

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2024

**Subject:** Manchester Libraries Update

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

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### Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee with an update on the library strategy and to present future plans.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

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### Wards Affected: All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	Libraries support the zero-carbon agenda. This includes high quality, low-carbon buildings that are community hubs to be used by multiple organisations, that libraries encourage books to be read by multiple people and the increase in eBooks – reducing the use of paper. We have signed up to the Green Libraries manifesto. More details contained within section 2.4.1
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	As this is an update report, an EQIA has not been carried out specifically on the report. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of the library service. Examples of excellent EDI initiatives are outlined in 2.48 and throughout the report.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Libraries enable people to improve their skills, apply for work on-line, offer and offer volunteering opportunities, increasing residents' employability. Libraries lead the Council's work on reducing digital exclusion amongst residents, supporting the new Economic Strategy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Libraries assist in raising literacy and skills levels, including enabling our youngest residents to become school ready, helping to deliver Read Manchester.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Libraries are at the heart of our communities and offer a wide range of services and activities for free that help to build and maintain community cohesion and place pride. Libraries have always supported those that need the help the most, and have continued to do so during the cost-of-living situation, as described in section 2.5
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Good local libraries are part of the fabric of neighbourhoods, helping to sustain pride in Manchester and its communities. Manchester Central Library is a regional, national and international visitor attraction. Manchester Libraries have signed up to the Green Libraries Manifesto.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Our libraries are a key location for residents to access digital technology and helping build skills that will assist future generation of Mancunians to sustain the growth of the city. Our digital inclusion work is increasing connectivity in homes.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

None.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester's libraries embody the Our Manchester Strategy, providing locally based, customer focussed services at the heart of communities. The service contributes greatly to Manchester Strategy Outcomes, as detailed in section 2.3. Manchester's Library, Information and Archives Service delivers leisure, cultural, learning and information services through a network of 15 neighbourhood libraries, 6 community partnership libraries and the internationally renowned world class Central Library – the most visited public library in the country. The service also operates 24-hour virtual library, HMP Manchester Prison library and Books to Go (housebound) service and supports several neighbourhood-based book collections. Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA which holds records from across the city region. Manchester Libraries also leads on digital inclusion for the Council and city. Manchester Libraries work alongside the other nine authorities in Greater Manchester, progressing joint projects which provide benefit for residents and improved value for money, such as a shared library management system, joint procurement of e-books and working together on priorities such as 'green libraries.'
- 1.2 In 2023 we produced a new vision for Manchester Libraries which is included in Appendix 1. The vision set out how libraries contribute to Manchester being a high-class city improving the lives of residents and neighbourhoods and sets out the priorities for coming years. The key priorities identified are: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. Appendix 4 also lays out how we've made progress in the first 12 months of this vision.
- 1.3 The library service has evolved and reinvented itself over the past decade and whilst seeing significant reduction in revenue funding we have seen nearly £100 million capital investment, including the £50 million transformation of Manchester Central Library. In the last 10 years, and we have relocated over 90% of our libraries into new or refurbished or co-located premises. The Libraries Capital Programme continues to see significant investment into the service, improving the estate and service further. The 2023 Adult Public Library User Survey reported that over 93% of customers were satisfied with the service – the highest satisfaction rating we have ever received.
- 1.4 As valued community spaces, libraries act as a shop front and access point for a range of other council, government and public services and partner organisations, enabling people to access these services at a local level. A wide range of council services are delivered through our network of libraries for example adult learning (including learning specifically aimed at getting people back to work), youth provision, councillor surgeries, benefits advice, subsidised food provision and many other advice sessions. This has been particularly beneficial to residents during the cost-of-living crisis, where libraries have been the Council's warm spaces, acting as the neighbourhood living rooms. The support provided in response to the cost-of-living situation is laid out in section 2.5.

- 1.5 Library services also provide significant support for key Manchester City Council objectives such as raising literacy levels (both reading skills and digital), reducing dependency, sustaining local neighbourhoods and creating economic growth, and have a critical and key role in supporting the City Council's priorities. Libraries manage Read Manchester with the aim of spreading the love of reading throughout the city and increasing literacy levels with children and adults. Manchester Libraries have a leading role with digital inclusion for the Council and city. We work with the VCSE sector to reduce digital exclusion across community venues and in people's homes. Libraries also play a vital role through the provision of free public access to computers, free Wi-Fi, access to information and advice sessions.
- 1.6 In terms of a strategic planning framework, Manchester Libraries continue to provide a strong, key and vital role in the heart of their communities and neighbourhoods supporting learning, literacy, economic opportunity and inspiration, through the 4 universal public library offers around reading, information & digital, health & wellbeing, culture & creativity. This ensures that we have a coherent structured offer which meets the current and future needs of our residents and also ensure that our service offer is aligned to support the delivery of Our Corporate Plan.
- 1.7 It is now a decade since Central Library reopened following its transformation. 2024 will feature a number of celebrations for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reopening of Central Library and the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Central Library in its current building in St Peters Square. The library continues to be the most visited public library in the country, attracting a diverse range of residents as well as being a key attraction for visitors from outside the city. Part of the transformation vision for Central Library was to be an inclusive space, the city's living room and treasure trove appealing to families, children and young people, aspiring entrepreneurs and visitors to the city, as well as traditional library visitors. Central Library's cultural programme, Library Live, exists as a busy and diverse cultural programme for everyone to enjoy, and Central Library remains the most visited public library in the country.
- 1.8 Across the city, our neighbourhood libraries and community partnership libraries - play an integral role in their local communities, acting as safe, trusted, socially inclusive, free, accessible, welcoming and non-threatening spaces, that play a significant role in helping to address deprivation and inequality. Research has shown that using libraries improves residents' health and wellbeing by combating loneliness and social isolation, as well as providing a quiet place to study and read. We support customers with reading for pleasure and literacy, and the level of borrowing is increasing – both books and eBooks/eAudio.
- 1.9 Libraries are the primary community venue for residents to access IT, and offer training, support and assistance to residents. This is done through staff, volunteers and partner organisations, for example Citizens Advice Manchester, which offers highly popular weekly digital-advice sessions at libraries across the city. The offer has been supplemented by the availability of free SIMs for residents – over 3000 being donated in the last 12 months.

- 1.10 Fundamental to our ability to provide a high-quality breadth and range of services is the need to work well and effectively with a broad spectrum of partners and volunteers. Our partnership working across the city ranges from local community groups such as The Bread and Butter Thing and Citizens Advice Manchester to specialist intellectual property lawyers who give their time pro-bono to support fledgling entrepreneurs, to the British Library, Manchester Metropolitan University, The University of Manchester, the Manchester College, Arts Council England and The National Archives. Over 200 volunteers enable us to make the best use of the resources available within the city; increasing the number of volunteers further is a key priority for 2024.
- 1.11 In 2022 the Government commissioned an independent review of public libraries. The review was undertaken by Baroness Sanderson. Manchester City Council and Manchester Libraries contributed to the review, and we were highlighted on several occasions in the report that was published in January 2024. We are supportive of the recommendations in the review and have included a summary of our responses to the recommendations in Appendix 13.

## **2.0 Delivering the Library Strategy in 2023 and beyond**

- 2.1 Through investment in the previous Library 2020 strategy, the City Council has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining effective libraries at the heart of Manchester's communities. The key strands of Library 2020 strategy have been:
- Introducing and strengthening customer self-service transformation to all libraries.
  - Introducing new Open Plus technology to increase opening hours
  - Transforming Withington library.
- 2.1.1 To continue to progress and embed the strategy a 2021-2024 programme for citywide library renewal works to ensure that all libraries are in a strong position to serve their local communities for the next decade. Works include redecoration, refreshment and replacement of furnishings and equipment, and redecoration as required. This has included:
- Remodelling Newton Heath Library to create a new community meeting room and interview/advice room.
  - Refreshing other libraries such as Central Library and Archives +, Hulme High Street, Forum Library, Didsbury Library and North City Library.
  - Gorton Library opened in the new integrated Gorton Hub in 2022
- 2.1.2 In 2023 we have:
- Refreshed Longsight Library, 13 years after the last transformation programme, creating an improved childrens library and 2 new meeting rooms – this has allowed Barclays to have presence in the library, bringing much needed income into the service. Open+ has been installed, leading to being open 12 hours more per week.

- Opened the new Abraham Moss Library, as part of the Library and Leisure Centre, opened in August 2023 with the official opening in September 2023. It has proved very popular and is now one of the most visited libraries in the city.
- The opening of the new site for Northenden Community Library in St Wilfrid's Church Hall at the start of 2024. Its previous premises at Parkway Green became unavailable as Wythenshawe Community Housing Group are reviewing their estate however with the support of the church, we have retained library services in the village.

2.1.3 Significant capital investment is continuing in 2024. The grade 2 listed Chorlton Library will be fully refurbished during 2024-25, with a budget for capital works, supplemented by additional AMP works and Open Plus budget, making best use of Manchester City Council resources. The works include remodelling and refurbishment of the 1970's extension area, a new community meeting room and interview rooms, full redecoration, and the introduction of the Open Plus access system, whilst also restoring the historic dome over the lobby area that has been covered over in previous refurbishments. The library will operate a limited service for approximately 10 months whilst the work takes place, however additional hours will be introduced at neighbouring libraries.

2.1.4 All libraries across the city continue to thrive, acting as community hubs to serve the residents in their community. Appendix 2 gives examples from each library about services, initiatives and events that have taken place in the last 12 months. Providing access to reading material continues to be at the core of the library offer, and demand for books remains as high as ever. There is extremely high demand for books that are purchased from the bookfund. In 2022-23 a total of 695,000 books and 324,000 ebooks/eaudio were borrowed. There are waiting lists for thousands of the books. Currently over 10,000 books are reserved with customers waiting for them – this equates to approximately £112,000 of spend required to satisfy need. There are approximately 5,000 reservations on ebooks and 13,000 reservations on eaudio books from Manchester Libraries customers, equating to £150,000 and £700,000 additional spend if it was available respectively. These figures show the high level of demand for books, and the strain that brings upon the bookfund, and the increase in resident and customer expectation and demand.

2.2 In 2023 we produced a new vision for Manchester Libraries which is included in Appendix 3. The vision set out how libraries contribute to Manchester being a high-class city improving the lives of residents and neighbourhoods and sets out the priorities for coming years. The key priorities identified are: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. Appendix 4 also lays out how we've made progress in the first 12 months of this vision. Appendices 4 – 7 lay out in more detail some of the actions taken to deliver the vision. This includes library services to children, school engagement and Read Manchester; supporting start-up businesses; the culture and creative programme; health and wellbeing (including age friendly); Archives and Heritage

2.3 The library service contributes hugely to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority Outcomes and other strategies, including the Our Manchester Strategy 2025-35, the newly launched Economic Strategy, Making Manchester Fairer, Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-27, Manchester Age Friendly Strategy, Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-26 and the emerging new Cultural Strategy which will place libraries as cultural hubs in their communities. Examples of our contributions follow below.

#### 2.3.1 Investing in Success an Economic Strategy for Manchester

This strategy stresses the importance of inclusive growth. Libraries are a key contributor of this, with libraries contributing to a skilled local workforce through their role supporting lifelong learning and information provision. Specific work around digital inclusion, business support and the new generator spaces increase the role libraries play supporting this strategy.

#### 2.3.2 Making Manchester Fairer: Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-27

Libraries have always been a democratic space where support is given to those who need it the most. Use of the library computers is disproportionately from people who live in areas of most deprivation. Examples are given in section 2.6 below, of how this role has increased during the recent cost of living crisis.

#### 2.3.3 Manchester Age Friendly Strategy

Libraries are heavily used by older people and contribute greatly to this strategy. This is detailed in Appendix 8.

2.4 The library service contributes hugely to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority Outcomes.

#### 2.4.1 **Contributing to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city**

Libraries are possibly the longest standing re-use and recycling programme through the borrow and use of a book by multiple people. The increase in lending of Ebooks and Eaudio books reduces the carbon footprint of reading in the city still further. We have signed up to the Green Libraries Manifesto <https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=greenlibrariesmanifesto>.

The library estate contains generally good quality buildings with excellent carbon emission standards, and the capital investment into several of the libraries improves this further. By widening use of libraries as community hubs, we are preventing the need for other services and organisations to have their own buildings and reducing travel time amongst staff and partner organisations. Neighbourhood libraries are accessible for partners as workplaces and for service delivery, supporting the Our Manchester and Bringing Services Together approaches. They can also be used for

environmental and climate change campaigns, including Keep Manchester Tidy, which itself contributes towards carbon emission reductions.

Each library is now a collection point for old devices – these get refurbished by Community Computers and sold to Manchester residents for discounted price, benefiting the resident and reducing waste.

We hold events, workshops and activities for children that promote sustainability. These have included sessions from Biffa. During the Festival of Libraries, Central Library hosted The Roundview. This guides participants towards a sustainable and regenerative future, using a collection of puzzles. After the success at Central Library, The Roundview will be hosted at libraries around Greater Manchester later in 2024.

#### **2.4.2 Growth that benefits everyone**

Libraries develop and implement the Council's Digital Action Plan, which feeds into the Digital Strategy. This work reduces the number of digitally excluded residents in the city and increases the level of digital skills. People without digital skills are at increased the level of disadvantage – e.g. unemployment, low wage employment, social isolation, financial poverty. The Business & IP Centre (based at Central Library) and the Build a Business in GM Libraries initiative support the establishment and growth of start-up businesses, increasing the number of successful businesses in the city and the creation of jobs and opportunities. Libraries play an important role in supporting the business community in Manchester, and across Greater Manchester, offering insights and access to free resources, training and events. In 2023 the BIPC offered more activities and support than ever before. In January 2024 the Generator space opened on the ground floor of Central Library. This and other work supporting businesses is detailed in Appendix 6.

#### **2.4.3 Young People**

Libraries support young people from 0-18 years, as outlined in the Libraries Services to Children and Young people in Appendix 5. These include ongoing access and promotion of reading, joint initiatives with Read Manchester, events and activities including weekly storytimes at each library and Summer Reading Challenge, school engagement and developing more services with young people.

#### **2.4.4 Healthy Cared-For People**

People who use a library have improved health and wellbeing. A Central Library survey during the pandemic reported that 87% of respondents said they felt happier after using the library. The CIPFA Public Library User Survey of 2022 reported that over 80% of Manchester's respondents who sometimes felt lonely, felt less lonely after using the library. Libraries reduce social isolation for a whole range of its customers – from Mums and Dads attending storytimes with their children, to older people who use the library for social interaction in a welcoming environment, and Books to Go customers who are

housebound and may not see anyone else for a few days apart from the delivery driver who provides a range of books. Libraries are also key for residents receiving accurate health information, through digital access, health information and books on prescription and reading well collections. Libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions. All library staff have received training on dementia and are Dementia Friends. More on how libraries support health and wellbeing is detailed in Appendix 8.

#### **2.4.5 Housing**

Libraries contribute to the social infrastructure of successful and cohesive local communities. We work in partnership with Housing providers to reduce digital exclusion within their residents – to the benefits of the tenants and the housing providers. We work with organisations such as Lifeshare and Booth Centre to encourage and enable homeless people to access library services. As part of our Digital Inclusion Action Plan we have encouraged housing associations and homelessness organisations to embed digital inclusion in their work, with more than 10 venues establishing themselves as National Databanks in 2023 and are now able to give free data sims to their clients.

#### **2.4.6 Neighbourhoods**

Libraries are the beating heart of communities, being used and owned by the communities they reside in. They are well used venues key to successful and cohesive local communities. As community hubs they are used to gain access to skills, creative opportunities, digital access and access to a wide range of services at neighbourhood level. Libraries are increasingly becoming community hubs used to meet a whole range of priorities of people in the neighbourhood. The existence of a library within the neighbourhood is a critical factor to the quality of life of communities and residents in the neighbourhood. They are vital in the Council's response to the current cost of living crisis, with each library acting as a 'warm space' - more details in section 2.5.

#### **2.4.7 Connections**

Libraries ensure residents are digitally connected – particularly those who do not have Internet access at home. Each library offers free Internet access and high-speed Wi-Fi. Libraries are digital hubs where residents can access other services through video technology – for example Citizens Advice Bureau. We are currently upgrading all PCs across our libraries to ensure that we have the best access possible and will be upgrading Wi-Fi provision in line with wider MCC plans.

#### **2.4.8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are at the forefront of everything libraries do. Libraries are representative of the diverse communities in which they are located and are a key means to increase community cohesion. The book stock is diverse, including the recent 'See Myself in Books' initiative and the events programme outlined contains artists and authors from diverse backgrounds

and is attractive to all. Key EDI events are celebrated in libraries such as Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, International Women's Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and International Mother Language Day. In 2023 we hosted the Black British Book Festival where hundreds of people attended a vibrant programme of black authors and speakers. Manchester Libraries are accredited Libraries of Sanctuary and will re-accredit in 2024. We are supporting Manchester City Council to become a City of Sanctuary.

#### 2.4.9 **A Well Managed Council**

By widening use of libraries as community hubs, we are preventing the need for other services and organisations to have their own buildings and reducing travel time amongst staff and partner organisations. Neighbourhood libraries are accessible for partners as workplaces and for service delivery, in an Our Manchester and Bringing Services Together approach. Libraries are front door to council services, and other partner organisations. This can range from supporting a wide range of key messages from the council – including Keep Manchester Tidy, Budget consultations, to supporting residents with accessing specific initiatives online, including applying for parking permits and applying for a Voter Authority Certificate.

#### 2.5 Cost-of-Living support

2.5.1 Libraries have always supported those that need the help the most and have continued to do so during the cost-of-living situation. Libraries have been pivotal in the support that the Council has given to residents at this time. Over the last 2 winters each library has been a registered warm space. From October-February free hot drinks have been given, to complement the existing offer of warm, welcoming, non-judgemental space with a vast range of services always available from libraries. Many residents have become digitally excluded at this time as they've not been able to afford data charges. To alleviate this, we have donated over 4000 data sims offering six months free data over the last year. Organisations such as Citizens Advice Manchester use libraries to deliver welfare, debt and housing advice – the number of sessions per week has increased because of higher demand – with new sessions at Longsight Library and Gorton Library. Libraries have supported residents with food poverty. The Bread and Butter Thing operate successfully from four libraries and each library is now a donation point for food, with donations going to the local foodbank. We are supporting residents with period poverty, giving women free sanitary products in each library.

2.6 The priorities for future actions are outlined in the library vision, included as Appendix 3. We will continue to ensure that libraries improve the lives of residents and the communities in which they reside. We will maximise the use of services and ensure the investment made into Manchester's libraries bring the best outcomes for residents and the city. We will continue to develop and deliver services that deliver the priorities of: Our Manchester Our People, Literacy & Reading, Health & Wellbeing, Culture & Creativity and Digital Inclusion. We will continue to promote our services to residents and increase awareness of the huge variety of services. We'll continue to produce e-

newsletters, social media, hard copy leaflets, and work with partners to promote services, for example building on a successful partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, where a post about Manchester Libraries was their most viewed Instagram post in August 2023. Widening access and participation and visits to libraries remains crucial to Manchester Libraries strategy.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information in the report.

### **4.0 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Libraries 2023 infographics
- Appendix 2 - Examples of service delivery per library
- Appendix 3 - Library vision 2023-28
- Appendix 4 - Library vision action plan
- Appendix 5 - Read Manchester, Children, Young People & school engagement
- Appendix 6 - Supporting business
- Appendix 7 - Cultural and creative programme
- Appendix 8 - Health and wellbeing (including age friendly)
- Appendix 9 - Archives
- Appendix 10 - Manchester City of Literature
- Appendix 11 - Performance figures and Heat Maps
- Appendix 12 - Public Libraries User Survey 2023
- Appendix 13 - Manchester Libraries response to the Sanderson Review of Public Libraries

## Appendix 1: Infographics of Libraries performance in 2023

### Appendix 1a: Manchester Libraries 2023



### Appendix 1b: Items borrowed from Manchester Libraries in 2023



## Appendix 2 – Range of Services per library: Feb 2023 – Feb 2024

Library	Example of service / initiative
Abraham Moss	<p>In August 2023 following a multi-million investment from Manchester City Council, the brand-new state-of-the-art Abraham Moss Library and Leisure Centre which is open to the public for 96 hours a week was launched. The library is an ultra-modern open plan space, offering cultural and creative space for the whole community with great books, free access to wi-fi and the internet and an exciting and diverse event programme for all ages. This facility plays a significant role in helping to address deprivation and inequality for the local communities. The official opening day featured an advance taste of our forthcoming programme of health / wellbeing events including HAF for the community. Activities included Heart Valve Voice who offered heart health checks and advice for everyone with their trained clinicians. Manchester Libraries' Archives+ archivists showcased precious original archives from Crumpsall Workhouse and historic photographs from the Crumpsall Memory Box. Among our special guests were the Abraham Moss Community School pupil librarians, reading ambassadors and staff. National Poetry Day saw our very first guest author event for schools in the new library with Year 3 children from Abraham Moss Community School enjoying meeting engaging poet Dominic Berry who came along to perform poems from his new book "Make Some Noise" and encouraged the children to think about stories in a creative way.</p> <p>Library Staff joined the Read Manchester team at the Family Hub Launch at Woodville Children's Centre to engage families with our literacy and reading offer, and to promote The Summer Reading Challenge Ready, Set, Read! Parents and children could also choose a free book to take away and join the new Library and receive a new library card.</p>
Arcadia	<p>We continue to work in partnership with GLL, offering a 7 day a week service to customers. We provide a coffee morning which continues to remain popular and well-attended.</p> <p>The toddler story times also continue to be popular with parents in the area. We have continued to build on our schools programme to encourage children to read for pleasure, develop a love of books and the written word, in all formats.</p> <p>The Levenshulme Youth Project is expanding its provision at Arcadia Library. They currently provide a session on a Friday evening 6pm - 8pm within the library space. They have now expanded this to include a Monday evening and there is a new integrated activities programme. The library is the hub for this activity programme and aims to tackle some of the anti-social behaviour problems in the area; instil a sense of responsibility, empathy, and community pride among young people, contributing to a safer and more harmonious Library space</p>

Avenue	<p>Avenue is an Open Plus Library offering access to customers outside core library opening hours. It is a packed programme of events and activities. We held creative workshops with writer and naturalist Joe Shute to discover the history of the River Irk in October. The workshops explored the river through creative writing, storytelling and textile weaving. The first workshop got off to a great start with a group of local residents who contributed ideas, memories and creative written responses to the river Irk which runs through Middleton, Blackley and Blackley Forest, and, via the Irk Valley, through Crumpsall and Harpurhey into the city centre under Victoria Station. The ladies from the two Craft groups at Avenue Library played a starring role in making a huge success of the World's Biggest Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Macmillan Centre at North Manchester General Hospital.</p>
Barlow Moor	<p>Library staff launched a new story time in the Autumn, offering stories and rhymes for pre-school children and their adults. At Christmas we ran a special Christmas session, and each child was gifted with a book.</p> <p>Library staff attended Mersey Fest with a library stall where young people could do crafts and there were many books gifted for them to take home.</p> <p>As part of Chorlton book festival we did jewellery and Key ring making craft session at the after-school club.</p>
Beswick	<p>Students from The East Manchester Academy were invited to an event in the library to see a Miles Platting and Beswick Gasholder Films Screening by National Grid and Manchester Libraries. The screening included two short films made during the recent dismantling of the Saxon Street gasholder in Miles Platting. There was a photographic exhibition with historic and contemporary photographs, including previously unseen areas of these iconic industrial structures, alongside artefacts of the gasholder that have been donated by National Grid. This was a unique opportunity for the to learn about this important episode in Manchester's industrial heritage, since the second and last of these gas giants will begin its dismantling process this year and was a chance to ask questions of the engineers and professionals involved in the process and to spark a new generation of engineers or historians.</p> <p>Beswick Library is working with The Bread and Butter Thing to bring a mobile affordable food pantry to our community every Wednesday morning.</p>
Brooklands	<p>As part of our Black History Month events, we had a fantastic Saluting our sisters workshop delivered by Archives +, it researched Greater Manchester Pioneering Women of colour. The children and young people taking part learnt a lot and had great fun.</p> <p>We held an end of term Graduation Storytime session in July, over 20 families joined us for our final session and 10 children received a graduation certificate as they start school in September. The children dressed up in one of our Graduation gowns and caps. They all enjoyed stories, rhymes, crafts and the gifted books.</p> <p>Brooklands library staff have visited Button Lane primary school talking about the library and gifted the children with books</p>
Burnage	<p>In October the library celebrated its 10th Birthday as a Community run Library. We provided a full day of Childrens entertainment with two local artists Mandy &amp; Caroline providing fun art workshops, it was super busy all day with all having a great time.</p> <p>Library staff arranged afternoon tea with the Lord Mayor for the Volunteers to celebrate.</p>
Central Library	<p>Central Library is the hub of the city's 22 libraries and delivers an outstanding collection of cultural activities throughout the year. We hosted the fantastic Jill</p>

	<p>Furmanovsky exhibition which was a great success. We worked with multiple partners this year to deliver our programme including Manchester International Festival, Literature festival and were part of the piano trail for the Jazz festival.</p> <p>We have refreshed the Archives+ exhibition, turned the film pods into sound and vision pods for easier access to the content delivered within them from the Northwest Film Archive and Sound archives. We have installed a new set of digital screens to promote the activity that is happening within Central Library to our visitors.</p> <p>School visits have proven to remain incredibly popular, and over 110 school groups have visited this year.</p> <p>Story times have proven incredibly popular, and we have doubled the capacity by running four sessions over two days to keep up with demand. We also run monthly Sensory, Mandarin, French and Spanish story times.</p> <p>We have launched new activities this year which help with users' wellbeing, including the biweekly vinyl listening group and monthly crochet club. Both activities see a diverse audience coming together to share an activity and chat.</p>
Chorlton	<p>To celebrate World book day, author Mark Bradley gave a talk to a local school. Dom Berry performed his new show to 90 local school children as part of our Take 10 Day. Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeolo also showcased their brand-new book Speak Up! to local school children.</p> <p>As part of our Carbon Literacy action day program, we ran a Family recycled Christmas event, we made Christmas tree decorations and Christmas boxes from repurposed stuff, Biffa also made recycled Christmas cards, our Carbon literacy champion was also on hand to help educate people.</p> <p>Flapjack Press performed at the Edge, which was one of the highlights of the ever-popular Chorlton Book Festival.</p> <p>Some great authors have visited Chorlton Library this year for talks including at the Edge Theatre where we ran a family fund day as part of the Chorlton Pride celebrations, which involved three craft stalls making Rainbow mobiles, friendship bracelets and heart wands.</p> <p>Libraries staff visited six Primary schools to promote the Summer Reading Challenge, talking in assemblies telling the children all about how they can get involved in the challenge.</p>
Didsbury	<p>In May to celebrate Local History Month Archives+ ran a workshop in the library, it inspired people to start their own family research.</p> <p>The library helped to facilitate Didsbury Arts Festival including a first for Manchester of a Flight Simulator on the forecourt.</p> <p>The library took part in the Disbury Pride event, running a rainbow themed craft activity aimed at families and children.</p> <p>Library staff attended the Sustainability fair at the Parish Hall, running a recycled Christmas tree decoration craft session</p>
Fallowfield	<p>Library officers continue to train and work with volunteers to run the library offer. The volunteers get a great understanding and learn new skills. Over the years many volunteers have gone on to get paid library jobs.</p>
Forum	<p>Forum Library continues to be a creative spaces venue, putting on and celebrating large events such as International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palace. The events are gaining in popularity with a record number of just over 700 people attending the last Fun Palace.</p> <p>We have delivered sensory Storytimes for Ashgate Specialist primary school, the school has brought groups of children into the library, and we have also visited</p>

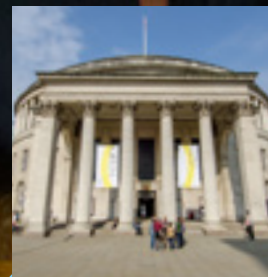
	<p>the school to provide the sessions. The school also comes to the library most weeks to read and choose books.</p> <p>School visit still prove to be very popular at the library, we have delivered introduction to the library visits and storytelling sessions.</p> <p>We were proud to be part of Wythenshawe games again this year, attending all three Fridays with a full library offer including crafts, storytelling and book gifting.</p> <p>The library continues to visit Village 135 and deliver the Reading Friends sessions, it's always a lovely afternoon doing crafts and talking about books.</p> <p>Planning is well underway to transform the upper floor of the library into a cultural and creative hub, using Arts Council funding.</p>
Gorton	<p>Strong community partnerships continue at Gorton Library with lots of community events and activities on offer to local residents. There has been a focus on school engagement since moving into Gorton Hub, promoting the beautiful space available to local children, their families. To encourage our local youngsters to read for pleasure, we have facilitated numerous author visits. We have also worked with one of the Making Manchester Fairer Kickstarter priority schools which included a 'pop up stall' at parents' evenings to promote library/Hub services to parents and children.</p> <p>The Bread and Butter Thing delivers sessions every Friday in the library meeting room with an average of 65 residents benefitting.</p> <p>We delivered HAF sessions during Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. Young people have enjoyed a variety of activities with artists, cultural &amp; STEM organisations. This allows young people to experience activities that may not always be available to them.</p> <p>The community rooms continue to be popular, particularly with organisations who are looking for venues where they can deliver sessions that are of societal benefit to the community, such as health and wellbeing; arts and crafts etc.</p> <p>We work in partnership working with other partners in the Hub and regularly contribute to atrium events.</p>
Hulme High Street	<p>The library continues to work well with our leisure partners on delivering events such as International Womens Day and other community activities. The library has a well-attended Storytime session for 0-5 year olds and over the past year GLL have set up a soft play session just before storytime.</p> <p>The over 50's coffee morning offers different activities every week such as talks from professionals on pensions, health, careers, volunteering as well as craft activities. The group has helped combat loneliness and isolation in the community.</p> <p>The Talk English session in partnership with (Manchester Adult Education service), continues to grow, helping our residents develop lifelong skills. As well as being of an educational benefit, the learners enjoy the session and benefit from the social aspect of being together.</p>
Longsight	<p>Longsight Library has recently undergone a refurbishment that has provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional 2 community meeting rooms</li> <li>• A new children's area, proving to be popular with families</li> <li>• New comfortable seating</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A drinks machine</li> </ul> <p>The Library continues to be a bustling community space. Event highlights this year have included International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces.</p> <p>The 4 meeting rooms provide a valuable space for local community groups to meet on a regular basis. The rooms are also available to organisations who are looking for venues where they can deliver sessions that are of societal benefit to the community. For example, Save the Children are currently working on a project to research and improve provision for families with children under 5 in the Longsight area. As part of this project, we have been able to increase the LEGO stock and provide LEGO gifts to local children. Several new local groups using the rooms include Maximus (a group dedicated to jobseeker refugee help), Bollyfit, Women’s Empowerment through the arts, Support for women suffering domestic abuse and LMCP with a range of health and mental health related support groups. We have recently partnered with Barclays Bank, who will be using our interview room to deliver some services that don’t involve cash, to the local community. As well as providing a service need to local residents, this has provided the library service with a source of income. When the ground floor meeting rooms are not in use, they are opened up for customers to use as a quieter study space and are in demand as Longsight is a popular library destination with the student population.</p>
Miles Platting	<p>This is a popular community library working in partnership with local housing provider Jigsaw which offers regular Family Fundays. Activities include weekly Children’s Art Clubs. There is a popular walking mums club every week that meets to walk along the canal, they then come to the library for tea &amp; coffee and Sure Start staff deliver a storytime and rhyme session for the children. There was a meet and greet Santa event at Xmas with a real reindeer! A Bike Library will be launching later in 2024 – bike maintenance is already happening. There are plans to offer some activities in the fabulous outside space this Summer, including planting and outdoor games.</p>
Moss Side Powerhouse	<p>The library has a community offer 11-2 Mon-Thu and Sat 12-5. This includes a regular adult reading group, our age-friendly coffee morning as well as community advice and guidance sessions.</p> <p>The young people's offer runs 3-7 Mon-Thu, including a well-attended homework club run by volunteers, a chess club, and a popular craft club/comic club.</p> <p>The library attracts lots of volunteers who help us deliver a wide range of services to children. We work closely with local schools and had over 2,500 children visit the library with their schools this year.</p>
New Moston	<p>The library runs weekly coffee mornings and Age Friendly hour with crafts and board games. There is also a monthly coffee with a copper event for local residents to pop in and speak to local PCSO’s about their concerns. We continue to strengthen connections with local schools and offer holiday activities for families which are always well attended.</p>
Newton Heath	<p>Newton Heath Library is a popular and well-loved local library in a verdant spot on the Rochdale Canal, close to the city centre and a haven for nature watchers where you can watch colourful canal boats and native wildlife float by. It is always vibrant and busy and is a real community hub providing a lifeline for local people. The two new meeting rooms, created in 2022 are heavily used by the community.</p>

	<p>Sessions include social groups, craft sessions, the popular weekly coffee mornings, Councillor Surgeries, NHS/MCC customer services consultations, Citizens Advice Bureau advice sessions and job interviews. The Bread and Butter Thing operate an extremely busy weekly service on Saturdays. Library staff have worked hard with local partners McrActive and Winning Hearts and Minds to reshape our teen offer and engage local young people with creative and positive activities including ping-pong, games, canoeing skills, karaoke and music. A table tennis tournament was very popular with all ages! The Women's Euros championship in July 2023 saw the library host the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to create a Manchester anthem and offer an orchestral taster session for all ages.</p>
North City Library	<p>North City Library is a Creative Space library which is co-located with partners The Manchester College. The Fun Palaces event had fun games about climate change delivered by MCC Climate Change Officer, we focused on recycling crafts (planting trees and wildflowers in a decorated pot made from a recycled plastic bottle and a bag to creatively decorate and take home using existing resources plus reuseable jigsaws and games in our other activities. Everything we did aimed for minimal impact on the environment – no glitter or new plastic in the craft decorations, paper or reuseable cups in the refreshments, recyclable plastic wrappings where necessary. As a local event, many families could walk or use the bus to get to the library rather than driving so transport was also a green aim. We had a singalong with the M9 Choir and Italian dance masters Matrafisc came back with a cool dance activity for families and children. We also displayed a LEGO Photo Exhibition and hosted a Challenge to see who could build the most imaginative Fun Palace from LEGO – with a prize for each of the winners.</p> <p>We launched our Summer Reading Challenge at Lily Lane Primary School with author James Campbell. Library staff delivered a Summer Reading Challenge assembly to help enthuse children with this year's Challenge "Ready, Set, Read!" and to invite them to our summer holiday activities. This school is one of our Make Manchester Fairer Children's and Education Kickstart priority schools. Library staff worked with partners GLL to offer a Summer Reading Challenge themed Treasure Hunt at North City Family Fitness Centre for children aged 5 – 10yrs and their families.</p>
Northenden	<p>Northenden Community Library has relocated to St. Wilfrids Church Hall, retaining the same amount of stock. Visitor numbers are on average slightly up from the previous location. Storytime and other activities continue at St. Wilfrids Church Hall.</p> <p>Some health and Children's books are now also located in Northenden Health Centre for people to borrow.</p>
Withington	<p>Withington Library ran a men's health event aimed at Caribbean and African men, and their family and friends. The event had some fabulous stalls offering and promoting free Health checks, social prescribing, health awareness, information on Prostate and Bowel cancer. We screened two amazing thought-provoking films, this really got people talking. People also got to eat some tasty Caribbean food, allowing them to enjoy, relax and share conversation.</p> <p>Holiday activity fund sessions take place in school holidays, with the young people got to enjoy activities such as Drama, football skills and clay modelling to mention a few, they also got lunch.</p> <p>A Withington customer gifted us a fantastic Lego model he had designed and built of the library, it is getting a lot of attention from customers and is very inspiring for the children that attend the busy Lego club.</p>

	<p>Library staff ran a library session with stories, crafts and library information at St Paul's stay and play sessions.</p> <p>The library was out and about again at Old Moat little Feast, the event had lots of activities for all ages, we ran a library stall and crafts.</p>
<p>HMP Manchester Prison Library</p>	<p>The past 12 months have brought a number of changes within the prison which have had a direct impact on the offered library services, including the introduction of the Reading Strategy for all prisons in England &amp; Wales. The library manager worked with the Learning Work &amp; Skills Lead and the Head of Education to create a local strategy ensuring that it meets the needs of the prison population.</p> <p>The library has worked with all areas of the prison to help them develop reading areas in the wings, workshops and programs departments, including securing a donation from Borderline Books of 400 books to get the individual collections started, creating promotional displays for the Shannon Trust Reading Program in all Reading Areas, training over 50 Shannon Trust mentors, provided collections from publishers such as Diffusion Books, Ransom and Barrington Stoke that ensure low level reading needs are met and are Dyslexia resources list with all Prisoner Information Desks workers so that they can share the library offer.</p> <p>The library has commissioned a series of workshops by Tony Sheppard for 2024. We have increased links with public libraries. All men being released into Greater Manchester area are now offered a public library card useable across the 10 Local Authorities,</p>
<p>Books To Go</p>	<p>We have delivered books and other resources to approximately 450 people with mobility difficulties this year.</p> <p>We attend outreach events, promoting the service, including Africa Day Windrush open day, Caribbean Carers group North, Caribbean Carers Group Central, Mental Health Support Group South Longsight Hub Festive event, and St Mary's hospital optical unit.</p> <p>Winter warmth bags have been delivered to customers.</p> <p>The service continues to be a lifeline for customers, with the delivery drivers often being the only people that they will speak to all day.</p>

# OUR VISION FOR Manchester Libraries 2023



The possibilities are endless  
[manchester.gov.uk/libraries](https://manchester.gov.uk/libraries)

# Manchester Libraries

the beating heart of our communities

Manchester Libraries and Archives Service deliver leisure, cultural, learning and information services through a network of neighbourhood libraries, community partnership libraries and the internationally renowned, world-class Central Library – one of the most visited public libraries in the country – HMP Manchester Prison library and Books to Go for housebound people.

People are at the heart of everything at Manchester Libraries. Each library helps to make its neighbourhood a vibrant place and serves the whole community, offering a warm welcome to all. Our high-quality buildings have received investment of several million pounds in recent years and are high-quality buildings that enable a fantastic service to be delivered.

We want everyone to get the most from our libraries. In recent months people have been facing a cost-of-living crisis that will last for months and possibly years to come. Libraries are helping Manchester residents more than ever. They provide welcoming spaces that improve people's lives by offering a free service for all in the community, as well as a warm welcome, support and resources. We have recently abolished fines for late returned books.

## There are so many reasons to use libraries, including:

- A vibrant, exciting and diverse events programme for all ages
- Book stock that promotes reading for pleasure and literacy
- High-quality Internet, Wi-Fi and printing at each library
- A skilled workforce, dedicated to offering an excellent service to customers.

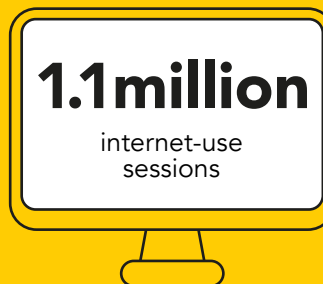
## Manchester Libraries in 2022



**2.2million**  
visits to libraries



**1.6million**  
books issued



**1.1million**  
internet-use  
sessions



**2million**  
social media views



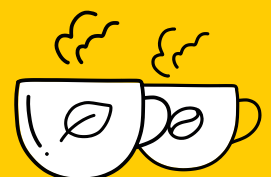
**772,000**  
e-books and  
audiobooks issued



**114,000**  
books gifted via  
Read Manchester



**143,000**  
event attendees



**20,000**  
free hot drinks with our  
warm spaces offer



*The library is a place of refuge to me – a world of knowledge, with the latest books to read and fantastic events.*

*Forum Library customer*



# Our priorities for the next five years

## Our Manchester, Our People

Our libraries will continue to focus on people, helping to make our neighbourhoods great places to live and Manchester a world-class city.

### We will:

- Be neighbourhood venues where local residents are welcome, can talk to people and be helped by skilled hospitable staff
- Provide a warm welcome to all, helping people to live side by side, and be Libraries of Sanctuary
- Be fully accessible, increase opening hours through Open+, and deliver books to people who are housebound
- Support people's skills and job prospects
- Increase engagement with young people
- Support local businesses and start-ups through the BIPC and other projects
- Implement the Green Libraries Manifesto, contributing to Zero Carbon
- Continue to invest in high-quality buildings – refurbishing libraries and outreach venues
- Support safer and stronger communities and thriving neighbourhoods
- Tackle poverty and social exclusion, combating disadvantage.

## Literacy and reading

Reading remains at the core of our library service. Literacy is key to life chances.

### We will:

- Run Read Manchester as a National Literacy Trust Hub
- Provide access to books for all ages, in all formats, including ebooks and books in different languages
- Ensure that libraries and archives stock represents our diverse communities
- Run Storytimes in every library
- Manage Bookstart
- Engage with schools, running class visits
- Run the Summer Reading Challenge
- Gift thousands of books to children
- Support book clubs
- Host book festivals, eg. Chorlton Book Festival, Manchester Literature Festival
- Work with the Shannon Trust to improve prisoners' literacy
- Work in partnership with Read Easy, improving residents' literacy.

## Digital inclusion

Our libraries provide free, high-quality access to Wi-Fi and the internet, and help residents with their skills and confidence.

### We will:

- Provide drop-in and structured learning and skills sessions
- Support residents with specific initiatives, eg. parking permits, voter ID
- Provide higher-level skills sessions through the Business and IP Centre
- Seek opportunities to provide free data and devices for residents
- Continue to provide and improve services and resources online that are available 24/7.



*The library stops time and noise, broadens my mind, and it makes me explore and discover new things. It excites my little boy and he feels happy. I love my library because it's always there.*

*Central Library customer*

## Culture and creativity

Our libraries are neighbourhood cultural and creative spaces where people can enjoy creative activities and events on their doorstep.

### We will:

- Programme vibrant, diverse and exciting events, accessible to all ages, including International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces.
- Encourage and foster creativity and participation for all ages
- Widen access and opportunities by partnering flagship organisations, such as Factory International, HOME, and Royal Exchange Theatre
- Run Holiday Activity Fund sessions
- Host exhibitions
- Bring archives and local history to neighbourhood libraries and Central Library
- Present Library Live, Central Library's cultural and creative programme.

## Health and wellbeing

Using our libraries makes people feel better.

### We will:

- Encourage people to use our safe, warm, free spaces, helping to reduce loneliness and make people feel better
- Be Age Friendly libraries
- Run social clubs, reading groups, coffee mornings
- Provide access to health information in the library and online and through signposting
- Provide and promote health books and books that improve wellbeing
- Host organisations that support people's health
- Increase the number of volunteers
- Be a trusted ear to residents
- Increase people's pride in their local area through archives and local history.

*My library means a lot to me and my son. It increases our knowledge and widens our imagination, takes us to places we've never been, and allows us to experience things we may never do in everyday life. It's imperative that every area and every person has access to a library.*

*Newton Heath Library  
customer*





“Manchester Libraries are extremely popular, well-used and well-loved, and we take pride in helping to make people’s lives better. We will continue to improve our services in the future, including our online resources.”

Councillor John Hacking – Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure, and  
Councillor Adele Douglas – Deputy Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure

If you have any questions about this vision, or any of its contents, or want to make suggestions or comments on how we can improve further, email [libraries@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:libraries@manchester.gov.uk)

## Appendix 4: Manchester Libraries Vision 2023-28 Progress document

This document shows the progress with actions listed in the Libraries Vision document since Feb 2023

### 1. Our Manchester, Our People

Our libraries will continue to focus on people, helping to make our neighbourhoods great places to live and Manchester a world-class city. We will

No.	Action	Progress
1.1	Be neighbourhood venues where local residents are welcome, can talk to people and be helped by skilled hospitable staff	Support to use computers, free Internet and Wi-Fi, a wide range of books to borrow, place to relax and meet people, offering a wide range of events for all ages. Somewhere to study and get help with homework.
1.2	Provide a warm welcome to all, helping people to live side by side, and be Libraries of Sanctuary	Warm Spaces, including free hot drinks, delivered from Oct 23-Feb 24. Libraries of Sanctuary reassessment to take place in 2025
1.3	Be fully accessible, increase opening hours through Open+, and deliver books to people who are housebound	Opening hours increased by 11 hours per week by introducing Open+ at Longsight Library. 450 residents with mobility difficulties currently receive library books through the Books To Go service
1.4	Support people's skills and job prospects	Libraries are key element of City of Learning initiative – offering community venues to partner organisations and promoting online learning opportunities
1.5	Increase engagement with young people	Youth Friendly Libraries - new standards currently being developed. Training received by libraries staff from the Youth, Play and Participation team
1.6	Support local businesses and start-ups through the BIPC and other projects	Manage the Greater Manchester Build a Business project, including delivery in Manchester. Enterprise Hub opened in January 2024 in the ground floor of Town Hall Extension
1.7	Implement the Green Libraries Manifesto, contributing to Zero Carbon	Signed up to manifesto. <a href="#">Green Libraries week</a> events delivered in October 2024. 'Green' is embedded into the delivery of library services. Increasing number of sessions for children delivered around 'green' themes. The Roundview activity piloted at Central Library in June 23
1.8	Continue to invest in high-quality buildings refurbishing libraries and outreach venues	New libraries and libraries refurbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abraham Moss Library &amp; Leisure Centre opened on 12/08/2023</li> <li>• Central Library refresh underway including IT, furniture, signage, archives storage and AV equipment</li> <li>• Northenden Library opened in St Wilfrid's Church Hall in January 2024</li> <li>• Chorlton Library will be transformed in 2024-25</li> </ul>
1.9	Support safer and stronger communities and thriving neighbourhoods	Over 5000 meeting room bookings in libraries across the city. The use of these rooms provides community groups with a venue in the heart of communities and residents receive a range of services and participate in a huge variety of groups and activities.

1.10	Tackle poverty and social exclusion, combating disadvantage	19 of our libraries are now food collection points, for their local foodbank. The Bread & Butter Thing operate from 4 libraries. Initiative launched to combat period poverty at all libraries, using public health funding Bookgifting via foodbanks
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## 2. Literacy and Reading

Reading remains at the core of our library service. Literacy is key to life chances. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
2.1	Run Read Manchester as a National Literacy Trust Hub	See Appendix 5 for the highlights of the Read Manchester programme
2.2	Provide access to books for all ages, in all formats, including ebooks and books in different languages	Total amount of items borrowed in 2023 is 1.48 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 228k Adult fiction books</li> <li>• 173k Adult non-fiction books</li> <li>• 412k Children's books</li> <li>• 142k Ebooks</li> <li>• 214k Eaudio books</li> <li>• 300k Emagazines &amp; newspapers</li> </ul>
2.3	Ensure that libraries and archives stock represents our diverse communities	See myself in books children's collections rolled out in libraries; neurodiverse collection being prepared. More diverse archives collections being collected – for example the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People archive.
2.4	Run Storytimes in every library	Well attended storytimes are run at every library.
2.5	Manage Bookstart	Over 10,000 packs are delivered to babies and 3-4 year olds – value of £130,000
2.6	Engage with schools, running class visits	70,000 attendees of class visits in 2023 – a combination of face to face and virtual libraries. 68% of schools have class visits with libraries 53,000 children receive the transition read book
2.7	Run the Summer Reading Challenge	Over 35,000 books were read by children who joined the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge 42 schools were part of the schools engagement pilot in 2023. In 2024 the school pilot will include all 10 Making Manchester Fairer early years kickstarter schools
2.8	Gift thousands of books to children	138,000 books and magazines gifted to Manchester residents and community groups
2.9	Support book clubs	We currently support 30 book groups across the city, most of which take place in non-library venues
2.10	Host regular author events, book festivals, e.g. Chorlton Book Festival, Manchester Literature Festival	153k attendees of events in 2023. Major book festivals supported, including for the first time the Black British Book Festival in September 2023
2.11	Work with the Shannon Trust to improve prisoners' literacy	The library in HMP Manchester has worked with all areas of the prison to help them develop reading areas in the wings, and host workshops. Borderline Books has donated 400 books to get the individual collections started, creating promotional displays for the Shannon Trust Reading Program in all Reading Areas. Over 50 Shannon Trust mentors have been trained. The library has provided collections from publishers to ensure low level reading needs are met and are dyslexia friendly
2.12	Work in partnership with Read Easy, improving residents' literacy	Read Easy promoted at all libraries and sessions run at Forum Library and Withington Library

### 3. Digital inclusion

Our libraries provide free, high-quality access to Wi-Fi and the internet, and help residents with their skills and confidence. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
3.1	Provide drop-in and structured learning and skills sessions	Each library has at least one session per week where extra support is given. AbilityNet sessions for over 50s launched in 5 libraries
3.2	Support residents with specific initiatives, eg. parking permits, voter ID	Library staff support residents online – both in libraries and telephone support via the digital inclusion team. Internet computers in all libraries being replaced in 2024 to ensure high quality Internet access continues to be offered
3.3	Provide higher-level skills sessions through the Business and IP Centre	Start-up businesses supported in the BIPC and through the new Generator space. More details provided in Appendix 6
3.4	Seek opportunities to provide free data and devices for residents	Over 4000 free data Sims and 50 free devices provided to residents. 30 devices provided to community organisations to lend to residents
3.5	Continue to provide & improve services & resources online that are available 24/7	E-Press is launched enabling emagazines and newspapers to be available alongside ebooks and eaudio books

### 4. Culture and creativity

Our libraries are neighbourhood cultural and creative spaces where people can enjoy creative activities and events on their doorstep. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
4.1	Programme vibrant, diverse and exciting events, accessible to all ages, including International Mother Language Day, Festival of Libraries and Fun Palaces	All the events mentioned held with high levels of attendance. In total 153,000 people attending over 8,000 creative opportunities.
4.2	Encourage and foster creativity and participation for all ages	A full, regular programme of creativity took place across libraries providing social, fun and learning activities. Programming is delivered by library staff, community volunteer groups and cultural organisations. It has included: early years Storytimes, school holiday activity, exhibitions, discussions and talks, painting clubs for adults, knitting, crochet and other craft clubs aimed at older residents.
4.3	Widen access and opportunities by partnering flagship organisations, such as Factory International, HOME, and Royal Exchange Theatre	Example this year have included: Beswick Library is a partner in the Royal Exchange's 4-year Local Exchange programme for Beswick, Ancoats and Clayton. The library has hosted local Culture Ambassador meetings, a youth company session, Grand Day Out group, attendance with a subsidised ticket for a mainhouse matinee and supported the success of theatre's mobile auditorium – the Den with a 9-day programme of performance, events and activities. Central Library was a venue for Factory International's The Welcome Roadshow, introducing residents to Aviva Studios through creative activity and the Manchester International Festival event The Find by Ryan Gander.

4.4	Run Holiday Activity Fund sessions	Well-attended HAF sessions offering a range of activities and a packed lunch were held in 6 libraries during Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.
4.5	Host exhibitions	Highlights from Central Library programme include: Jill Furmanovsky 'Photographing the Invisible' Exhibition, 50 years of rock photography. Curry Mile – A changing neighbourhood "You can see me, but I don't exist" A photography exhibition about refugees.  Neighbourhood libraries have hosted numerous exhibitions in the last year, including the gas holder exhibition at Beswick Library
4.6	Bring archives and local history to neighbourhood libraries and Central Library	Several libraries host interactive touch screen kiosks that enable residents to access videos and sound recordings around their local area. Libraries with these so far are Gorton Library and North City Library. Events were held in several libraries for Local and Communities History Month in May 2023.
4.7	Present Library Live, Central Library's cultural and creative programme	An extensive, vibrant diverse programme has taken place, listed in more detail in appendix 6. A highlight this year was the Black British Book Festival which was hosted at Central Library for the first time in September 2023.

## 5. Health and wellbeing

Using our libraries makes people feel better. We will:

No.	Action	Progress
5.1	Encourage people to use our safe, warm, free spaces, helping to reduce loneliness and make people feel better	Libraries are a place to relax and meet people, offering a wide range of events for all ages. All Libraries registered as warm spaces, offering free hot drinks from October 2023 – Feb 2024.
5.2	Be Age Friendly libraries	Manchester Libraries are Age Friendly Libraries, offering a variety of activities and social groups. All libraries also offer an Age Friendly Hour drop -in session once a week.
5.3	Run social clubs, reading groups, coffee mornings	Wide variety of clubs for all ages held in libraries across the city, including age-friendly sessions in each library
5.4	Provide access to health information in the library and online and through signposting	Health information provided, both in the library and via the Manchester City Council website. Increasing number of partnerships developed, and sessions delivered and promoted in libraries
5.5	Provide and promote health books and books that improve wellbeing	Health books and wellbeing books promoted in libraries, including the Reading Well collections. Health book collection established in Northenden Health Centre.
5.6	Host organisations that support people's health	Heart valve sessions run in libraries in September 2023. 350 people over 50 years old had heart checks.
5.7	Increase the number of volunteers	Volunteers provided 12,000 hours of volunteering over the last 12 months. This is a 20% increase from the previous year. It is a key priority to improve this further over the next year
5.8	Be a trusted ear to residents	All libraries act as community hub with staff and volunteers ensuring a warm welcome in libraries

5.9	Increase people's pride in their local area through archives and local history	An increasing number of archives+ sessions and resources held in libraries across the city, including during Local and Communities History Month 2023. This will be increased in the next 12 months, including engagement with the Assheton Collection. BFI Replay promoted in libraries across the city.
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## **Libraries engagement with children, young people and schools, and Read Manchester**

Libraries work with Read Manchester to promote reading for pleasure and the outcomes of literacy, wellbeing, and life skills, which lead to improved health, educational attainment and jobs. The library offer spans all age groups from baby storytimes and rhyme and an active partnership in Baby Week, right through to young people in our high schools.

The core offer includes the Bookstart offer, weekly storytimes at each library, class visits, author visits and national campaigns including the Summer Reading Challenge, World Book Day, Empathy Day and National Storytelling Week. Local and regional events including Chorlton Book Festival and the Festival of Libraries also include programming for children and families.

The Summer Reading Challenge supports 4-11 year olds to continue reading over the summer holidays and avoid the literacy slide that can occur during the break from school. Libraries again offered an integrated model of working, with 42 primary schools signing up their pupils directly to the challenge and receiving materials in school to support this. Children from all other schools were able to join via their local libraries, as part of a universal offer. Over 35,000 books were read by all the children taking part.



Manchester Libraries and BookTrust continue to gift book packs to over 10,000 babies and 3-4 year olds every year to encourage family reading and an early and enduring love of books. The baby pack goes to every baby in the city via the Registrars, whilst the Toddler and Preschooler are targeted via the Early Years partners.

Engagement with schools has continued to grow. During the academic year September 2022 to July 2023, 143 schools engaged with libraries (68% of total schools). Almost 70,000 children attended class visits (in-person and virtual) in the academic year 2022/23. Read Manchester's book gifting programme supported schools and pupils by giving them over 53,000 brand new books as part of their transition read and other book gifting programmes.

Six of our libraries were venues for the Holiday Activities and Food programme in Easter, Summer and December. Sessions involved lunch and activities such as arts and

crafts, reading, music and other positive, engaging activities, and were aimed at ages 11-16. Each holiday young people participated in sessions at Forum, Miles Platting, Withington, Central Library, Gorton and Newton Heath. These aimed to keep young people fed and entertained over holiday periods when they were out of school, and to engage them with libraries.

Working with the Youth, Play and Participation team, training has been rolled out for library staff across the city in working with and engaging young people. Youth-friendly library standards are being created and will include consultation with young people.

## Read Manchester

For the last seven years Libraries and Education have worked together to support literacy and reading for pleasure through the Read Manchester campaign, a partnership with the National Literacy Trust. This helps us work with all age groups and focus certain campaigns on specific areas to provide maximum impact. In this way we can improve literacy levels across different ages and communities in Manchester.



Ensuring equal access to books through our **bookgifting campaign** has been a central aspect of this offer. These have been donated by publishers and have been given to residents via community groups, foodbanks, youth groups, churches and refugee groups. As far as possible, choice of books is encouraged so that recipients can choose books that appeal to them; owning a book has been shown to be important in encouraging enjoyment of reading.

Some of the feedback from our recent Christmas bookgifting campaign included the following:

From a parent: *"This is my child's first book. I can't believe she can take this home. I am so happy, thank you!"*

Another organisation said: *"It makes a huge difference to our vulnerable families."*

And from Message Community Grocery: *"Children loved recognising familiar characters, people were overwhelmed with the fact that they were gifted and the choice they had. It has been such a blessing to a community finding it tough to make ends meet. It was great to see pre-teens walking proudly out of the store with a book under their arm."*

Promoting inclusive and diverse books is the driver behind Read Manchester's **See Myself in Books** campaign. These mini libraries of 25 books by authors of colour feature central characters from ethnically diverse backgrounds which reflect the population of Manchester. Forty schools have benefitted from these collections, with a further 20 collections to be gifted in 2024. The collections are accompanied by our programme of author and illustrator school visits. A further set of books have been put together to reflect neurodiverse characters and will be promoted over the coming months. For both projects, a resource for teachers has also been prepared.

The 4<sup>th</sup> year of our year 6 Transition Read again saw all year 6 pupils (over 7,000) receive a copy of *The Lion Above the Door*, to keep along with teaching resources to support the move to high school. Pupils in SEND schools also received a copy of Sophy Henn's book *'Super Duper You.'* In 2023 a new transition read was launched for early years with children moving up from nurseries and private settings to reception receiving a copy of Dr Ranj's book *'A Superpower like Mine.'* Every 4-year-old received a copy of the book through Making Manchester Fairer funding. The celebration event was held at Moss Side Powerhouse.



Libraries and Read Manchester were the national partner for Empathy Lab UK's live Empathy Day event. Held at the National Cycling Centre velodrome. Over 500 pupils were heard top children's authors speak about their books and writing, as well as talk to the children about the empathy message and how children can find their own empathy superpowers. Each child received a book. Schools attending were supported with empathy-themed books to share back at school.



Partnering with Transport for Greater Manchester, World Book Day was also a highlight of the year and demonstrates the reach and impact of Read Manchester. World Book Day UK supported the partnership by bringing two top children's authors to the city to meet local school children. Over 7,000 books were placed on tram seats across the network, and children could exchange their book tokens for a World Book Day book in all libraries, instead of having to go to a bookshop or supermarket.



## Appendix 6: Libraries supporting enterprise.

### Business & IP Centre (BIPC) GM

The BIPC in Central Library goes from strength to strength. In 2022-23:

- Delivered over 600 activities including one to one support, workshops, networking events, and webinars.
- Over 5,000 attendees came to events – more than twice our annual target and the most attended BIPC outside London.

The recent report published by the British Library, [Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0](#) reveals the national impact the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Network has had over a three year period from April 2020 to March 2023. The report shows how the BIPC GM has continued to support entrepreneurship and economic recovery at a local level, contributing to a payback of £6.63 for every £1 of public money spent across the BIPC Network.

Between April 2020 and March 2023, the BIPC GM:

- Helped to create 2,170 new businesses and 357 additional jobs
- Generated £17,900,000 Gross Value Added (GVA)
- Supported a range of entrepreneurs, of which:
  - 62% were women
  - 42% identified themselves as from a minority ethnic community
  - 15% were disabled
  - 24% were aged 35 and under
  - 36% were from the most deprived areas

In addition:

- 96% of BIPC supported businesses are still trading after their third year (national average 40%).
- 65% of attendees have only used BIPC services for business support.

At a national level the BIPC GM made a significant contribution to the overall targets of the national network, including the addition of some of our case studies in national marketing campaigns.

The launch of the Democratising Entrepreneurship 2.0 was held at the House of Lords in July 2023, where Jonathan Ebbs, manager of Libraries' business services spoke about our success.

The success of the BIPC network also featured in the recent Public Libraries Review conducted by Baroness Sanderson – included as Appendix 13.



## Build A Business in GM Libraries

Launched in autumn 2021, this ERDF part-funded programme of business support supported over 1,000 individuals across 8 GM authorities by the end of June 2023. As a result of its success, the project was awarded UK Shared Prosperity Funding and continued seamlessly from July 2023 with funding until March 2025. In addition the service has expanded to all 10 GM authorities with Rochdale and Wigan joining.

### Highlights from the Summative Assessment:

- Very successful engaging with individuals from very diverse/underrepresented backgrounds, including female entrepreneurs, people from BAME groups and refugees. In many cases, the SME Champions have adapted to meet the needs of particular groups, e.g. refugees.

- Access to BIPC resources and expertise has been of great value to beneficiaries in developing and exploring their business proposals.
- Pre-starts and early-stage businesses lack funding and the project has provided access to resources such as databases and other BIPC resources at no cost to the participant.
- Successfully brought beneficiaries together, for example through workshops and networking events. Knowledge and experience to be shared and business connections to be developed. It has also enabled a business community to be developed.
- Successful in facilitating business creation and growth.
- Delivered in supportive and relaxed environments which has made participants feel at ease.
- The team working on the project, both centrally and across the participating local authorities, have been fully committed to delivering a successful project for the benefit of participants.
- Many beneficiaries have continued to engage following completion of the support programme by speaking at events and passing their knowledge to other participants.
- Enabled the eight local authorities and their respective Champions to work together and to learn from each other's experiences.
- Enabled the SME Champions to develop lasting relationships with participants by ensuring that participants have a single point of contact on the project.
- Raised the profile of business support delivery through libraries with a number of key agencies. This has given this approach to business support more credibility.
- The Enterprise Officers played a significant role in improving the confidence of participants with regard to developing their business ideas.

Feedback from clients:

"Best training I've ever been on"

"I didn't realise IP was so important to my new business"

"It was so good, can't believe this is free "

"Interested to learn more about IP and how it may affect my business ideas"

"Session was brilliant!! More value than I expected."

"Extremely insightful and useful - great for networking too"

"Passionate, confident and totally involved our interest."

"Brilliant content, food for thought, very approachable trainers."

"Pitched at the right level & very engaging - really good"

## Build A Business in GM Libraries

Starting up?  
Growing a business?  
Got a brilliant idea?

From **artisan baker** to  
**zumba instructor**...  
our business support  
programme can help  
you get the skills,  
information & know-how  
to succeed.



Find out more at:  
[www.buildabusinessgm.org](http://www.buildabusinessgm.org)



### Enterprise Hubs:

The Enterprise Hubs are funded through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Funding (£1.8m) with four centres in the City to redevelop unused space to support local entrepreneurs to develop and grow their business.

- Town Hall Extension - The Generator, the flagship space
- Royal Mills in Ancoats offering meeting and networking spaces
- The Yard in Cheetham Hill will be a sustainable fashion/atelier hub
- 422 on Stockport Road Longsight provides local space for small businesses and local start ups in a community setting.

The Generator offers:

- Space to develop the business
- One to one business information support from the onsite Enterprise Officer
- Programme of events and workshops
- Networking and peer support opportunities
- Community building with members and users

The Enterprise Officer is available in the Generator for 1-2-1 support. These support sessions help identify the individual guidance, development and resource needs of the entrepreneur and help them improve their chances of business success by being

referred to relevant support and resources within the programme, including the resources available at BIPC Manchester.

The Generator is aimed at early stage business founders looking to make connections, collaborate and learn from each other - and meets these needs at a low entry cost for members who can benefit from the wrap around business support and be incubated to move into the wealth of mainstream facilities the City offers. It is also an ideal space for freelancers and hybrid/remote workers who want to take a break from working from home or coffee shops.

The team are working hard on a second Generator Space based in Ancoats which will further strengthen business support in the heart of the city.





## **Appendix 7: Cultural and Creative programme**

Manchester Libraries are an important part of the city's cultural and creative infrastructure, often providing access to resident's first cultural experience. Libraries are the most visited cultural venue in the city. The Central Library cultural programme, Library Live, is complemented by activities across all libraries, including three libraries badged as Creative Spaces – North City, Longsight and Wythenshawe Forum. The cultural and creative programme has been developed through several successful Arts Council England funding grants, establishing strong relationships with the city's cultural organisations and groups and supporting library staff's skills and confidence in programming creative events.

Alongside the busy events calendar delivered by library staff, such as cultural festival days, Sunday Fundays, school holiday crafting, Holiday Activity Fund sessions, weekly storytimes, author events, age friendly groups etc, the cultural programme provides access to other high quality creative experiences and opportunities on residents' doorsteps, as well as an introduction to the citywide offer. The cultural programme is delivered in partnership with the city's cultural organisations and artists, supported and informed by library staff.

Some examples of this activity include:

Beswick Library is continuing their four-year partnership of community engagement with the Royal Exchange Theatre which so far has included staff and customers actively participating in their Ambassador programme, Chatty Cafe, Young Ambassadors and Elders group. In August 2023 staff and volunteers from Royal Exchange Theatre produced the very successful East Manchester Community Festival at the Den, their pop-up theatre, which was co-hosted by Beswick Library and neighbouring East Manchester Academy. The programme continues with GM-wide Ambassador get-togethers, social events, free theatre seats for community participants and Young Company workshops.

The Force of Nature project, facilitated by Community Arts Northwest, supported Manchester-based women musicians Sarah Yaseen, Emmanuela Yogolelo and Meduulla to create music around the themes of climate change and climate justice in the Global South. First performed at Festival Square for Manchester International Festival 2023, the performance is now touring to North City Library and Longsight Library accompanied by a series of workshops engaging communities in creative climate conversations, song writing, singing and music making in each library.

Manchester Histories has established a hub in Manchester Central Library, it is a welcoming space that has a focus on wellbeing and highlights lesser-known histories and heritage through exhibitions, performances, installations, workshops, and events. The Hub also promotes the HiDDEN Network, a group of smaller historic buildings, museums, and libraries with rare collections and archives such as the Working-Class Movement Library, Victoria Baths, the Transport Museum and the Jewish Museum.

The library service has secured a grant of approximately £200k from the Arts Council's Libraries Improvement Fund (round 2) programme. The investment will contribute to a transformation of the first floor of the library in 2024, to create a flexible community creative and social space. It will be equipped for small scale live performances and screen presentations, as well creative, digital and music activity and engagement. The space will be a resource for young people as well as the wider community. The library is engaging with colleagues delivering the Cultural Hub planned for Wythenshawe Town Centre as part of the Levelling Up Round 2 initiative to ensure complimentary.

### **Highlights of the cultural programme: Feb 23 – Feb 24.**

#### **Jill Furmanovsky 'Photographing the Invisible' Exhibition, 50 years of rock photography.**

For the last 50 years, Jill Furmanovsky has been photographing music's greatest icons. In March 2023 Jill opened her retrospective exhibition, guest curated by Noel Gallagher, 'Photographing the Invisible' at Manchester Central Library displaying some of her most famous works and hidden gems from her extensive archive.

#### **Manchester City of Literature's Festival of Libraries.**

This celebration of Greater Manchester's 133 libraries featured a vibrant programme for all ages that highlights the library network's full offer, across wellbeing, culture and creativity, digital and information, and, of course, reading. Events were held in most of Manchester's Libraries including family fun days at Central Library, North City, Longsight and Wythenshawe Forum. The festival featured the 'Look for a book' initiative which engaged people with reading in non-library venues.

#### **Manchester Celebrates World Book Day 2023**

Thousands of free books were given away on Manchester's trams to celebrate World Book Day in March 2023. Commuters across the Manchester Metrolink network were in for a treat as the books went out to help promote a love of reading amongst children and their families.

#### **Empathy Day 2023**

550 children from across the city were invited to the National Cycling Centre (Velodrome) to be part of our exclusive author event celebrating Empathy Day. Manchester Libraries and Read Manchester hosted the live schools event with Empathy Lab, who brought top children's authors Rob Biddulph, Sophy Henn and Rashmi Sirdeshpande to the Velodrome, hosted by poet Paul Jenkins.

#### **Black British Book Festival**

Manchester was one of cities taking centre stage in a summer tour to celebrate the Black British Book Festival. The festival is Europe's largest celebration of black literature with storytelling, workshops. Central Library hosted the festival on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September with talks from key black authors including Jackie Kay, Kehinde Andrews, Ore Agbaje-Williams and Lola Jaye.

### **Chorlton Book Festival**

Chorlton Library was preparing for an exciting refurbishment, so events were popping up all over town in 2023 bringing the folk of Chorlton a smaller but perfectly formed festival for 2023! Highlights included creative writing workshops, fantasy writers, diaries of a football fan, local history walks and spoken word performance night.

### **Brushstrokes of Bridgerton**

A special evening discussing the TV show, colour-blind casting, changing the narrative and discovering more about the panels experience within the world of theatre, TV and film. Panel members included Keisha Thompson, Contact Theatre, Kevin Dalton-Johnson, International artist and curator, Cllr Prof Erinma Bell MBE DL, Peace Campaigner and Carol-Ann Whitehead, Ubuntu Festival Director.

### **International Mother Language Day**

Every February we celebrate UNESCO's International Mother Language Day (IMLD) with our partners Manchester City of Literature. It is a day to champion language diversity and its connection to cultural and traditional heritage. During half term in 2023 libraries across Manchester held special events including dancing, food, storytelling sessions.

### **Central Library Author Events**

We work with local and national publishers and writers to programme our own diverse range of literary events. High profile authors we welcomed to Central Library include bestselling thriller writer Harlan Coben, Booker Prize winning author Douglas Stuart, queer fantasy fan favourite TJ Klune, Succession creator Jesse Armstrong and much-loved romance writer Tessa Bailey.

### **Manchester Literature Festival**

Once again, Central Library was the lead venue for the festival. Authors appearing in 2023 included Natalie Haynes, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Kate Mosse, Sebastian Barry, Sheena Patel, Simon Armitage, DJ Annie Macmanus, MP Lisa Nandy, musician Thurston Moore and comedian Doon Mackichan.

### **Fun Palaces**

Fun Palace events were held at four libraries across the city on Saturday 7 October for this national celebration of sharing passions and skills. Almost 2,000 people attended these hugely popular family fun days packed with creative activities.

### **South Asian Heritage Month**

This year's theme was 'Stories to Tell'. Manchester Libraries planned a range of events, including Chabba making workshops, Yoga classes, marionette puppet workshops and a new exhibition on the history of the Curry Mile.

### **Re:Sound**

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver the Re:Sound project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music at Central Library.

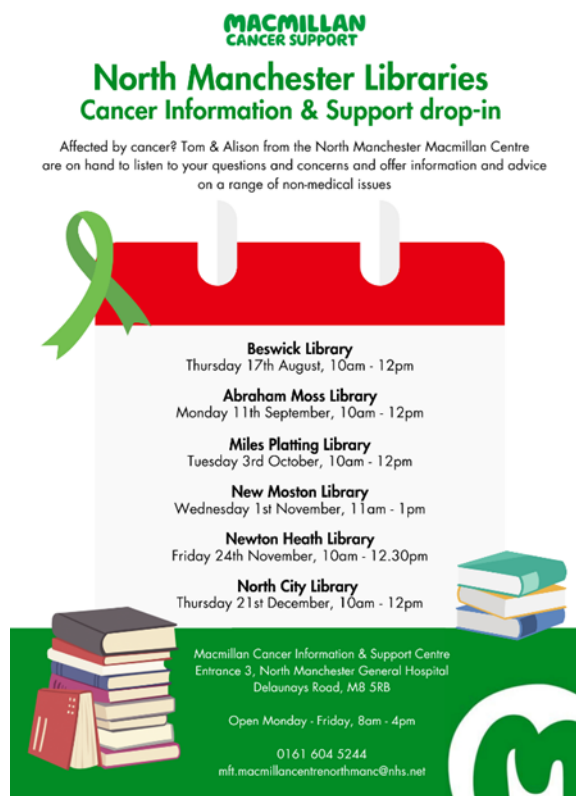
## Appendix 8: Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Libraries offer a wide range of health and well-being activities that have a primary effect on improving people's health and also have a broader impact on well-being for the individual and the wider community.

Libraries are also key for residents receiving accurate health information, through digital access, health information and books on prescription and reading well collections. As community venues, libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions.

### Direct provision of health promotion and support services

Libraries offer a range of health activities such as Be Well sessions, diabetic workshops, Staying Well this Winter events, armchair exercise sessions, COVID and flu vaccination sessions, blood pressure checks, dementia carer cafes and Macmillan advice sessions. The Macmillan sessions are offered across North Area libraries and are tied in with our age friendly coffee morning drop-ins.



**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

**North Manchester Libraries  
Cancer Information & Support drop-in**

Affected by cancer? Tom & Alison from the North Manchester Macmillan Centre are on hand to listen to your questions and concerns and offer information and advice on a range of non-medical issues

**Beswick Library**  
Thursday 17th August, 10am - 12pm

**Abraham Moss Library**  
Monday 11th September, 10am - 12pm

**Miles Platting Library**  
Tuesday 3rd October, 10am - 12pm

**New Moston Library**  
Wednesday 1st November, 11am - 1pm

**Newton Heath Library**  
Friday 24th November, 10am - 12.30pm

**North City Library**  
Thursday 21st December, 10am - 12pm

Macmillan Cancer Information & Support Centre  
Entrance 3, North Manchester General Hospital  
Delaunays Road, M8 5RB

Open Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm

0161 604 5244  
mft.macmillancentrenorthmanc@nhs.net

In September 2023, we teamed up with Heart Valve Voice to offer free heart checks at nine libraries across the city. As its primarily people over 50 who are affected by heart valve failure, we aligned the checks to our Age Friendly hour at most locations. Across nine libraries, the medics listened to 341 hearts, with 56 people found to have a previously undetected cardiac condition. Those people were given a letter to take to their GP to get further checks and advice and were followed up by the Heart Valve Voice team. We will explore other similar offers by health providers as this has demonstrated the value of having preventative health care checks in libraries as we are a neutral community-based

location.

### Social isolation, loneliness and mental health support

Loneliness and social isolation are now recognised as having significant impacts on people's physical, as well as mental health. The recent Public Library User Survey showed that 80% of customers who feel lonely regularly, feel less lonely because of using the library. People of all ages feel lonely but can feel as a sense of belonging in libraries – this is the case for many young people. For older people, loneliness and

social isolation can be chronic issues - according to Age UK, more than a million older people go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. Being socially isolated is a key risk factor for older people in terms of dementia and other mental health conditions, and libraries can offer safe spaces for older people to meet others, and either engage in activities, or just have a chat and a natter. We have an Age Friendly hour and an Age Friendly space at all libraries to provide a friendly accessible space, and social activities for older people. Keeping the brain active in later years is known to reduce the risk of developing dementia, and reading can help prevent the onset of dementia by 35%. For people who are unable to physically access their neighbourhood library, the Books to Go service provides reading and listening resources direct to people's homes, with the visits of our staff also providing a small respite from loneliness and social isolation. For people who are digitally literate, our on-line services also provide 24 hour access to bibliotherapy books and music resources.

### **Making Manchester Fairer**

Libraries play a key role in the Making Manchester Fairer programme to reduce health inequalities in the city. As free, welcoming, non-judgemental spaces, libraries are recognised as community venues that are crucial to supporting the aims of this programme. Libraries play a key role in all the Making Manchester Fairer kickstarter projects – particularly the early years kickstarter. Libraries are crucial to the Making Manchester Fairer Anti-Poverty Strategy.

### **Warm spaces**

Throughout the winters of 2022/23 and 2023/24, all libraries across the city have acted as warm spaces, providing somewhere warm and a free brew for people who may be struggling with the cost of heating at home. This benefits health by helping keep people warm and socially active.

### **Package for Val**

We know that women and girls in our communities are facing period poverty. According to a representative survey of 1,000 girls and young women aged 14-21 by Plan International UK, in the UK, 1 in 10 girls can't afford to buy menstrual products, while 1 in 7 have struggled to afford them. Manchester Central Library has been trialling #APackageForVal campaign for the last year, which supplies anyone that asks with 2 sanitary towels in a discrete paper bag, with no questions asked. Using £3500 of Public Health funding we have rolled out Package for Val across 18 of our neighbourhood and community libraries in early 2024.

### **Domestic abuse training**

We have worked with the Domestic Abuse Team to develop bespoke training for library staff to be delivered in 2024 on how to best assist people fleeing domestic abuse who ask for help.

## Manchester Libraries – Becoming Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries are absolutely committed to making sure that we provide services that meet the needs and aspirations of our older customers. Alongside other local facilities and services, libraries are seen as an important and crucial feature of an Age Friendly neighbourhood. In partnership with Age Friendly Manchester we agreed and adopted a set of Age Friendly standards - attached below - which set out how we ensure that our services and buildings are Age Friendly. We were audited by older people against these standards and are proud that all Manchester Libraries have been designated as Age Friendly since June 2022



### Age Friendly Hour and Age Friendly Spaces



Since we re-opened after the pandemic, we have been offering an Age Friendly Hour at all our libraries offering social activities and a brew. In most places, we've timed this to be directly before or after our toddler storytimes, to enable inter-generational crossover - watching the children singing and enjoying their storytime can give a positive boost to older people who may be feeling a bit lonely. We also know how important it is for people to stay connected so in most libraries, we have created vibrant Age Friendly areas with new seating and refreshment trolleys, offering older people a safe, enjoyable and positive experience when they visit, with comfortable places to sit and enjoy the company of others.

### Age Friendly Notice Boards

We know how important it is for people to have easy access to information in different formats, so in addition to our online information we have made sure we have an Age Friendly noticeboard on display in all libraries. Our noticeboards are kept up to date, are easy to see and read, and ensure that we are promoting activities and information across the community. They are also portable so that they can be on prominent display in coffee mornings or Grand Day Out sessions. During lockdown, libraries were used by partners as a means to cascade vital information regarding COVID and Health matters to everyone in the local community.

### Age Friendly Audits

As part of the age friendly designation process, library staff conducted a detailed self-assessment for each of our libraries, covering the physical space as well as our service offer. These assessments highlighted some areas for change around

seating, signage and activities offered which we acted on. This was followed up by Customer Service audits, carried out by older people who engaged with other older service users, listened to their feedback and produced an action plan specific to each library.

From June 2022 all libraries in Manchester were given 'Age Friendly Libraries' status and now proudly display the new Manchester Age Friendly Library logo, which was specially designed for us, and reflects our commitment to welcoming and supporting older people within each of our libraries.

### **Staff Training**

All library staff are aware of our age- friendly aspirations and of the issues that can affect people as they age. We developed a bespoke Dementia Friends session, and this is part of our induction for new staff. Workshops have also taken place training staff in how to set up and facilitate Age Friendly groups, activities and events.

### **Age Friendly employer**

Manchester Libraries commit to supporting Manchester City Council becoming recognised as an Age Friendly Employer. Nearly 60% of library staff are aged over 50. We have supported staff who want to reduce their working hours or take flexible retirement, and we have a number who have retired but keep working for 7 hours a week with us – giving them a continued small income and interest, whilst retaining their skills and experience within the service. Since 2020, through open recruitment events, we have taken on a number of new staff over the age 55, with several new starters being well into their 60s, and bringing the benefit of their experience to our service.



## Manchester Libraries Age Friendly Standards

### We are Age Friendly

Manchester Libraries have committed to a Set of Age Friendly Library Standards which clearly defines the level of service older people can expect from their library.

**Our Age Friendly Manchester Libraries** offer the following commitment to older people using our service. **We will:**

1. **Ensure you feel welcome.** Our staff will ensure your visit is a safe, enjoyable and positive experience. Services inside the library will be well signed for better wayfinding. This is your Library, please do let us know how we can help you.
2. **Encourage Social Engagement.** We offer a diverse range of activities, some are aimed specifically at older adults. Our libraries are comfortable places in which to sit, socialise and enjoy the company of others.
3. **Be accessible.** Our libraries are well lit and clutter free with no services only accessible by stairs. We will pay attention to the needs of those with mobility issues by offering: supported access through doors, flooring that is even and clutter free and an accessible counter service.
4. **Have places to sit.** You will find a sufficient range of seating throughout each of our libraries and we will ensure seating is always available near entrance points where you may need to rest or await transport.
5. **Offer volunteering opportunities.** We want to hear about the skills you have that you want to share with others.
6. **Have large print books, talking books and e-books.** We will ensure our stock is age appropriate and meets the broad needs and tastes of Manchester's diverse communities. We will promote our Books to Go Service to those not able to get into the library.
7. **Support you with your computer use.** Our staff and volunteers will patiently support those who need additional IT support. Our "IT Drop Ins" are designed for new users. We will work with partners to offer additional IT training.
8. **Provide information.** Where we cannot support you with your enquiry we will signpost you to someone who can help.
9. **Display leaflets and posters.** We know how important access to information is. We will keep our notice boards up to date and relevant. They will be easy to see and interact with. We will promote our activities across the community.

10. **Have toilet facilities including accessible toilets.** These will be checked regularly for cleanliness and supplies.

## Appendix 9: Archives

Manchester Libraries manages the Greater Manchester County Record Office function on behalf of GMCA, holding records from across the city region. We manage two partnerships – The Archives+ partnership with colleagues at Manchester Central Library and the Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership with the nine other GM Local Authorities.

In 2023 we Manchester Libraries and Archives successfully reaccredited as a Place of Deposit with The National Archives. The assessors described the archives service, based at Central Library, as ‘unparalleled’ throughout the country.



Councillor Hacking, Executive Member for Skills, Employment and Leisure and Alison Gill, Manchester Libraries and Archives, receiving the Accreditation certificate from Jeff James, Chief Executive Officer and Keeper of UK National Archives.

Using Manchester City Council capital funds, the Archives+ exhibition area was overhauled this year to ensure it is sustainable for the next seven years. The film pods have been transformed into Sound and Vision pods which feature sound archives for the first time alongside the North West Film Archives films for the first time. This includes Unlocking Our Sound Heritage archives and Manchester Voices material – a Manchester Metropolitan University project that explored the accents of Greater Manchester.

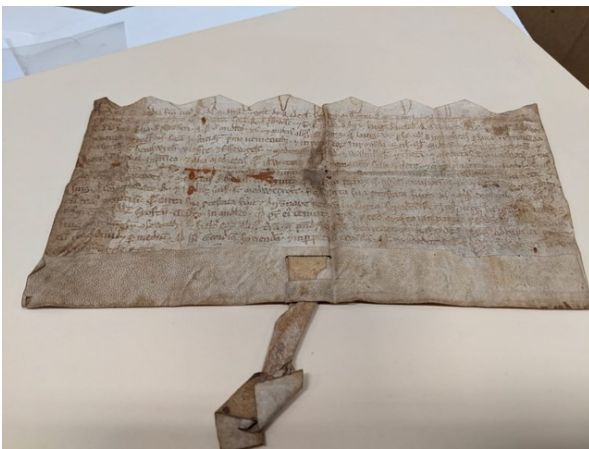


This has been a particularly rich year for Archives+ exhibitions, including Manchester Voices (analyzing Greater Manchester's accents), various exhibitions in the Manchester Histories Hub, the Manchester Hip Hop Archive displayed in Spinningfields and the Manchester Ship Canal exhibition. Curated by Martin Dodge from the University of Manchester, the exhibition contains visually striking adverts created by commercial artists in the twentieth century to promote the Manchester Ship Canal and the Port of Manchester around the world.

The Manchester Histories Hub, in the lower ground floor of Manchester Central Library, has been developing as a centre for heritage & wellbeing. It has hosted several Come & Chat workshops giving people the opportunity to come together and learn from one another about Greater Manchester's history and heritage using archives & collections. Workshop feedback from those taking part suggests the sessions have had a positive impact on their mental health, and new friendships have been formed combating social isolation and loneliness. The hub has also hosted several small exhibitions & events over the past year. This has included the Manchester Histories Salon, archives from the HiDDEN network, Rooms of Our Own, which celebrated the story of the women who saved the Pankhurst Centre and Manchester City of Literature, International Mother Language Day Exhibition, showcasing their international connection to the other UNESCO Cities of Literature and celebrating Manchester's creative work.

The Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society Helpdesk has been extremely busy throughout 2023, assisting 3500 customers - the same level as pre-pandemic.

Archives+ has been awarded £100k from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a new website for the Manchester Local Image Collection and digitise 10,000 more images using local volunteers. The two-year project began in January 2024 and will bring together online for the first time all the library's digitised local photographs.



**Articles of Agreement 1197**

In 2023, the Greater Manchester County Record Office purchased the Assheton collection. This collection is Greater Manchester's oldest surviving archive collection and has long been deposited with us. We managed to raise £100k to purchase it and to engage customers with it. The funding has been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, V&A Purchase Fund, Friends of National Libraries and the Manchester Central Library Development Trust. It includes material from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and relates to the Assheton family of Middleton.

Archives+ is the digitisation partner on the Royal Northern College of Music's Throwing Open The Concert Doors project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project is digitising over 1300 important and at-risk concert recordings held on obsolete open tape reels going back 50 years, transforming access to them while engaging the local community with the College's musical heritage. As part of the project Archives+ receives £55k to cover an Audio Preservation Engineer and conservation costs for 15 months. At January 2024 digitisation is ahead of schedule and is projected to reach as many as 2,000 tapes. Many of the concerts online can be listened online at <https://on.soundcloud.com/qdp51>.

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver the Re:Sound project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music. The community groups were Afrocats, KYSO Talent Group, Pendleton Sixth Form College, The Sebene Project, Young Identity and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.

This year saw the official launch of the British Film Institute's BFI Replay product that gives access nationally via every library computer and library Wi-Fi to a fascinating collection of video clips and films. One of the Archives+ partners the North West Film Archive (Manchester Metropolitan University) provided material for this website and has created toolkits to help customers make the most of BFI Replay.

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People were successful in their bid to the Wellcome Trust in 2021, in partnership with Archives+, to catalogue, digitise and make accessible their Disabled People's Archive. The project continues and highlights of the collection are now available at: <https://disabledpeoplesarchive.com/in-the-archive/>.

Beswick Library was pleased to host a fascinating exhibition for the National Grid Gasholders from the Bradford Road gasworks. These historic structures, some dating back to the 1890s, are being demolished and will vanish from the East Manchester skyline. Beswick Library partnered with National Grid to hold a celebration of these local icons, showing films about their history and the demolition process. Actual sections of steelwork from the Saxon Street gasholder, have been donated by National Grid and were displayed at Beswick Library and Miles Platting Library, alongside an exhibition of contemporary and historic photographs. Visitors said: "I had no idea it was going to be so fascinating! I'm so glad I stayed to hear this." and "Seeing the steelwork pieces was amazing – they really gave you a sense of the scale of the gasholders and how gigantic they were!"

A launch of the Greater Manchester rate books and electoral registers project with Findmypast happened during May's Local and Community History Month. This new resource makes thousands of indexed family history archives accessible online for free at Greater Manchester archives and libraries for the first time.

## **Appendix 10: Manchester City of Literature Update**

This report is a summary of activity carried out under the UNESCO City of Literature designation since the last report to Scrutiny Committee in January 2023.

The report gives an overview of the commitments to UNESCO and the benefits the designation brings; the governance model for Manchester City of Literature, the independent organisation that coordinates the designation, and its vision, achievements and impacts for residents, local writers and for international initiatives.

It also shows how high-quality community celebrations such as Festival of Libraries have impacted on wellbeing and engagement for residents (59.7% reported improved wellbeing; 37% will visit their libraries more often and 47% will encourage other people to visit and use libraries). It shows how Manchester City of Literature has generated an additional £250K+ of external investment in literary activity in the city and supported and created new partnerships. It shows how Manchester is contributing to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Background to Manchester City of Literature**

31 October 2023 was the sixth anniversary of Manchester being designated a UNESCO City of Literature. Manchester's successful application to become a UNESCO City of Literature was led by Manchester City Council, The University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University (the 'Commissioning Partners'), working with a range of literature sector partners from across the city.

The new independent organisation established in 2019 to coordinate the designation became a registered charity in 2020.

The designation, which is awarded to Manchester City Council in perpetuity (subject to successful review every four years), brought Manchester into a global network of (now) 350 UNESCO Creative Cities across seven creative fields: literature, design, crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, music and gastronomy. There are (now) [53 Cities of Literature](#) across six continents.

### **Commitments to UNESCO**

Member cities of this UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) recognise the value - economically, socially and environmentally - of placing creativity and culture at the heart of their sustainable development. The City Council retains a key role in the realisation of the UNESCO designation, including a commitment to UNESCO to strengthen participation in cultural life and to integrate culture into city strategies to meet the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This global plan for a sustainable future where no one is left behind shares many features with Our Manchester and other Council policies.

The Council was the lead applicant to UNESCO for the designation in 2017 and will retain responsibility as the official holder of the designation in perpetuity. Manchester is also bidding to be a UNICEF Child Friendly City and a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning. It is important for success that all three initiatives are strongly aligned.

The UNESCO designation links with a range of other strategic priority areas, including but not limited to: international; skills development; children and families; economic development; social inclusion; and community cohesion.

Now the charity is established City Council officer level involvement has changed from a leadership and initiation role towards grant monitoring to safeguard our investment; partnership working on shared priorities and initiatives; and support for the Council's representative on the Board.

Manchester is required to attend two international conferences with other Creative Cities each year to share the city's best practice and exemplar creative projects on sustainable development. At the Annual UNESCO Conference, attendance by a senior political figure from the city is required. The cost of travel for this is paid for by Manchester City of Literature.

#### Benefits

- Whilst there is no funding attached from UNESCO, the designation and active participation in the UCCN is already bringing a range of benefits to the city for example:
- Raised profile of the city and its cultural offer regionally, nationally and internationally;
- Raised profile of the city's publishing sector and related creative industries, attracting new businesses and inward investment;
- A stronger voice in policy development on the international stage, and opportunities for sharing best practice, with regards to culture and sustainable development;
- Development opportunities for local residents and cultural organisations such as international artist exchanges and residencies;
- Increased potential to lever new funding into the city for cultural activity, including work that promotes literacy.

#### **Vision and Governance Model for Manchester City of Literature**

Manchester City of Literature's vision is to create *an innovative, distinctive, equitable, globally connected city of reading and writing, where diverse voices are celebrated, creative talent and industries are nurtured and where literary activity changes lives.* The ambition is for Manchester City of Literature to be owned by the whole city, with literary organisations empowered to develop and promote Manchester's literary and cultural offer through a consistent but diverse collective voice and shared branding.

Manchester City of Literature has already helped support, connect and add value to existing activity; encouraged partnership working and joint fundraising; raised the profile of the sector; ensured the city's active participation as a member of the UCCN; and enabled Manchester's diverse range of voices to be represented and celebrated, with everyone in the city benefiting from the designation.

The values that underpin the designation are:

- Distinctive – creating distinctive cultural experiences inspired by Manchester's unique, radical character and rich cultural heritage whilst looking to the future;
- Inclusive – celebrating the rich diversity of voices in the city, building on the strengths of Manchester's people and widening participation in literary activity;
- Transformative – developing skills, nurturing creative talent & transforming lives;
- Connected – linking and supporting literary activity and enabling collective advocacy for Manchester's literary community and international collaborations;
- World-leading – a beacon for high quality, culturally democratic, truly diverse literary activity.

A Board of Trustees oversees the work of Manchester City of Literature and ensures it delivers its charitable objectives and obligations to the Commissioning Partners. Following an open recruitment process, Manchester writer Zahid Hussain was appointed as the first Chair of the Board. Each of the Commissioning Partners nominate a trustee for the Board: currently Cllr Luthfur Rahman for Manchester City Council; Professor Jess Edwards for Manchester Metropolitan University; and Professor John McAuliffe for the University of Manchester. They are joined by 6 Community Trustees selected via open recruitment.

There is a staff team of four (2.6 FTE): Ivan Wadeson, Executive Director; Hawwa Alam, Community Engagement Manager; Jo Flynn, Partnerships and Communications Manager, and Rachel Fallon, Operations Manager. Freelance project staff are engaged for funded initiatives such as Festival of Libraries.

### **Manchester City of Literature Partners**

Manchester City of Literature works with and through a partnership network of over 30 organisations including HEIs, publishers, writing agencies, libraries, festivals and booksellers. Manchester City of Literature has continued to grow the Partnership Network with publishers Bent Key and Honford Star and bookshop The House of Books and Friends joining the Network. In this period, Manchester City of Literature issued 12 monthly newsletters sharing news and events from across our Partnership Network and hosted over 14 Network meetings bring literary partners together: 38 organisations attended in this period. Events including working with schools with a presentation from First Story, collaborative work with publishers, on literature centres including a presentation from the Wheeler Centre in Melbourne and on writer residencies including a presentation from Ljubljana City of Literature.

Partners: Manchester City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Manchester, the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre, the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, Bent Key, Carcanet, Central Library, Centre for New Writing, Chetham's Library, Commonword, Comma Press, Creative Manchester, Elizabeth Gaskell's House, Flapjack Press, Fly On The Wall Press, Honford Star, House of Books and Friends, John Rylands Library, MACFest, Manchester Children's Book Festival, Manchester Libraries, Manchester Literature Festival, Manchester Poetry Library, Manchester University Press, Manchester Writing School, Muslim Writers North, Pariah Press, Poets & Players, Read Manchester, Saraband Press, The Portico Library, Working Class Movement Library and Young Identity.

### **Manchester City of Literature Project Activity**

Manchester City of Literature highlights the city's literary and cultural strengths to local residents and to global stakeholders. Through programmes and projects, it amplifies the city's strong history of literary expression and free speech, its linguistic diversity, its world-class literary education, its vibrant creative industries sector, its innovative spirit and its ambition to ensure more people engage with culture than ever before. Independent research by The Audience Agency showed that in 2022, 1 in 5 of Manchester residents were aware of the UNESCO Creative City designation. A selection of community projects include:

### **International Mother Language Day (IMLD)**

IMLD is an annual celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. Since 2018 over 12,000 adults and young people have engaged with IMLD events created by partners including Manchester Libraries, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Manchester, Community Arts Northwest, Instituto Cervantes and Comma Press. The [programme of IMLD events for February 2024](#) features over 22 events including a multilingual writing exhibition about textiles and identity in Central Library from 12 February. The Threads exhibition features nine other Cities of Literature Reykjavik, Granada, Leeuwarden, Wrocław, Melbourne, Odesa, Tartu, Exeter and Nottingham alongside work from Manchester writers Keisha Thompson and Hafsah Aneela Bashir.

### **Multilingual City Poets**

To further promote Manchester's linguistic diversity, three Multilingual City Poets were appointed in February 2021 to create new poetry in English, Urdu, Arabic and Spanish. In 2023 poems were created about [Manchester's history of protest](#), [Gaza](#) and on the South Asian diaspora contribution to UK life (the latter to be premiered at Manchester Indian Film Festival in May/June 2024).

### **Festival of Libraries**

This is a unique Festival in the UK that celebrates the role of public, heritage, specialist and medical libraries. 2023 saw the third edition of the Festival across Greater Manchester. In 2023, there were 111 events and exhibitions over 5 days, from 7-11 June. For the five days of the Festival, footfall in libraries was 58,000+ people and 5,120 people attended individual, bookable in-person events or exhibitions. High profile appearances at this year's festival included Poet Laureate Simon Armitage with a masterclass at Manchester Central Library, author and presenter Nadiya Hussain in Rochdale, and drag artist Cheddar Gorgeous at Chetham's Library.

The independent evaluation showed that 98% of visitors agreed that libraries are an essential community service. 74% felt the Festival had shown them their library had more to offer than they had previously thought. 50% said they would now encourage other people to visit and use libraries.

*"My children hugely enjoyed it. The poet was brilliant and really knew how to connect them to the content."*

*"The staff were really welcoming and it was nice to spend time with my son in the library."*

*"Such friendly staff, lovely and informal. Thank you so much for doing this event, we enjoyed it!"*

*"Truly amazing, well-organised and presented event. Beautiful building and very welcoming ambience."*

Two MA students from the University of Manchester undertook placements on the Festival of Libraries creating digital content including bespoke family tours and trails.

## **Schools Writing Trail**

The Manchester City of Literature Schools Writing Trail showcased the 'best of the best' of student writing, offering a city centre literature trail in parallel with Manchester's Festival of Libraries.

[The Schools Writing Trail](#) was an indoor and outdoor exhibition of some of the very best student writing in Manchester. Over 100 young writers were featured, writing in 12 languages, with 152 pieces of writing. The Trail was a walkable constellation of young voices connecting community arts centres, schools, universities, and libraries with over 40 schools in Greater Manchester. The Schools Writing Trail project was a celebration of the young writers who are a vibrant part of what makes Manchester a UNESCO City of Literature.

There were 6 locations in the city centre where audiences could read work that was generated from 8 Manchester-based initiatives: First Story's Connect Event, Z-Arts Story Stars, The Portico Library's annual Sadie Massey and Art of the Book awards, the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester's annual Schools Writing

Competition, Manchester Metropolitan University's annual Mother Tongue, Other Tongue competition, Saturday Club and, in conjunction with the Comino Foundation, Comino Poet in Residence program.

### **NHS Windrush Untold Stories**

Working alongside Manchester City of Literature Community Champion, Jackie Bailey, Manchester City of Literature devised [an exciting programme of workshops for African Caribbean NHS workers \(past and present\)](#) and their families and communities to explore their experiences of contributing to the NHS Story. This was in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University and the parallel [NHS Untold Stories programme](#). NHS staff took part in a series of workshops led by industry-leading writers including Shirley May, Micah Yongo and Keisha Thompson to develop writing to be exhibited at the Manchester Poetry Library. Following the initial workshop phase, seven NHS Windrush Stories writers received follow up mentoring to develop their work. They worked alongside the writers who delivered the initial workshops to prepare their writing for publication and exhibition. The creative work spanned genres including poetry, creative journaling, fantasy and music.

### **Re: Sound**

Manchester City of Literature secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to deliver this project to allow young people in Manchester to connect with heritage through audio creativity. Manchester City of Literature and Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (part of Archives+) brought together six Manchester-based sound artists with six Manchester community groups to bring audio heritage and local history to life through dynamic soundscaping, collaging and music. The community groups were Afrocats, KYSO Talent Group, Pendleton Sixth Form College, The Sebene Project, Young Identity and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.

### **Stories of Gorton**

Local residents were recruited to explore [Gorton by walking its streets and sharing stories](#) about the neighbourhood. Five residents accompanied writer Sarah Butler each month between September 2022 and March 2023. Each month a different person led the walk around the parks, houses, work places, neglected corners and vanished buildings of the neighbourhood. Writing created during the project was collected together [into a pamphlet](#) published in June 2023 and [shared at the Festival of Libraries](#).

### **Our Stories LGBTQ+ Conference**

[Our Stories in November 2023](#) championed the bold steps publishers are making to advance equality, to amplify the stories of LGBTQ+ writers and illustrators and to explore routes into publishing for aspiring authors By bringing together young people, writers and illustrators working in every form of literature, and publishing folk

from the UK and Ireland, Our Stories sparked a conversation with the industry, and made steps to empower the next generation of LGBTQ+ writers and illustrators to take up pathways into publishing.

A selection of international and writer residency projects:

### **17 Books for 17 Sustainable Development Goals.**

With this digital campaign delivered in December 2023, we highlighted a book associated with Manchester each day on our social media platforms which ties in with a UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal.

### **International Mother Language Day in February 2023**

International activity included:

- A collaborative multilingual chain poem called 'Words from the Childhood Home'. Anjum Malik, a Manchester-based poet who writes in Urdu and English, began the poem with a four-line stanza on the theme of 'the childhood home'. Each following poet was then asked to respond to the previous stanza in their mother tongue, with a translation into English. Eight other UNESCO Cities of Literature took part: Dunedin, Edinburgh, Heidelberg, Lviv, Melbourne, Montevideo, Nottingham and Tartu
- Post-COVID Cities', a comic art exhibition from Angoulême City of Literature, shown during IMLD in Central Library featuring artwork from Nanjing, Quebec City, Reykjavik, Bucheon, Slemani & Angoulême. Alongside the exhibition, films were screened from Tartu, Nottingham and Reykjavik Cities of Literature
- Four other UNESCO Cities of Literature programming events in their city for IMLD: Bucheon, Norwich, Edinburgh and Gothenburg

### **Tartu European Capital of Culture 2024**

Manchester writer David Hartley was selected to represent Manchester as Writer in Residence with Tartu City of Literature for a collaborative project for the city's European Capital of Culture programme in 2024. The residency saw David Hartley paired with Estonian artist Henri Hütt. They worked together during David's residency in Tartu to create a collaborative work called A Forest Of Ink And Skin to be shown in Tartu as part the 2024 Prima Vista International Literary Festival for the European Capital of Culture programme. Parallel to this project, David Hartley and Henri Hütt will be working with other Manchester and Estonian artists on The Embassy of Utopia, a two-day event for Festival of Libraries in June 2024. Taking place in Central Library, The Embassy of Utopia invites the people of Manchester to take the stage and share their vision for the future of our city.

### **Slamovision 2023**

Manchester City of Literature was represented at the Slamovision global poetry slam in November 2023 by Esther Koch. Esther went head-to-head with entries from eight other Cities of Literature; Exeter, Iowa City, Kuhmo, Tartu, Dublin, Ljubljana, Nottingham, Quebec City and Vilnius. The event was hosted in person with livestreaming by Nottingham City of Literature. Esther Koch won Slamovision for Manchester meaning Manchester City of Literature will host the 2024 final.

## **Writer Residencies and Presentations**

For the Festival of Libraries 2023, award-winning Icelandic Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir was hosted [by the John Rylands Library for an in-person writing residence](#). Auður returned to Manchester in October 2023 to talk about the residency and her work as part of Manchester Literature Festival.

Manchester writer [Bria Cotton was selected for a virtual residency](#) with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Australia in November 2023. Bria will be working with them virtually to explore the collection and create new original work as part of her residency, supported by Melbourne City of Literature. The residency will also include opportunities for meetings with all the writers in residence and facilitated further connections with Melbourne as a City of Literature.

Three Manchester artists were featured in events in Quebec City, Canada, alongside the annual Cities of Literature conference. Writer Yusra Warsama wrote and recorded a poem which was featured in a thirty-minute soundtrack to [Multivox, an outdoor dance piece for 29 performers](#) which was the opening event of Quebec's literature festival Quebec En Toutes Lettres.

A [public art exhibition called Toponymy](#) showed new and different stories for where a city's name comes from. Manchester City of Literature commissioned a new original text from writer Shamshad Khan and an illustration by Audrey Albert, explaining and expanding on the origin and the meaning of how Manchester got its name. The exhibition opened in September 2023 in one of the main squares in Quebec and will move around to other outdoor locations until October 2024.

## **Global Profile and Influence**

The Manchester City of Literature team attended the [annual UNESCO Cities of Literature Conference](#), hosted by Quebec City of Literature over five days in October 2023. Manchester shared a best practice case study on the Schools Writing Trail. Manchester City of Literature representatives have also represented the city in global showcases in person in 2023 including in Gdansk, Bremen and Bucheon.

Manchester was also represented on the [UNESCO UK Sites Illustrated Map](#). For the first time a map bringing together all of the Biosphere Reserves, Creative Cities, Global Geoparks and World Heritage Sites across the British Isles that are waiting to be discovered has been published. Manchester is one of the 58 sites represented

and took part in this national and global tourism development project supported by the GREAT campaign and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

### **UK Ambassador to UNESCO**

In July 2023, Manchester City of Literature coordinated the visit to Manchester of Anna Nsubuga, UK Ambassador to UNESCO. Together with James Bridge, Secretary-General of the UK High Commission to UNESCO, Anna visited Central Library, The Portico, Manchester Poetry Library and John Rylands Library meeting reps from University of Manchester, Man Met Uni and literary organisations. She had a tour of Central Library and Archives + with Neil MacInnes and on the second day of her visit she gave a keynote address at the ISPA Conference organised by HOME and Manchester International Festival alongside Cllr Rahman.

### **Securing Additional Investment**

Manchester City of Literature has been highly effective at leveraging investment into Manchester's literary sector. Since 2020, Manchester City of Literature has secured over £337,000 of new investment into literary activity from Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, British Council, Granada Foundation and corporate sponsors, with a decision on an additional £98,660 due in February 2024.

### **Conclusion**

This report shows the impact of the designation on Manchester since 2020 and the multiple benefits delivered to residents and local creative industries. It shows how the city is living up to its commitments to UNESCO and how the opportunities that the designation bring are being realised.





The Schools Writing Trail at Central Library and Z-Arts Hulme.



NHS Windrush Untold Stories



Re:Sound community groups on stage in Central Library.



Toponymy Exhibition in Quebec City



## International Partnerships and Presentations 2024

### Threads Exhibition | 12 February - 23 March

Organised by Manchester City of Literature, features 9 other UNESCO Cities of Lit: Reykjavik, Wrocław, Melbourne, Exeter, Granada, Nottingham, Tartu and Leeuwarden.

### International Mother Language Day | 21 February

Online Panel discussion with Manchester, Leeuwarden and Gothenburg Cities of Literature.

### Rising Tide at Pearse Street Library, Dublin | 22 February

Manchester's Slamovision winner Esther Koch appears the bill at this Dublin City of Literature spoken word night.

### Not Just Words: Reading for Odesa | 24 February

Readings of classic and contemporary Ukrainian literature in solidarity with Odesa and Lviv Cities of Literature. Events taking place in Manchester Central Library and simultaneously in Dublin, Edinburgh, Exeter, Krakow, Kuhmo, Iași, Lviv, Melbourne, Nottingham, Reykjavik, Tukums, Wrocław.

### World Poetry Day | 21 March

Manchester will contribute to this global celebration alongside UNESCO Cities of Literature.

### Granada Book Fair, Spain | 19 - 21 April

Manchester is the guest city at the Granada Book Fair taking part of three days of events and workshops.

### A Forest of Ink and Skin at Prima Vista Literature Festival, Estonia | 11 May

Manchester writer David Hartley & Tartu artist Henri Hutt have created a performance piece as part of Tartu's European Capital of Culture programme on Estonian folklore, the natural world and storytelling as a power for good.

### Bremen | 8th June

Manchester's Multilingual City Poet Jova Baglioli Reyes will feature at this German Poetry Slam Evening as part of Poetry on the Road Festival.

### Festival of Libraries 2024 | 13 - 16 June

- MONUMENTS from award-winning Québec poet and performer Vanessa Bell in which voices, texts, photos and videos meet around a real territory, Newfoundland, and an imagined road trip.

- The Embassy of Utopia is a two-day open forum of utopian-themed speeches and sharings as the people of Manchester share their vision of the future of the city alongside UK and Estonian artists.

-Danish Comics exhibition from Art Bubble Festival gives an overview of the history of Danish comics and then introduces nine contemporary artists from Denmark in an vivid and accessible way. The exhibition is in English and Danish.

-From Ink To Action and Collectives For Change are two comic art exhibitions in partnership with Lakes International Comic Art Festival featuring artists from from Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria.

### Annual Conference of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

1-5 July   
Braga Portugal

### Annual Conference of the UNESCO Cities of Literature

21-25th October  
Edinburgh, Scotland

### Slamovision | Date TBC

Poets from across the Cities of Literature network compete in a Eurovision-style slam, hosted by last year's winner Manchester.



## Manchester Libraries Performance 2023

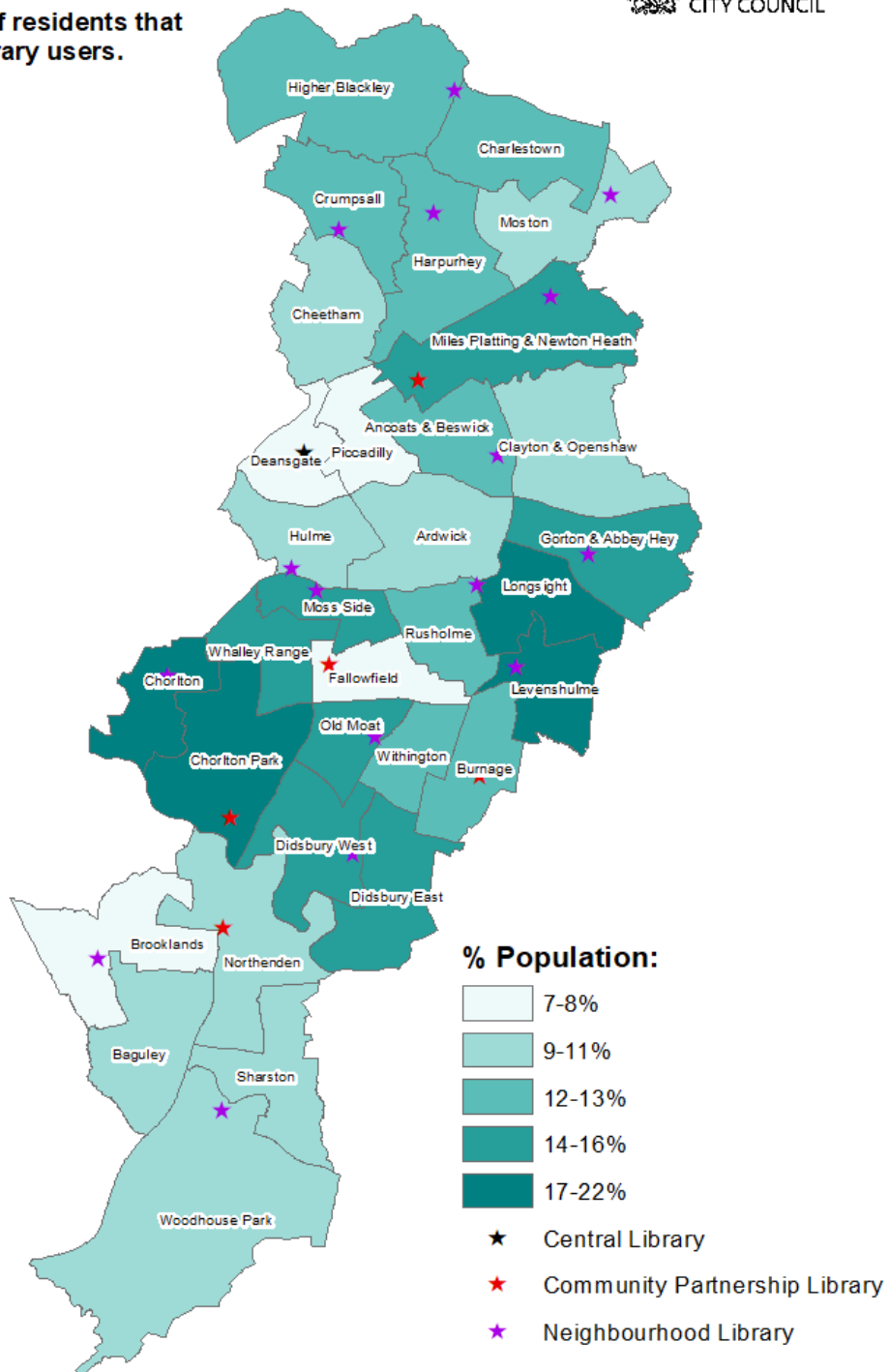
2023	Visits	Loans	PC Usage (hours recorded)	Wi-Fi (authenticated sessions)	Education Session (participants)	Events and Activities (attendees)	Active Members (borrowed stock and/or used PC)
<b>CITY-WIDE</b>							
Online/Telephone	-	209,137	-	-	-	-	128
Ebook/audiobook	-	656,375	-	-	-	-	-
Books to Go	-	42,989	-	-	-	-	454
Outreach (non library based sessions)	-	-	-	-	29,774	2,626	-
<b>BRANCHES</b>							
Abraham Moss	88,025	21,114	7,037	-	1,348	5,962	6,219
Arcadia	95,978	28,899	9,964	56,324	963	2,582	3,328
Avenue	44,257	21,202	8,280	4,625	1,017	6,136	2,995
Barlow Moor	2,900	1,383	1,091	3,704	31	170	142
Beswick	44,232	10,829	5,142	21,664	976	3,761	2,638
Brooklands	17,926	13,750	3,191	5,926	597	3,015	1,223
Burnage	15,487	10,310	579	2,344	2,022	3,504	1,189
Central Library	1,387,608	117,877	121,372	728,352	8,055	40,230	28,771
Chorlton	112,447	74,093	8,564	10,860	1,075	3,551	8,671
Didsbury	98,725	60,312	5,705	17,236	896	4,392	5,801
Fallowfield	70,223	6,075	5,750	1,085	654	6,251	1,713
Forum	130,988	42,912	18,727	16,442	1,927	15,328	5,966
Gorton	78,221	30,457	15,880	2,319	2,423	4,146	4,254
Hulme High St	134,725	17,582	11,371	7,885	-	3,740	1,894
Longsight	171,071	37,409	24,433	16,514	3,246	5,979	7,184
Miles Platting	6,291	2,522	585	394	-	1,552	422
Moss Side Powerhouse	19,366	13,331	10,739	8,088	2,139	3,326	1,783
New Moston	3,850	2,105	443	1,383	-	712	490
Newton Heath	61,081	11,370	7,159	3,997	794	9,845	2,525
North City	57,176	20,445	12,131	18,973	452	7,065	3,824
Northenden	5,048	4,466	869	1,032	12	1,394	329
Wells Centre		-	11,770	-	-	-	
Withington	84,709	35,350	10,167	39,925	398	5,967	5,198
Z-Arts		3,818	-	-	-	-	279
<b>Branch Totals</b>	<b>2,730,333</b>	<b>587,611</b>	<b>300,949</b>	<b>969,072</b>	<b>29,025</b>	<b>138,608</b>	<b>96,838</b>
<b>Total (including City-Wide)</b>	<b>2,730,333</b>	<b>1,496,112</b>	<b>300,949</b>	<b>969,072</b>	<b>58,799</b>	<b>141,234</b>	<b>97,420</b>

# Percentage of residents who are library members – January 2024

## Manchester Libraries



Percentage of residents that are active library users.  
Q3 2023-24



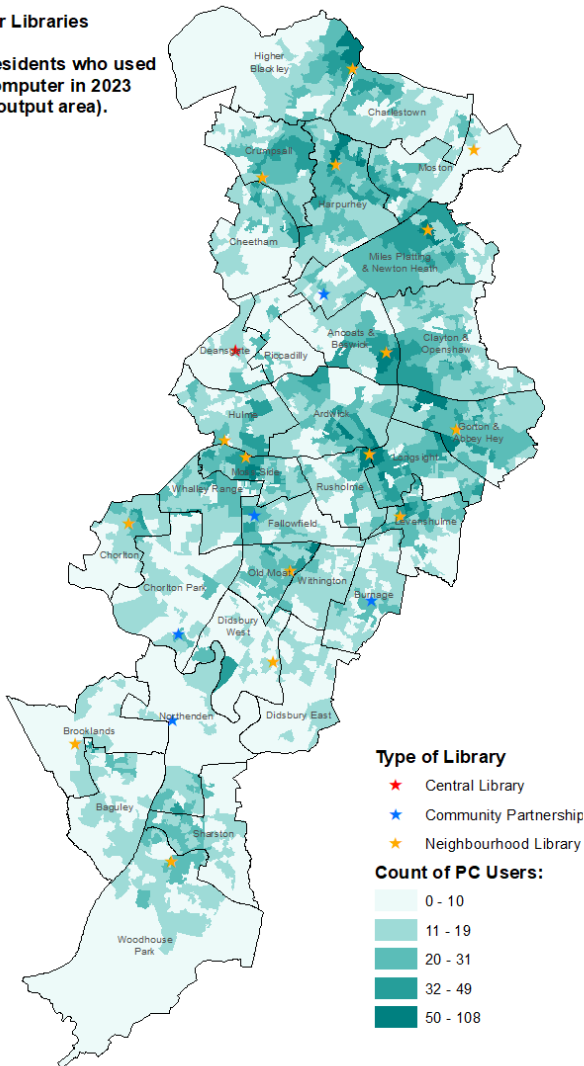
© Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 100019568. Map produced by PRI: Place

**An active member is someone who has borrowed a book or used a library computer in the last 12 months.**

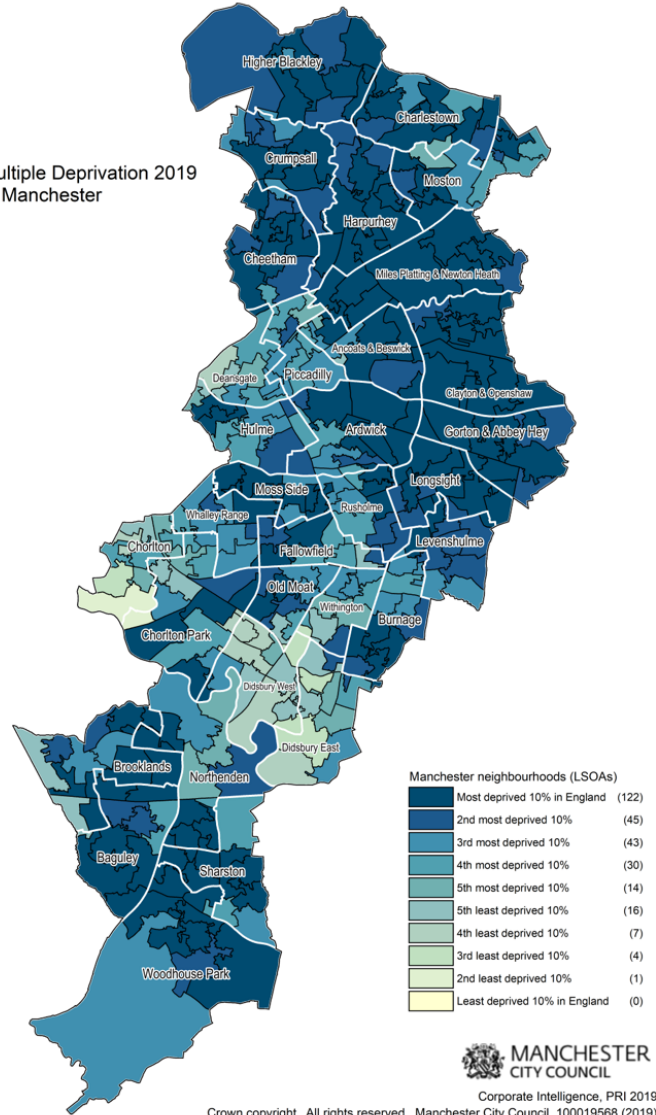
# Library computer users in 2023 compared to Index of Multiple Deprivation

## Manchester Libraries

Count of residents who used a library computer in 2023 (based on output area).



## Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 Manchester

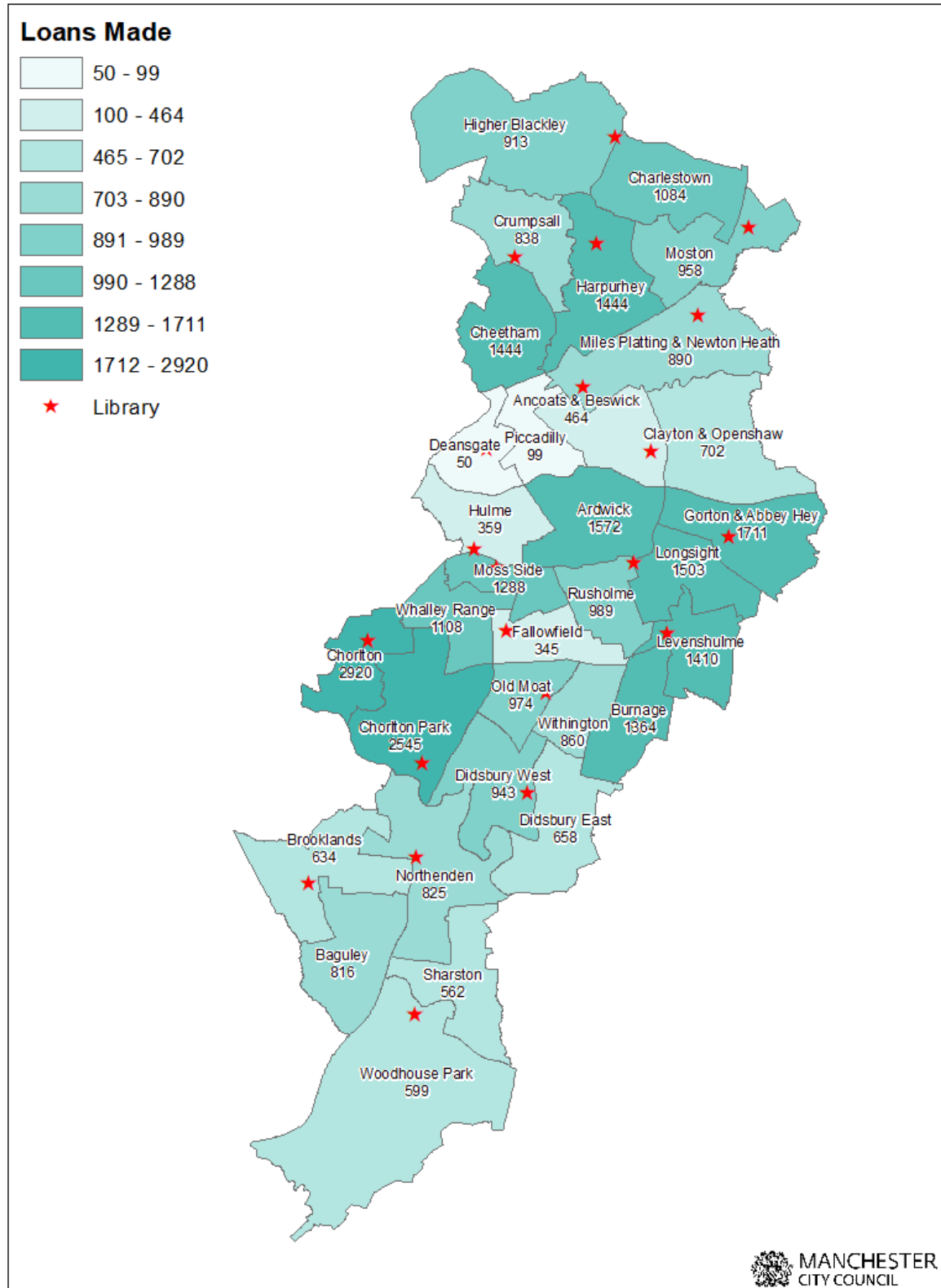


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The darker areas are generally the same on both maps, showing that the libraries computer users tend to live in the more deprived areas of the city.

# Summer Reading Challenge 2023: Number of books borrowed by children during the Summer Reading Challenge

## Summer reading Challenge 2023

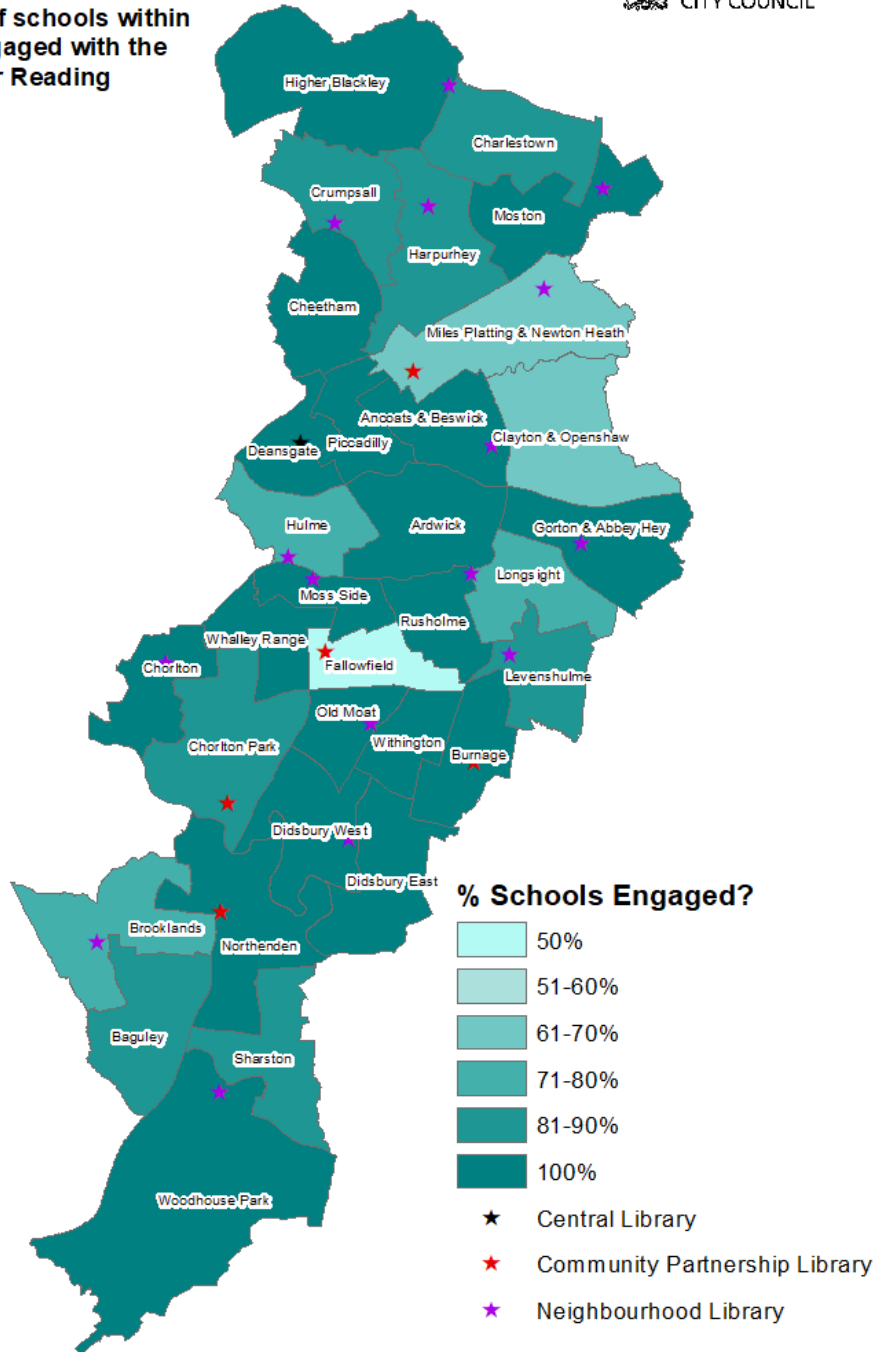


# Summer Reading Challenge 2023: Percentage of schools engaged through Summer Reading Challenge

Manchester Libraries



Percentage of schools within ward that engaged with the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge

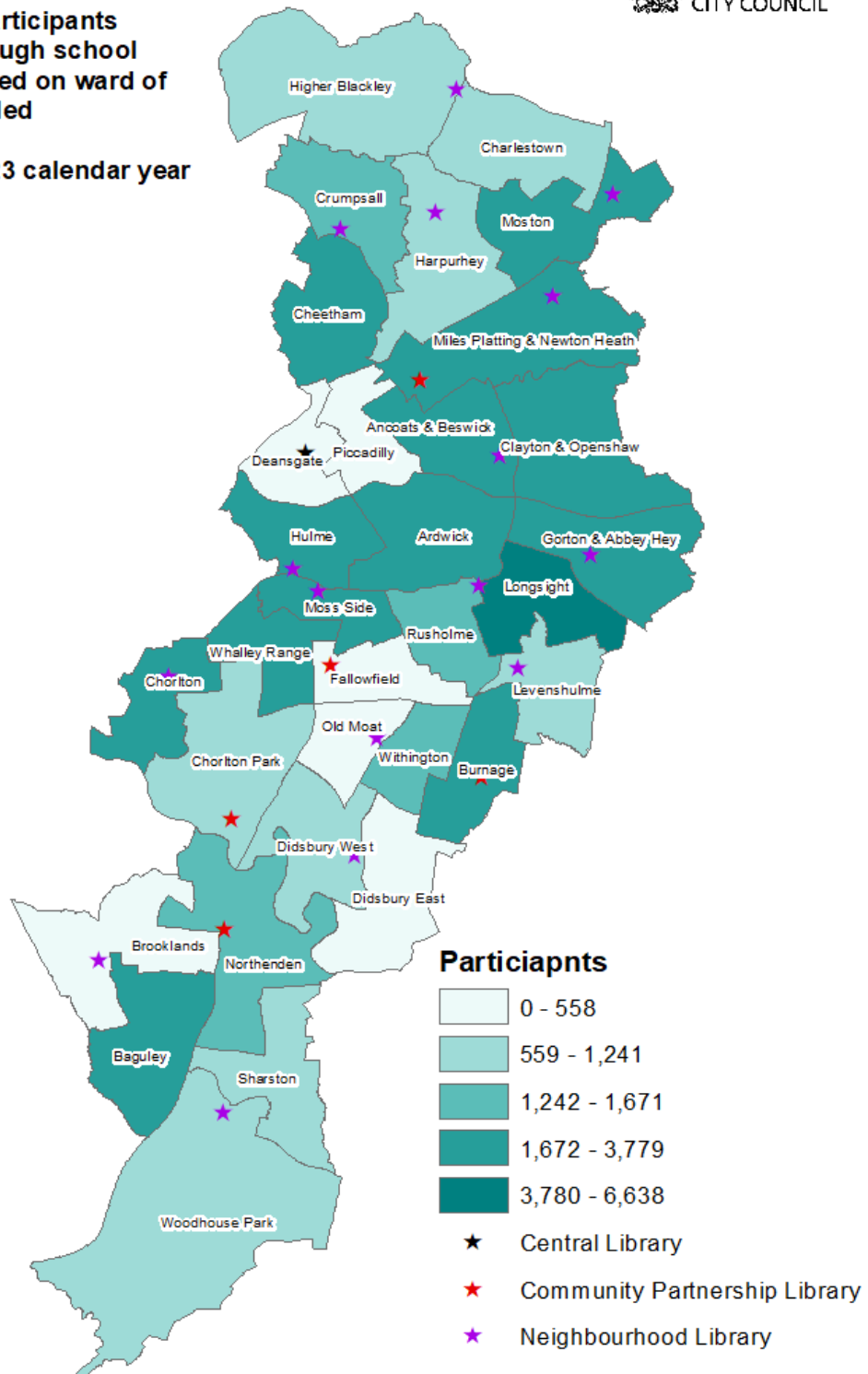


# School engagement – 2023

## Manchester Libraries

Number of participants engaged through school sessions based on ward of school attended

Based on 2023 calendar year



# Manchester Libraries:

## Adult PLUS 2023 Results

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Analysis by PRI: Place  
May 2023

## Introduction

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The CIPFA Adult Public Library User Survey was carried out across all Manchester libraries during the week beginning 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023. 3182 questionnaires were received back, achieving a response rate of 71%, 3% lower than in 2020.

The survey consisted of 28 questions. Customers were invited to rate their satisfaction of the key areas of their library's service, including books, computers, and information services. A new section for 2023 focused on digital exclusion and asked how if at all respondents accessed the internet at home. The final part of the questionnaire related to demographic information about the customer. Customers were also given the opportunity to provide any comments for improving services, which will also be analysed and forwarded to the relevant managers in due course.

Some library results are not statistically viable; as when compared to the recorded library visits, there are too few responses to a question to get a reasonable sample for analysis. A total of 9 of the Manchester libraries received an error rating over 5% and therefore caution must be taken with these results. For example, Barlow Moor (18 responses), Abraham Moss (67 responses) and Fallowfield (54 responses) were amongst the libraries that cannot reliably be measured by this survey for any of the questions because of their low response rate.

Conclusions referenced in this report that are drawn from statistically unreliable results have been indicated with an asterisk\*.

In contrast to the last survey (2020) in which Arcadia and Hulme High Street, had the two highest response rates, a total of 6 libraries received over 95% response. In the 2023 survey, Burnage library led the response rate with 99% (82 surveys), followed by Didsbury with 96% (190 surveys). A further 4 libraries had a response rate of 95% (New Moston, Miles Platting, Brooklands & Avenue).

## Results Summary

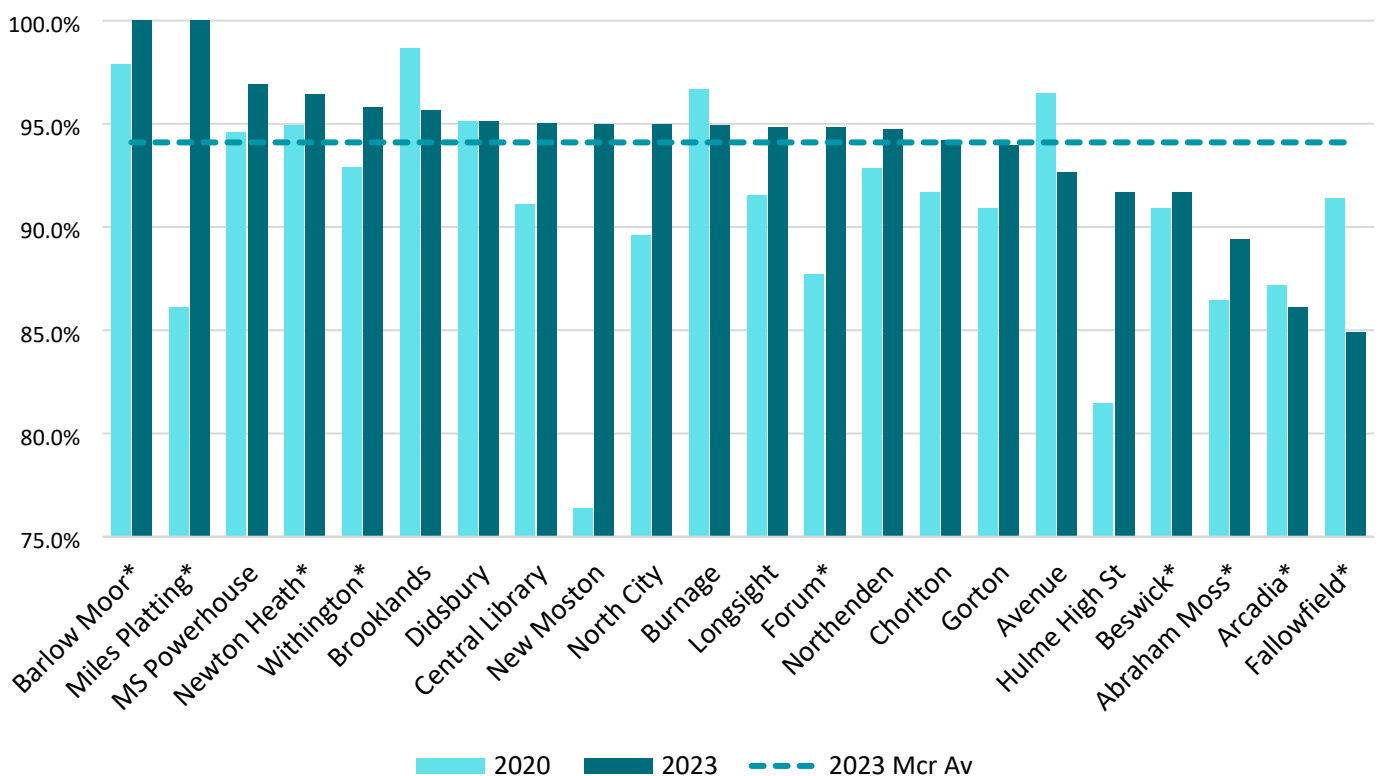
Customer satisfaction with their library – satisfaction is defined as users rating services as either good or very good.

Library	Number of Responses	2020	2023	% Change
Central Library	406	91.1%	95.0%	4%
Abraham Moss*	67	86.4%	89.4%	3%
Arcadia*	108	87.2%	86.1%	-1%
Avenue	139	96.5%	92.6%	-4%
Beswick*	49	90.9%	91.7%	1%
Brooklands	70	98.7%	95.7%	-3%
Chorlton	139	91.7%	94.2%	2%
Didsbury	190	95.1%	95.1%	0%
Forum*	298	87.7%	94.8%	7%
Gorton	170	90.9%	94.0%	3%
Hulme High St	188	81.5%	91.7%	10%
Longsight	377	91.5%	94.9%	3%
MS Powerhouse	68	94.6%	96.9%	2%
Newton Heath*	114	94.9%	96.4%	2%
North City	190	89.6%	95.0%	5%
Withington*	267	92.9%	95.8%	3%
Barlow Moor*	18	97.9%	100%	2%
Burnage	82	96.7%	94.9%	-2%
Fallowfield*	54	91.4%	84.9%	-6%
Miles Platting*	20	86.1%	100%	14%
New Moston	101	76.4%	95.0%	19%
Northenden	67	92.9%	94.7%	2%
Weighted total	<b>3,182</b>	<b>90.9%</b>	<b>94.1%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>2020 Results</b>	4,193		91%	
<b>% Change</b>	-24%		3%	

- ✓ The overall satisfaction rate for the city was 94.1%, compared to 90.9% in 2020. This 3% rise can be heavily attributed to the positive increases at library level from: New Moston (+19%), Miles Platting (+14%) and Hulme High Street (+10%).
- ✓ Miles Platting\* and Barlow Moor\* tied with the highest overall rating, with 100% of customers considering the libraries to be good or very good.
- ✓ Barlow Moor\* is the only library to have attained above 95% satisfaction in both 2020 and 2023.
- ✓ Positively, sixteen of the branches saw an increase in overall satisfaction rates.
- ✓ Didsbury was the only library to maintain their exact satisfaction rating.
- ✓ Fallowfield\* saw the biggest decrease in overall satisfaction, from 91% in 2020 to 84% in 2023.

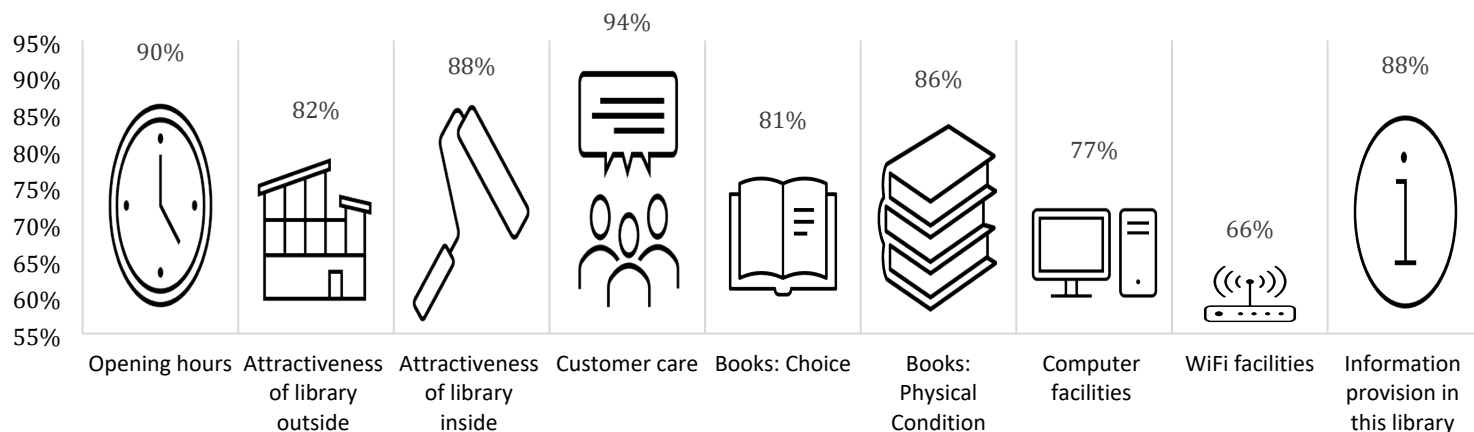
## Libraries: Overall

- The library with the most questionnaires completed was Central Library with 406 responses, followed by Longsight library with 377 responses.
- 15 libraries were above the Manchester weighted average for overall satisfaction of 94%, with Barlow Moor\* and Miles Platting\* having the highest proportion who felt the library overall was good or very good (100%).
- Encouraging progress in overall satisfaction levels can also be seen at New Moston and Miles Platting\*, increasing by 19% and 14%\* respectively, placing them both above Manchester’s 2020 average.
- There was also salient improvement in satisfaction from customers of Hulme High Street library, in which scores increased 10% from 81.5% to 91.7%.
- Fallowfield library recorded the lowest overall satisfaction level: 85% of respondents rated the library as good or very good, this was 6% decrease since 2020. However, it must be acknowledged that only 54 forms were completed.
- Of the libraries with statistic viability, Moss Side Powerhouse had the highest overall satisfaction ratings (97%). Of these libraries, the lowest overall satisfaction was Hulme High Street (92%), Avenue (93%) and Gorton (94%).
- Considering only the statistically viable results, the biggest decrease in satisfaction rates related to Avenue which dropped 4% to 92.6% from 96.5%.



## Key Areas of Satisfaction

In addition to their overall satisfaction customers were also asked to rate how they felt regarding nine key indicators which are listed in the chart below.



- ✓ 94% of customers rated **customer care** as good or very good. The city-wide average was 3% higher than the result from 2020. 18 out of the 22 libraries either improved or maintained their satisfaction rating in this area since 2020.
- ✓ Satisfaction with **opening hours** improved since 2020 with 90% (+4%) of customers considering them to be good or very good. This increase can be heavily attributed to the 46% increase in satisfaction regarding Miles Platting which jumped from 24% to 70%.
- ✓ Despite Barlow Moor\* having the lowest satisfaction rate for **opening hours** (49%), it improved by 4% when compared to the 2020 results.
- ✓ In an exact reflection of the previous survey (2020), 82% of customers reported their library's **external appearance** as very good or good. The highest satisfaction rate was for Gorton (94%) which improved 34% since 2020. This development reflects the introduction of the Gorton Hub building which opened in November 2022.
- ✓ 88% of customers reported the **internal appearance** as good or very good. This was a 4% increase since 2020. In comparison to the 2020 survey in which New Moston saw the biggest decline (-25% when compared to 2016), in 2023 it had the most improvement with satisfaction rising 19% to 76% overall. Miles Platting scored highest, with 100% of their respondents giving a positive rating.
- ✓ Satisfaction with **computers** declined from 78% to 77% city wide compared to 2020. Both Barlow Moor\* and Miles Platting\* scored highest of all branches, with 100% of respondents rating computers as good or very good. The 100% from Miles Platting was the biggest improvement, with satisfaction rising 18%. In contrast, Fallowfield\* scored the lowest (70%) and declined 14%.
- ✓ All libraries now offer free **Wi-Fi** and customers are invited to use their own devices. Overall satisfaction with the Wi-Fi decreased 4%. Miles Platting\* had the highest satisfaction rating (93%), and Burnage had the highest improvement (+17%). In a repeat of 2020 results, Central Library ranked lowest (59%), decreasing 6%.
- ✓ Across all indicators, **information provision** had the highest improvement rating since 2020. Satisfaction rose from 82% to 88%. Just 3 libraries, Didsbury (-8%), Barlow Moor\* (-1%) and Fallowfield (-9%) decreased in their scores. Moss Side Powerhouse scored the highest, with 98% of respondents rating positively.
- ✓ Customer satisfaction with the **choice of books** increased from 80% to 81%. Additionally, the physical **condition of books** improved from 82% to 86% of customers feeling satisfied. A big contribution to this rise can be attributed to North City which satisfaction with physical condition of the book stock rose 10%.

## Libraries: League Ranking

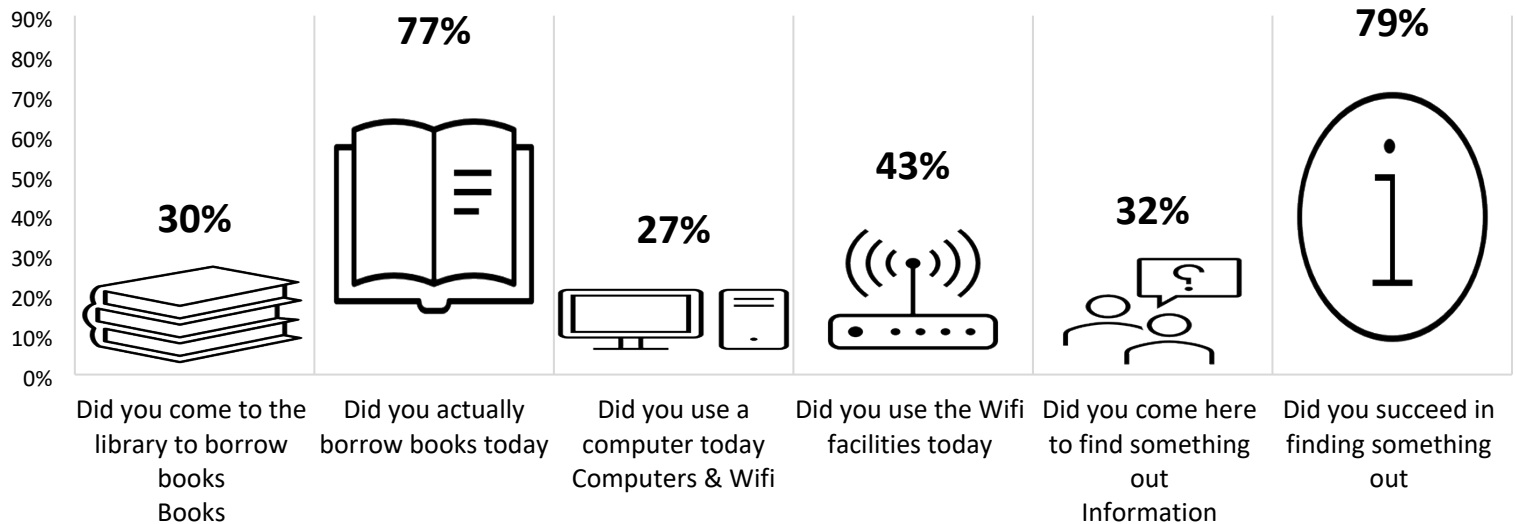
- Of all the key satisfaction questions, standard of customer care had the biggest proportion of respondents considering this to be good or very good (94%). Abraham Moss\*, Moss Side Powerhouse, Barlow Moor\*, Miles Platting\* and Northenden scored 100%.
- Across the 9 indicators Miles Platting ranked in the top three for seven of the satisfaction measures, however, it must be acknowledged that only 20 forms were completed.
- Barlow Moor\*, Moss Side Powerhouse, Gorton and Brooklands were ranked in the top three for three different satisfaction measures each.
- Both Fallowfield\* and Arcadia\* ranked in the bottom three for 6 out of 10 key measures, such as customer care, choice of books and overall satisfaction.
- Of the libraries with statistically viable results, New Moston was ranked in the bottom three libraries most often (5 measures), followed by Hulme High Street (3 measures).

Library	Count of Top 3	Top Three In:
Miles Platting*	7	Overall, Internal, Customer Care, Books; Condition, Computers, Wi-Fi & Information
Barlow Moor*	3	Overall, Customer Care & Computers
MS Powerhouse	3	Overall, Internal & Information
Gorton	3	External, Internal & Computers
Brooklands	3	External, Wi-Fi & Information
Beswick*	2	Opening Hours & Books: Condition
Northenden	2	Customer Care & Books: Condition
Longsight	2	Books: Choice & Wi-Fi
Avenue	2	Opening Hours & Books: Choice
Abraham Moss*	1	Books: Choice
Newton Heath*	1	Opening Hours
Didsbury	1	External

Library	Count of Bottom 3	Bottom Three In:
Fallowfield*	6	Overall, Customer Care, Books: Choice, Books: Condition, Computers & Information
Arcadia*	6	Overall, Internal, Customer Care, Books: Choice, Books: Condition & Wi-Fi
New Moston	5	Opening Hours, External, Internal, Books: Condition & Information
Hulme High St	3	Customer Care, Computers & Information
Northenden	2	Opening Hours & External
Abraham Moss*	2	Overall & External
Chorlton	2	Internal & Wi-Fi
Central Library	2	Computers & Wi-Fi
Miles Platting*	1	Opening Hours
Withington*	1	Books: Choice

## Library Usage

- 32% of customers wanted to find something out during their visit and of those respondents, 79% succeeded. Beswick\* Library saw the biggest increase from 2020 (+17%), followed by Barlow Moor\* (+10%) which scored 95% and 100% respectively.
- 30% of customers visited the library to borrow books comparable to 37% in 2020. Of the 30% of customers that intended to borrow a book, 77% did so. Respondents were most likely to intend to borrow a book from Burnage (65%) and least likely from Central Library (21%).
- 27% of visitors used a computer, a 10% decrease from 2020. Half of users from Miles Platting\* and Barlow Moor\* used a computer. Respondents were least likely to use a computer in Fallowfield\* and Didsbury; both 19%.
- 43% of respondents used the Wi-Fi, a 36 % decrease from 2020. The library with the least Wi-Fi usage was Miles Platting\* (16%). The highest rate of Wi-Fi use was from users of Arcadia\* library with 57%.

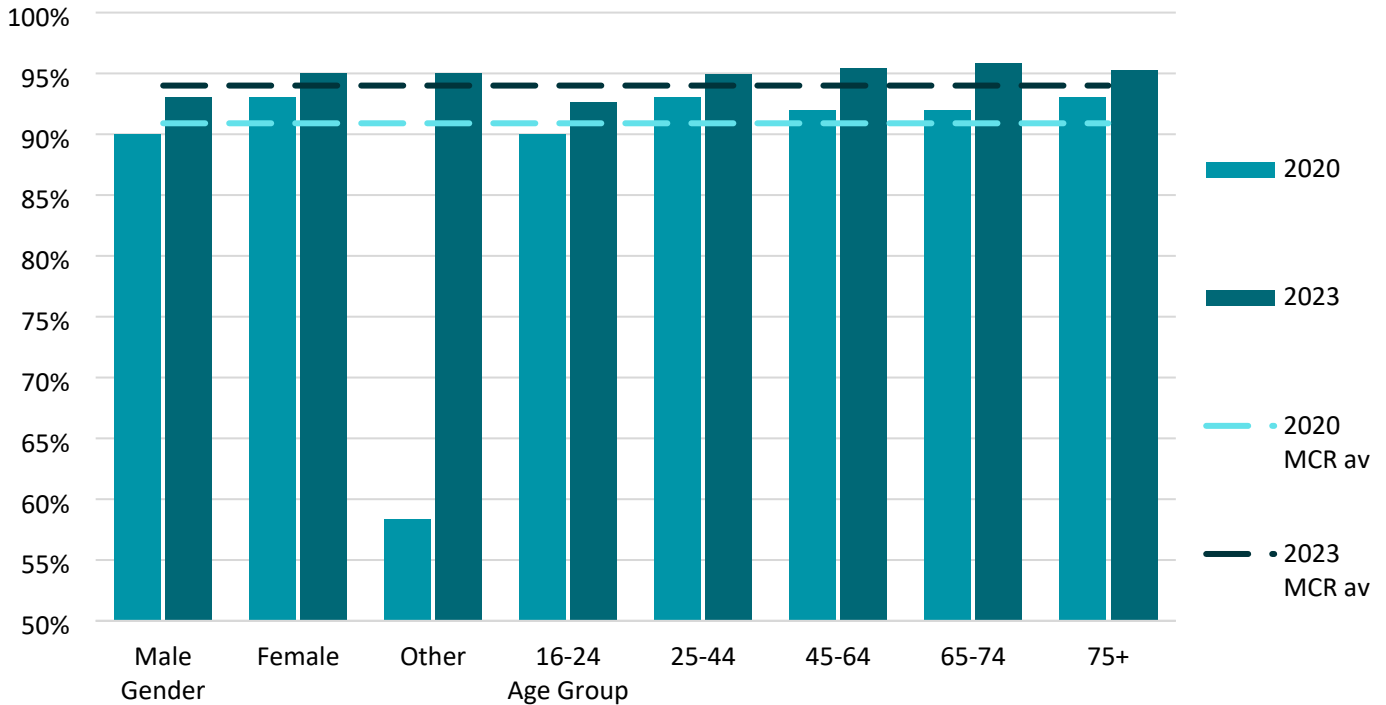


## About our customers

- The most likely way for respondents to travel to the library was on public transport (45%) which is an exact reflection of the proportion of 2020 respondents. 16 % of customers travelled to the library using private transport such as cars or motorbikes – this is a 4% decline since 2020. 2023 saw an incline in respondents travelling to the libraries on foot, rising from 30% to 34%.
- A section focusing on loneliness and isolation was introduced in 2020. 38% percent of respondents said they felt lonely either some of the time or often, and 73% of those respondents said visiting the library helped to reduce these feelings of loneliness.
- The gender split for the weighted Manchester response was 59% female and 40% male; in 2020 this was 56% female and 43% male. The response rate for this question was 90%, which was 1% higher than the 2020 response rate. Overall satisfaction levels showed that female customers were 95% satisfied and male customers 93% satisfied.

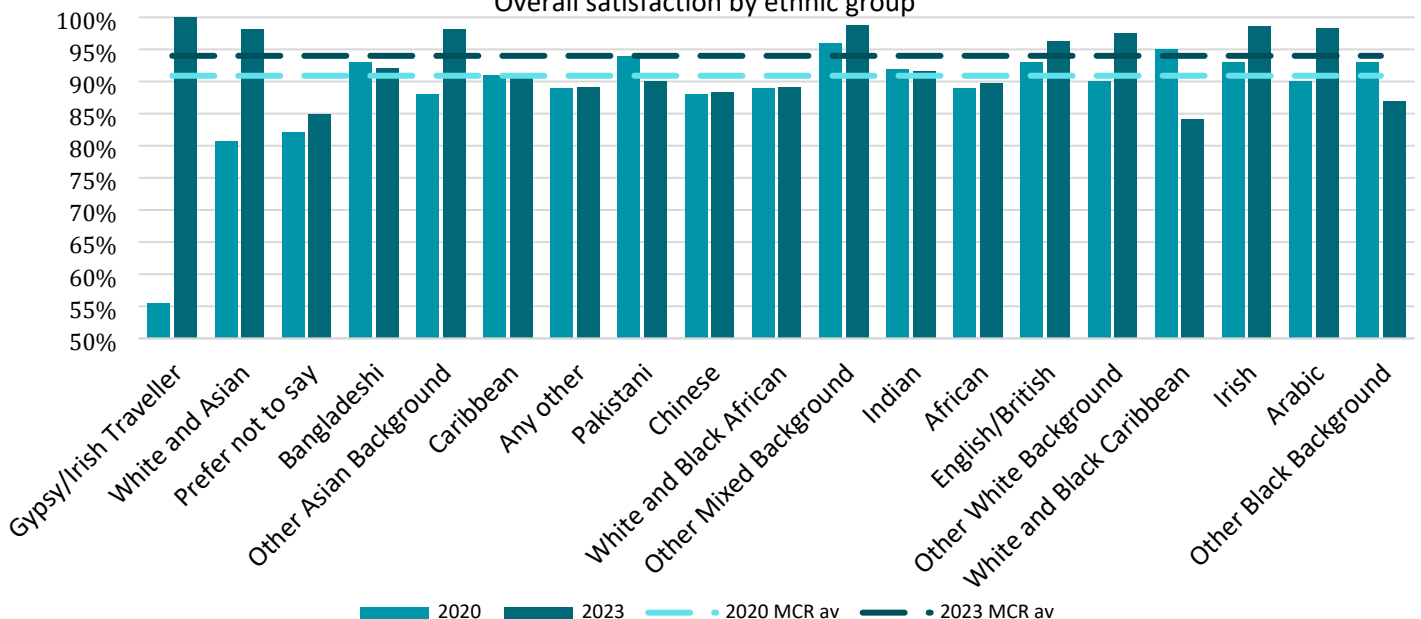
- Age: 18% of the customers who took part in the survey were under 25. The age group with the highest number of respondents was 35 to 44, making up 18% of respondents who provided their age. 7% were 75 and over: the oldest of whom were aged 97. The age group with lowest proportions of satisfied customers were the under 25s at 93%, whereas the 65-74 cohort had the highest numbers of satisfied respondents (96%).

Overall satisfaction by gender and age

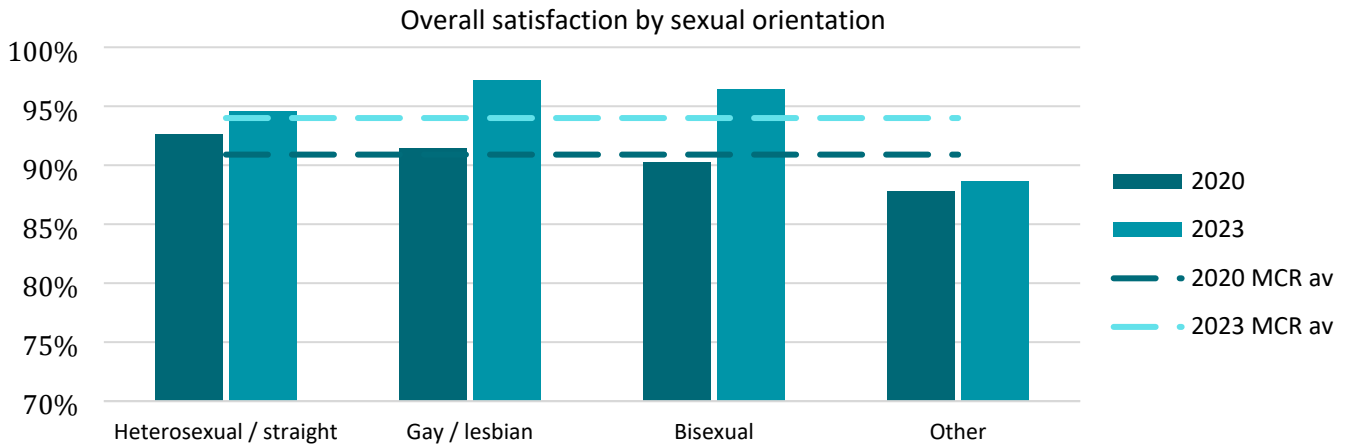


- With regards ethnic groups, 66% of those surveyed identified as being White (4% higher than the previous survey), 11% Asian, 12% Black, 4% Mixed and 3% Other. The response rate for this question was 91% which is a 6% increase since 2020. The group with the highest level of overall satisfaction was Gypsy or Irish Traveller (100%) which increased 44% since 2020, followed by Other Mixed Background (99%). Mixed ethnicities White and Black Caribbean were the ethnic group with the lowest levels of satisfaction (84%). The size of the response captured for these ethnic groups is very small so it should be noted that this may not be a true reflection of satisfaction levels amongst these groups.

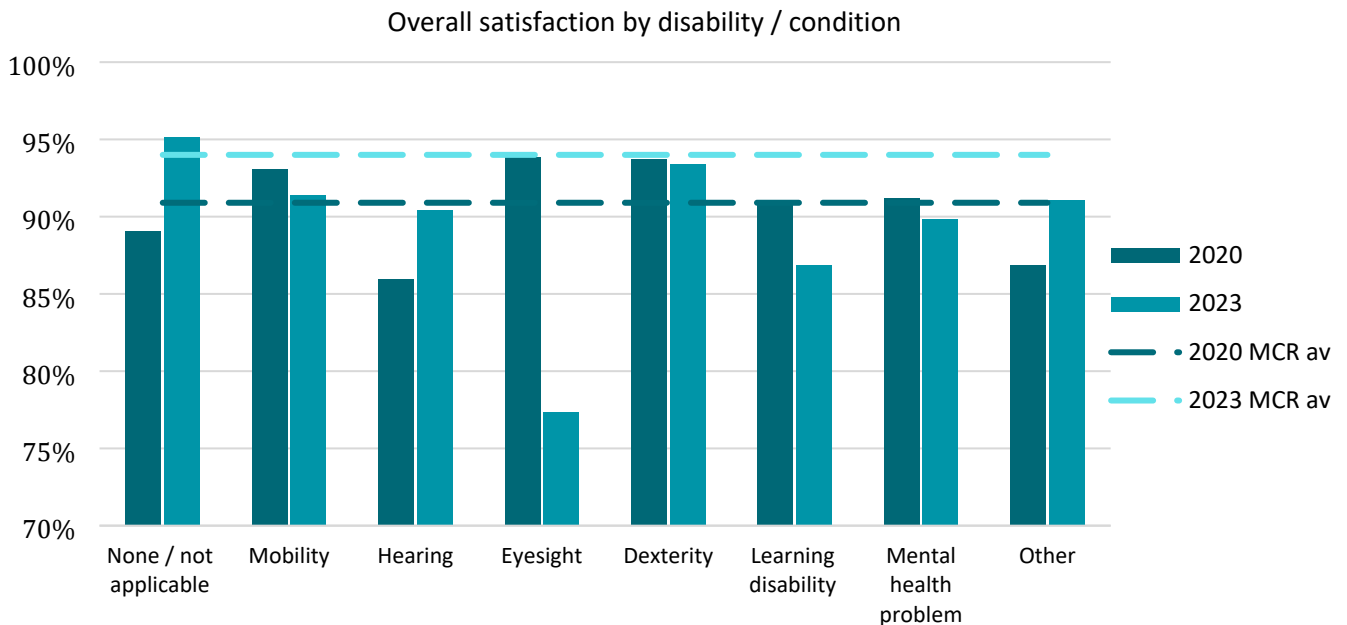
Overall satisfaction by ethnic group



- In terms of sexual orientation, 89% of respondents identified as being heterosexual, 5% as gay/lesbian, 4% bisexual and 2% other. The response rate to this question was 88% therefore the results may not be fully representative of our customer cohort, however this is a 10% increase in response rate since the previous survey. Customers who cited their sexuality as gay/lesbian had the highest level of satisfaction overall (97%) whilst customers who cited their sexuality as other had the lowest overall satisfaction (87%). This is closely aligned to 2020.



- Customers taking part in the PLUS survey were asked if they had a disability/condition. 28% of respondents considered themselves to have at least one. 8% of respondents had mobility difficulties, 5% had hearing difficulties, 3% had a dexterity disability, 5% learning disability, 2% had eyesight difficulties and 12% said they had mental health problems. Overall, customers who cited no disabilities were more likely to be satisfied than those who did. The lowest satisfaction rate was from those who noted having disabilities related to their eyesight (77% which is 17% lower than 2020). The response rate for this question was 81%.



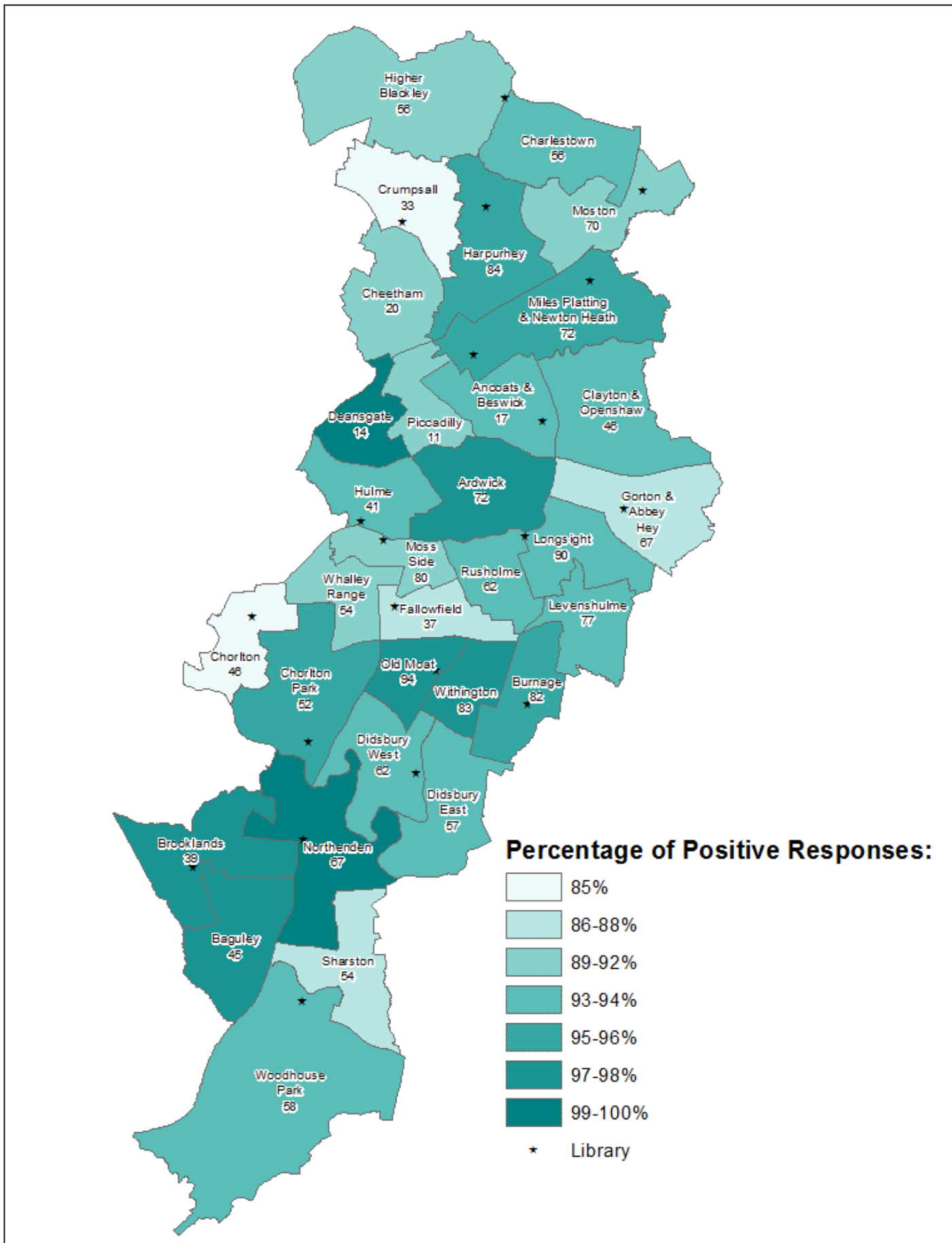
- 38% of respondents cited their faith as Christian, 15% Muslim, and 40% declared they did not have a religion. The response rate to this question was 90% (a 16% increase to the response rate in 2020). Customers who cited their religion as Buddhist were the most satisfied at 100% (although there were just 35 respondents identifying with this demographic). Those who preferred not to provide a response about religion were least satisfied at 88%. It must be noted the cohort size for different religious groups captured in this survey were small so may not show a true reflection of satisfaction levels amongst this group.

- 47% of customers surveyed in Manchester were economically active (working part-time, full-time, self-employed), in comparison to 44% in 2020. Of the customers in Manchester who were economically inactive, 14% were students, which was 8% less than 2020, 10% unemployed, 2% long-term sick or disabled, 23% were retired and 2% were looking after the home or family. Of the customers who are economically active, 95% were satisfied with their local library; those who are retired 96% and those who are unemployed 93%. The response rate for this question was 89% (a 7% increase since 2020).
- 49% of respondents have been using the library for over three years and 38% have been using the library for over a year, while 13% were making their first visit, which shows new customers are being attracted as well as retaining a high number of our existing customer base. Of those making their first visit, 96% were satisfied with the library they visited compared to those who had been using the library for three years or more at 92%.
- Customers were also asked if using the library had helped them in aspects of their personal lives. 57% responded saying it had helped them in study/learning, 26% to get online, 44% meeting people, 46% in feeling better about themselves, 11% for job seeking, 38% said it helped them with their health and wellbeing, 11% for their job and 3% for managing finances. Out of all responses received, 89% indicated that using a library has helped them in one or more aspects of their lives.
- A new element of the survey in 2023 questioned digital inclusion. 14% of respondents indicated that they did not have access to the internet at home. Of the 14%, almost half (47%) suggested this was due to the expense of Wi-Fi and 25% said they had no need for it. 21% of respondents stated they didn't have the equipment necessary for Wi-Fi use and a further 13% said they didn't have the skills to use it. 5% of customers said they didn't feel safe to use the internet at home.
- Finally, customers were given the opportunity to offer a closing comment or library suggestion for improvement. 1,538 respondents chose to do so, and the comments are currently being analysed.

# Manchester Adults PLUS 2023

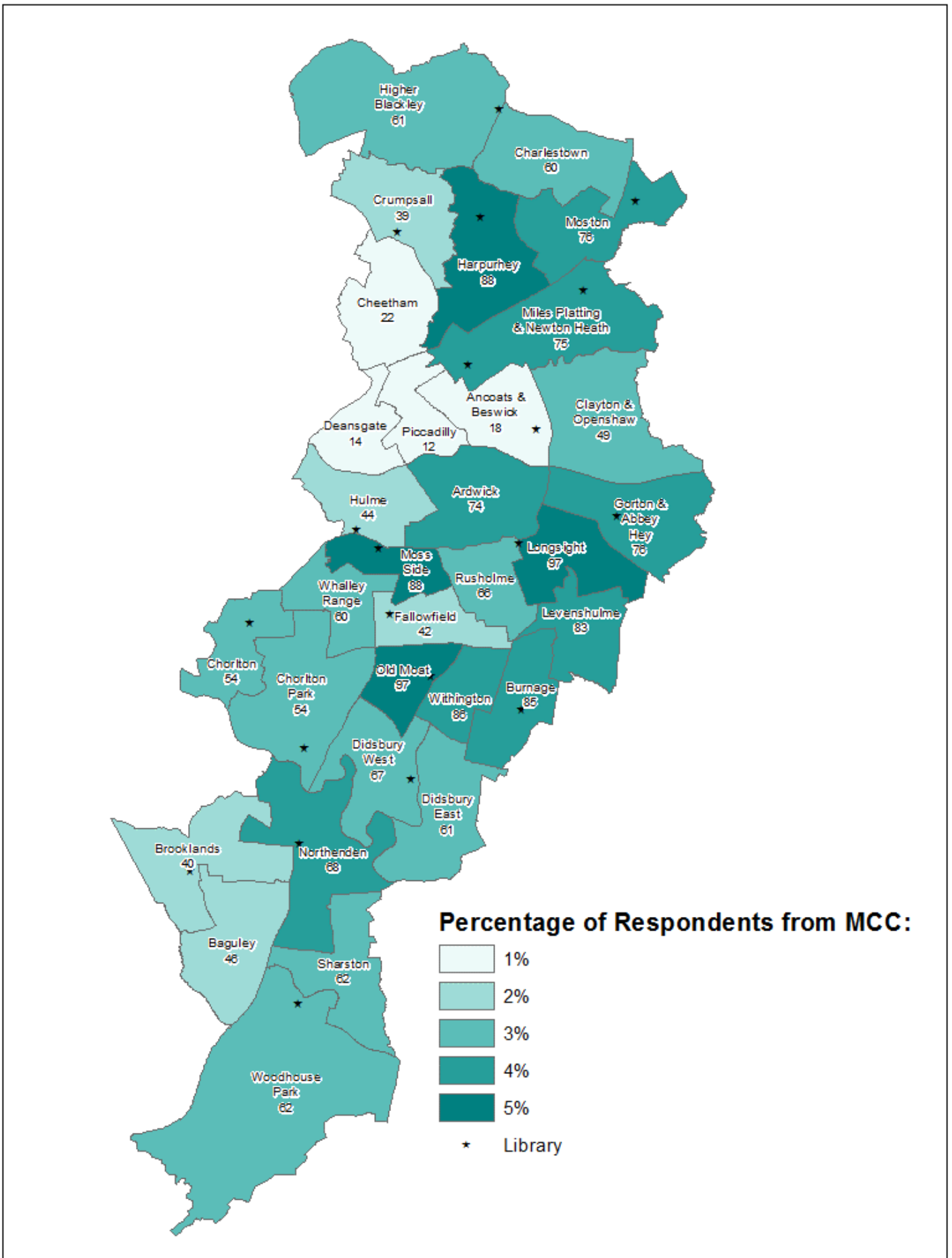
Overall, how good is this library?

Count of positive responses and percentage by respondents' home postcode.



# Manchester Adults PLUS 2023

## Residence of Manchester Respondents by Ward (1,926)



## **Appendix 13: Manchester Libraries response to the Sanderson review of public libraries**

Manchester Libraries welcomes the Sanderson independent review of English public libraries and are pleased that our contribution to the review has been incorporated into the report, and that some of our work is highlighted.

A summary of our response to the specific recommendations

### **Recommendation 1. A national data hub to better evidence the role libraries play in our society**

We agree that a national dataset would be useful. Linking into the major Library Management Systems to make the data collection as seamless as possible would be beneficial. We would be happy to be part of a pilot to explore this (we are part of a consortium of 11 authorities) and can include it in a library management system specification for a procurement beginning later this year. We agree the costs should be borne centrally for this data work.

We agree that it is absolutely crucial that we can show to stakeholders and funders how libraries improve people's lives and contribute to wider stakeholder priorities, for example health and wellbeing. Any help that can be provided nationally to support this would be welcomed. This maybe through the data work, or evaluation taskforce mentioned in the report, or by building on the Libraries Connected Universal Offers.

### **Recommendation 2. Undertake a scoping exercise for a consistent national branding campaign to raise awareness of our libraries**

We agree fully that promotion of libraries is a key priority. We would welcome a national branding campaign to supplement our local marketing and would be happy to be involved one of those involved in developing the campaign.

### **Recommendation 3. The closer involvement of the British Library**

The Business and Intellectual Property Centres (BIPC) network has been invaluable to us and start-up businesses in Manchester and Greater Manchester. We would welcome continued investment in this, and the exploration of other initiatives using the model of the BIPC.

### **Recommendation 4. An expanded library membership**

Manchester Libraries have piloted automatic library membership in a couple of ways in recent years.

From 2018-20, library cards were given to children by the registrars at the baby's registration. We haven't continued this initiative post-pandemic and we are aware that there was relatively few of the cards activated, meaning the gift of the library card did not translate into library membership. However, we will now review this and look at restarting this scheme and have the processes in place, with the aim to have

a follow up communication with parents and also link into the family hubs and other partner agencies.

We have been a member of the engagement pilot for summer reading challenge for the last 3 years that is mentioned in the report. We would support central funding and a national initiative to encourage universal membership either with the summer reading challenge or the transition into primary school. We have run a 'transition read' over the last 3 years for children entering a new key stage and believe this is an opportunity for universal library membership.

### **Recommendation 5. Strengthening the volunteer network**

Volunteers add so much to the library service, and increasing the number of range of volunteers is a priority for Manchester Libraries. We believe this can be best achieved locally without the need for any national initiatives, however a national call to action as part of an advocacy programme would be helpful.

### **Recommendation 6. The creation of a Libraries Minister and a more joined-up approach within government**

We would welcome an increase in profile and understanding of libraries within national Government, and the creation of a Libraries Minister and a more joined-up approach within government may help with that.

### **Recommendation 7. The establishment of a Libraries Laureate**

We would fully support the creation of a Libraries Laureate and would welcome them to Manchester and be part of our cultural programme.

### **Recommendation 8. A change to the timing of Libraries Week to better involve politicians nationally and locally**

Libraries Week is a great opportunity to show the impact of libraries and will participate in it whatever time of year it took place.

Finally, we agree that books are the bedrock of a library service and book fund budgets need to be maintained at a reasonable level to ensure good quality reading material is accessible and the love of reading and literacy skills are developed for people of all ages. We support the highlighting of 'fines free' having removed fines in 2020.