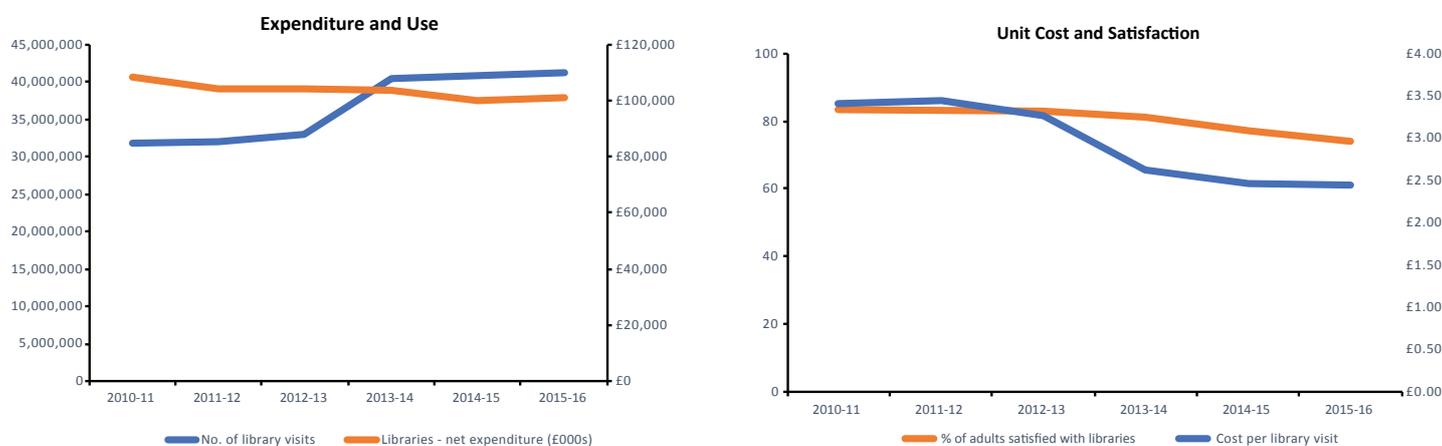


Libraries Briefing 2016

Culture and leisure services, including libraries, play an important role in the quality of life in local communities. In addition to the social and economic benefits delivered, the impact they have on promoting better health and wellbeing of the population and in reducing demand on other core services is well documented.

They can also connect well with communities that more traditional and regulated services often struggle to reach. This unique relationship provides real potential to achieve impact for people in the greatest need.

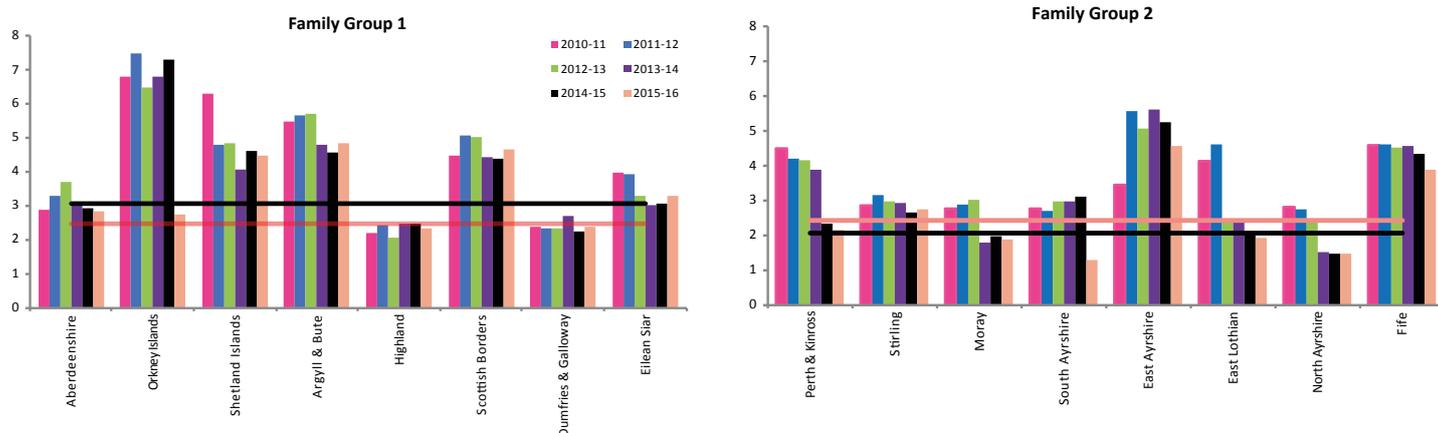
However, given there is little in the way of statutory protection for culture and leisure spending, library services face a particularly challenging financial context across the coming period. There has been a 33.2% reduction in unit costs since 2010/11, reducing from £3.66 to £2.44 in 2015/16 for the average cost per visit. During this time, satisfaction rates have also reduced, from 82.5% to 77.3%.

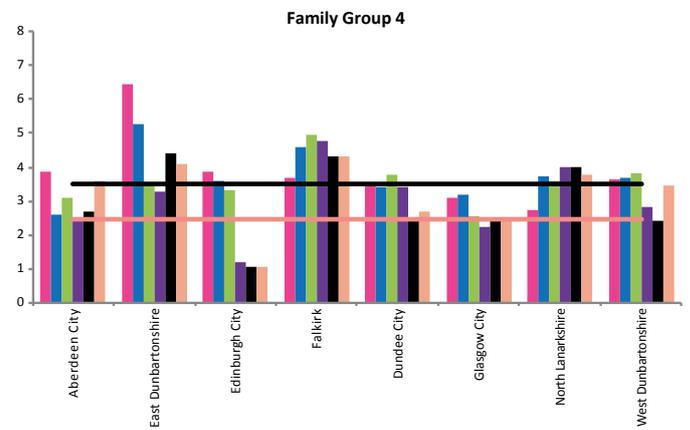
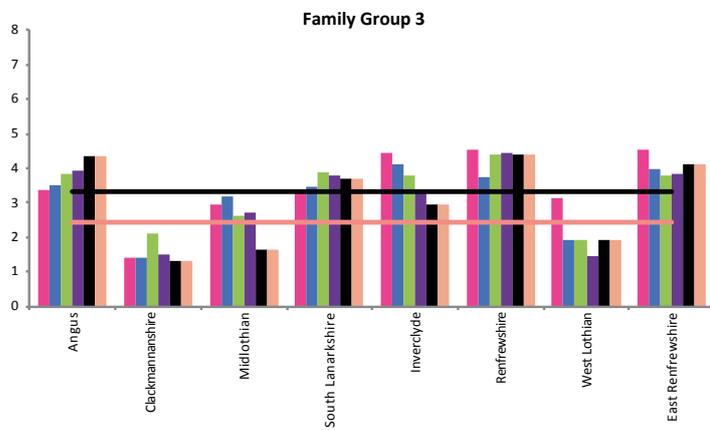


While there is significant variation in both cost and satisfaction trends across councils, there are no systematic effects of deprivation, sparsity or council size. However, work within Family Groups has identified the following factors as important in understanding the variation between authorities:

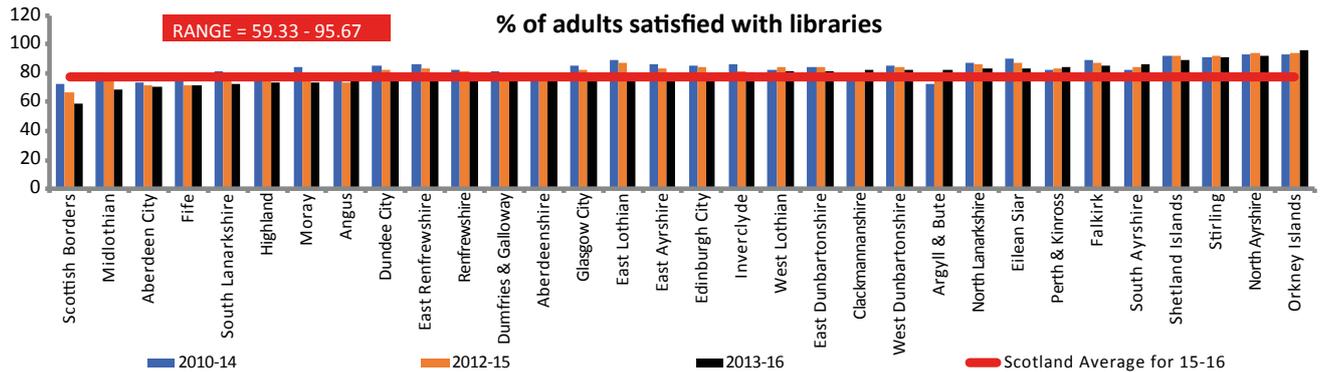
- Local political and strategic priority given to the role of culture and leisure in supporting improvement in wider outcomes, e.g. health and wellbeing, educational outcomes, tackling inequality, economic development, community empowerment, etc.
- Scale of provision and level of service (e.g. opening hours)
- Digital channel shift
- Service delivery model and level of in house and trust delivery
- Staffing composition, level and roles
- Level of volunteering, community involvement and asset transfer
- Income generation capacity
- Asset management and co-location/multi-use premises

Variation in Cost by Family Group





Variation in Satisfaction Rates



Sharing Practice—August 2016 Benchmarking Event

Library services across Scotland are being re-defined. **Co-location** of services and mixed-use facilities mean that libraries are often now about much more than lending books but can be community hubs for leisure, council tax and citizen's advice. This has significantly reduced the cost basis for many authorities whilst minimising the impact on opening hours, but has also altered the workforce profile with an increase in multi role library staff and fewer qualified librarians.

Additionally, evolving approaches towards the **concept of 'lending'** are seeing an expanding range of resources being offered, from toys to power tools. The continued focus on digital channel shift and digital inclusion are also important elements of the changing shape of library provision and have enabled a significant increase in library usage over the period. The challenges are often very different for rural and urban library services however. For example, rural councils have seen sharp reduction in funding for mobile services which has necessitated the exploration of more innovative ways of reaching these communities. For urban authorities, challenges around provision for people with mental health and addiction issues have led to investment in training for frontline staff on this.

Digital

Digital investment and channel shift is significantly transforming service delivery within the libraries sector. The extent and focus of this shift varies across the country however. **North Ayrshire** provide education hubs around employability and digital skills, and have used Public Library Improvement funding to purchase a range of Android tablets and educational apps, including *Appiness* for Early Years to help parents/ carers to support their child's learning and to develop digital skills, and *Apptitude* to build digital engagement and capacity in local communities, particularly around skills development with upper primary pupils and adult learners building digital literacy skills. These initiatives resulted in an increase of virtual visits of around 300% and an increase in membership of 0-8 year olds. **North Ayrshire** and **Inverclyde** also collaborated to develop and implement an online training programme for library

Co-location

Co-location, integration and partnership delivery of services is one of the key ways the library sector is evolving to manage the cost base while continuing to improve accessibility. **Aberdeenshire**, like many other authorities are looking to the development of integrated community campus models for schools to deliver cheaper library facilities which are open longer hours. **Highland** has focussed on a facility design and asset management approach to drive savings through the sharing of facilities, IT, and staffing teams with Leisure and Customer Services without having to reduce staff/service. **East Renfrewshire** has invested in a multi-purpose facility to offer learning, leisure and business in the new Barrhead Foundry. **North Ayrshire** has worked in partnership to develop libraries as community hatcheries for digital businesses, social enterprise support, creative industries, health and

staff to enable them to build confidence in using mobile technologies and consequently support library users. **West Lothian** invested in new technology to deliver a significant channel shift, introducing self-service kiosks and an eResource providing digital resources. This resulted in low and reducing cost per visit and an increase in visitor numbers without any library closures. **Aberdeenshire** (and 5 others) have pursued the shared procurement of a Library Management System to provide better intelligence and improved access for customers. **Borders** saw their investment in computers deliver a 5% increase in virtual visits. **Stirling** provide 3D printers and makerspaces to increase access to digital services and **Edinburgh** have developed the 'Digital Toybox' initiative which provides mobile 'maker spaces' to support young people develop new skills in coding, robotics, media, and electronics. Many authorities are making increased use of social media to market their library services and reach a broader base (e.g. **South Ayrshire**), while as a trust, **Highland** have benefited from having control of their own website and communications.

Rural Proofing

Rural councils like **Aberdeenshire** and **Scottish Borders** have focussed on partnership delivery to meet specifically rural challenges. **Aberdeenshire** is developing creative hubs to encourage creatives to use the library estate, and have linked in with Visit Scotland to develop a reciprocal arrangement around staff and premises which has enabled access to library services 7 days a week. **Aberdeenshire** are also pursuing alternative mobile delivery models, including online shopping; amazon-like lockers; book vending, and use of Tesco/other stores. **Borders** have redesigned their 'mobile library services' to fit with community events such as coffee mornings/lunch clubs.

wellbeing havens, skills and personal development (learning, literacy, reading, heritage, culture and play). **Borders** has a hybrid model, with 5 integrated services including customer services and library provision, but highlight the importance of integration across 'the right things'. The trend is not universal however, for example **Inverclyde** has chosen not to co-locate services and their effective and active young people's team has improved personal attention for service users. **Glasgow** have introduced Macmillan cancer information and support services in 25 libraries across Glasgow, while a number of councils (for example **Edinburgh**, **Dundee** and **East Lothian**) now provide hearing aid batteries in libraries after engaging with customers on how to improve access to services.

Workforce

New service delivery models emerging as a result of service reviews and the continuing focus on efficiencies have significant implications for the workforce. Engagement and consultation with staff at all levels has been highlighted in successful attempts to re-organise working processes to streamline services and allow savings (**Aberdeenshire & Highland**). Staffing restructure and review of roles and remits have been a focus for many (for example **West Lothian**, **Scottish Borders** and **Highland**). In Highland, every tier of staff is now working differently with all staff on the same shop floor, and all working across libraries, leisure and customer services. **Aberdeen** has placed greater emphasis on volunteers to enhance the service using Duke of Edinburgh and school placements, linking in with Skills Development Scotland. **Highland** have developed a volunteer strategy focussing on recruiting teen volunteers and providing accreditation.



Useful Links

Presentation: [Transformation in North Ayrshire Libraries](#)

Presentation: [West Lothian Libraries Rapid Improvement Plan](#)

Explore the LGBF data by service, across councils and over time using the [My Local Council Tool](#)



Case Studies

[East Renfrewshire Co-location](#)

[Fife Walk On](#)

[Highland Shared Facilities](#)

[Inverclyde Family Participation](#)

[North Ayrshire Partnership Engagement](#)

[West Lothian Partnership Working](#)