35	390
Heldon and Laich	20	5	120	75	5	20	5	35	285
Buckie East and Findochty	25	5	165	105	15	25	10	49	399
Rathford	20	5	170	105	15	35	5	43	388
Rural Keith and Rothes	25	5	175	105	15	10	0	42	377
Speyside	25	5	135	100	10	20	5	20	320
Glenlivet	25	5	140	95	5	15	5	20	310
Total	170	40	1,065	705	70	155	30	244	2,479

2.4 library provision in Moray

At present there are 15 libraries and 2 mobile libraries in Moray. The total number of library borrowers in 2011-2012 was 26,384. The number of borrowers of the potentially affected libraries in 2011-2012 was 4,441. The total number of visitors to the potentially affected libraries was 38,422 against 644,126 for the service. There were 1,602 individual computer users against 20,544 for the service.

Table 3 gives an overview of total number of individual borrowers in Moray.

Table 3: Number of borrowers 2011-2012

Potentially Affected libraries	Individual borrowers	Remaining libraries	Individual borrowers
Burghead	497	Forres	3,785
Hopeman	568	Lossiemouth	1,666
Dufftown	544	Elgin	10,159
Rothes	321	Aberlour	772
Cullen	446	Keith	1,583
Findochty	220	Buckie	2,440
Portknockie	249	Fochabers	1,130
Mobile 2	634	Tomintoul	176
Mobile 3	962		
Total	4,441		21,943

The vision, strategic and policy objectives of the library service in Moray are as follows:

2.4.1 Vision

- Mission Statement - "Learning to Live, Living to Learn".
- Aims - "Inspire, Include and Improve"

2. 4.2 Strategic Objectives for Libraries Service

- To promote and maximise the contribution of Libraries and Information Services to the educational, cultural, economic and democratic life of Moray, wherever possible working in partnership and within Community Planning principles.
- To increase library access and participation for all sections of Moray's community.
- To contribute to the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of Moray and to maximise access to that heritage.

2.4.3 Policy Objectives for Libraries Service

- To support citizens and organisations to develop skills to access information and to ensure access to accurate, organised information in libraries through effective use of ICT.
- To deliver an inclusive service that reflects and helps build cohesive communities through working with individuals and organisations, by supporting Community Planning and by supporting, recording and providing access to community heritage, culture and identity.
- To promote reading as a lifelong skill and pleasure, to support the development of literacy skills for life and work, and to provide a range of attractive and appropriate materials.
- To promote and deliver lifelong learning through access to appropriate materials, information on learning opportunities, the provision of courses by supportive and qualified staff and effective partnerships with other learning providers.
- To ensure consistent, high quality, relevant, customer focussed services that are delivered by appropriately skilled staff.
- To promote and develop libraries as valued Information Centres, Learning Centres, Reader Development Centres, Community Resource Points and Council Service Points and to provide library facilities and mobile libraries that meet the needs of 21st century, communities and demonstrate Best Value.
- To ensure commitment to continuous improvement and that the service meets the requirements of the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix for Scotland and other statutory obligations and appropriate Quality Schemes.

Table 4: Borrower profile of potentially affected libraries

Potentially Affected Libraries	*Individual borrowers Aged 60+	Housebound	Care Homes	Disabled	Home Educators
Burghead	125	6		6	2
Cullen	145	1	2	4	1
Dufftown	126	4	2	24	
Findochty	30	0	1	2	
Hopeman	105	1		2	1
Portknockie	66	1		2	
Roths	75	3	1	2	
Mobile 2	191	10	9	17	
Mobile 3	278	6	6	55	2
Total	1,141	32	21	114	6

Table 5: Borrower profile remaining libraries

Remaining libraries	*Individual borrowers Aged 60+	Housebound	Care Homes	Disabled	Home Educators
Aberlour	212	6	6	17	3
Buckie	710	11	20	29	1
Elgin	2,257	16	11	156	11
Fochabers	159	3	3	7	0
Forres	848	7	9	28	5
Keith	381	25	10	40	1
Lossiemouth	381	24	2	14	2
Tomintoul	39	0	0	1	1
Total	4.987	92	61	292	24

The opening hours for all libraries currently are:

Aberlour Library

Monday 10.00am - 12 noon

Tuesday 2.30pm - 5.00pm; 5.30pm - 8.00pm

Wednesday 10.00am - 12 noon

Thursday 2.30pm - 5.00pm; 5.30pm - 8.00pm

Saturday 10.00am - 12 noon

Buckie Library

Monday 10.00am - 8.00pm

Tuesday 10.00am - 8.00pm

Wednesday 10.00am - 8.00pm

Thursday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Friday 10.00am - 5.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 12 noon

Burghead Library

Tuesday: 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Thursday: 5.00pm - 8.00pm
Friday: 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Saturday: 10.00am - 12 noon

Cullen Library

Tuesday - 2.00pm - 5.00pm & 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Thursday - 2.00pm - 5.00pm & 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Saturday - 10.00am - 12 noon

Dufftown Library

Tuesday 10.00am - 12noon & 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Wednesday 10.00am - 12noon
Thursday 10.00am - 12noon & 2.00pm - 4.00pm & 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Friday 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 12noon

Findochty Library

Tuesday - 3.30pm- 5.30pm
Wednesday - 5.00pm - 8.00pm
Thursday - 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Saturday - 10.00am - 12 noon

**Milne's Learning Centre incorporating Fochabers Library
During Term Time**

Monday - Friday 10.00am - 12.00pm & 3.30pm - 8.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 1.00pm

During School Holidays

Tuesday 11.00am - 1.00pm & 5.00pm - 8.00pm
Wednesday 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Thursday 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Friday 11.00am - 1.00pm & 5.00pm - 8.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 1.00pm

Forres Library

Monday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Tuesday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Wednesday 10.00am - 8.00pm

Thursday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Friday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 12 noon

Hopeman Library

Opening Times

Tuesday - 5.00pm - 8.00pm
Thursday - 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Friday - 4.00pm - 8.00pm
Saturday - 10.00am - 12 noon

Keith Library

Monday 10.00am - 5.00pm
Tuesday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Wednesday 10.00am - 5.00pm
Thursday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Friday 10.00am - 5.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 12 noon

Lossiemouth Library

Monday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Tuesday 2.00pm - 8.00pm
Wednesday 2.00pm - 8.00pm
Thursday 10.00am - 8.00pm
Friday 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Saturday 10.00am - 12 noon

Portknockie Library

Tuesday - 2.00pm - 4.00pm & 5.00pm - 7.00pm
Thursday - 2.00pm - 4.00pm & 5.00pm - 7.00pm
Saturday - 10.00am - 12 noon

Roths Library

Tuesday - 3.00pm - 5.00pm & 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Wednesday - 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Thursday - 10.00am - 12noon & 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Saturday - 10.00am - 12noon

Tomintoul Library

Monday - 1.30pm - 3.30pm & 6.00pm - 7.30pm
Tuesday - 1.30pm - 3.30pm
Wednesday - 10.00am - 12noon
Thursday - 6.00pm - 7.30pm

Friday - 1.30pm - 3.30pm

2.5 Access to internet, information and online services

The information in this section was gathered with the assistance of Digital Highlands and Islands of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The responsibility for the factual accuracy remains with the author of the report.

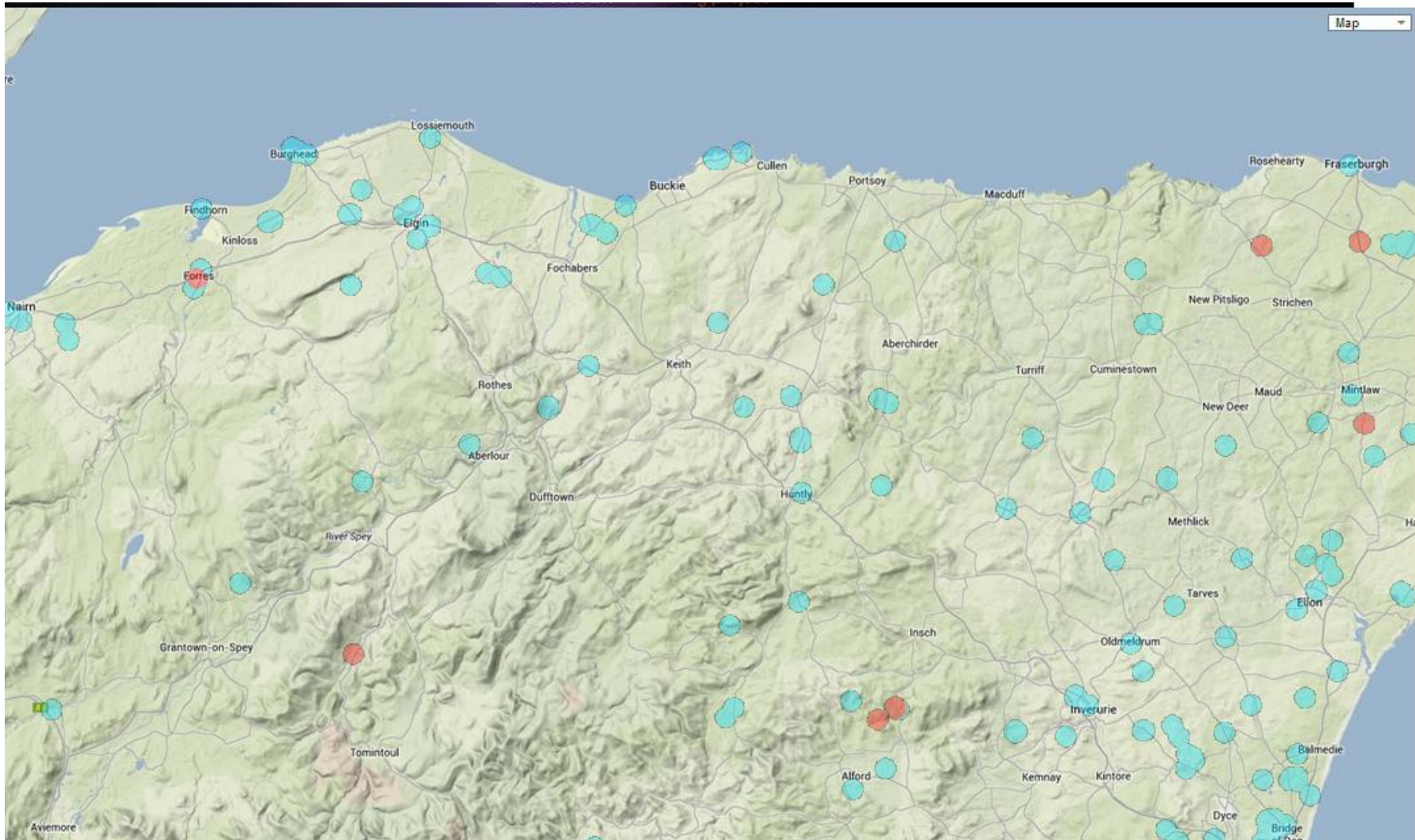
One of the arguments put forward for maintaining the libraries is that in some areas they are the only places where people can access personal computers with broadband connection. Problems with internet connection have been reported during the consultation in and around Burghead and areas around Dufftown.

Figure 1 shows the areas in Moray where there is no broadband coverage (red) or where the broadband speed is less than 2Mb per second. The map is based on reports from users, each circle representing a report. It doesn't necessarily reflect absence of broadband: the issues can be a result of various factors such as:

- proximity to the exchange
- the length and quality of any phone wiring extensions in the home. This doesn't apply to fibre-based broadband, which uses a special data extension kit rather than the existing phone extensions.
- whether all broadband microfilters are correctly installed.
- the processing speed of the computer and router or modem
- the speed of the connection between computer and modem or router.(source: bt.custhelp.com)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise have started an investment project aimed at delivering high speed fibre optic broadband throughout the Highlands and Islands area. It is expected that by the end of 2016, 84% of all homes in the Highlands and Islands area will be connected to the high speed broadband. For Moray this means that the issues currently occurring in and around Burghead are likely to have been resolved. The issues around Dufftown, however, are unlikely to be resolved through this project.

Figure 1 Broadband Coverage in Moray



Source: <http://maps.thinkbroadband.com>

3 Results from the consultation

3.1 introduction

A total of 1,760 questionnaires were returned. Of these, 969 were from people using the libraries that are potentially under threat of closure.

Table 6 shows the frequency of use for each of the main library services as indicated by the respondents to the consultation.

Table 6 Frequency of use of library services

	Very Frequently	Frequently	Regularly	Infrequently	Very Infrequently	Not Answered
Mobile	0	144	2	8	2	22
On Line Reading Room	9	0	6	4	2	12
On Line Reference	19	7	10	17	7	38
Library Computers	121	39	37	54	32	153
Support From Library Staff on Using Computers	29	7	14	27	11	71
E-book Service	5	2	4	7	0	10
E-audio Service	3	1	2	6	2	5
Photocopier/faxes	28	1	40	55	22	79
Lending books: adults	190	234	128	82	13	209
Lending books: teenagers	15	26	25	26	11	68
Lending books: children	121	51	45	15	3	90

There were a wide range of responses to the frequency of use so to simplify this for analysis the following has been used.

Frequency	Explanation	Sample Phrases
Very Frequently	More than once a week	All the time, Every Time it opens, Daily, Weekly
Frequently	More than once a month	Often, Fortnightly, When Mobile comes, 20 per annum
Regularly	Once a month	Monthly, Once a month, 12 times a year
Infrequently	At least twice a year	Rarely, Not Often, Occasionally, Quarterly
Very Infrequently	Once a year or less	Very Rarely, Annually, As required

Table 7 shows the number of people using other library services

Table 7 Other library services used

Other Library Service Used/Reason for Visiting Library	Number
Advice, Guidance and Support From Staff	22
Applications (e.g. bus pass)	7
Archives, reference, research and study	101
Attend and Organise Events/Exhibitions/Displays/Talks	28
Books on Wheels	1
Borrow Art	2
Borrow Tapes/CD's	50
Borrow Videos/DVD's	54
Café	13
Children's Activities (Including Story Time and Reading Challenges)	60
Clubs, Groups and Classes	45
Computer and Other Courses	9
Depositing plastic bags	1
Dog Bags	9
General, Local, Tourist, Community and Local Government Information	47
Laminating	2
Meeting Others/Friends, Chat and Socialise	23
Meetings	13
Minutes of Meetings	3
Newspapers, Magazines and Periodicals	11
Peace, quiet, meditation and a coffee break	4
Purchase Tickets and Stamps	4
Request, order, reserve, recall and renew books	39
Toilets	1
Warmth on a cold day	1
Work Experience/Duke of Edinburgh	1

3.2 themes

This section will give a brief description of the main themes that emerged from the consultation, indicating the groups potentially affected by them and the extent to which they came up in the survey. These will be further explored for each individual library in the next section.

Table 8 gives an overview of reported library use and frequency for the 5 most popular library services. The numbers are for the potentially affected libraries only.

Table 8 Frequency of library service use

	Lending Books Adults	Lending Books: Children	Lending Books: Teenager	Library Computers	Photocopier/ Faxes
NA	128	63	47	95	45
Never	233	501	640	354	499
Very infrequently	3	1	2	9	2
Infrequently	19	5	8	21	16
Regularly	65	24	10	11	19
Frequently	162	39	16	23	0
Very frequently	124	101	11	85	17

The following themes emerged from the consultation:

1. Access to alternative libraries
2. Access to ICT
3. Impact on educational attainment
4. Rural isolation
5. Impact on independence
6. Impact on quality of life
7. Financial impact
8. Impact on health
9. Employment or benefits
10. Concerns about capacity of remaining static libraries and mobile library
11. Concerns about suitability of mobile library
12. Library as a community hub

3.2.1 Access to alternative libraries

For all potentially affected libraries this was the single most important issue. Concerns about this were expressed by 535 respondents from those libraries, representing 55%.

Difficulties with accessing alternative libraries were due to:

- Inadequate access to transport. This affects primarily people with a disability, carer responsibility, the elderly and in some cases parents with children.
- Health issues which make travelling long distances difficult or impossible, for example epilepsy, Crohn's disease.

- Cost of transport: This is an issue for people on low income and particularly those on unemployment benefits, and for families with children over 5 years old.
- Frequency of visits. Access to a local library means that those who read a lot can visit frequently and take out only a few books at a time. This is something that is valued particularly by those with a disability, carer responsibility and elderly. Going to a library further away means less frequent visits and therefore the need to carry more books at a time. For people with a range of disabilities or those who are elderly it can be difficult or impossible to carry many books at a time.

Table 9 gives the distance to the nearest remaining library for the potentially affected areas and table 10 the travel costs by public transport.

Table 9 Travel distance in miles to nearest library

	Aberlour	Buckie	Elgin	Forres	Keith	Lossiemouth
Burghead			8.8	9.4		8.4
Cullen		6.7	21		19	
Dufftown	6.4		19			
Findochty		2.9	20			
Hopeman			7.7	11		6.3
Portknockie		4.9	21			
Rothies	4.6		11			

Table 10 Travel cost by public transport to nearest library (Adult return) Note elderly and disabled receive free transport.

	Aberlour	Buckie	Elgin	Forres	Keith	Lossiemouth
Burghead			£4.20	£8.60		£8.60
Cullen		£7.20			£10.00	
Dufftown	£4.50		£8.60			
Findochty		£4.50	£10.00			
Hopeman			£4.20	£8.60		£8.60
Portknockie		£5.40	£10.00			
Rothies	£4.50		£7.20			

3.2.2 Access to ICT

This was raised as an issue by 84 respondents from the potentially affected libraries, representing 9% of all respondents. If we disregard the respondents from the mobile libraries, where there is no internet access, this number represents 12% of respondents who would be affected by the proposals. The latter would be a fairer representation.

The main reasons for needing access to ICT in a library that were mentioned in the survey were:

- Apply for benefits, jobs and communicate with the Department for Work and Pensions in order to maintain their eligibility for benefits. This affects not only those who are unemployed, but also those in part-time employment and/or those in receipt of tax credits/universal credit (see table 1). Affected groups: elderly, disabled, pregnancy/maternity, carers of young children, carers.
- Homework. (age: 0 – 16)
- Access to information and services. This can cover a range of needs. In some areas where internet access is slow, the library computers were preferred by some people to their own computers at home because internet access through the library computers tended to be faster.

3.2.3 Educational attainment

A total of 83 respondents (8.5%) indicated that their own or their children's education would be affected. The following factors are relevant in this respect:

- Research has identified that babies and toddlers who are not introduced to storytelling, books, rhymes from an early age are at a marked disadvantage in their learning by the time they go to school. The significant rate of poor literacy levels in Scotland, apart from disadvantaging the individuals concerned, has a negative effect on Scotland's economic performance. (Scottish Book Trust).

The findings show that by the age of five, children from the poorest of homes are already 11.1 months behind those from middle income homes, because of less exposure to books, storytelling and rhymes. And it reveals that reading and library visits are essential for young children – with youngsters who are read to daily and taken to the library regularly being more advanced in their language skills than those who are not. Almost half of the attainment gap between the poorest and middle income families can be explained by parenting styles and home environment – factors such as reading and trips to the museum (Sutton Trust Report 2010).

Table 7 shows a relatively high number of people (60) who have used the library for their children to access activities such as the summer reading challenge and story time. Table 6 also shows a high number of very frequent use of book lending for children.

- A number of school children use library computers for their homework
- A relatively high number of adults use libraries to access computer or other courses, groups or classes (54) and 101 people used it for reference, archive or study purposes (table 7).

3.2.4 Rural isolation

78 respondents (8%).

This issue can be seen as one of the elements constituting an impact on people's quality of life. The mobile library has the highest number of respondents that would face isolation with a loss of this service. Many mobile library users live in rural locations and as stated above many are disabled and elderly. A number of them also live alone. Interestingly, the 2 fixed libraries with the highest number that would be affected by isolation are also in the 2 communities with the highest number of respondents that feel the library is a community hub.

3.2.5 Independence

19 respondents (3.5%), elderly, disability, carers. A loss of independence is something that was highlighted by the young, elderly and the disabled. Going to the local library on their own is the first and the last thing in life that some people are able to do on their own. One parent whose son has autism says that he can go to the local library on his own but feels uncomfortable in Elgin and Lossiemouth libraries.

3.2.6 Impact on quality of life

Mentioned by 259 respondents (27%). This is a difficult aspect to quantify and it could simply be the fact that they miss the walk to the library or the chance to browse through the books before choosing one. There are a high proportion of mobile library users who will have their quality of life affected. Those mobile library users identified as being most likely to be affected were all female and predominantly disabled and/or elderly. Issues such as independence and rural/social isolation are elements within this impact.

3.2.7 Financial impact

This was mentioned by 117 respondents (12%). The main financial cost incurred would be that of travelling to the nearest library either by public transport or in fuel for the car. Other financial impacts would be the cost of purchasing books which one respondent said was cheaper than the bus fare. The other cost identified was in buying or upgrading computers and paying for internet access. With one respondent not even being able to afford to have a telephone line connected to their home. The financial cost of the unemployed having to travel to do online job searches as a requirement of their entitlement to Job Seekers Allowance was highlighted as a particular issue.

3.2.8 Impact on health

15 respondents (1.5%)

For some of the respondents this was as simple as becoming travel sick while getting to an alternative library. For others it would lead to anxiety, stress and depression. Some of this would be caused by social isolation but for others it was going from a small local library where they felt safe to a large impersonal town library.

For a number of elderly people having a library within walking distance gives a purpose to have regular walks.

3.2.9 Employment or benefits

15 respondents were on unemployment benefits, representing 2% if disregarding the number of respondents using mobile libraries. However, the changes under the welfare reform will also affect those in part-time jobs and or those in receipt of tax credits/universal credits. Groups affected include disability, carers, pregnancy/maternity.

Access to IT will be needed to apply for benefits, jobs and communicate with the Department for Work and Pensions in order to maintain their eligibility for benefits. There will also be a need for support with some IT issues, such as setting up an internet account and other aspects of information literacy. These are issues that library staff can assist with and this support has been valued by a great number of respondents.

There will, however, be need for additional support that library staff can't give. This relates to issues around benefit eligibility and the, sometimes very complex, forms that need to be filled in. Furthermore, if people have their benefit application rejected, they will need to be signposted to further option, such as appeals or applications for crisis loans. This requires the specialist support from either JobCentre Plus staff or benefit advisors from the Moray Council. This is an issue that is beyond the scope of this assessment, and one that is being looked at by JobCentre Plus and other partners including the Moray Council. What is within the scope of this assessment, however, is that any proposed closure brings with it the need to find alternative venues for people to access the internet with appropriate support.

3.2.10 Concern about capacity of remaining libraries

A relatively small number of people expressed concerns as to whether the remaining libraries would be able to cope with the increased demand. This was particularly the case in respect of removing the mobile library. People were concerned that the visits of the mobile library would become less frequent (every 6 weeks instead of 3) and that there would be far less stock available by the time it came round to their pitch.

3.2.11 Concern about suitability of mobile library as alternative

A small number of respondents commented that the mobile library is not accessible to wheelchair users. This, however, is not the case. They are fitted with lifts for wheelchair users. Space in the mobile libraries is limited to two wheelchairs.

The most important issue which would make the mobile library unsuitable as a substitute for a static library is that there is no broadband access in mobile libraries.

3.2.12 Library as community hub

This was highlighted especially in Cullen and Burghead and would appear to be linked closely to rural/social isolation and impact on quality of life. It is difficult, however to link this specifically to any groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 Themes by protected group

3.3.1 Age

- 65+.
 - Potential impact in relation to social isolation,
 - rural isolation,
 - access to library services,
 - access to IT (benefits),
 - access to courses.
 - Cost and difficulties of transport.
 - Prefer frequent visits to take out small number of books instead of infrequent visits
- Pre-school (0-3; 3-5). Potential impact on educational attainment.
- School age (primary; secondary) Potential impact on educational attainment, research for homework, access to books needed for homework
- 18 – 65. Potential impact in relation to access to IT (benefits), access to courses and essential skills training, job clubs
 - People who care for elderly relatives. Potential impact in relation to social isolation,
 - rural isolation,
 - access to library services,
 - access to IT (benefits),
 - access to courses.
 - Cost and difficulties of transport.
 - Prefer frequent visits to take out small number of books instead of infrequent visits

3.3.2 Sex: women

Parents of pre-school and school age children. Potential impact in relation to pre-school and school age children, access to alternative libraries.

3.3.3 Disability

- People with disabilities. Impact in relation to access to library services, access to IT (benefits), access to courses
- Carers. Potential impact in relation to social isolation, rural isolation, respite, access to IT

3.3.4 Race

Potential impact in relation to ESOL, access to IT, access to courses. No impact identified in survey

3.3.5 Sexual orientation

No impact identified in survey

3.3.6 Gender reassignment

No impact identified in survey

3.3.7 Pregnancy and maternity.

Potential impact in relation to pre-school age: educational attainment, access to alternative library.

3.4 Themes by library

3.4.1 Cullen

Number of borrowers:	446
Number of visits:	8,047
Number of PC users:	625
Hours of PC used:	318
PC use as percentage of potential:	17%
Number of respondents to survey:	193

Of all potentially affected libraries, the highest number of responses could be attributable to Cullen Library. If we take the number of respondents that identified an issue as a measure of importance, then the issues for the users of Cullen Library were:

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 111 users, representing 57.5% of the respondents who use Cullen Library. 37 of the respondent indicated that if the library were to close they would not access alternative libraries. 23 people responded that they would find it difficult or impossible to travel because of health problems or disability, 10 would struggle with the cost of transport. A further 9 people indicated that they would struggle to carry the books either because of the increased distance or because they would have to visit less frequently and would need to take out more books at a time.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 52 respondents (27%). This includes feeling isolated (rural/social isolation, 12 users) and loss of independence (3 users). A high number of people in Cullen (25) indicated that the library to them is a community hub and as such important to their quality of life.
3. **Financial effects** were identified by 25 respondents (13%)
4. **Computer access**, 18 users (9%)
5. **Impact on educational attainment**, 14 users (7%)
6. **Health effects** were mentioned by 4 users (2%)
7. **Employment prospects/benefits**, 4 users (2%)

3.4.2 Findochty

Number of borrowers:	220
Number of visits:	1,309
Number of PC users:	142
Hours of PC used:	58
PC use as percentage of potential:	6%
Number of respondents to survey:	91

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 44 users, representing 48% of the respondents who use Findochty Library.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 18 respondents (19%)
3. **Impact on educational attainment**, 10 users (11%)
4. **Financial effects** were identified by 5 respondents (5.5%)
5. **Computer access**, 3 users (3%)
6. **Rural/social isolation**, 3 users (3%)
7. **Loss of independence**, 3 users (3%)

3.4.3 Portknockie

Number of borrowers:	249
Number of visits:	2,906
Number of PC users:	1,060
Hours of PC used:	886

PC use as percentage of potential: 21%
Number of respondents to survey: 117

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 68 users, representing 58% of the respondents who use Portknockie Library.
2. **Impact on educational attainment,** 18 users (15%)
3. **Computer access,** 16 users (14%)
4. **Financial effects** were identified by 15 respondents (13%)
5. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 11 respondents (9%)
6. **Health effects** were mentioned by 2 users (2%)
7. **Rural/social isolation,** 1 user (1%)
8. **Employment prospects/benefits,** 1 user (1%)
9. **Loss of independence,** 1 user (1%)

3.4.4 Burghead

Number of borrowers: 497
Number of visits: 6,853
Number of PC users: 997
Hours of PC used: 987
PC use as percentage of potential: 25%
Number of respondents to survey: 119

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 62 users, representing 52% of the respondents who use Burghead Library.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 33 respondents (28%)
3. **Financial effects** were identified by 19 respondents (16%)
4. **Rural/social isolation,** 16 users (13%)
5. **Impact on educational attainment,** 14 users (12%)
6. **Computer access,** 11 users (9%)
7. **Loss of independence,** 6 users (5%)
8. **Health effects** were mentioned by 4 users (3%)
9. **Employment prospects/benefits,** 2 users (1.5%)

3.4.5 Hopeman

Number of borrowers: 568
Number of visits: 5,869
Number of PC users: 1,531
Hours of PC used: 1,327
PC use as percentage of potential: 23%
Number of respondents to survey: 90

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 50 users, representing 55% of the respondents who use Hopeman Library.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 27 respondents (30%)
3. **Financial effects** were identified by 16 respondents (16%)
4. **Rural/social isolation**, 16 users (18%)
5. **Impact on educational attainment**, 11 users (12%)
6. **Computer access**, 11 users (12%)
7. **Loss of independence**, 4 users (4%)
8. **Employment prospects/benefits**, 3 users (3%)

3.4.6 Dufftown

Number of borrowers:	544
Number of visits:	8,864
Number of PC users:	2,359
Hours of PC used:	2,464
PC use as percentage of potential:	42%
Number of respondents to survey:	112

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 57 users, representing 51% of the respondents who use Dufftown Library. Dufftown itself may not be that far from Aberlour, but it serves a relatively large, rural hinterland.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 29 respondents (26%)
3. **Computer access**, 19 users (17%)
4. **Financial effects** were identified by 19 respondents (17%)
5. **Impact on educational attainment**, 11 users (10%)
6. **Rural/social isolation**, 8 users (7%)
7. **Employment prospects/benefits**, 4 users (3.5%)
8. **Loss of independence**, 1 user (1%)

3.4.7 Rothes

Number of borrowers:	321
Number of visits:	4,574
Number of PC users:	1,672
Hours of PC used:	3,119
PC use as percentage of potential:	62.5%
Number of respondents to survey:	68

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries.** This was highlighted by 45 users, representing 66% of the respondents who use Rothes Library.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 13 respondents (19%)
3. **Financial effects** were identified by 10 respondents (15%)

4. **Computer access**, 10 users (15%)
5. **Impact on educational attainment**, 8 users (12%)
6. **Rural/social isolation**, 4 users (6%)
7. **Employment prospects/benefits**, 2 users (3%)
8. **Health effects** were mentioned by 1 user (1.5%)
9. **Loss of independence**, 1 user (1.5%)

3.4.8 Mobile libraries

Number of borrowers:	1,596
Number of visits:	17,336
Number of respondents to survey:	179

Current figures show that 795 (50%) people use a mobile library as well as one or more static libraries.

1. **Difficulty with access to alternative libraries**. This was highlighted by 98 users, representing 55% of the respondents who use one of the mobile libraries.
2. An effect on their **quality of life** was identified by 76 respondents (42%)
3. **Rural/social isolation**, 25 users (14%)
4. **Financial effects** were identified by 8 respondents (4.5%)
5. **Health effects** were mentioned by 4 users (2%)
6. **Impact on educational attainment**, 1 user (1%)

4 Mitigating actions per impact

Table 11 gives an overview of mitigating actions for each library. The overriding impact is the restricted access to an alternative library. All other impacts are a consequence of this.

4.1 Access to alternative library

Rationalise use of mobile library targeting only those who need a mobile service. At present, approximately 50% of mobile library users also use a static library.

Free access to transport is available for people with a disability and the elderly, but this doesn't help overcome issues regarding number of books people can carry and the difficulty in making transport arrangements. It also doesn't mitigate against the impact on people who are unemployed and or families with children. The dial-a-bus service in Moray is being extended and will be promoted more widely. The effect of this will need to be monitored.

Encourage community groups to deliver some of the services and facilitate this. This could consist of book lending or exchange services. However, it must be stressed that this will not be a replacement for the library.

Strengthen housebound service through use of volunteers following general public appeal and approaches to community and welfare organisations. In addition mobile will seek to target housebound where other alternatives are not possible

Promote online services through a media campaign and as part of a wider digital participation strategy. This will also include basic skills ICT sessions offered and delivered in the nearest library.

Retain one library in the east coastal area of Moray to serve those who are outwith reasonable access to Buckie, in the west coastal area and Laich who are outwith reasonable access to a principal library and in the Dufftown/Glenlivet area to necessarily complement Aberlour Library in serving wider Speyside. Dufftown, more than other libraries, has a large, rural hinterland with poor or no access to the internet.

4.2 Access to ICT with support

There will be a need for accessible ICT with support and supervision in the communities in the absence of the libraries. This need is likely to increase as the Digital by Default programme is rolled out. Currently, there are problems with access to broadband in the areas around Dufftown and Burghead. The investment project currently undertaken by Highlands and Islands Enterprise is likely to resolve the issues in the area around Burghead by 2016 but not in the Dufftown area.

Support with benefit application on site through surgeries by JobCentre Plus staff and Moray Council welfare rights officers.

4.3 Impact on educational attainment

Those libraries attached to a school will continue to function as school libraries.

Make more books available through playgroups and nurseries.

This will leave a gap in provision for 0 – 3 years old. Places in toddler groups for 0 - 3 year olds are not funded, unlike playgroups and nurseries for 3 - 5 year olds.

4.4 Rural isolation/independence, impact on health

As per access to alternative library

	Cullen	Findochty	Portknockie	Burghead	Hopeman	Dufftown	Roths	Mobile
Promote online services	Online reference and online reservations are currently not used much (table 6). Promotion and extension of these services can mitigate to some extent with study and homework but requires internet access at home. Online reservations will still require library visits to pick up the books.			Poor internet connectivity limits the mitigating effects of these services for the time being.	Online reference and online reservations are currently not used much (table 6). Promotion and extension of these services can mitigate to some extent with study and homework but requires internet access at home. Online reservations will still require library visits to pick up the books.	Poor internet connectivity limits the mitigating effects of these services for the time being and is unlikely to be resolved in the near future.	Online reference and online reservations are currently not used much (table 6). Promotion and extension of these services can mitigate to some extent with study and homework but requires internet access at home. Online reservations will still require library visits to pick up the books.	Online reference and online reservations are currently not used much (table 6). Promotion and extension of these services can mitigate to some extent with study and homework but requires internet access at home. Online reservations will still require library visits to pick up the books. This could be suitable for those who use a static library as well as a mobile library

	Cullen	Findochty	Portknockie	Burghead	Hopeman	Dufftown	Roths	Mobile
Extend opening hours Aberlour						This can mitigate to some extent, provided the opening hours are co-ordinated with the bus timetable. In winter this is sometimes adversely affected by weather, particularly between Dufftown and Aberlour. The 36 bus missed three days over the last 2 years.		
Extend availability of books through nurseries and playgroups	This can help mitigate against potential impacts on educational attainment for age groups of 3 and above. Additional mitigation will still be needed for the 0-3 age group.							
Libraries currently located in schools will continue to operate as school libraries	This can help mitigate against potential impacts on educational attainment for age groups of 3 and above. Additional mitigation will still be needed for the 0-3 age group.						This can help mitigate against potential impacts on educational attainment for age groups of 3 and above. Additional mitigation will still be needed for the 0-3 age group.	

	Cullen	Findochty	Portknockie	Burghead	Hopeman	Dufftown	Rothies	Mobile
Retain Cullen library	This will keep a library within reasonable distance for users in this area. This in turn will mitigate against other identified impacts to a large degree. A service bus is available between the three libraries (maximum cost £7.40 per journey) Elderly and people with a disability can be picked up outside their homes by dial-a-bus service.							
Retain Burghead library				This will keep a library within reasonable distance for users in this area. This in turn will mitigate against other identified impacts to a large degree. An hourly service bus is available between Burghead and Hopeman (maximum cost £5.00 per return journey). Elderly and people with a disability can be picked up outside their homes by dial-a-bus service.				
Retain Dufftown library, not extend opening hours for Aberlour						This will mitigate fully against all identified impacts for Dufftown.		

4.5 Guidance on objective justification

The justification needs to be on the basis of more than just costs. Cost can be considered as part of the overall consideration but cannot be the only justification.

The test for justification hinges on two elements: legitimate aim and proportionate means. Case law on this has yet to develop and it is difficult to give a hard and fast definition of the two but some guidance is available.

The defence of “proportionate means to a legitimate aim” can be made only in cases of indirect discrimination or discrimination arising from disability and can never be used in cases of direct discrimination.

Direct discrimination is when someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied generally, but puts a protected group, such as people with disability, at a particular disadvantage. Effectively, this can occur when we treat everyone the same.

Discrimination arising from disability means that someone is treated unfavourably because of something arising as a consequence of disability.

Indirect discrimination is defined on the basis of the effect on groups of people, whereas discrimination arising from disability can be defined on the effect on an individual.

- A legitimate aim cannot in itself be discriminatory and must be legal.
- It must represent a real, objective consideration.
- Examples of legitimate aims can be
 - Ensure better efficiency of the service
 - Deliver a better focused, more transparent service
 - Target a service at a specific client group

The proposal must be proportionate and requires a balancing exercise. Considerations in this respect are:

- Is the action appropriate and necessary to achieve the aim?
- Is it the least discriminatory means of achieving the aim?
- The more serious the impact is the more convincing the legitimate aim needs to be.

Appendix I Library Closure Impact Questionnaire Analysis

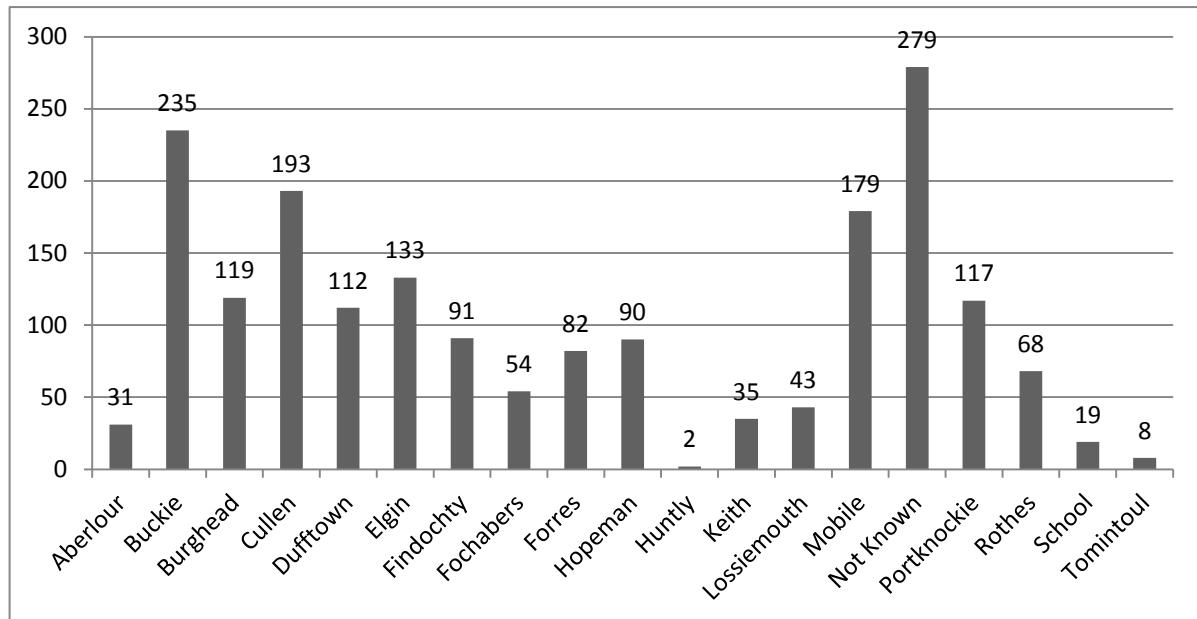
RESPONDENT ANALYSIS

There were 1,760 individual hand written questionnaires returned from the Stakeholder Groups listed below. Each questionnaire was read and the details entered on a spreadsheet to assist in the analysis of the responses. As new issues that had not already been foreseen arose these were added to the spreadsheet and earlier responses re-examined for similar issues. The vast majority of the responses below were from individuals, however there were some that replied for the entire group. Again the vast majority appeared to be genuine responses and there was no obvious attempt to exaggerate their use of the library service. There were 18 different responses using a photocopied Citizens Panel questionnaire from the Dufftown area which appeared to be from legitimate library users. Some of the returns from Buckie High School didn't appear to be totally genuine but none of these would have had an impact on the results. Also the high number of returns from Buckie High School only had 68 indicating that they used or lived near one of the potentially affected libraries.

Stakeholder Group	Number of Responses
Autism Stakeholder	2
Buckie High School	426
Burghead Library	57
Burghead Nursery	3
Burghead Primary School	5
Burnie Day Centre	23
Citizens Panel	470
Cullen Library	113
Cullen Primary School	26
Dufftown - Aigan Court	12
Dufftown Mother and Toddler Group	1
Dufftown Library	29
Dufftown Pre-school Group	1
Elgin Academy	5
Essential Skills Learner	3
Findochty Library	46
Findochty Parent Support Group	1
Findochty Primary School	13
Hanover House	6
Home Educator	1
Hopeman Library	22
Hopeman Luncheon Club	1

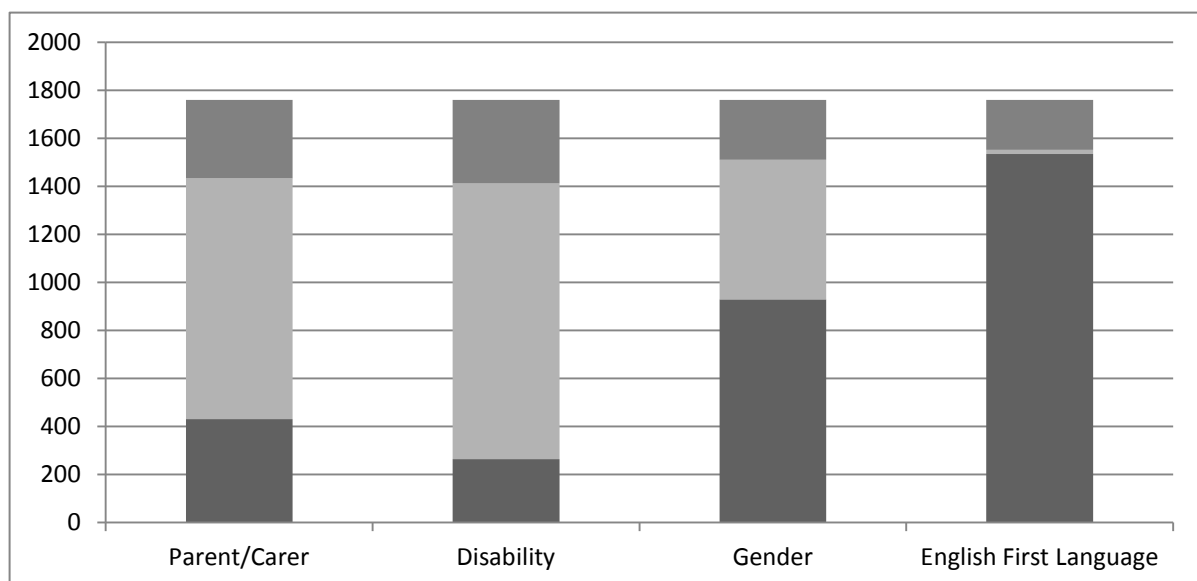
Hopeman Primary School	23
Lossiemouth High School	38
Mobile Library	126
Moray Access Panel	1
Moray Council Day Service's	8
Moray Handy Person Service	23
Moray Resource Centre	1
Mortlach Primary School	18
North East Sensory	6
Patient Public Forum	1
Photocopy - Citizens Panel	18
Portknockie Library	19
Portknockie Nursery	10
Portknockie Primary School	51
Quarriers Carers	13
Rothies Library	45
Rothies Nursery	1
Rothies Parent Council	1
Rothies Primary School	6
Rothies Strength and Balance Group	3
Summer reading challenge	45
Unknown	11
Youth Work - Burghead	21
Youth Work - Hopeman	5

The returns indicated that the respondents used 18 different libraries with 101 using multiple libraries. Not all respondents used their nearest library for a variety of reasons. The number of users for each library is shown in the chart below. Where the respondent didn't indicate which library they used the nearest one was obtained from their postcode. If there was no postcode or there was a choice of nearby libraries then Not Known was used. There were 2 users of libraries outside Moray and 19 of the responses from Buckie High School indicated that the only library they used was the school library.

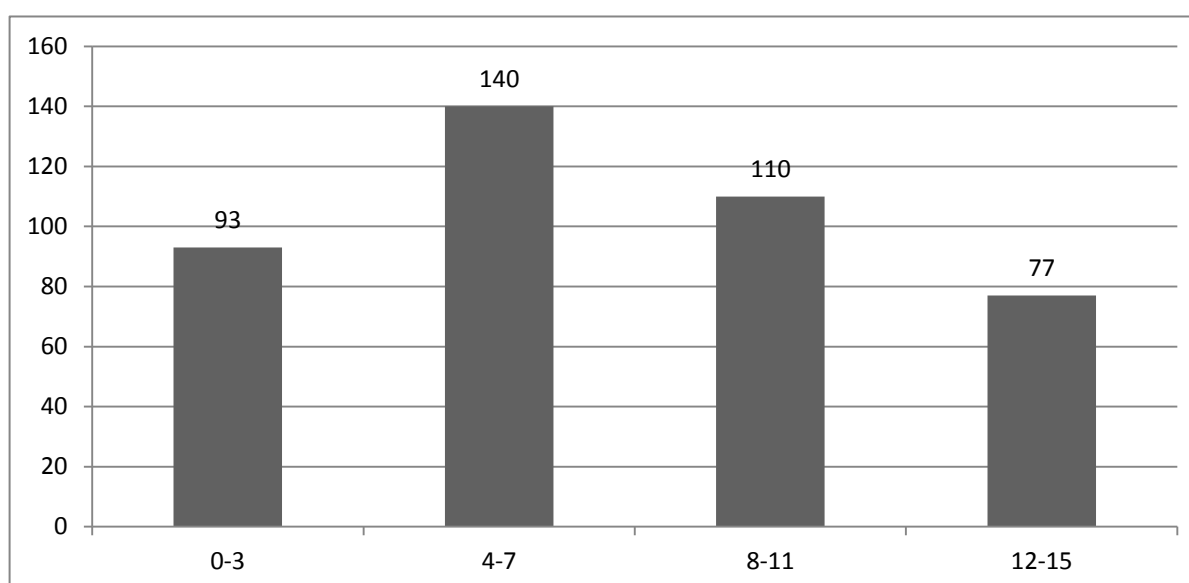
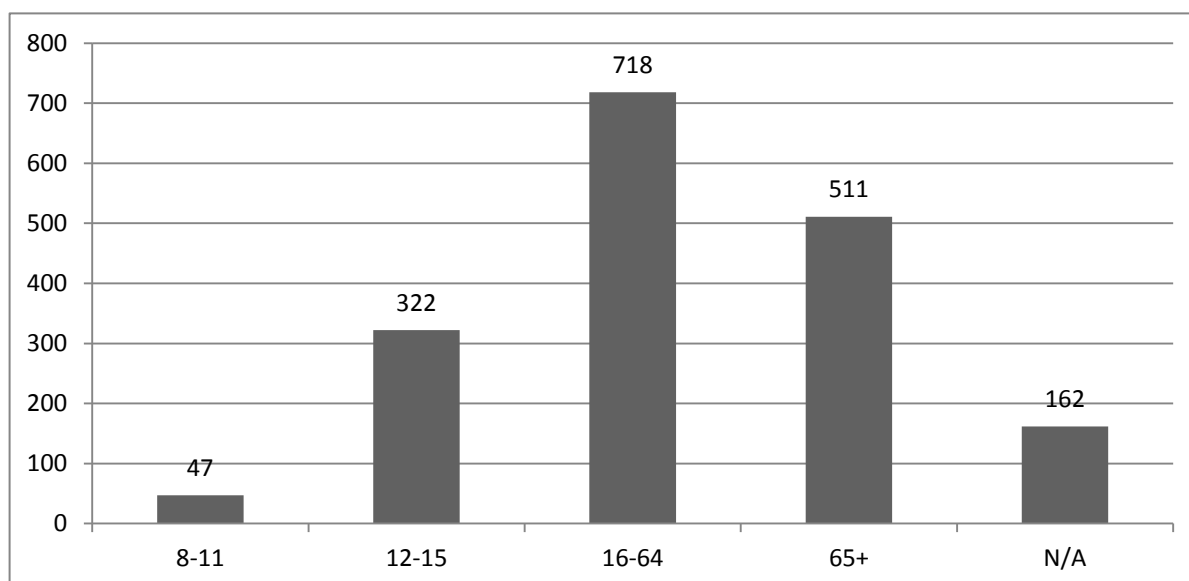


There were 431 who classed themselves as a parent or carer, 265 who consider themselves to have a disability, 17 stated that English was not their first language and there were 929 female and 582 male respondents. The full breakdown is below.

	Yes	No	N/A
Parent/Carer	431	1002	327
Disability	265	1147	348
English First Language	1534	17	209
	Female	Male	N/A
Gender	929	582	249

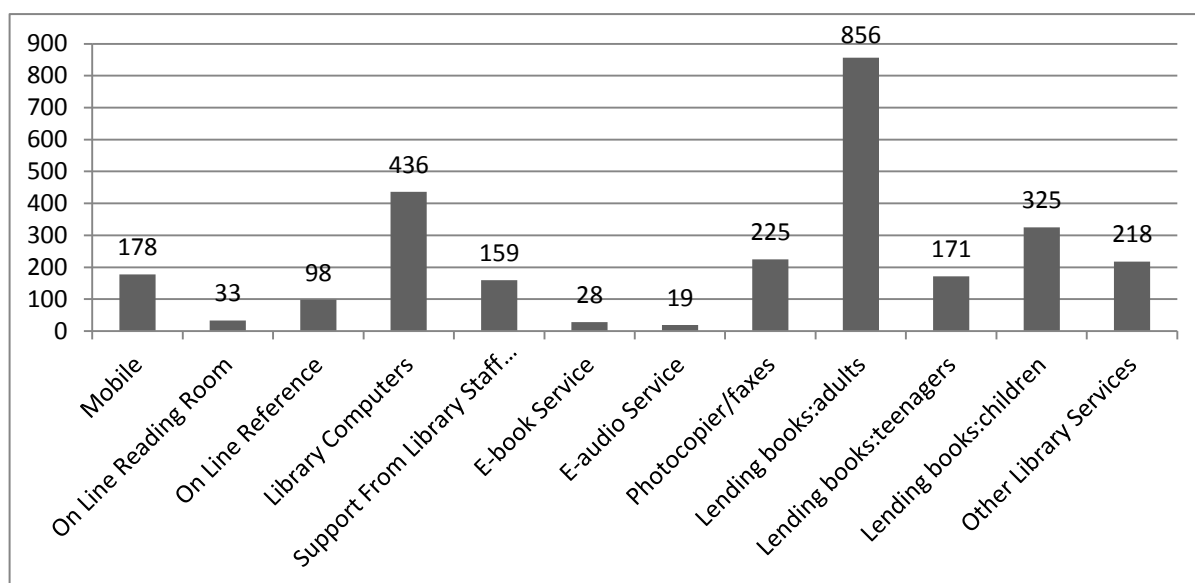


The age breakdown of the individual respondents is shown below followed by the age breakdown of children under 16 that were included as part of a parent/carer questionnaire.



LIBRARY SERVICES

Each respondent was asked to indicate which of the library services they used and how often they used them. The number using each service is shown below.



There were a wide range of responses to the frequency of use so to simplify this for analysis the following has been used.

Frequency	Explanation	Sample Phrases
Very Frequently	More than once a week	All the time, Every Time it opens, Daily, Weekly
Frequently	More than once a month	Often, Fortnightly, When Mobile comes, 20 per annum
Regularly	Once a month	Monthly, Once a month, 12 times a year
Infrequently	At least twice a year	Rarely, Not Often, Occasionally, Quarterly
Very Infrequently	Once a year or less	Very Rarely, Annually, As required

The frequency of use for each of the main library services is shown in the table below.

	Very Frequently	Frequently	Regularly	Infrequently	Very Infrequently	Not Answered
Mobile	0	144	2	8	2	22
On Line Reading Room	9	0	6	4	2	12
On Line Reference	19	7	10	17	7	38
Library Computers	121	39	37	54	32	153
Support From Library Staff on Using Computers	29	7	14	27	11	71
E-book Service	5	2	4	7	0	10
E-audio Service	3	1	2	6	2	5
Photocopier/faxes	28	1	40	55	22	79
Lending books: adults	190	234	128	82	13	209
Lending books: teenagers	15	26	25	26	11	68
Lending books: children	121	51	45	15	3	90

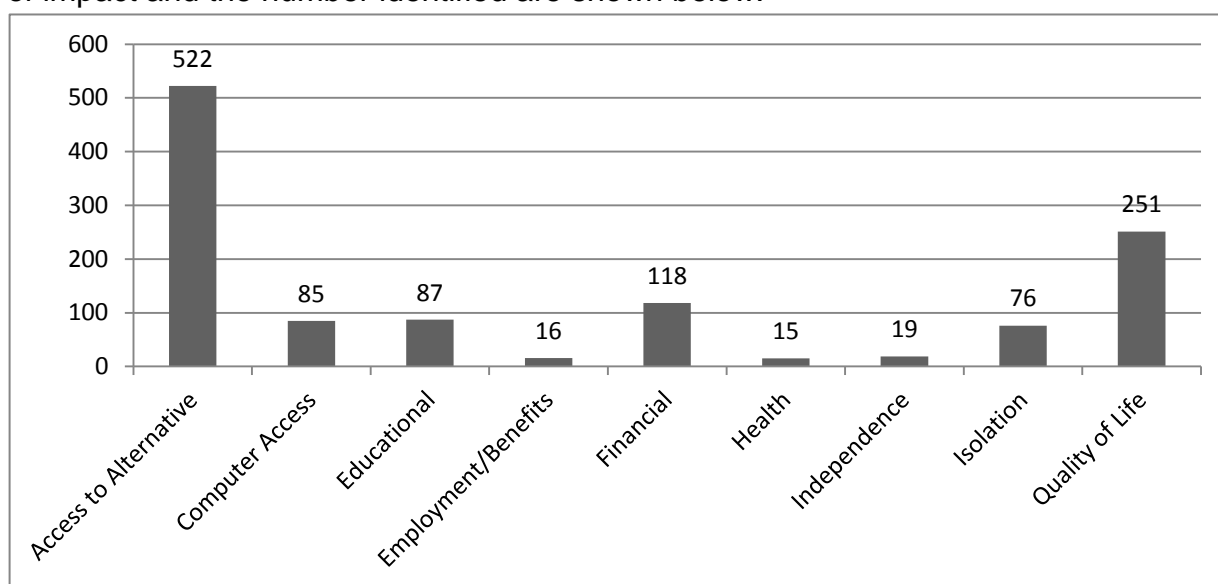
Again there was a wide range of other library services people used and reasons why people go to the library. These are listed below and those of a similar nature have been grouped together.

Other Library Service Used/Reason for Visiting Library	Number
Advice, Guidance and Support From Staff	22
Applications (e.g. bus pass)	7
Archives, reference, research and study	101
Attend and Organise Events/Exhibitions/Displays/Talks	28
Books on Wheels	1
Borrow Art	2
Borrow Tapes/CD's	50
Borrow Videos/DVD's	54
Café	13
Children's Activities (Including Story Time and Reading Challenges)	60
Clubs, Groups and Classes	45
Computer and Other Courses	9
Depositing plastic bags	1
Dog Bags	9
General, Local, Tourist, Community and Local Government Information	47
Laminating	2
Meeting Others/Friends, Chat and Socialise	23
Meetings	13
Minutes of Meetings	3
Newspapers, Magazines and Periodicals	11
Peace, quiet, meditation and a coffee break	4
Purchase Tickets and Stamps	4

Request, order, reserve, recall and renew books	39
Toilets	1
Warmth on a cold day	1
Work Experience/Duke of Edinburgh	1

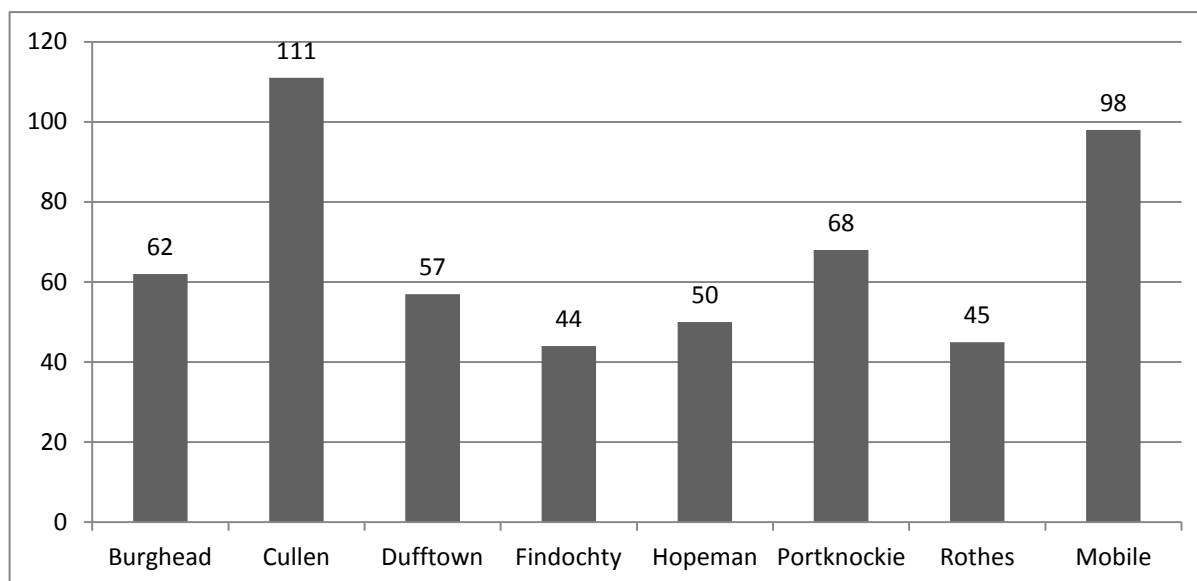
IMPACT

Each respondent was asked for the impact the library closures would have on them personally. Only those questionnaires that identified one of the potentially affected libraries are used in the following impact assessments. These statements were examined and there were 9 specific areas of impact that were identified. Each area of impact and the number identified are shown below.



Access to Alternative

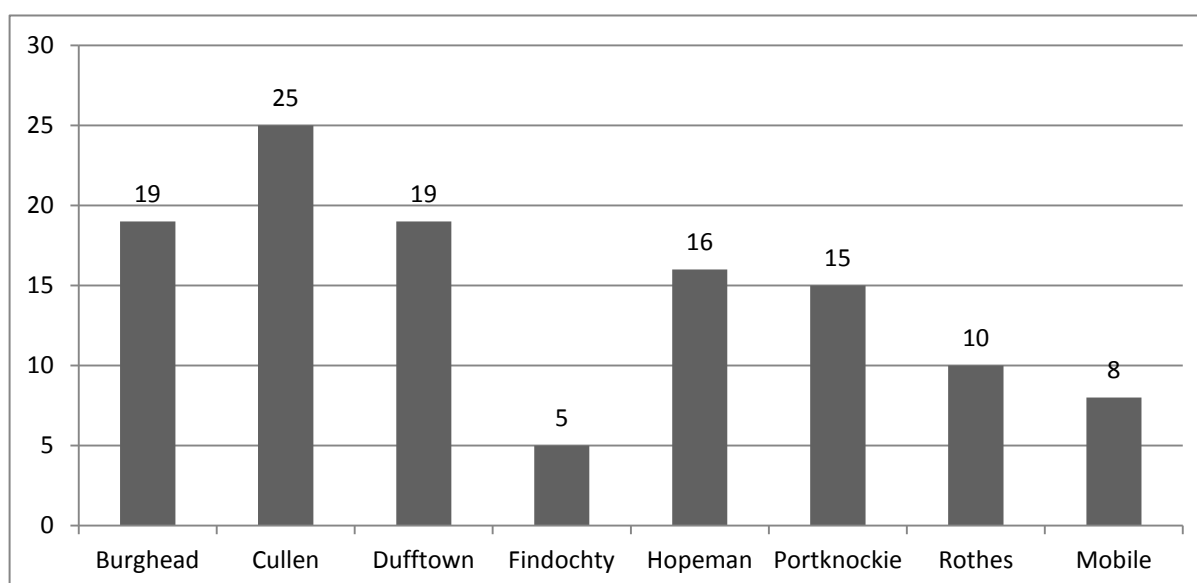
The number of library users that indicated they would have difficulty in accessing the services they use in alternative libraries or elsewhere is shown below.



Notably users of Dufftown and Rothes libraries are already the least likely to use an alternative library with none in Dufftown and only one in Rothes. The main reason given by those most affected by the library closures is cost of public transport. This is particularly the case with young families and those on benefits. Disability and health reasons are the next biggest reason with people being unable to travel or not being able to walk to a bus stop or from the bus station to the Elgin Library, especially if they are carrying books. One carer was unable to leave her husband with dementia for the length of time the trip to Elgin and back would take.

Financial

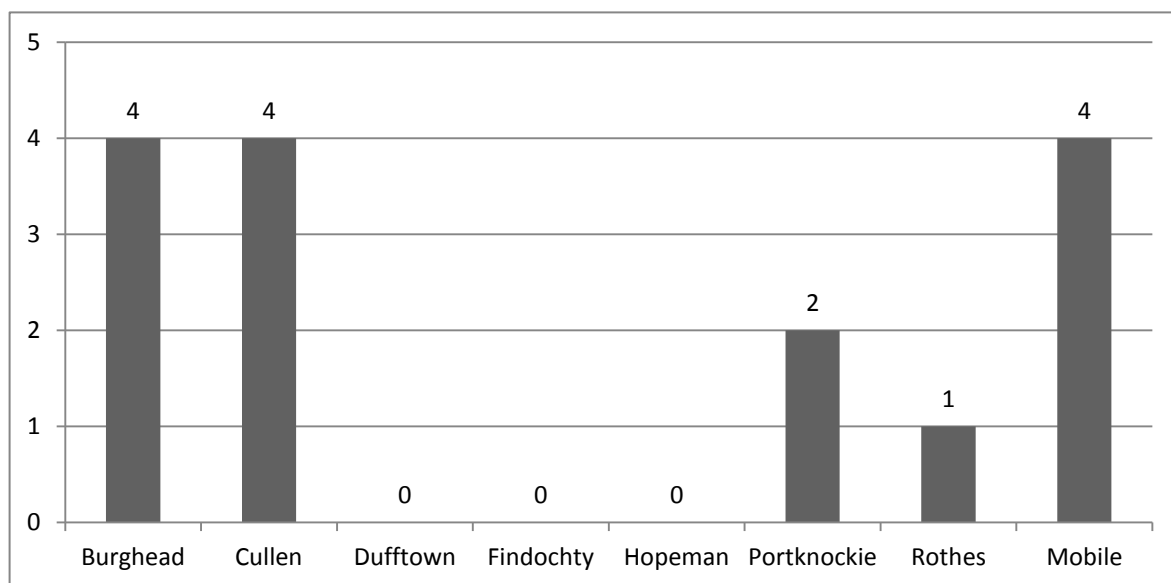
The number of library users that indicated they would be impacted financially by the library closures is below.



The main financial cost incurred would be that of travelling to the nearest library either by public transport or in fuel for the car. Other financial impacts would be the cost of purchasing books which one respondent said was cheaper than the bus fare. The other cost identified was in buying or upgrading computers and paying for internet access. One respondent is not even being able to afford to have a telephone line connected to their home. The financial cost of the unemployed having to travel to do online job searches as a requirement of their entitlement to Job Seekers Allowance was highlighted as a particular issue.

Health

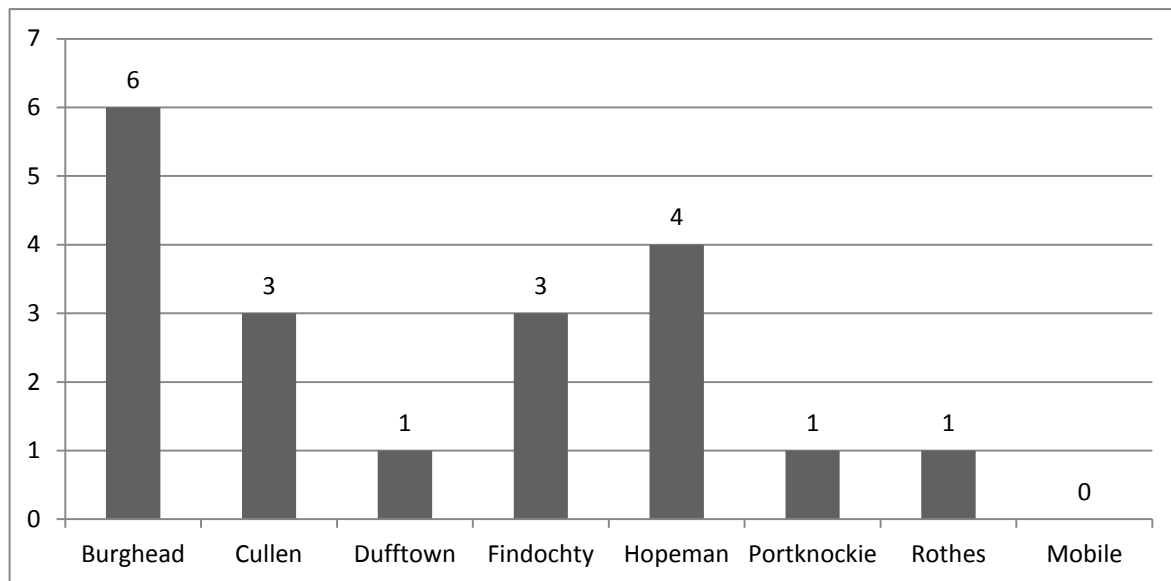
The number of library users that indicated their health would be affected by the library closures is below.



For some of the respondents this was as simple as becoming travel sick while getting to an alternative library. For others it would lead to anxiety, stress and depression. Some of this would be caused by social isolation but for others it was going from a small local library where they felt safe to a large impersonal town library.

Independence

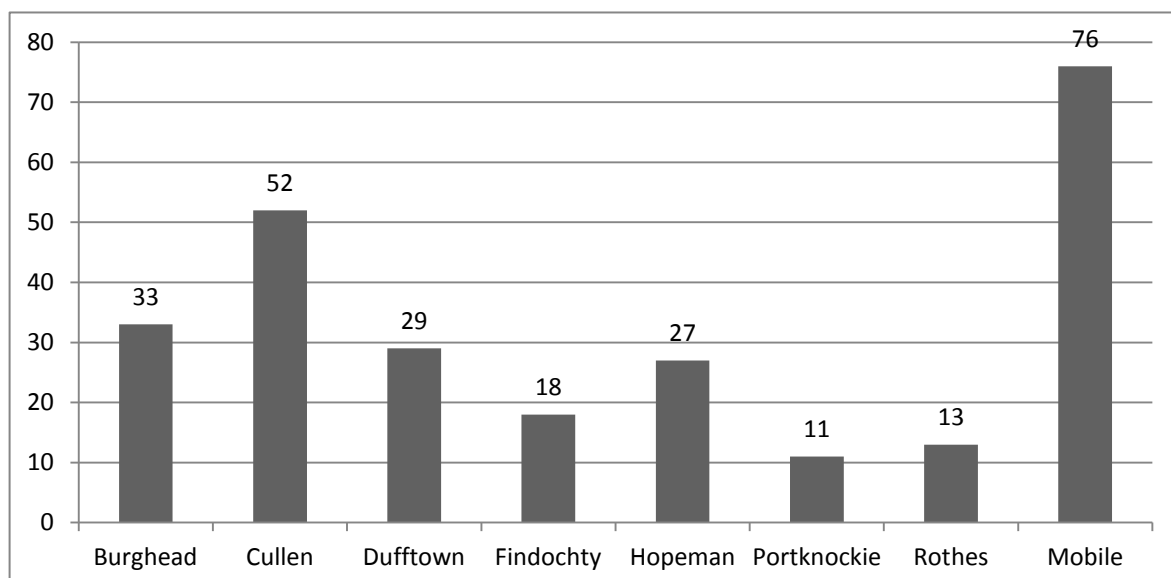
The number of library users that indicated they would lose some of their independence by the library closures is below.



A loss of independence is something that was highlighted by the young, elderly and the disabled. Going to the local library on their own is the first and the last thing in life that some people are able to do on their own. One parent whose son has autism says that he can go to the local library on his own but feels uncomfortable in Elgin and Lossiemouth libraries.

Quality of Life

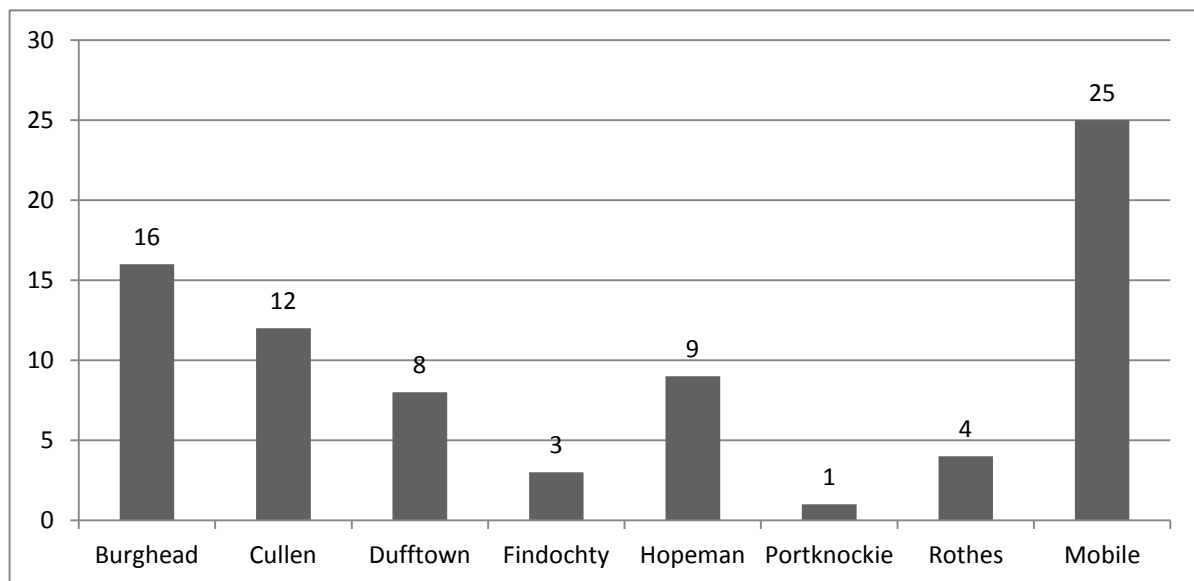
The number of library users that indicated their quality of life would be affected by the library closures is below.



This is a difficult aspect to quantify and it could simply be the fact that they miss the walk to the library or the chance to browse through the books before choosing one. There are a high proportion of mobile library users who will have their quality of life affected. Those mobile library users identified as being most affected were all female and predominantly disabled and/or elderly.

Isolation

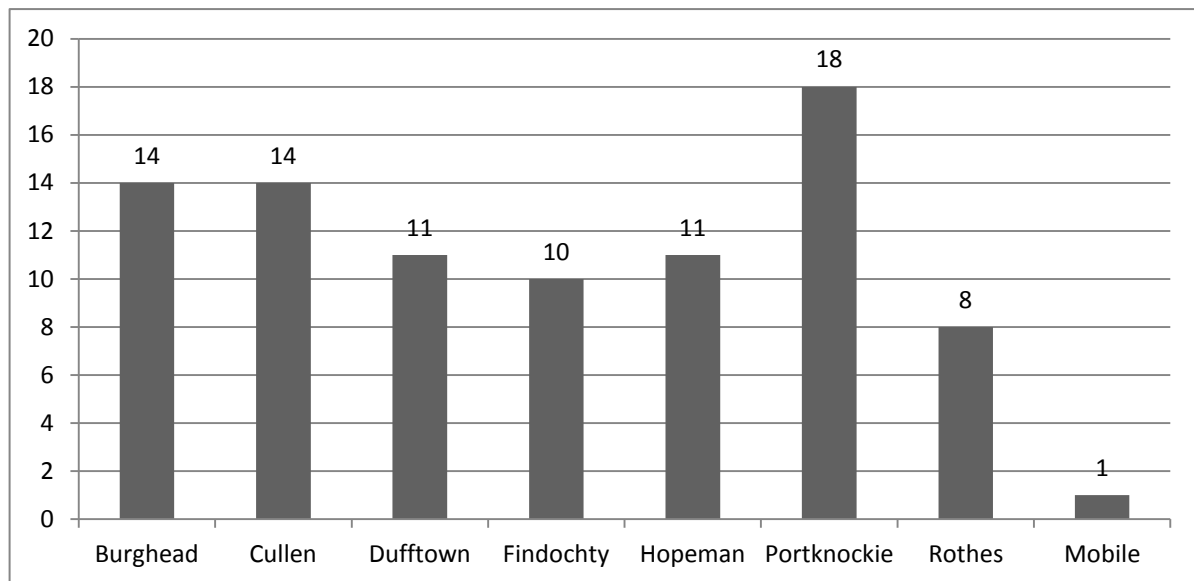
The number of library users that indicated that they would face rural or social isolation by the library closures is below.



Again the mobile library has the highest number of respondents that would face isolation with a loss of this service. Many mobile library users live in rural locations and as stated above many are disabled and elderly, a number of them also live alone. Interestingly the 2 fixed libraries with the highest number that would be affected by isolation are also in the 2 communities with the highest number of respondents that feel the library is a community hub.

Educational

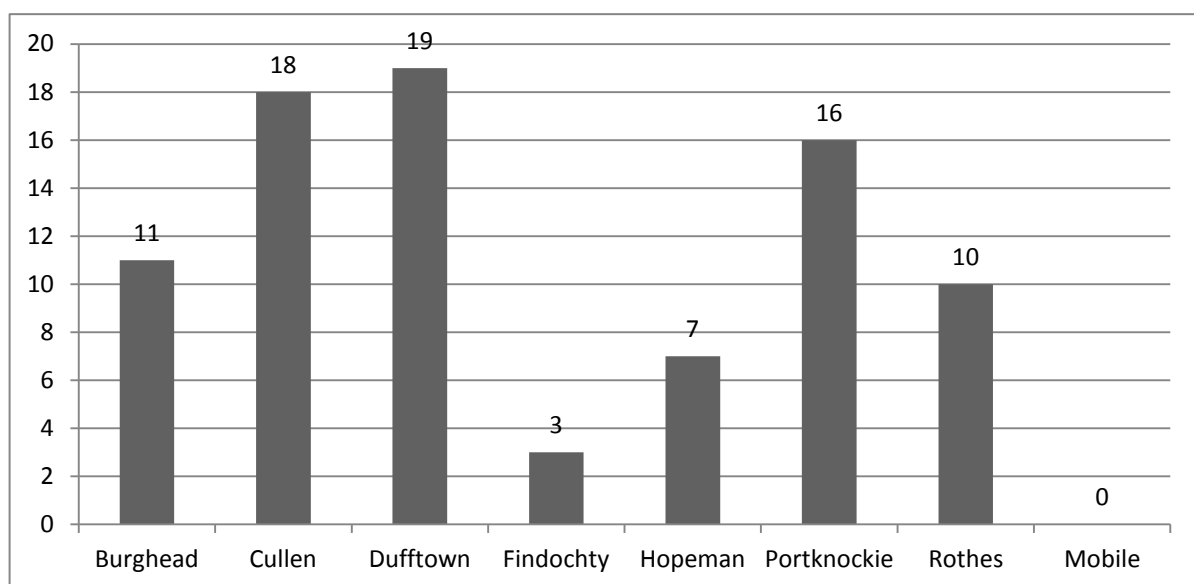
The number of library users that indicated that their own or their children's education would be affected by the library closures is below.



Of all the impacts this is the one that is most even across all the potentially affected libraries. Portknockie is slightly higher which is due to the fact that the school children completed questionnaires by themselves. Other questionnaires from schools were predominantly completed by the parents. The mobile user who felt that there would be an educational impact was a Home Educator. However the impact was not about the loss of the mobile library but rather they felt that the already busy computers in Elgin would become even busier.

Computer Access

The number of library users that indicated that their access to a computer and or the internet would be affected by the library closures is below.



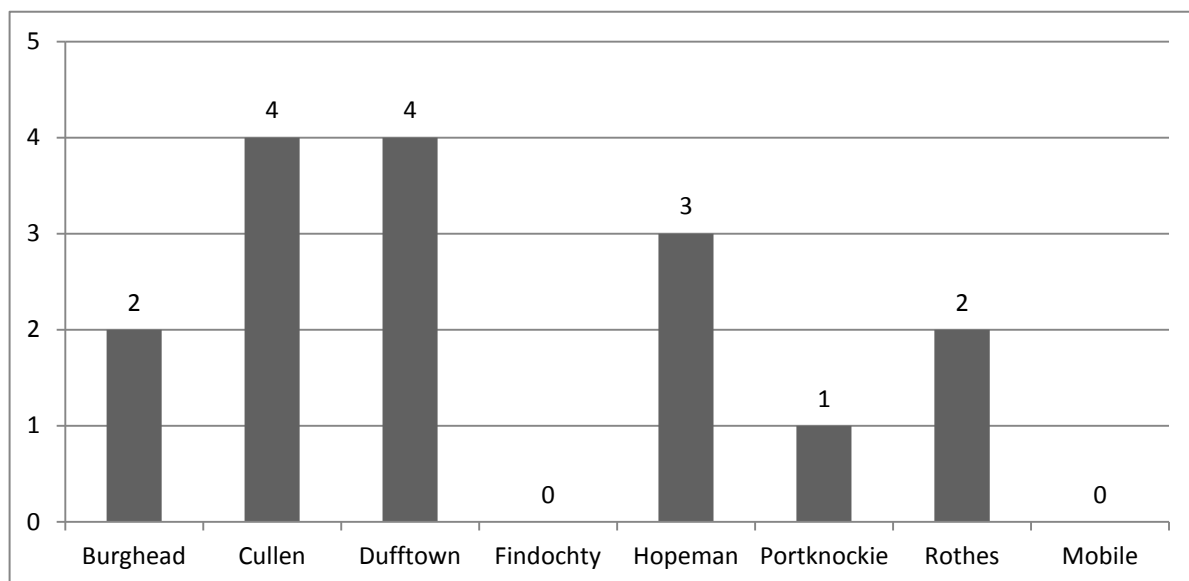
The main impacts from the loss of access to computers are for the unemployed to search for jobs and complete job applications and for schoolchildren to assist them in doing their homework. Other impacts include loss of email facility, online banking and one person, who has Power of Attorney over a seriously ill relative, carries out all communications regarding his care and finances using a library computer.

This is also one area in which users of libraries that were not scheduled for closure would feel an impact. Users of both Buckie and Elgin libraries felt that the computers were already busy and that extra users from the other libraries would make this situation worse. They also felt that staff would have less time to assist them as they would be stretched elsewhere.

Out of the 436 computer users from all libraries 143 (33%) needed support from staff in their use. Of those that needed support 82 (57%) were aged over 65 and 55 (38%) were aged 16-64.

Employment/Benefits

The number of library users that indicated that their employment prospects or benefits claims would be affected by the library closures is below.

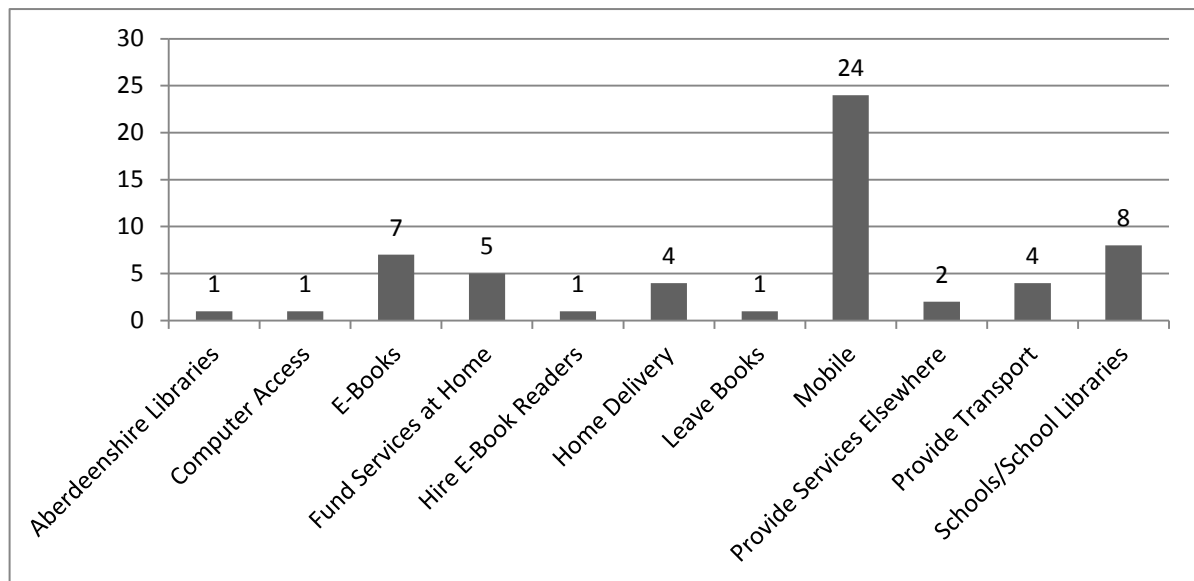


These respondents linked their ability to search and apply for jobs and their ability to claim benefits to the loss of the library computers as indicated above. This is an area that males appear to be impacted on the same as females, especially in the ability to search for jobs in connection with Job Seekers Allowance. One self-employed person would be affected as they use the library to assist them with their business. There were also others who relied on the tourist industry who felt that the library closures may affect this.

There were only 23 respondents from all libraries who directly mentioned Welfare Reforms or claiming benefits online.

MITIGATION

Respondents were asked how the impact on them could be mitigated and there were very few responses other than to keep the library open. The numbers for each mitigating action is provided below.



The most common mitigating action was to provide a mobile library to replace the fixed library. However there were a number of concerns expressed over this as a replacement. The most obvious is that it wouldn't replace the loss of computers and photocopiers/faxes etc. Some people feel the frequency and stock level is already inadequate and this would be made worse by going to one Mobile Unit and that unit having to cover a larger area. There was a suggestion that every 4 weeks was the lowest it should go to replace the existing mobile service and it should visit those areas losing a fixed library weekly. One of the reasons given for why people wouldn't use a mobile library in the future is that it comes when they are at work.

Schools and School Libraries is the next largest suggestion, however this covers a wide range of ideas. This ranged from ensuring children had computer and internet access at school including the ability to order books online to be delivered to the school. There were suggestions that the libraries joined onto schools should become the school library and another that all school libraries should be improved. Some other ideas were that the public should be able to use the school photocopiers and computers and that all school libraries should be open to the public. The collocation of schools and libraries wasn't popular with everyone though as it makes some elderly users uncomfortable. One previous user of Hopeman Library now travels to Elgin since the library was moved.

The next suggestion for mitigation was to provide e-books or an online library that people could borrow from. Interestingly this suggestion is something the library service already provides. Of those library users responding to the questionnaire only 28 indicated they used the E-Book Service. The main reasons given for people not using this service is that they had never heard of it, didn't have the technology to use it, it wasn't compatible with their e-reader, not interested and preferred real books. Of the 28 users of the E-Book Service only 3 didn't also borrow books from the library. The results for the E-Audio Service were similar with only 2 out of the 19 users not also borrowing books.

Funding services in library user's houses was the next suggestion for mitigation. This ranged from providing every child with free books or book vouchers to having computers with broadband installed.

The next two suggestions were broadly similar, take the people to the libraries by providing a dedicated bus; extending dial a bus and one user wanted to be collected in one of the Council's electric cars. The flip side of this was delivering books to the home that people had ordered online, either by van or 1st class post. Extending dial a bus wasn't popular with everyone as they lived too far from a main road, it doesn't run at the evenings and weekends and they can't predict when they might want to go to the library.

Other suggestions were to leave a supply of books in set locations (Bay View Court) that were rotated monthly, hire out e-readers from the library, provide computer access for the unemployed, provide the same services in other local locations and use Aberdeenshire libraries. The Aberdeenshire library suggestion came from one Cullen Library user who would find it easier to travel to Portsoy than to Buckie.