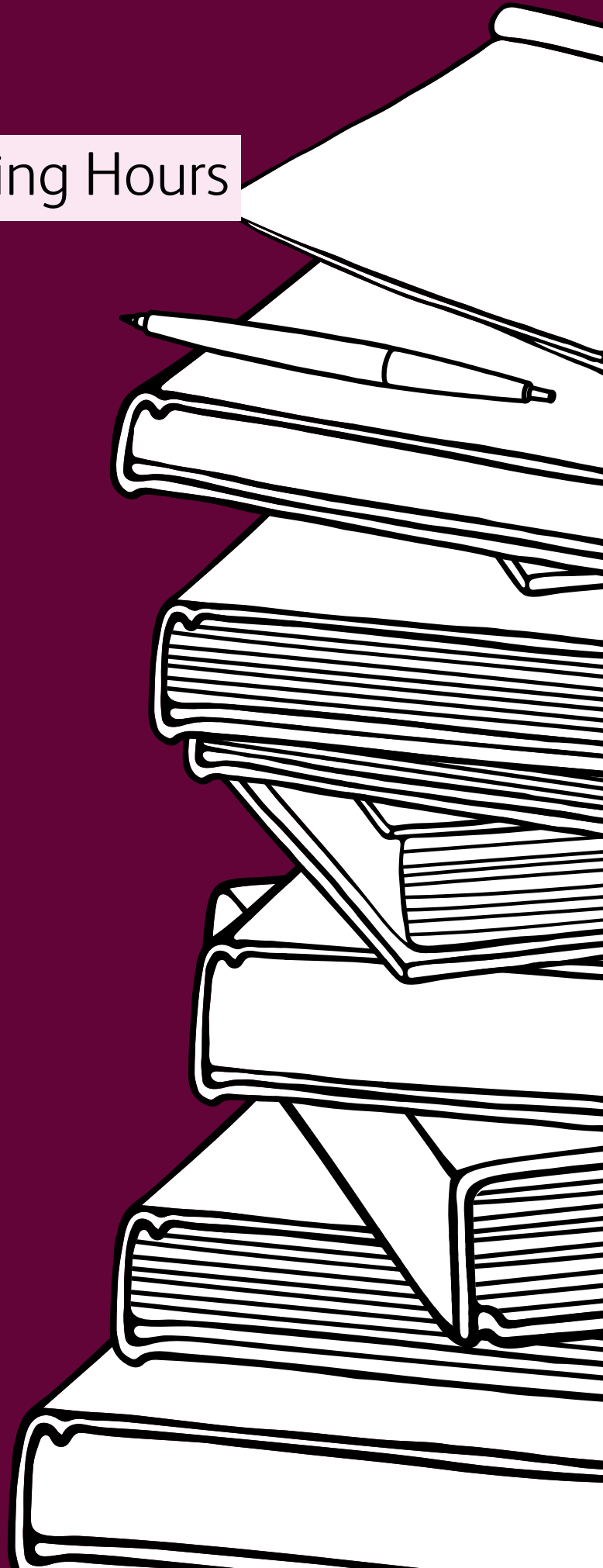


Hackney Libraries: Consultation on Opening Hours

Strategic Needs Assessment

Consultation closes:
27 January 2026

have  say



Strategic Needs Assessment: Hackney Libraries (January 2025)

The London Borough of Hackney has a population of 261,491, served by a network of 7 council-run libraries across the authority area. There is also a volunteer-led library, a universally accessible online library service, and a home library service delivering outreach for those residents who are unable to leave their homes.

Hackney Council and its services are committed to working together, in a one council approach, as well as working collaboratively with partners to deliver our services effectively to our communities, focusing where possible on the areas of greatest needs. Allowing our services to be shaped by local needs is a key design principle when developing Hackney Council's library service. This evidence-based approach, linking the design and delivery of our library service with identifiable local needs, is endorsed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Library Strategy for England.

We have looked at a series of measures to determine where need is greatest. In recognition of the broad range of interventions which a library service can help support, we have taken a range of measures which indicate need across the breadth of society and an individual's life course. These include:

- demographic information at borough and ward level
- deprivation indicators at borough and ward level
- health and wellbeing data and insight
- digital exclusion data and insight
- educational attainment data and insight
- poverty and cost of living information at London and borough level

These measures have been combined with library demand data (including figures for event participation, computer use, book issues, survey data and membership data) and independent research (conducted by the LGA Peer Review Team) and plotted according to library catchment areas, producing a matrix of need for each Hackney library.

The evidence will enable the council to identify communities where it may need to focus its resources to provide services delivering both library strategy outcomes and broader Hackney Council priorities.

This needs assessment is complemented by an [Equality Impact Assessment \(EqIA\) available on the consultation page](#) and in libraries to read.

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Executive Summary

Hackney has seven libraries; two large libraries and five branch libraries, each serving between two or three wards each plus one volunteer-run library. Hackney also has a home library service (CLS) for residents unable to travel to a physical site due to age, disability or caring duties. The libraries are arranged in clusters with one main library and two branches in each group as follows: Dalston CLR James and Shoreditch; Hackney Central and Homerton; and Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington and Clapton.

Hackney's libraries have average visitor numbers to libraries compared to all other London boroughs and slightly above average visitor numbers compared to other boroughs with 7-9 libraries.

There is some variation between the busiest times amongst Hackney's libraries. However current data shows that the quietest hours for all libraries are early mornings, evenings and weekend days.

Hackney's libraries are in the top quartile of computer use hours compared to other London boroughs and above average hours compared to other boroughs with 7-9 libraries. In 2024/2025 all Hackney Libraries had an increase in computer use hours and an overall increase of 38% across sites - rising from 88,000 hours across sites (in 23/24) to 120,000 hours (in 24/25).

30% of residents are registered members of Hackney Libraries and in 2025 Hackney Libraries have 82,000 active members - a 5% increase on 2024.

In 2024, Hackney's libraries were above average for diversity of stock at 11.8% compared to our peers who are at 9.1%.

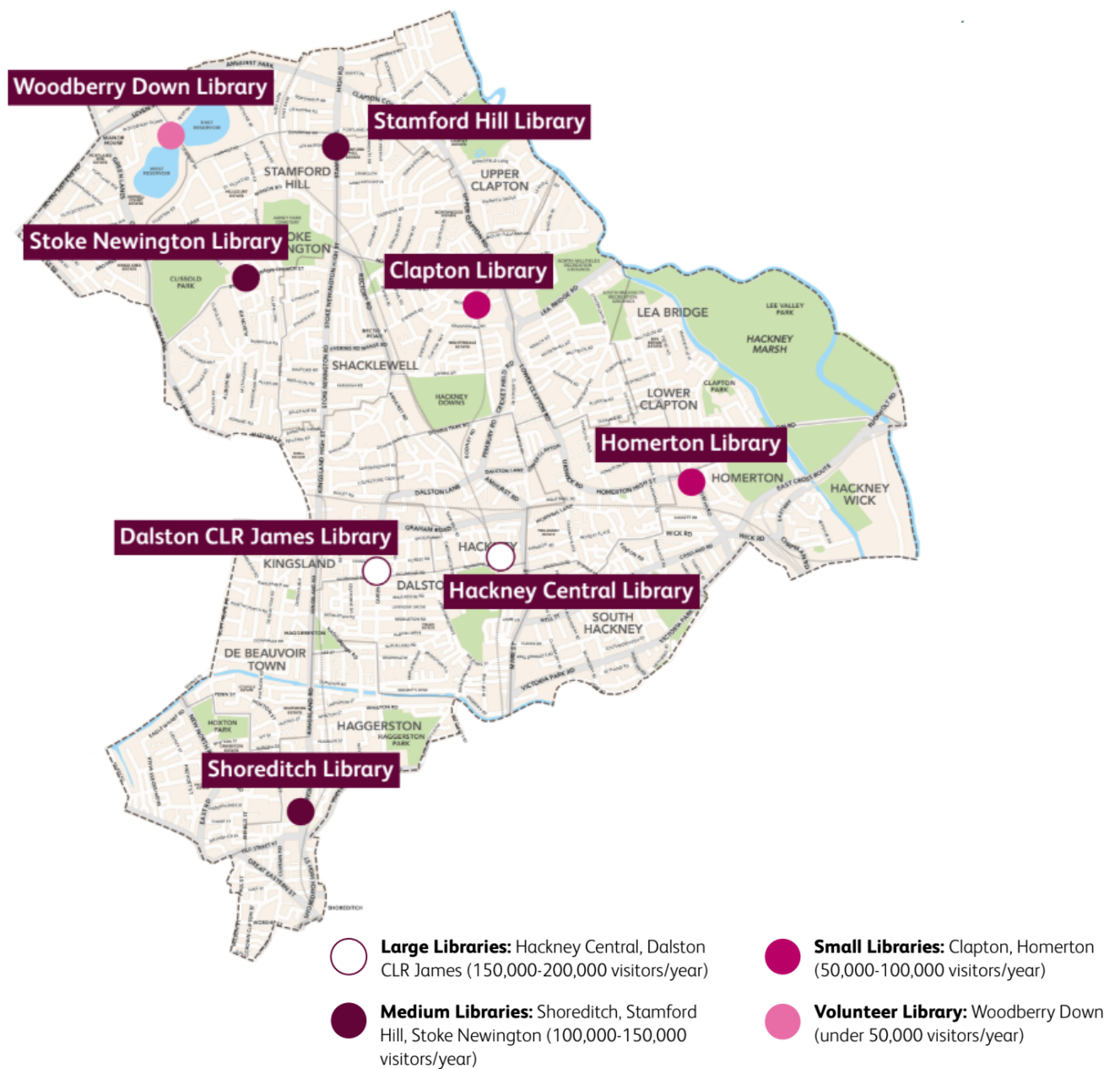


Figure 1: Map showing the location and annual footfall of Hackney's libraries

Purpose

A needs assessment is an essential element of the background information needed to enable the council to decide on the future direction of their library service. A needs analysis considers the potential need for libraries in different sectors of the community and different localities, including the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act and other characteristics in line with the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The needs assessment sets out the current library provision, analyses existing data and provides an evidence base as the foundation for future proposed options to effectively deliver the library service for residents.

A needs assessment is made more meaningful by analysing individual library usage patterns within the service to identify specific trends. A needs analysis can also include comparisons with other appropriate local authority-run library services to contextualise information about Hackney's libraries. As well as supporting evidence-based proposal development, a needs assessment can inform priorities for future service delivery and aid decision-making.

In developing this needs assessment, the council is aware of its statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service and to 'do so in a way which meets the needs of local library users taking into account the resources available.' Furthermore, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) guidance states that 'a comprehensive and efficient service means will differ between councils and will depend on the needs of each area' which should be informed 'through analysis of evidence around local needs'.

Hackney's Library Service

Hackney has seven library buildings, one of which, Stoke Newington, is currently closed for refurbishment. Hackney has a home library service for residents unable to visit a physical library and a volunteer-supported library in Woodberry Down. Hackney Libraries also provide a digital library service, offering e-books, newspapers and magazines and audiobooks, and the service in 24/25 has 82,196 registered library users (active at least once in the last three years).

Hackney is a member of the Libraries Consortium, a group of 23 local authorities (19 in London) set up under a unified library management system. The consortium also allows for stock, transport, and digital resources to be shared and jointly managed, giving users access to resources from Libraries Consortium library services across London.

In addition to lending books, magazines, DVDs, and providing access to other materials such as academic journals, citizenship and language learning content, the Library Service delivers and hosts a huge programme of events and regular sessions for Hackney residents of all demographics and offers a wide range of spaces for hire. These include sessions run by community groups, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations and Council-run services.

The largest, most heavily used libraries with the highest footfall are Dalston CLR James and Hackney Central. Dalston hosts our most well attended and popular poverty reduction and refugee support schemes and Hackney Central hosts the majority of large adult events. Shoreditch, Dalston and Clapton host multiple Adult Education classes a week, Dalston, Shoreditch, Hackney Central and Stamford Hill host Digital Buddies sessions. Clapton and Homerton host multiple U3A sessions a week and all libraries host VCS organisations and pop up literacy and health and wellbeing programmes. All libraries boast a range of well-loved free regular activities including under 5s sessions, lego and games clubs, reading groups for children and adults, writing groups, knitting and craft.

Hackney Library Service set opening hours according to the needs of local communities and neighbourhoods, opening on Sundays for the Jewish Community at Stamford Hill and at Dalston for people studying at our main campus. All libraries stay open until 8pm at least 3 days a week to account for people using them after school/work or to study in the evenings.

Hackney's libraries offer far more than traditional book lending and borrowing. They act as community hubs, providing social opportunities, access to free wifi, fixed PCs, information, support, warm spaces, and public facilities.

The National Context

Councils have a statutory responsibility to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service based on the needs of the area and the resources available. This also includes councils being able to demonstrate:

- Plans to consult communities alongside an assessment of their needs
- Consideration of a range of options to provide library services in the area
- A rigorous evaluation of the potential impact of proposal
- An ability to evidence the link between the design and delivery of library services (Localism Act, 2011).

Councils must also encourage adults and children to use the library fully and lend free books and other printed materials to those living, working and studying in the area (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964). The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) recent libraries review identified that libraries should:

- Meet legal requirements
- Be shaped by local needs
- Focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience
- Make decisions informed by evidence, building on success
- Support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers
- Promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise
- Use public funds effectively and efficiently

Councils must also comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty is considered more fully within the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment. Both research and resident feedback cite libraries as an essential community resource. Known key benefits of libraries include:

- their flexibility and responsiveness to local needs and circumstances
- their digital offer that mitigates different types of digital exclusion
- the variety of services on offer, presented in different modes and formats
- their contributions to partnerships with other services, organisations and community groups, including leadership and innovation
- their provision of space and material resources for voluntary and community-led activities which may not otherwise be resourced
- their contribution to learning and building skills for leisure, education and employment their outreach activities to engage difficult-to-reach groups in public life and social connection.

In a local authority context, libraries are also often important community spaces where people feel safe, access information freely, and engage in co-located services. Research has shown that libraries hold a position of trust in communities, which facilitates access to the services based on them. Libraries have also been shown to have benefits for digital inclusion and health and wellbeing.

The number of library visits in Hackney has broadly followed the trend in London as a whole, declining slowly with a significant drop during the COVID-19 pandemic, from which there has been a slight recovery.

Since 2011/12, Hackney Library Service has been asked to save £2.086 million. Most recently, the library service has engaged in two rounds of savings since 2021/22 and achieved a corporate savings target of £250k in 2022/23 and a further £248k in 2023/24.

In light of the increasing financial pressures facing local authorities, many councils have made or are planning to make savings-oriented changes to how their library services operate. Between 2015 and 2024, many of our geographical neighbours, including Enfield, Barnet, Waltham Forest, Haringey and Camden, consulted on library service restructures intending to make savings.

The London Context (CIPFA)

Here, aspects of Hackney's Library Service are compared with those of other London boroughs, particularly those identified by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as our statistical neighbours. Based on the CIPFA Nearest Neighbours model, Hackney's statistical neighbours are Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hounslow, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, and Wandsworth.

Comparison of opening hours

Figures 2 and 3 show that Hackney has a slightly below average number of libraries and slightly below operating hours per week compared to its statistical and geographical neighbours.

Local Authority	Number of libraries	Total hours per week	Average hours per week
Average	9	390	45
Hackney	8	422	52.75
Enfield	17	686	40.36
Redbridge	11	597	54.27
Newham	10	579	57.9
Haringey	9	525	58.3
Hounslow	11	459	41.73
Waltham Forest	8	442	55.25
Ealing	9	398	33.12
Sutton	8	378	47.25
Islington	10	381	38.1
Tower Hamlets	7	360	60
Merton	7	347	49.57
Lewisham	12	326	29.68
Brent	6	308	51.33
Croydon	13	296	22.77
Kingston	7	250	35.71
Barking & Dagenham	6	245	40.83
Hammersmith & Fulham	5	242	48.4

Figure 2: Table showing total number of libraries and their opening hours compared to that of Hackney's statistically similar neighbours

Local Authority	Number of libraries	Total hours per week	Average hours per week
Average	9	451.5	53.7
Newham	10	579	57.9
Haringey	9	525	58.3
Waltham Forest	8	442	55.25
Hackney	8	422	52.75
Islington	10	381	38.1
Tower Hamlets	7	360	60

Figure 3: Table showing total number of libraries and their opening hours compared to that of Hackney's geographical neighbours

Financial comparison

Figure 4 below shows that Hackney has the 6th highest net budget for its library services compared to thirty of its statistical neighbours. This places Hackney expenditure above the London average and that of its statistical neighbours (Figure 5).

Total budgeted expenditure on library services 2024/25

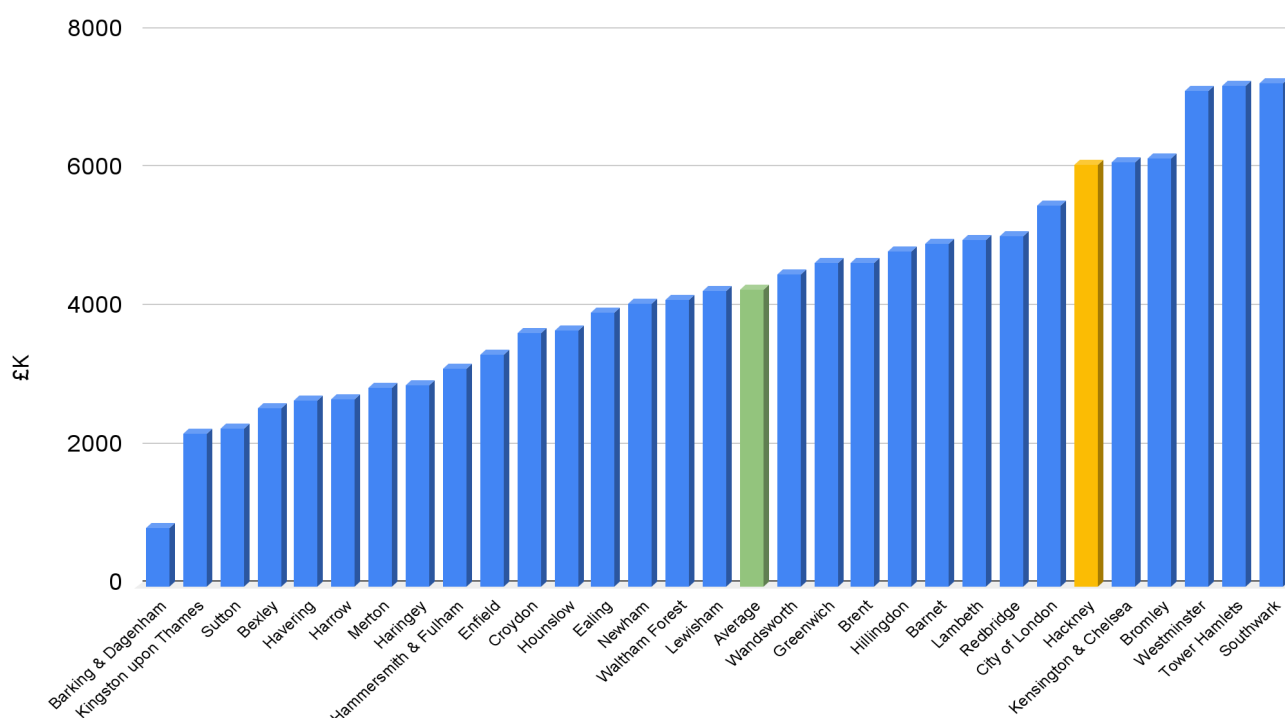


Figure 4: Table shows net budgeted expenditure on Hackney Libraries in 24/25 compared to other London boroughs. Source is revenue actual data (Gov.uk)

Total expenditure on library services 2024/25

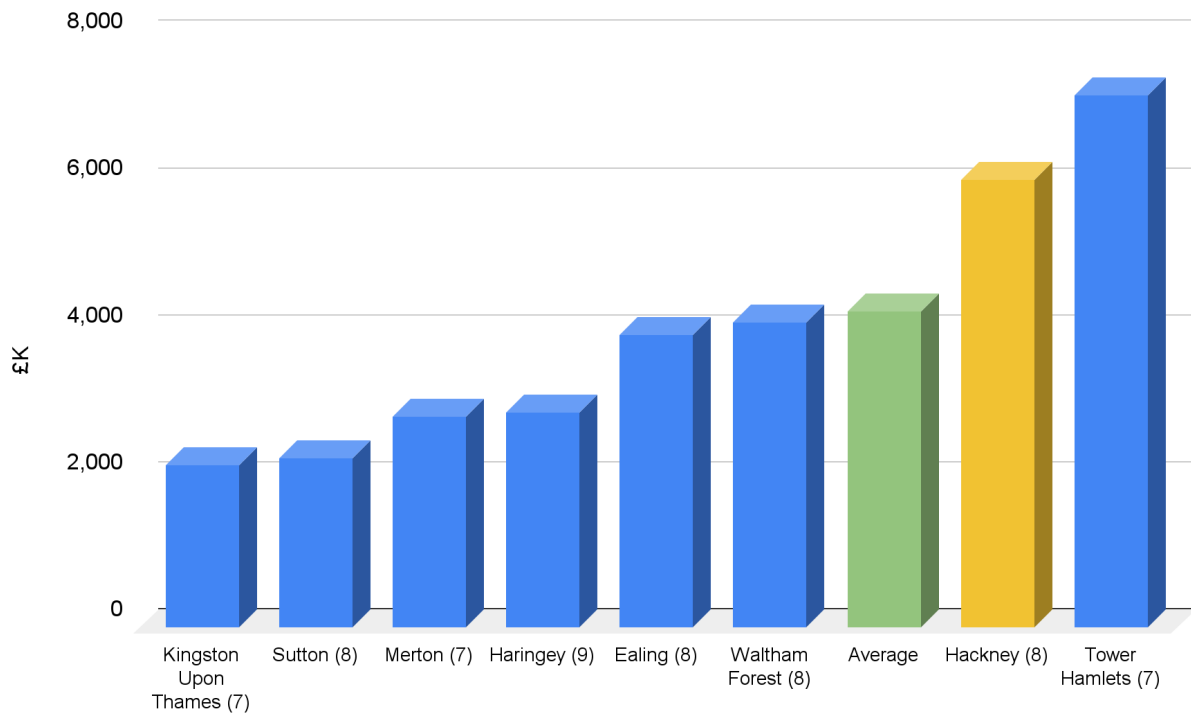


Figure 5: Table shows total budgeted expenditure on Hackney Libraries in 24/25 compared to our statistical neighbours with between 7-9 libraries. Data relating to our geographical neighbours; Camden (9 libraries) and Islington (12 libraries) excluded because spend isn't publicly available.

Borough Profile

Historically Hackney has welcomed people from around the world. Inward migration can be traced back to the 17th century with the arrival of immigrants such as the French Huguenots. There are well established Caribbean, Turkish and Kurdish, Vietnamese and Orthodox Jewish communities. There are also newer communities of people from African countries and Eastern Europe.

Hackney is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country - over 40% of its people are non-White. The ONS estimated that Hackney's population is around 260,000 and predicts it will grow to around 300,000 by 2050. Around 47% of the population come from Black and Global Majority groups, with the largest (21%) being Black or Black British. 36% of the population are White British.

Hackney has one the largest groups of Charedi Jewish people in Europe. They predominantly live in the north east of the borough and represent around 7% of the borough's overall population. At least 4.5% of Hackney's residents are Turkish or Kurdish and are mainly concentrated in the South, East and Central parts of the borough. At least 89 different languages are spoken in Hackney.

Significant inequalities mark Hackney, and whilst deprivation levels are high, particularly in the north and east and in pockets across the borough, there are also areas of great affluence. Hackney is one of the more deprived authorities in the country, ranking 22 out of 317 local authorities in England and the 11th most deprived borough of the 35 boroughs in London according to its average rank, which demonstrates that deprivation is more evenly distributed across Hackney than in other boroughs. A total of 11% of Hackney's neighbourhoods are in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally.

Protected characteristics in Hackney

The data below presents the profile of protected characteristics among Hackney residents; this data comes from the 2021 National Census and Hackney's EqIA template.

The 'Library User' column shows the percentage of library users with each characteristic and how far above and below the Hackney average.

Age: Hackney is a relatively young borough, with over half of the population (55%) under 35 years old, and almost a third (31%) aged under 24. People aged over 55 make up 17% of the population.

Age	Library Users	Hackney	London	England
All usual residents		100% (259,148)	100%	100%
Aged 4 years and under	11% (2% lower)	6.2% (16,135)	6%	5.4%
Aged 5 to 9 years		5.8% (15,159)	6%	5.9%
Aged 10 to 15 years	17% (5.75% higher)	7.1% (18,384)	7.2%	7.2%
Aged 16 to 19 years		4.3% (11,159)	4.4%	4.6%
Aged 20 to 24 years	54% (0.75% lower)	7.2% (18,592)	6.7%	6%
Aged 25 to 34 years		24.5% (63,482)	18.1%	13.6%
Aged 35 to 49 years		22.3% (57,714)	22.7%	19.4%
Aged 50 to 64 years	18% (1.5% lower)	14.7% (38,022)	16.9%	19.4%
Aged 65 to 74 years		4.8% (12,473)	6.5%	9.8%
Aged 75 to 84 years		2.2% (5,798)	3.8%	6.1%
Aged 85 years and over		0.9% (2,230)	1.6%	2.4%

Disability: According to the 2021 Census, almost a fifth of the population of Hackney (14.3%) are disabled under the Equality Act 2010.

Disability	Library Users	Hackney	London	England
All usual residents		100% (259,146)	100% (8,799,728)	100% (56,490,048)
Disabled under the Equality Act		14.3% (37,020)	13.2%	17.3%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	15% (0.7% higher)	6.4% (16,622)	5.7%	7.3%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little		7.9% (20,398)	7.5%	10%
Not disabled under the Equality Act		85.7% (222,126)	86.8%	82.7%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	85%	5.1% (13,250)	5.2%	6.8%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions		80.6% (208,876)	81.5%	75.9%

Gender Reassignment: Hackney has a slightly higher proportion of residents (1.07%, 2241 people) with a transgender identity (their gender identity is different from the sex registered at birth) by

comparison to London and England and a lower proportion (89.28%, 18,7007 people) of than those with a cisgender identity (their gender identity is the same as the sex registered at birth). Similarly to the sexual orientation data, people in Hackney were also less likely to respond to this question, although more likely to respond to this question than to the question on Sexual Orientation. This may be due to a number of factors, for example lack of confidence in sharing data or not wanting to share personal information, experiences of transphobia, religious, cultural or philosophical beliefs or practices. The 2021 Census estimated that around 1% of the population in Hackney is transgender, with a high proportion of people identifying as a non-binary gender.

Gender Reassignment	Library Users	Hackney	London	England
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth		89.28%	91.21%	93.47%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth		1.07%	0.91%	0.55%
Not answered		9.65%	7.88%	5.98%

Marriage and Civil Partnership: 27% of adults in Hackney are married or in a civil partnership compared to 40% in London and 45% in England and Wales.

Pregnancy and Maternity: There were 3,971 live births in City and Hackney in 2021. The general fertility rate (GFR) for Hackney is 54 live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 compared to 56 in 1000 for London and England.

Ethnicity: According to the 2021 Census, around 47% of the population come from Black and Global Majority groups; 21.1% as 'Black', 10.4% as 'Asian', 6.7% as 'Mixed' and 8.7% identify within the 'Other ethnic group' category. Hackney has one of the largest groups of Charedi Jewish people in Europe. They predominately live in the north east of the borough and represent almost 7% of the borough's overall population. Just over 3% of Hackney's residents were born in Turkey and live throughout the borough. Hackney is a borough with a huge range of language diversity, with 89 different languages listed as a resident's preferred language, out of 96 languages listed in the census. The most common first language is English, followed by Turkish (3%), Spanish (2%) and French, Portuguese or Yiddish (all 1%).

Ethnicity	Library Users	Hackney	London	England
All usual residents		100% (259,147)	100%	100%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh		10.4% (26,885)	20.7%	9.6%
Bangladeshi	11% (0.6% higher)	2.5% (6,554)	3.7%	1.1%
Chinese		1.3% (3,459)	1.7%	0.8%
Indian		3.4% (8,832)	7.5%	3.3%
Pakistani		0.9% (2,461)	3.3%	2.8%
Other Asian		2.2% (5,579)	4.6%	1.7%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African		21.1% (54,645)	13.5%	4.2%
African	25% (4.9% higher)	11.4% (29,478)	7.9%	2.6%
Caribbean		6.9% (17,903)	3.9%	1.1%
Other Black		2.8% (7,264)	1.7%	0.5%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups:		6.7% (17,487)	5.7%	3%

Religion or Belief: 30.7% of Hackney's residents describe themselves as Christians - a significantly lower proportion than in London or England. The borough has relatively high proportions of people of the Jewish faith, Muslims and people with no religion or who declined to state one.

Religion	Library Users	Hackney	London	England
All usual residents	100%	100% (259,145)	100%	100%
No religion	31%	36.3% (94,113)	27.1%	36.7%
Christian	29%	30.7% (79,499)	40.7%	46.3%
Buddhist	1%	0.9% (2,343)	0.9%	0.5%
Hindu	0.8%	0.8% (1,998)	5.1%	1.8%
Jewish	5%	6.7% (17,426)	1.7%	0.5%
Muslim	8.4%	13.3% (34,578)	15%	6.7%
Sikh	0.6%	0.7% (1,867)	1.6%	0.9%
Other religion	2.5%	1.9% (4,879)	1%	0.6%
Not answered	18%	8.7% (22,442)	7%	6%

Sex: According to the 2021 Census there are proportionally more women living in Hackney than men with 52.2% of the population female and 47.8% male.

Sex	Library Users	Hackney
Female	57%	52.2%
Male	40%	47.8%

Sexual Orientation: Compared to other London boroughs, Hackney has one of the lowest numbers of straight/heterosexual people, with only the City of London having fewer, and people in Hackney are

more likely to identify as bisexual or queer compared to any of the London boroughs. Hackney residents are also less likely to have chosen to answer this question than in any other London Local Authority. This places Hackney in the top 5 of the 34 London Local Authorities for the largest LGBTQ+ population as well as the London Local Authority with the third highest proportion of those not providing an answer to the question. Hackney has the 6th highest LGBTQ+ population in England.

Sexual Orientation	Library Users	Hackney	London	England
Heterosexual identity	70.2%	79.6%	86.2%	89.4%
LGBTQIA+ identity	9.6%	7.8%	4.3%	3.2%
Not answered	4.6%	12.6%	9.5%	7.5%

Socioeconomic Status:

Indices of Deprivation 2015: Based on the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Hackney was one of the 20 most deprived local authorities in London. However, between 2010 and 2015, the proportion of highly deprived neighbourhoods in Hackney significantly decreased from 42% to 17%. This indicates that Hackney is becoming relatively less deprived compared to other areas.

- Based on average ranking Hackney ranks as the second most deprived LA in the Country (1st in 2010)
- Based on the 'extent' measure Hackney ranks as the 11th most deprived LA in the country. In the same measure in the (1st in 2010)
- Based on the percentage of "lower super output areas" (small area geographies) in the top 10% most deprived nationally, Hackney ranks as the 49th most deprived area nationally (6th in 2010)
- 1 in 5 children and 2 in 5 adults over 60 live in poverty.

In terms of geographical variation, there are some particular concentrations of deprivation:

- In the eastern part of the borough around Kings Park and Hackney Wick (served by Homerton Library)
- In the north-west of the borough, around Manor House and Woodberry Down (served by Woodberry Down and Stamford Hill Library)
- The borders between Victoria and Homerton wards (served by Hackney Central and Homerton Library)
- The borders between Springfield and Lea Bridge wards (served by Clapton and Stamford Hill Libraries)
- Areas of Hackney Downs (served by Clapton Library), Hoxton West and Haggerston (served by Shoreditch Library) south Clissold (served by Dalston Library)

Income: The Index of Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Index of Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) measure income poverty affecting children and older people, and are part of the indices of deprivation. Hackney has an IDACI score of 32 and an IDAOPI score of 43:

- 32% of children in the borough are in income deprived households (48% in 2010)
- 10th most deprived local authority district for the IDACI domain
- 43% of older people in the borough are in income deprived households (45% in 2010)
- 2nd most deprived local authority district for the IDAOPI domain
- Child poverty rate (AHC) - 43% (Worse compared to all London Boroughs (33%) *London Poverty Profile*)
- Income deprivation: Income deprivation (Hackney is the 3rd most income-deprived borough relative to London and the rest of England *London Poverty Profile*)

Employment: In the employment domain Hackney ranks as the 57th most deprived local authority in the country, and 7% of Hackney's LSOAs are in the top 10% most deprived nationally. There are particular concentrations of employment deprivation in the Kings Park, Homerton, Wick, Springfield and Woodberry Down areas of the borough.

- Out-of-work benefits - 16.3% (Worse compared to all London Boroughs (12.8%) *London Poverty Profile*

Educational Attainment: In the education domain Hackney Schools have fared well in all areas when compared to the national levels and in comparison to the other 153 local authorities with some exceptions at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) regarding attainment and ethnicity.

- At KS4 Caribbean, Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot and Mixed Heritage pupils have the lowest Attainment 8 scores in Hackney. These three cohorts also have the largest gender gap. Caribbean boys and Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot boys have the lowest attainment overall. Indian pupils underperformed compared to the equivalent national cohorts. African girls, on the level 5 benchmark, have an eight percentage point gap to the equivalent national cohort, although the performance gap on the Attainment 8 measure is much smaller.
- The five cohorts that perform below the overall Hackney EYFS level are: Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish and Cypriot boys (22% below), Caribbean boys (17% below), African boys (15% below) and Caribbean girls (7% below).
- In Hackney, children in care achieve lower attainment scores in their GCSEs

Health: In the health domain Hackney ranks as the 61st most deprived local authority in England, and 8% of Hackney's LSOAs are in the top most deprived 10% nationally. There are particular concentrations of health deprivation in the south of the borough, in Hackney Wick, pockets of Victoria, London Fields, Hoxton West, Hackney Downs, Hackney Central, South Clissold and Woodberry Down.

- Premature deaths per 100,000 - 404 (Worse compared to all London Boroughs (309) *London Poverty Profile*
- Residents spend on average around a quarter of their lives in poor health and people in Hackney live shorter lives compared to many other London boroughs
- 1 in 5 people live with a long term health condition or disability
- More residents are diagnosed with depression now than 10 years ago

Housing: In the housing and services domain Hackney ranks as the 6th most deprived local authority in England, and 53% of the boroughs LSOAs are in the top 10% most deprived nationally. Housing deprivation is relatively evenly spread throughout the borough with some lower levels in the north-western side of the borough around De Beauvoir and Stoke Newington.

- Hackney is the third most densely populated borough in England
- Around 4,000 children live in temporary accommodation
- Hackney has higher rates of homelessness (21 per 1000 households) compared to London (18) and England (13). Homeless acceptances: Main homelessness duty owed per 1,000 households - 1.44 (Worse compared to all London Boroughs (0.93%) *London Poverty Profile*
- Over 40% of Hackney's housing is socially rented, a much higher percentage than in London or nationally. Home ownership is correspondingly lower - just under a quarter of the borough's households are owner occupiers. Nearly a third of Hackney's households rent from a private landlord.
- 5.3% (28) of respondents in our recent Library users Survey (2025) were living in temporary accommodation or experiencing homelessness. The majority of respondents 48% (245 people) were renters, with 21.6% (113 people) renting privately, 12.8% (67) renting from the council, and 12.4% (65) from a housing association. Next highest were those who owned their property outright 20.6% (108) and being bought on a mortgage 15.6% (82). 9% (47) didn't know.

- Hackney has proportionately more lone parent, single person, cohabiting couples and other household type households than the averages for both London and England, and fewer single family households (both with and without children).

Crime: In the crime domain Hackney ranks as the 5th most deprived local authority in England, with 44% of the borough's LSOAs in the top 10% most deprived nationally. The crime rate is relatively evenly spread throughout the borough, but with some lower levels in Stamford Hill West, Cazenove, and Springfield. The overall reported crime rate is high compared (125 crimes per 1000 people) to London (107) and England (88).

Poverty: Poverty in Hackney is a significant and persistent challenge, with around one in three households and nearly half of all children living in poverty after housing costs. The borough faces deep-rooted inequalities driven by low incomes, high housing costs, and systemic barriers to opportunity. These issues disproportionately affect Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities, disabled residents, and single-parent households. Despite a strong sense of community and resilience, many residents struggle to meet basic needs, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated local and national action to tackle the root causes of poverty.

Background to Library Data Collection

Demographic data

Hackney Libraries collect data from users who register for a library card. Much of our data is in line with data collected by the census (ethnicity, age, disability). However, we don't collect data on housing tenure, health and employment. The ward profile data provided by the census therefore gives us a good indication of the health, living and employment status of the residents around each library.

- Across all libraries we have significantly higher levels of women and young people using our libraries than the borough averages
- Across all libraries (excluding Stoke Newington), our user base broadly represents the ethnic diversity of the local wards, but in most cases we have high to significantly high numbers of Black, Mixed and Asian users than the borough averages
- Across all libraries (excluding Stamford Hill) we have lower or significantly lower than the borough average levels of older people using our libraries.

In our January 2025 survey of users, we asked about housing tenure to gain a better picture of users' housing status. We compared this to 2021 data and added a category for **'temporary accommodation/experiencing homelessness'**. In January 2025:

- 12.8% of users were renting from the council, a percentage increase of 30% from 2021
- 5.3% of users were living in temporary accommodation or experiencing homelessness (data not collected in 2021)
- Our daily computer users are those in temporary accommodation/experiencing homelessness, council renters, private renters, and housing association renters
- Our most frequent visitors are those in temporary accommodation/experiencing homelessness, council renters, private renters, housing association renters using libraries 'every day' or 'a few times a week'

Footfall data

In recent decades, across the UK, libraries have seen a decline in visitors. Hackney followed a similar trend pre- and post-pandemic, with the 2024-25 total of visitors to all libraries in Hackney falling to around seven hundred thousand visitors from a high of over one million visitors recorded in 2011-2012 (the last time we have accurate footfall data).

Historical usage data, gathered through the Plescon system, recorded annual library usage. However, Plescon's limitations prevented the collection of weekly, daily, or hourly footfall data for this consultation. The system also utilised beams that recorded movement rather than actual numbers,

likely inflating these figures. Consequently, the needs assessment cannot rely on historical data collected by Plescon.

In January 2024, footfall data collection in libraries was updated to a new system, Kepler, which already provides more detailed information than the previous system, albeit over a shorter time span. Kepler was rolled out in phases across all libraries (excluding Stoke Newington, which is currently closed) between October and December 2023. Therefore, the Needs Assessment relies on one full year of footfall data and the emerging datasets from Kepler.

The Kepler datasets gathered so far show variables due to factors such as seasonality and peaks in usage during exam revision time. The data we have now can be relied upon for decision-making and considered alongside public insight when making decisions about future operating models.

Stoke Newington Library is currently closed and has no Kepler footfall counter. Pre-pandemic data shows it was a busy library, with footfall rates similar to Shoreditch (a similar sized library). It is recognised that its previous visitors may be visiting other libraries and they and other visitors may well return to use Stoke Newington when it re-opens. To accurately model any impact of the closure of Stoke Newington on the footfall data of other libraries e.g. its nearest neighbours, we would need to rely on pre-closure data to identify any spikes in usage that correlate with the closure of Stoke Newington. It is therefore not possible to say whether and how many library users have been displaced to use neighbouring libraries as opposed to visiting out of borough libraries or stopping visiting libraries. Equally, it is not clear how many users might return to visiting Stoke Newington when it re-opens, though insight from our recent Library Customer Satisfaction Survey showed good representation of Stoke Newington Library users, with 9% of respondents marking it as their most used library.

Footfall Across Hackney's Libraries

This section is informed by Kepler data held by the Hackney Library Service as described in the previous section. The datasets provided are based on the periods when the Kepler footfall counters started operating in each library 1 Jan '24. The end date in all cases is up to and including 1 Jan '25.

Annual Footfall: Total Footfall to All Libraries (Jan 2024 - Jan 2025)

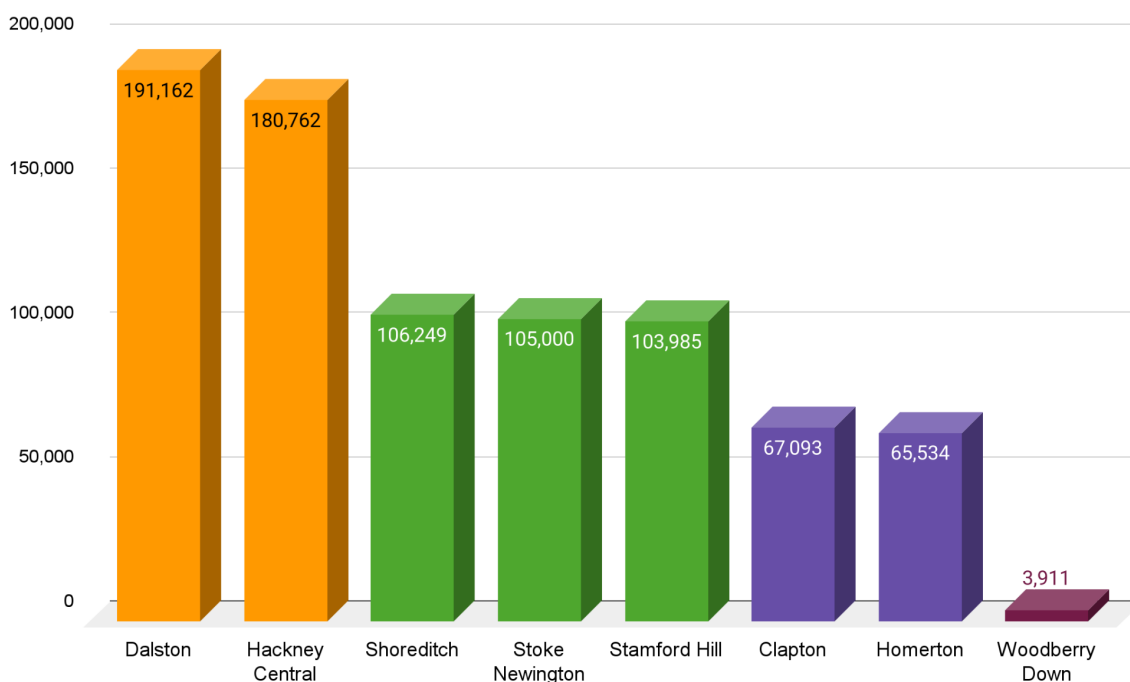


Figure 6 shows the percentage of total footfall to main libraries broken down by library, Annual Footfall: Comments

- Libraries had a total of 714,785 visits in 2024
- Footfall counters were installed in all libraries in December 2023, so 2024 is our first full year of accurate footfall data since the service restructured and no previous data is available to compare it to
- Annual footfall is proportional to the size of each library.
- Graph includes an estimate for Stoke Newington Library (based on other medium sized libraries). This library is currently closed for refurbishment.

Annual Footfall: Main Libraries Total Footfall (Jan 2024 - Jan 2025)

Library	Annual Footfall 2024
Clapton	67,710
Hackney Central	180,489
Dalston	191,162
Homerton	65,534
Shoreditch	106,216
Stamford Hill	103,985

Annual Footfall: Main Libraries Total Footfall by Day of the Week (Jan 2024 - Jan 2025)

Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Clapton	12,775	13,561	8,562	13,556	10,164	8,092	n/a
Hackney Central	31,209	32,343	33,057	31,228	28,732	23,920	n/a
Dalston	28,209	28,666	31,629	31,676	28,331	27,071	15,580
Homerton	12,092	13,758	7,938	13,003	10,413	8,330	n/a

Shoreditch	18,583	20,106	20,724	18,414	14,643	13,746	n/a
Stamford Hill	17,624	18,397	18,211	16,992	15,852	7,875	9,034

Daily Attendance: Main Libraries Average Visitors per Day (Jan 2025)

Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Clapton	278	271	171	282	207	159	n/a
Hackney Central	664	647	675	625	563	460	n/a
Dalston	613	573	645	634	556	521	312
Homerton	263	275	159	265	213	163	n/a
Shoreditch	413	410	414	368	293	270	n/a
Stamford Hill	392	375	364	340	317	154	177

Monthly Attendance: Main Libraries Footfall Comparison (Jan 2024 vs Jan 2025)

Library	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	% increase/decrease
Clapton	5,414	5,880	8.61%
Hackney Central	15,914	16,753	5.27%
Dalston	14,457	14,188	-1.86%
Homerton	4,965	6,512	31.16%
Shoreditch	9,540	9,263	-2.90%
Stamford Hill	9,276	8,978	-3.21%

Figures 7, 8 and 9: Tables showing annual footfall, footfall by day of the week, average number of weekday and weekend visitors, busiest and quietest days, and a comparison of January 2024 and January 2025 visitor figures for each of Hackney's libraries. Clapton and Homerton are closed on Wednesday mornings.

The tables above are based on the mean average of visitor data daily calculated from when the relevant library footfall counter became operational on 1st January 2024 through to the 31st January 2025. It is recognised that this is a limited dataset, however it provides some emergent evidence-based insight into weekly trends in usage.

At this stage, the data has been used to shape library opening hours options (subject to public consultation) and continued data gathering and monitoring for consistent trends through the Kepler footfall counters.

This way of collecting and calculating mean average footfall data is subject to the following caveats:

- Where the library has been closed for a bank holiday or a staff training day on a day it would usually be open, the data is disregarded for the average visitor number calculation.
- All libraries closed for stock takes during 2024. The footfall figures for those days have been disregarded for the average visitor number calculation.

Daily Attendance: Comments

- Dalston CLR James Library and Stamford Hill Library are open 7 days a week, all other libraries are open Monday - Saturday
- Clapton and Homerton close on Wednesday mornings
- All libraries see a reduction in footfall on Saturdays and Sundays (where open), compared to Monday to Friday.
- All libraries see a reduction of footfall on Fridays where the libraries close at 6pm (2 hours

less than other weekdays where most libraries have 8pm closing times), but all of our small and medium libraries have seen an increase in footfall on Fridays since 2024.

- Though Stamford Hill Library is open twice as many hours on a Saturday than it is on a Sunday, footfall on Sundays is significantly higher per hour which can be explained by the high proportion of Charedi Jewish customers who would not attend on Saturdays using this branch on Sundays
- Dalston, Shoreditch and Stamford Hill have seen a slight decrease of between 1% and 3% in footfall overall since January 2024.
- Hackney Central and Clapton have all seen a marked increase in footfall of between 5% and 8% since January 2024
- Homerton has seen a significant increase in footfall since January 2024 and the only library in Hackney that has increased by an average of 20% - 40% every day of the week.
- The only libraries to see increases of above 10% are Clapton and Homerton.

Hourly Footfall

Hourly timed entry data is available with the Kepler Footfall Counter system and for the purpose of the needs assessment the data relied on is timed entry data between 1st January 2024 - 31st January 2025, split between weekdays and weekends.

The footfall data collected via timed entry provides data to show that the fewest number of people enter the library during the final hour of the day than any other day. The table below is based on hourly footfall charts collected by Kepler by weekday and weekend.

Daily Attendance: Busiest and Quietest Days (Jan 2024 - Jan 2025)

Site	Busiest Weekday	Quietest Weekday	Visitors Saturday	Visitors Sunday	Busiest Hours Weekday	Quietest Hours Weekday	Busiest Hour Weekend Day
Clapton	Thurs	Wed/Fri	8,092	n/a	3pm-5pm	6pm-8pm	12noon-3pm
Hackney Central	Wed	Thurs/Fri	23,920	n/a	2pm-5pm	6pm-8pm	1pm-3pm
Dalston	Wed	Mon/Fri	27,071	15,580	1pm-4pm	6pm-8pm	1pm-3pm
Homerton	Tues	Wed/Fri	8,330	n/a	1pm-4pm	6pm-8pm	1pm-3pm
Shoreditch	Wed	Thurs/Fri	13,746	n/a	3pm-5pm	6pm-8pm	12noon-3pm
Stamford Hill	Mon	Thurs/Fri	9,034	9,698	1pm-4pm	6pm-8pm	1pm-4pm

Figure 10: Table showing quietest and busiest weekday and weekend operating hours for each of Hackney's libraries based on Kepler data captured between 1 Jan 2024 and 31 Jan 2025.

Hourly Footfall: Comments

- The current usage trends set out in the table above indicate Dalston, Homerton and Stamford Hill are busiest between 13:00 and 16:00, Clapton and Shoreditch between 15:00 and 17:00, Hackney Central between 14:00 and 17:00.
- All libraries are quietest between 18:00 and 20:00. The first hour after opening is the second quietest.
- The busiest hours vary more on weekends, ranging from 10:00 - 15:00. Weekend quietest hours: all libraries are quietest between 16:00 - 17:00.
- Note: Whilst the very quietest hours are at the end of the day, it is also quiet in the majority of libraries for the first hour after opening. While this may indicate less general demand for libraries at these times further consideration should be given to library users who due to their specific protected characteristics may prefer to use the library at quieter times, whether these be at the start or end of the day. This time of day is also seasonally popular with young people and students revising for exams. This is explored further in the accompanying EqlA.

Registered Users

Registered users for each of Hackney's seven libraries.

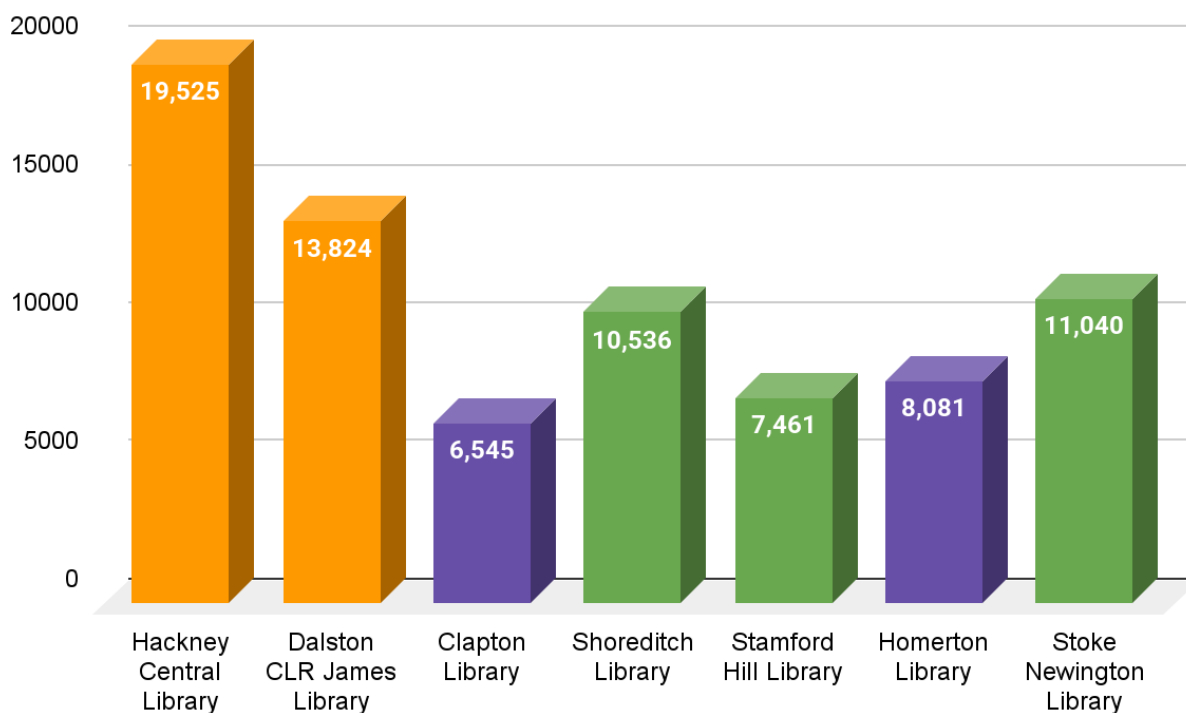


Figure 11: Chart showing registered users per library in 2024. 78,430 registered users

Registered users as a % of neighbouring ward populations 23/24.

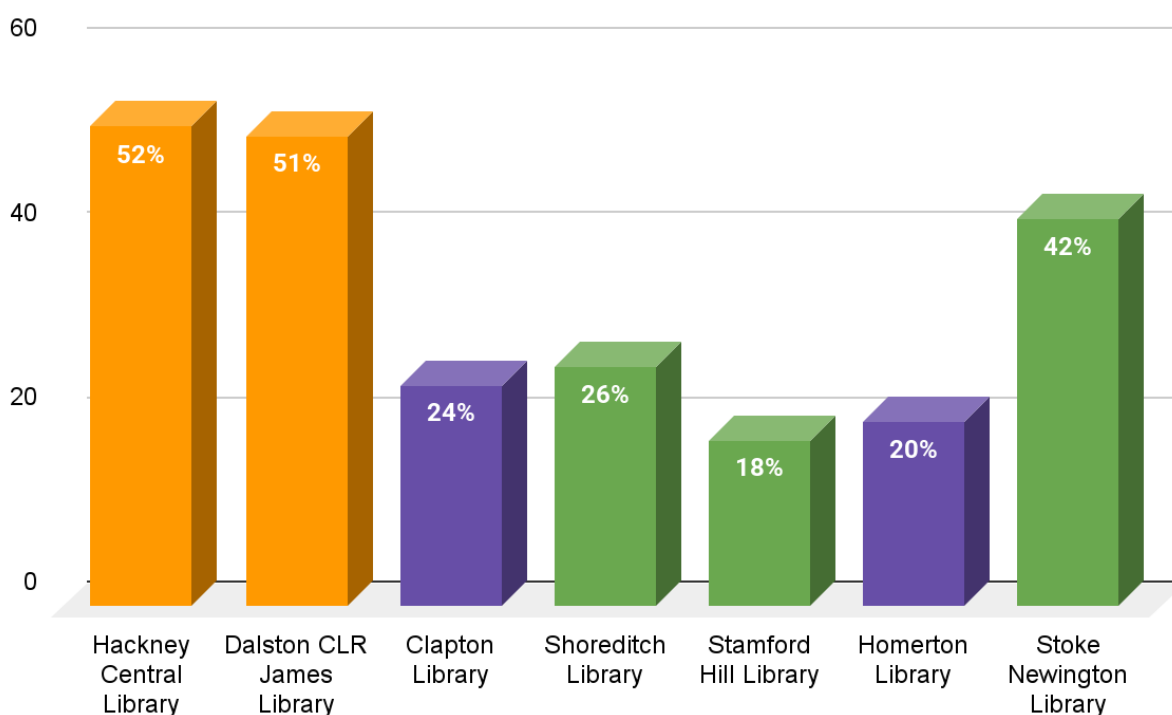


Figure 12: Chart showing registered users per library as a % of neighbouring wards in 2024. 238,021 population

Active borrowers by library 23/24.

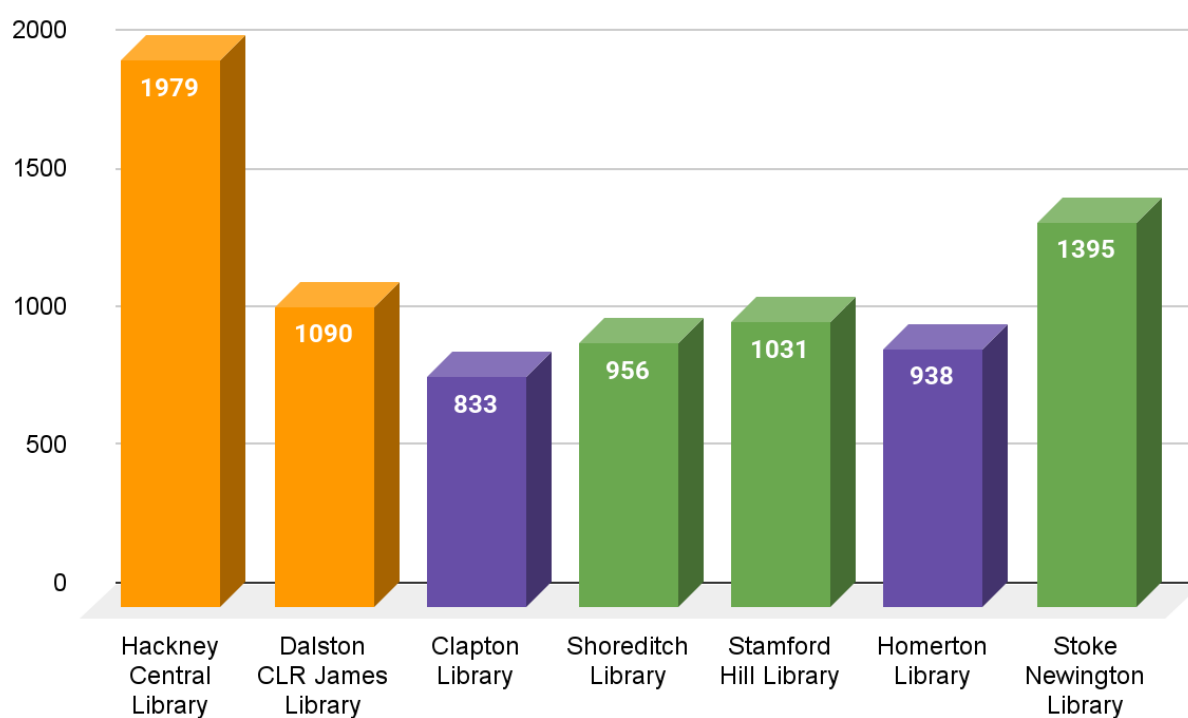


Figure 13: Chart showing active book borrowers per library in 2024. Total 8427

Physical issues by library 23/24. 372,614

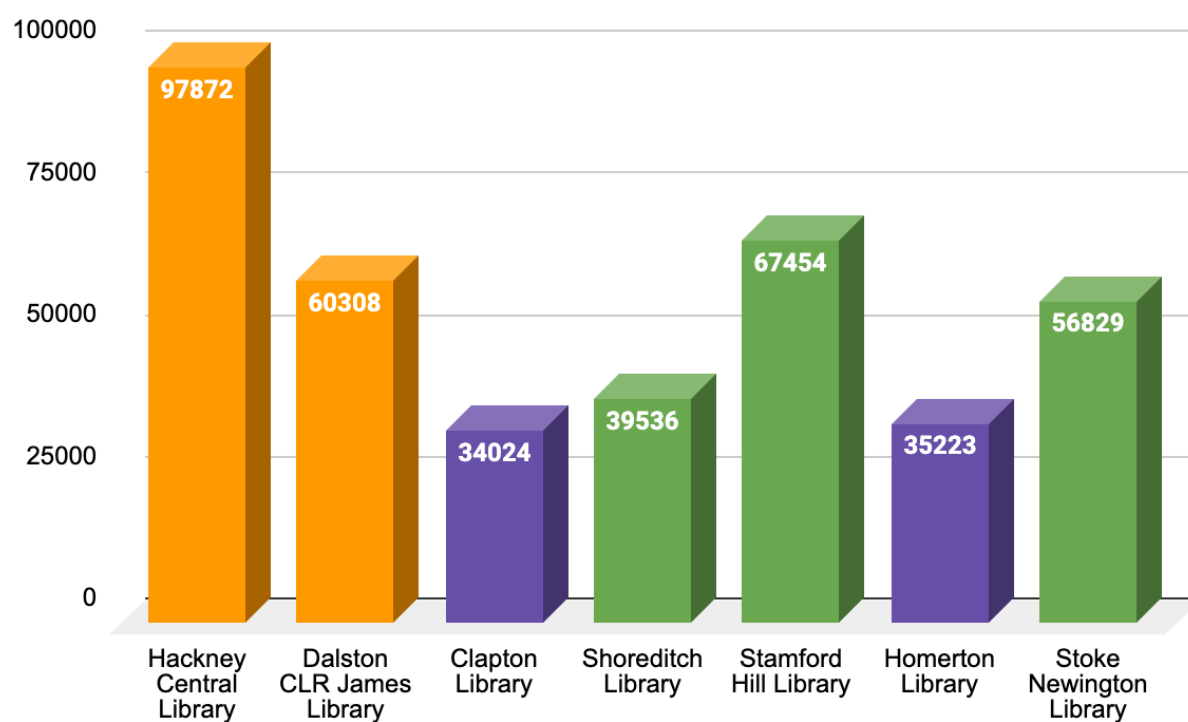


Figure 14: Chart showing issues per library in 2024.

Active users by library 23/24

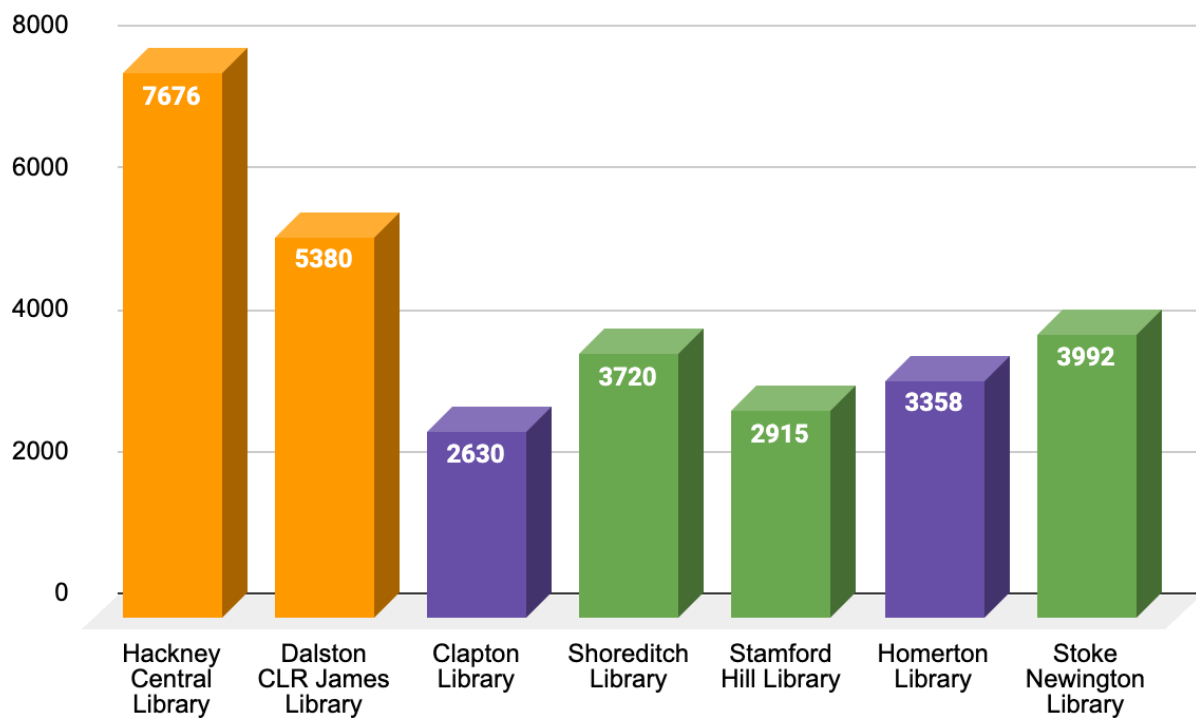


Figure 15: Chart showing active users in 2024. Total 30,080

Number of computer hours by library 23/24

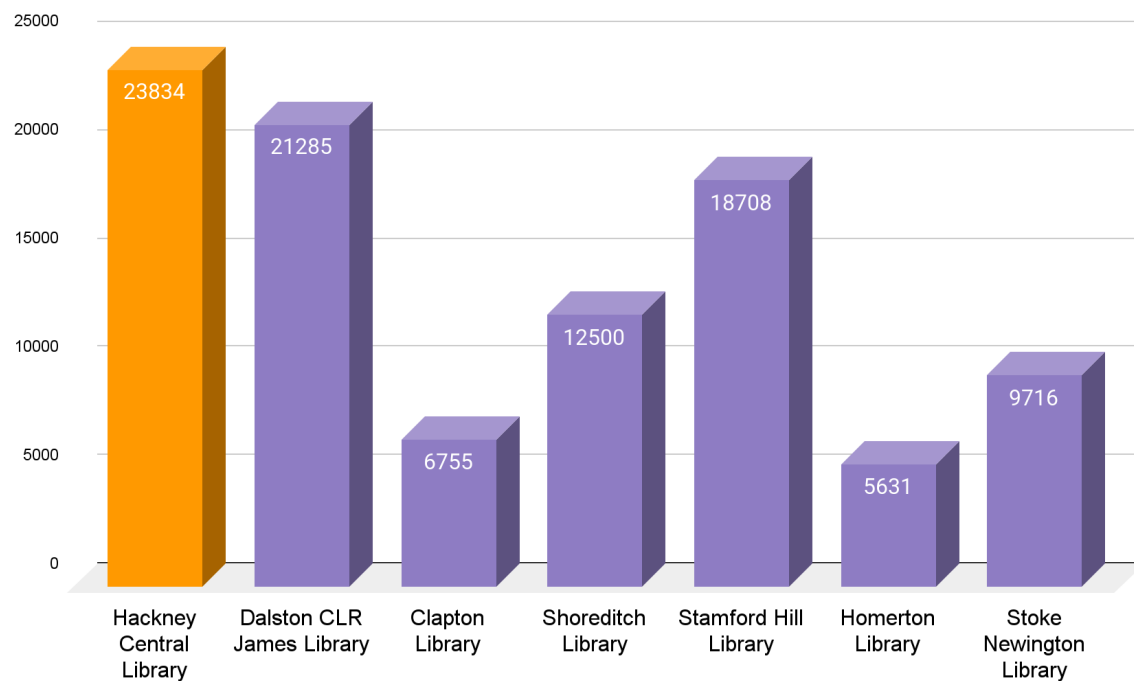


Figure 16: Chart showing computer hours in 2024. total 98,501

Registered Users: Comments

- **Large libraries:** Hackney Central Library has by far the most registered users, nearly 20,000, followed by Hackney's other main library, Dalston CLR James at almost 14,000.
- **Medium libraries:** Stoke Newington and Shoreditch have half the amount of registered users as Hackney Central at around 11,000. Stamford Hill has 4,500. Whilst Stamford Hill has a similar number of visits per year than the other two medium sized libraries, it has significantly fewer registered users
- **Small libraries:** Despite having similar levels of footfall, our small libraries have significantly different numbers of registered users; Homerton 8,081 and Clapton 6,545.

Registered Users and Usage Patterns: Comments

- **Hackney Central** has by far the highest number of registered users, PC hours, active users, borrowers and issues, but lower footfall than Dalston CLR James Library.
- **Dalston** has the highest footfall of all libraries and high levels of PC usage, but lower levels of issues and active borrowing than Hackney Central.
- Despite being a medium sized library, **Stamford Hill's** issues and PC hours are more in line with main libraries.
- Despite being smaller libraries, **Homerton** and **Clapton** have comparable levels of physical issues, active users, and book borrowers to the medium sized libraries.
- The higher-than-average level of demand for PC access at **Stamford Hill** links to other data around digital exclusion in the borough.
- In 24/25 PC hours up across all sites by 28% since 22/23.

Change over time

Change in the number of computer hours in 23/24 and 24/25 across all libraries

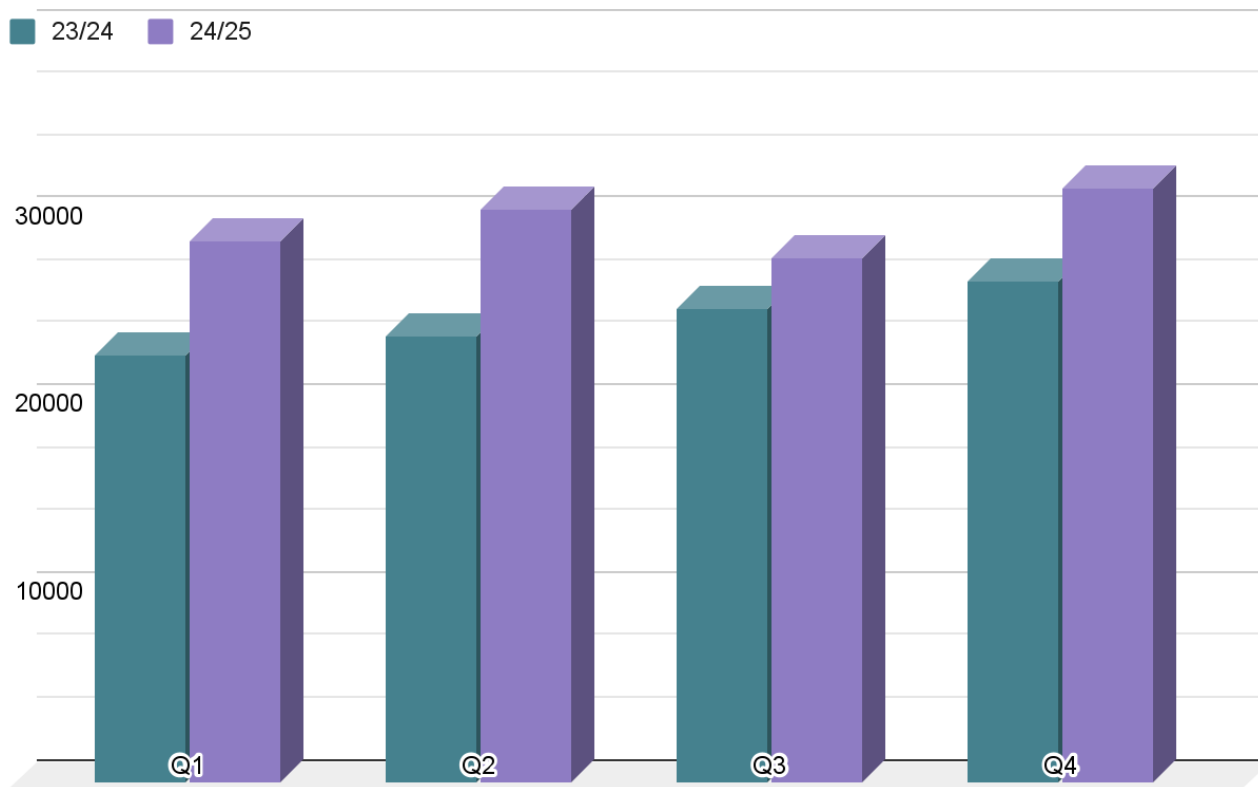


Figure 17: Chart showing PC hours in 23 vs 24

Change in the computer hours by site in 23/24 and 24/25

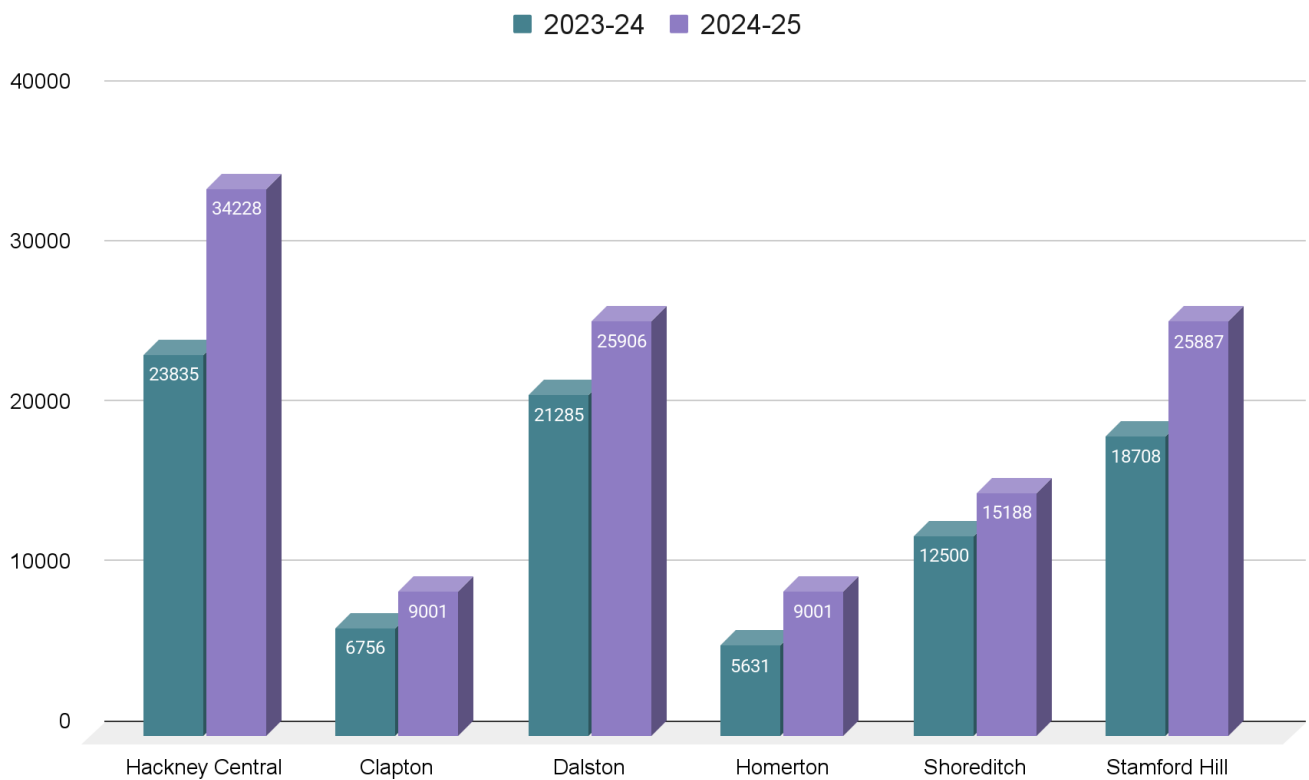


Figure 18: Chart showing PC hours by site in 23/24 vs 24/25

Change in the stock issues in 23/24 and 24/25

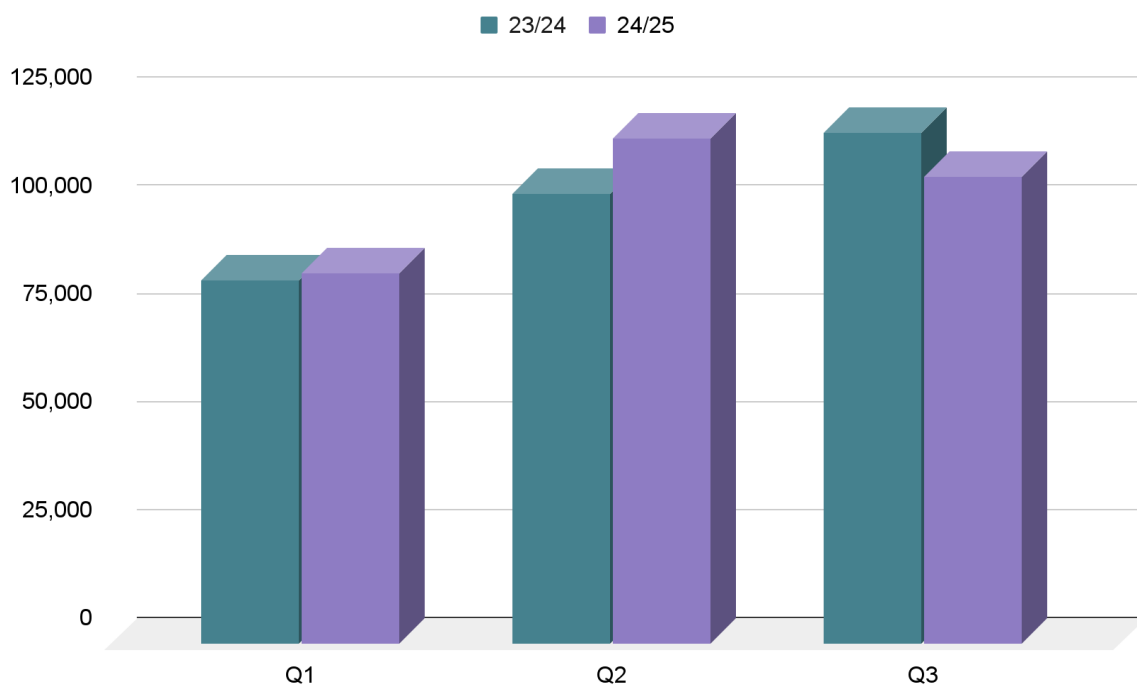
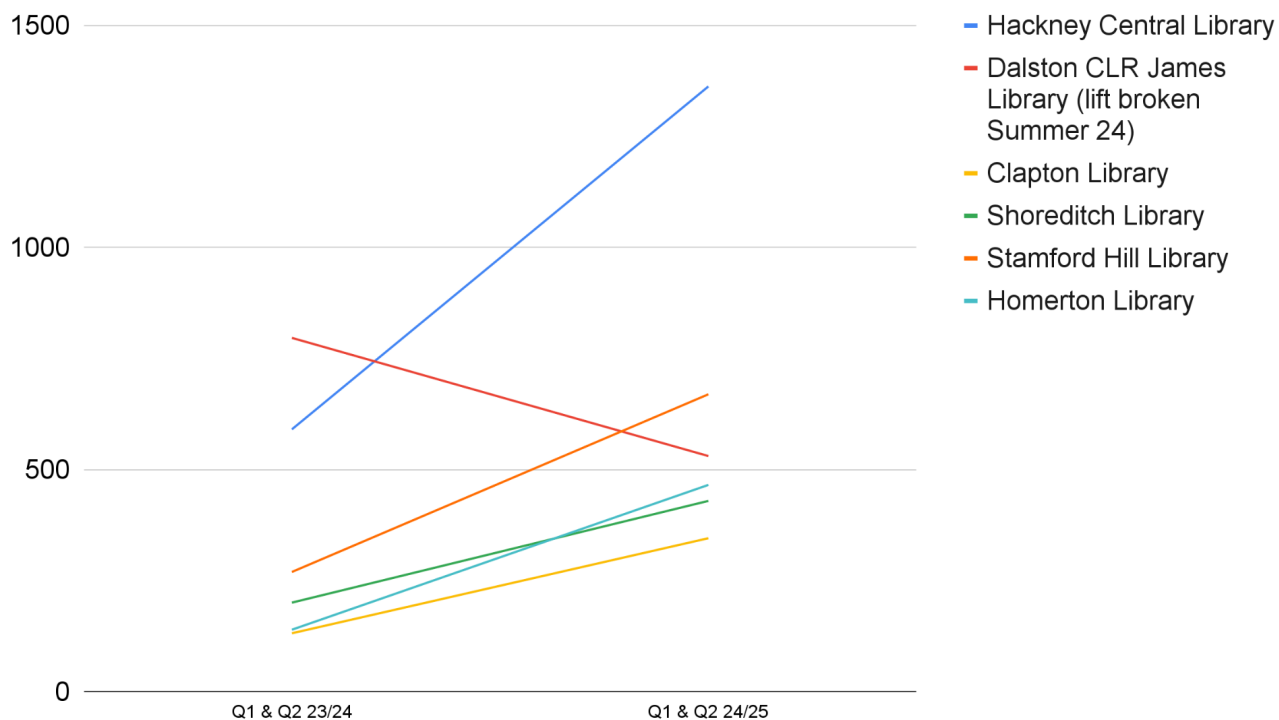
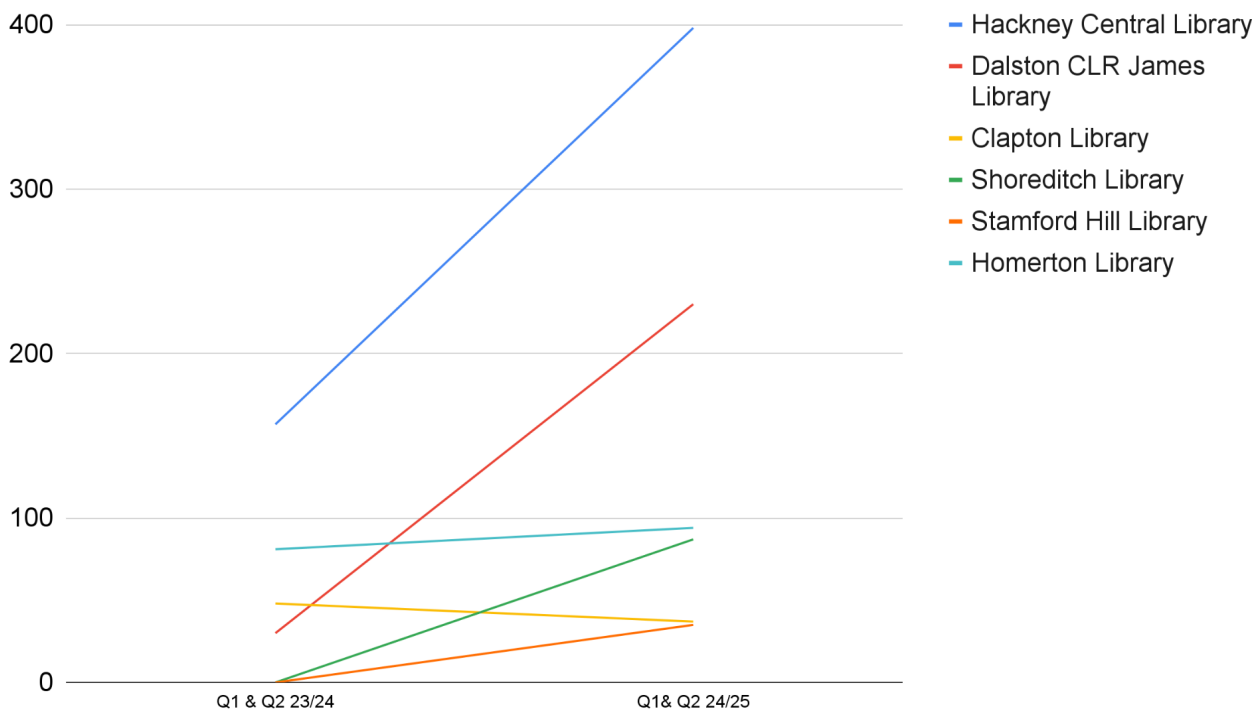


Figure 19: Chart showing stock issues in 23 vs 24

Child Event Attendees between 23/24 and 24/25



Adult Event Attendees between 23/24 and 24/25



Figures 20 and 21 show the increase in child and adult event participants between 23/24 and 24/25

Libraries used between 2021 and 2025 customer surveys

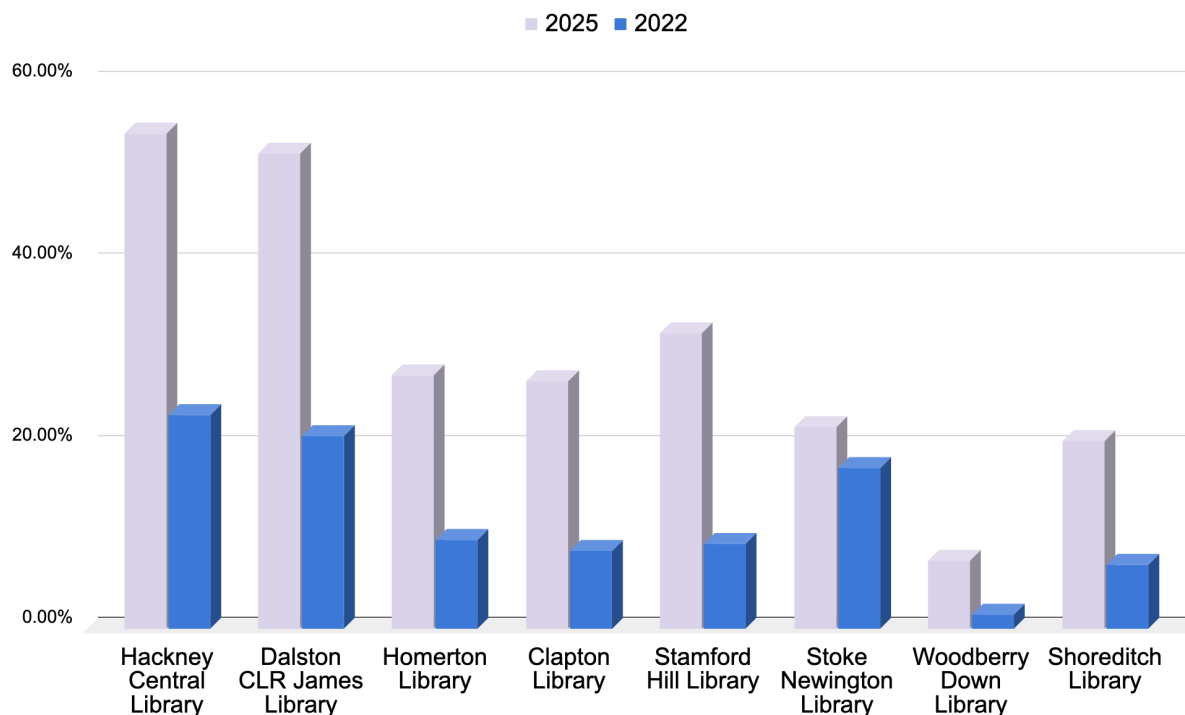


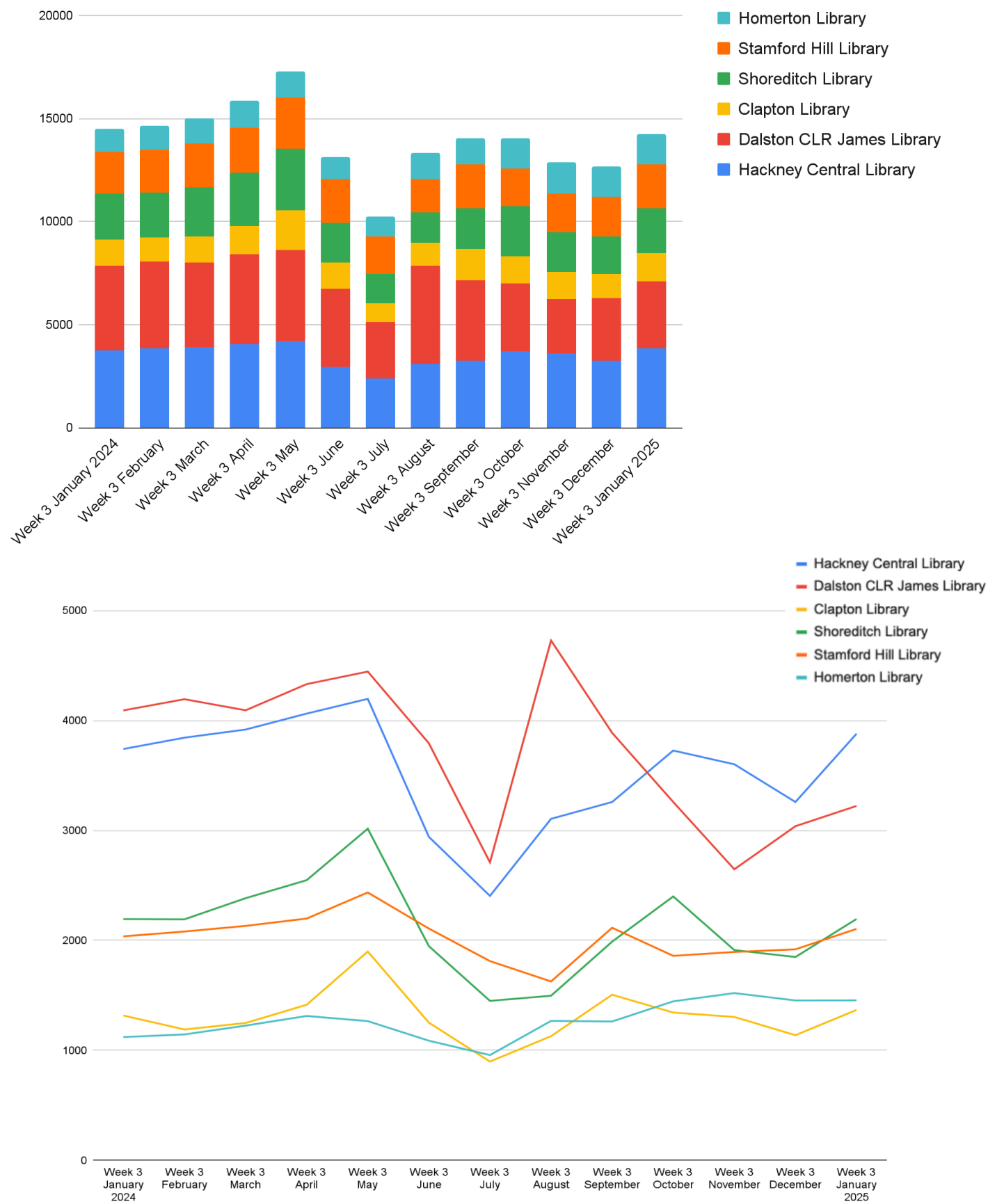
Figure 22: Which libraries have you visited? Responses in 2022 vs 2025

Participation: Comments

- **Computer hours:** 28% increase in PC hours across all sites in the same period Q1-Q3 23/24 and Q1-Q3 24/25
- **Issues:** Increase in stock issues in the same period Q1&Q2 22/23 and Q1& Q2 23/24
- **Events:** 80% increase in children event attendees and 179% increase in adult event attendees across all sites in the same period Q1&Q2 22/23 and Q1& Q2 23/24
- **Libraries used:** Increase in residents using libraries in 2025 compared with 2022

Seasonal Variation in Footfall

Figures 23 and 24 show the seasonal variation across the year



Seasonal Variation in Footfall: Comments

- All libraries dip in the summer months and July is the quietest month at all libraries
- Most significant variation is seen at our bigger libraries and the most stable visit patterns are at smaller and medium sized libraries
- All libraries have an increase in usage during exam revision period (April/May), but the biggest surge is seen at Clapton, Stamford Hill and Shoreditch
- Homerton, Hackney Central, Clapton and Shoreditch had higher visitor figures in January 2025 than they did in 2024

Ward Profiles

Hackney's Ward profiles explore the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the local population of each of Hackney's wards. They show the age, ethnicity and religion of the local population. They also include information on housing, education, disability, employment, health, gender and sexual orientation. The profiles are a snapshot and are intended to support an understanding of Hackney's ward characteristics and support local decision making.

Library	Wards / Neighbourhood	Ward Profile
Dalston CLR James	Dalston Ward De Beauvoir Ward Shacklewell Ward	In Shacklewell Ward there is a higher proportion of Bangladeshi residents, Black, Mixed/Multiple and Other ethnic groups than the borough average and a lower proportion of White groups. Shacklewell Ward has a higher proportion of single family households, lone parents and other household types than the borough average and slightly fewer one person households.
Hackney Central	Hackney Central Ward London Fields Ward Victoria Ward London Fields Neighbourhood (also serving Well St Common Neighbourhood (no library)	Victoria and Hackney Central continue to be two of the most deprived wards in Hackney in terms of health and disability.
Shoreditch	Haggerston Ward Hoxton East & Shoreditch Ward Hoxton West Ward Shoreditch Neighbourhood	Shoreditch is an area of continued development and growth, but many of these neighbourhoods still experience high levels of social and economic deprivation. The northern parts of Hoxton East and Shoreditch, Hoxton West and Haggerston wards are in the top 20% most deprived wards according to income.
Stamford Hill	Stamford Hill West Ward Cazenove Ward Springfield Ward Springfield Park Neighbourhood	Stamford Hill Library serves communities with high levels of deprivation, across all indicators (such as income, education and skills). It also serves the local Orthodox Jewish and Muslim community.
Stoke Newington	Clissold Ward Stoke Newington Ward Clissold Park Neighbourhood	Clissold and Stoke Newington are the least deprived wards according to income. While the number of social rented homes is lower than Hackney overall figures it is still almost double the national figure (Clissold).
Clapton	Hackney Downs Ward Lea Bridge Ward Hackney Downs Neighbourhood	Hackney Downs and Lea Bridge have high levels of Black, Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani residents and relatively high levels of deprivation in terms of education and skills

Homerton	Homerton Ward King's Park Ward Hackney Wick Ward	Homerton, King's Park and Hackney Wick are very diverse areas that are all within the top 10% and 20% most deprived wards according to income and the top 5 most deprived wards in Hackney. Homerton has been identified as a growth corridor in Hackney and work is being done to improve streets, spaces and sustainable transport connections. Part of work to regenerate Homerton includes thinking about future uses for the library building. All three wards are amongst the most deprived in Hackney, and Hackney Wick is the most deprived ward. Amongst the highest levels of 65+ year olds living alone in these wards. All three wards have amongst the highest levels of residents with no qualifications in Hackney.
	Hackney Marshes Neighbourhood (also serving Well St Common Neighbourhood - no library)	
Woodberry Down	Brownswood Ward Woodberry Down Ward	Significant variance between the two wards served by Woodberry Down Volunteer Library. Brownswood's residents are considerably more economically active than London and England levels. Employment levels are higher than Hackney, London and national figures. Woodberry Down Ward is the second highest deprived ward in Hackney.
	Woodberry Wetlands Neighbourhood	

Figure 25: Table showing neighbouring ward profiles for each library

Library	Local Ward Population	Registered Library Customers as % of local ward population	Visits per year (2024)
Dalston CLR James	27,202	13,824 (51%)	191,162
Hackney Central	37,556	19,525 (52%)	180,489
Shoreditch	39,929	10,536	106,216
Stamford Hill	40,995	7,461 (18%)	103,985
Stoke Newington	25,963	11,040 (42%)	No data
Clapton	27,123	6,545 (24%)	67,710
Homerton	39,253	8,081 (20%)	65,534
Woodberry Down	21,126	925 (4%)	3,911

Figure 26: Table showing total number of registered users per library and as a % of neighbouring wards in 2024. 238,021 population

Users and Non-Users

Some demographic groups in Hackney are more likely to be library users than others. The data we have shows that women are more likely to be registered library users than men and white British people are more likely to be registered than non-white British people, but all libraries (with the exception of Stoke Newington) have 'higher' to 'significantly higher' levels of Global Majority users than ward and borough averages and lower than average levels of white registered users.

Additionally, children and young people are overrepresented within the library's users, with 0-21-year-olds far more likely to be registered users than any other age groups. The Council has actively encouraged children and young people to join and use their local library through initiatives such as Stories and Rhymes for under 5s, the Hackney Reading Quest, Hackney Reading Champions Scheme, Chatterbooks reading clubs and library cards for all new reception children. All libraries experience an increase in visitor numbers of around 10% during exam periods (April-July and Oct-Dec), but some libraries have a significant surge; Clapton 60%, Shoreditch 38% and Stamford Hill 17%.

Between 2019 and 2024, the customer base has become more diverse, with increases in levels of Black and Asian customers at most libraries.

The Peer Review in October 2024 praised the library service for its work in engaging with underrepresented groups and developing exemplary projects that highlight this approach. During site visits, sector experts also commented on how diverse our customer base is compared to other London libraries.

Hackney's libraries serve as key access points for Council services, particularly for residents who may face barriers to accessing the main Council campus or online services. As a result, libraries are increasingly co-locating with various Council services. Other Council services recognise libraries as key satellites in the borough to meet, hear from and cross-refer residents.

In 2024 Hackney Library Service updated its customer profiles for each library using 2021 census data, showing where each library performs above or below the Hackney average.

Library	Library Customer Profiles (where above the borough average)
Dalston CLR James	• Significantly higher levels of young people (9% higher) • Considerably higher levels of women and Black customers (over 5% higher) • Slightly higher levels of Children, Asian and Mixed Ethnicity customers (around 1% higher) • Lower levels of older people, disabled people, White people and Other Ethnic Groups • 6% increase in visitor figures during exam period • 1.86% footfall decrease (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)
Hackney Central	• Significantly higher levels of young people (5% higher) • Considerably higher levels of women and Black customers (over 5% higher) • Slightly higher Asian, Mixed Ethnicity and disabled customers (around 1% higher) • Lower levels of older people, children, White people and Other Ethnic Groups • 9% increase in visitor figures during exam period • 5.27% footfall increase (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)
Shoreditch	• Significantly high levels of women (7% higher) • Higher levels of young people, Asian, and Black customers (over 2% higher) • Slightly higher levels of disabled and Mixed Ethnicity customers (around 1% higher) • Lower levels of Children, White people and Other Ethnic Groups • 38% increase in visitor figures during exam period • 2.90% footfall decrease (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)
Stamford Hill	• Significantly high levels of young people (9% higher) • Considerably higher levels of women and Black customers (4% higher) • Slightly higher levels of Asian customers (1% higher) • Older people and child age customers reflect borough averages • Lower levels of disabled, White people, Mixed Ethnicity and Other Ethnic Groups • 17% increase in visitor figures during exam period • 3.21% footfall decrease (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)
Stoke Newington	• Significantly high levels of women (8% higher) and White customers (9%) • Higher levels of young people (3% higher) • Slightly higher levels of disabled customers and children (around 1% higher) • Lower levels of Mixed Ethnicity, Asian, and Black customers

	No footfall data (currently closed)
Clapton	- Considerably higher levels of young people (9% higher) - Significantly higher levels of women and Asian customers (5% higher) - Higher levels of Black and Mixed Ethnicity customers (3-4% higher) - Slightly higher levels of children (around 1% higher) - Lower levels of White people, older people, disabled people and Other Ethnic Groups 60% increase in visitor figures during exam period 8.61% footfall increase (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)
Homerton	- Significantly higher levels of women (6% higher) Black customers (10% higher) and young people (6% higher) - Higher levels of disabled, Asian, Mixed Ethnicity customers and children (around 1% higher) - Lower levels of White people, older people and Other Ethnic Groups 11% increase in visitor figures during exam period 31.16% footfall increase (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)
Woodberry Down	- Significantly higher levels of women (13% higher), Asian customers (8% higher), young people (7% higher) and children (6% higher) - Considerably higher levels of Mixed Ethnicity customers (4% higher) - Slightly higher levels of disabled customers and Other Ethnic Groups (around 1% higher) - Lower levels of White people, older people and Black customers 5.4% footfall increase (Jan 24 vs Jan 25)

Figure 27: Table showing customer profiles for each library

Customer demographics are above or below borough averages

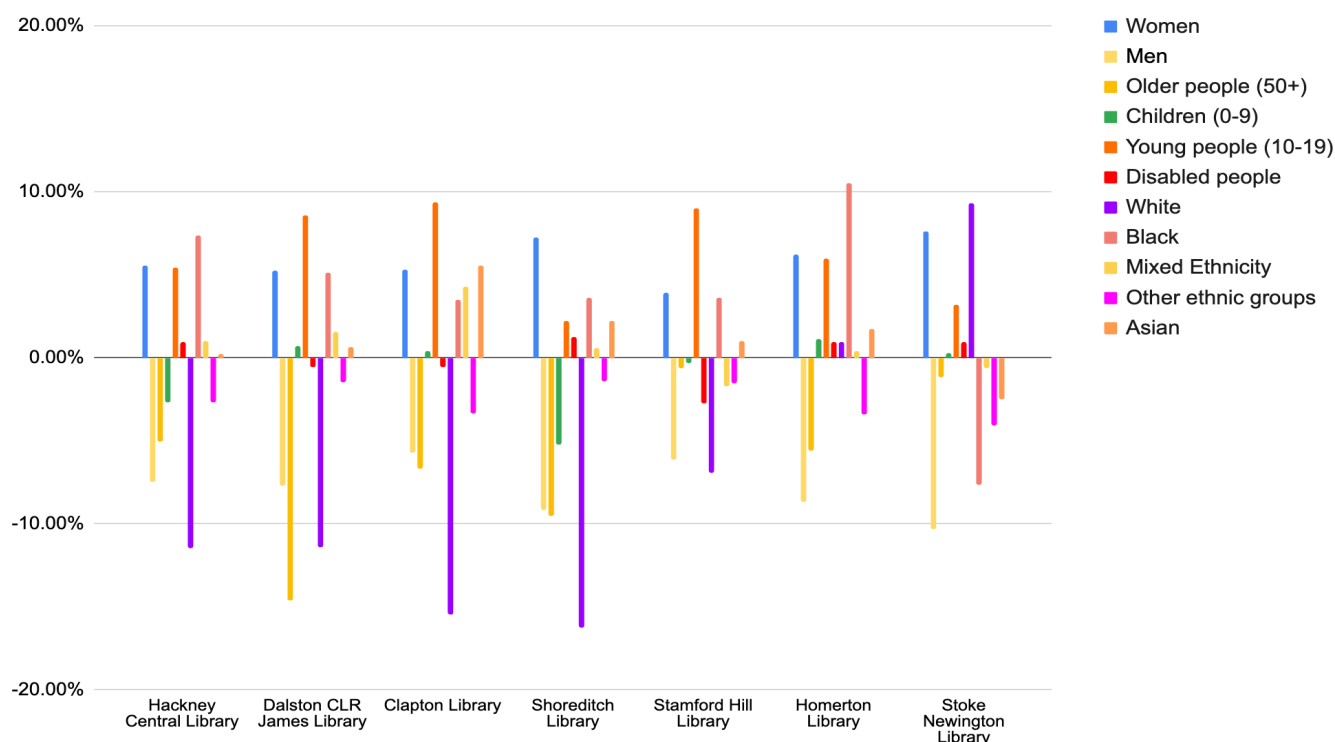


Figure 28: Chart showing where each library performs above or below the borough average for customer demographics. Borough average at 0.00%

Customer Diversity: Comments

- **Women:** all libraries have above average levels of women as registered customers
- **Men:** all libraries have below average levels of men as registered customers
- **Older people (50+):** all libraries have below average levels of older people as registered customers
- **Children (0-9):** most libraries have below average levels of children, with the exception of Dalston, Clapton and Stoke Newington with slightly higher levels of children as registered customers
- **Young people (10-19):** all libraries have above average levels of young people, but Dalston, Hackney Central, Clapton and Stoke Newington have significantly higher levels of young people as registered customers
- **Disabled people:** most libraries have below average levels of disabled people, with the exception of Hackney Central, Shoreditch, Homerton and Stoke Newington, which have slightly higher levels of disabled people as registered customers
- **Black:** all libraries, with the exception of Stoke Newington, have above considerably higher levels of Black customers, but Clapton has significantly higher levels and Stamford Hill and Stoke Newington have lower levels of Mixed Ethnicity people as registered customers
- **Mixed Ethnicity:** most libraries have slightly higher levels of Mixed Ethnicity customers, and Dalston, Clapton and Stoke Newington with slightly higher levels of children as registered customers
- **Other Ethnic Groups:** all libraries have below average levels of Other Ethnic Groups as registered customers
- **Asian:** all libraries, with the exception of Stoke Newington, have above average levels of Asian people, but Clapton has significantly higher levels of Asian people as registered customers
- **White:** all libraries, with the exception of Stoke Newington, have significantly lower than average levels of White people as registered customers. Stoke Newington has significantly higher levels and, whilst Stamford Hill has considerably less than the borough average, it has higher levels than the other main libraries due to the high levels of Orthodox Jewish people as registered customers

Change Over Time: Customer Diversity

In 2019 a Needs Assessment was undertaken to support the work to develop a new strategy for Hackney's Library Service.

Figure 29 shows change in registered customer diversity over time (between 2019 Needs Assessment and 2024 Needs Assessment)

Library	Women	Men	Children (0-9)	Young people (10-19)	White	Black	Asian
Dalston							
Hackney Central							
Shoreditch							
Stamford Hill							
Stoke Newington							
Clapton							
Homerton							
Woodberry Down							

Figure 29: Table showing significant increases and decreases since 2019 to above or below the borough average for customer demographics. Green = significantly increasing above borough average levels // red = significantly decreasing below borough average levels // grey = maintained levels since 2019

Change Over Time Customer Diversity: Comments

- **Women and Men:** all libraries have maintained above borough average levels of female and below borough average levels of male registered customers
- **Age:** all libraries have maintained above borough average levels of young people and levels in line with borough averages of children, with the exception of Stamford Hill, which has increased levels of children as registered customers to above borough averages
- **Older people, Disabled People, Mixed Ethnicity and Other Ethnic Groups:** these customers were not analysed in the 2019 Needs Assessment
- **Black:** most libraries have increased levels of Black people as registered customers even further above borough averages, with the exception of Hackney Central, which has maintained above borough average levels and Stoke Newington where levels have decreased even further below borough averages
- **Asian:** most libraries have increased levels of Asian people as registered customers even further above borough averages, with the exception of Stoke Newington and Homerton where levels have decreased to below borough averages
- **White:** most libraries have maintained levels of White people as registered customers, with the exception of Dalston, Clapton and Woodberry Down, where levels have decreased even further below borough averages

Access to Service Provision and Need

Libraries often serve as the only universal service in a neighbourhood, welcoming everyone regardless of age, background, income or ability. Safeguarding measures are in place, and library staff are trained to provide support and ensure the safety of all users.

Hackney Library Service recognises that many visitors are not registered customers but individuals seeking basic facilities like toilets, water fountains, Wi-Fi, phone charging, and shelter. All libraries have welcoming spaces for customers needing somewhere to fulfil these basic needs, with staff and security available to assist. The Engagement and Development Team has partnered with other organisations to address issues such as homelessness, digital and social isolation, mental and physical health, food insecurity, and period poverty. To further empower staff, the team organises four training days annually, covering topics including safeguarding, domestic violence, anti-racism, mental health, special educational needs, and accessibility.

Co-located services and access to Council Information

Hackney's libraries play a vital and visible role as a neighbourhood presence for the Council and our staff support and signpost residents towards appropriate information Council services. During the Library Review and recent Peer Challenge Hackney Libraries were told people view libraries as 'trusted and inclusive spaces' and in a recent survey Librarians were one of the most trusted professions alongside doctors and nurses.

All libraries host consultations, surveys, community forums and drop-ins allowing people to have their say on borough-wide and hyper-local consultations. This is essential to ensuring the Council hears from those who aren't online. In 2023/24 Hackney Library Service partnered with the Consultation and Engagement Team to host exhibitions, surveys and focus groups at libraries to reach and hear from people on liveable neighbourhoods, children's centres, school closures, Climate Action Plan and other key Council decisions affecting their lives and neighbourhoods.

All libraries host monthly Ward Councillor Surgeries giving local residents access to ask questions and meet Members in their neighbourhood. Hackney Library Service coordinates this programme with the Mayor's Office and 120 Ward Councillor Surgeries were hosted in 2023/24. The libraries also serve a citizenship role by offering spaces for councillor surgeries throughout the week, including weekends. They are a space where Council teams consult with residents, especially those residents who are not digitally literate.

Each academic year Adult Learning holds 250 classes in ESOL, English, Maths and Digital Skills in

three libraries, 150 information and sign-up sessions in four libraries and Hackney Libraries collaborate with the team on courses signposting for volunteers and annual family learning festivals across all libraries.

All libraries have physical and digital notice boards displaying Council and health and wellbeing information. Library Officers regularly make referrals to Adult Social Care, Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Teams.

All libraries stock the free Love Hackney magazine, a key source of information for residents and the main distribution point for the magazine.

Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers

Hackney's Welcome Hub for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants launched in Dalston CLR James Library in May 2024, and has welcomed over 200 refugees and asylum seekers needing advice. The hub is delivered in partnership with the Council's Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrants (RASM) Team, with Council officers from RASM, Housing, Adult Learning, and Catch 22 attending weekly to provide immediate support and signposting. The Engagement and Development Team and a Library Officer provide a small library with books in Ukrainian, Farsi, Spanish, and Kurdish Sorani, and offer assistance with online access and library membership. To date, 23 members have registered at Dalston Library with a 'Sanctuary' status.

Homelessness

Hackney's libraries are heavily utilised and valued by individuals experiencing homelessness. These individuals visit libraries daily to use restroom facilities, charge their phones, read, access the internet, or simply find a warm or cool space without judgement. Unlike many services, people without a fixed address are able to join the library.

Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations

Numerous community organisations hold meetings and deliver support groups and services in libraries, including the Hackney Afrikan Writers, U3A, Bikur Cholim, Carers First, Hackney Food Bank, GamCare, Mind, and Hackney Pensioners. In October 2024, Hackney Library Service began collaborating with Strategic Property on their Space Bank initiative to attract more local community and voluntary organisations, maximising co-location and service delivery options where feasible. This will culminate in a pilot study on how voluntary sector organisations and libraries can co-deliver.

In partnership with PERM Inc. (Permanently Included) and Hackney's Improving Outcomes for Young Black Children & Young People Accountability Board, Hackney Libraries runs a monthly drop-in session for support and signposting. This service is available for Hackney families and young people seeking guidance and support regarding transitioning to secondary school, education, mental health, or interactions with the police.

Orthodox Jewish communities

Hackney Library Service has a long standing and trusted relationship with Hackney's Orthodox Jewish Communities. In November 2024, the Engagement and Development Team developed a partnership with Side by Side Orthodox Jewish SEND School to pilot a supported work experience programme at Stamford Hill Library.

Employment

From individual desks to study booths, all our libraries have multiple work and study zones. These areas are heavily utilised throughout the week by individuals using their own devices and connecting to the wifi to use library printers and scanners.

In 2024, Hackney Library Service piloted a series of Women in Business Co-Working Sessions with the East End Trades Guild. Over the years Hackney Libraries have worked with Renaisi to run CV writing and help back into work sessions.

The Library Service offers affordable spaces for hire, ranging from individual meeting rooms to larger spaces and a hall. These spaces provide valuable services for small businesses to hold training sessions, meetings, and events, further serving our communities.

In 2024, Hackney Library Service is working with Unity Works to provide employment and digital

skills workshops for SEND young people aged 16-24 at Dalston Library.

Each year, over 50 young people from Hackney Schools participate in work experience placements at libraries. In 2024/25, Hackney Libraries are partnering with the Council's work experience team to bring work experience back in-house, aiming to better integrate it with opportunities across directorates and increase our capacity to support students with special educational needs (SEND) and those requiring supported internships.

Digital exclusion

As a result of the reduction of Council offices and satellite services across the borough, and with the increase in digital exclusion in some neighbourhoods and communities as technology advances, Hackney's libraries are now at the forefront of equity of access, providing 7 days a week contact with the Council, access to information, signposting to services and opportunities, and are our libraries are often the only way many residents are able to participate in surveys and consultations.

Hackney Library Service provides high quality information and digital support, which enables individuals and communities to develop skills, access information and to inform life choices. The offer helps children and adults to engage and feel safe online. It ensures resources and opportunities are accessible and embraces creative and innovative technology.

The service focuses its support on those most in need who potentially have limited access or knowledge of the Internet and other IT applications. In order to support residents, it provides a broad range of one to one and group IT support.

Hackney Libraries' Digital Buddies volunteers support people to get online and to learn new digital skills. The programme expanded from three to four libraries in 2024/25 and is delivered in partnership with Employment and Skills who recruit and train volunteers with the libraries team. In 2023/24, 350 people were supported at 3 libraries with 250 Digital Buddy volunteer hours logged.

Child Poverty

The government has formed a Child Poverty Unit, within the Cabinet Office, to lead on the development of a new Child Poverty Strategy, which will be published in Spring 2025. Libraries, with their universal and equal access for all ages, are at the heart of tackling the impacts of poverty, supporting children, parents/carers and wider community support networks. Hackney's Libraries have very high levels of child and young customers making them well placed to support the four strategy themes, particularly; Reducing essential costs, Increasing financial resilience and Enhancing local and community support

Reducing essential costs and increasing financial resilience: Hackney Libraries work with internal and external partners to provide money, debt and money saving advice, including Scope Community Disability Energy Advice at Homerton, Stamford Hill and Dalston Libraries, Hackney's Energy Advice Team at Dalston's Refugee Hub, Money hub and debt advice sessions to help tackle the key cost drivers for low-income families. Hackney Libraries also distribute the household Support Fund vouchers to low income and vulnerable families and host Adult Learning and ESOL classes.

Libraries, with their universal and equal access to free resources for all ages, are at the heart of tackling the impacts of poverty. Hackney Libraries provide access to books, storytelling sessions and rhymetimes, free toys and play sessions, free clubs and activities, and pop up health and wellbeing sessions to ensure parents and carers are supported and all children have the best start in life. Our summer programme of activities is especially valued by families in keeping children occupied with fun, free activities over the school holidays. Hackney Libraries work with children's centres, schools, nurseries to support early years literacy and provide study space, homework clubs and work experience to help children and young people to get ahead. (See also Health and Wellbeing and Literacy and Learning)

Health and wellbeing

All libraries host a range of groups and services that support our communities with their health and wellbeing services covering subjects such as physical activity, mental health, social prescribing, sexual health, mindfulness and smoking cessation. A year round approach to promoting healthier lifestyles through libraries is in place and all of our partnerships are developed with mutual benefit

with partnership agreements in place.

Better health partnerships have been established with Family Action, Mind, Gloji Smoking Cessation and Public Health. In 2023/24 over 40 pop-up health and wellbeing clinics took place in libraries, including covid vaccination, immunisation clinics, sickle cell and Thalassaemia awareness sessions, and 277 residents were supported through 40 social prescribing sessions.

In 2023/24 partnerships were established with Scope Youth Ambassadors, RNIB and Macular Society to conduct Access Audits of libraries, the outcomes of which inform the design briefs for Hackney Central and Stoke Newington Library Improvement Projects. Hackney Library Services also works with the RNIB and Macular Society to run a Monthly Sight Loss support group at Dalston CLR James Library.

Mental Health partnerships have been established with Drama therapists from John Howard Centre for Forensic Mental Health to pilot a weekly community theatre workshop with patients at Homerton Library and with Mind to run a book club at Dalston CLR James Library.

SEND partnerships have been established with Homerton Hospital's Speech & Language team to hold regular blocks of sessions for children on the ASD spectrum and their parents to develop communication skills in a non-clinical setting at Homerton Library.

Physical activity

The Engagement and Development Team has initiated a successful partnership between Homerton Library and King's Park Moving Together (KPMT), a Council initiative tackling health inequalities in one of the most deprived parts of our borough. The scheme has seen four well-attended 12 week programmes delivered July - October: hip-hop dance for children, hip hop dance and accessible yoga for older adults, and family fitness. This has both brought new people to the library, and introduced fitness opportunities to existing library users; KPMT is currently working to secure funds for this to continue longer term.

Hackney Libraries longstanding partnership with Hackney u3a provides them with spaces for free to run fitness classes for older people at our libraries, including tai chi, pilates and folk dancing.

Literacy and Learning

Hackney's libraries support children's learning and development from infancy through adulthood. We partner with schools and community groups to offer a variety of programmes and activities that nurture a love of reading and learning. Our services extend to supporting young people in their educational pursuits and assisting adults in developing literacy skills at any age including literacy support for adults through partnership with Read Easy which reaches 30 adults per year in weekly 1:1 sessions.

Hackney Library Service acknowledges the importance of reading as a fundamental life skill, contributing to positive outcomes in various aspects of life. Reading and borrowing books remains the highest used customer channel provided by Hackney's libraries with 232,470 adult and 247,600 children's books borrowed in 23/24. Each of our libraries hosts or delivers at least one reading group per month for adults and one per library for children.

Under 5s: All libraries offer weekly stories and rhyme sessions, with 6940 parents and under 5s attending in 23/24 and new parenting support sessions and sign and rhyme sessions for deaf children are being piloted alongside Rhymetime at Hackney Central Library. Bookstart gives free books to every child in Hackney at birth and to targeted children at two key stages before school, as well as free packs for children with additional needs, tips and guidance on reading together, resources and activities, and much more. In 2023/24, 4343 Bookstart packs were distributed through Hackney Libraries.

Primary school children: Most Hackney Libraries have higher than borough average numbers of children (12%) as registered customers. Dalston, Clapton, Homerton and Stoke Newington have the highest numbers of child customers and our biggest age group for borrowing books is 0-9 year olds. Library Officers at all 6 main libraries lead monthly Chatterbooks reading clubs for primary school children. Primary schools and nursery classes visit all libraries daily for story sessions and book borrowing, with 15,419 children and teachers visiting during 23/24. Three of our libraries run well-attended homework clubs to support learning in English and maths.

Hackney Library Service works closely with Hackney Education and young people from 26 primary and secondary schools on our peer-led Reading Champions Schemes in schools which is invaluable in promoting reading for pleasure amongst children and the improved life chances this brings.

The Council's 10x10 scheme includes visiting a library as one of the goals for children to achieve by age 10. Through the scheme a library card was provided for every reception child in Hackney in September 2024 (2,200 children).

Hackney Libraries Quest encourages children to engage with the library in a variety of ways, with a special focus on reading for pleasure. By motivating children to read more books during the summer holidays, the program helps prevent the "summer slide" in reading skills.

Young People: Hackney has some of the highest usage rates of libraries amongst young people in the country. All libraries have higher than the borough averages of young people (12%) ranging from 13% up to over 20% at Dalston, Clapton and Stamford Hill. Our libraries experience an increase in visitor numbers of around 10% during exam periods (April-July and Oct-Dec), but some libraries have a significant surge; Clapton 60%, Shoreditch 38% and Stamford Hill 17%.

Adults: In 2023/24, 30 adults with low or no literacy were taught to read in weekly 1:1 sessions with Read Easy volunteers in our libraries.

Hackney Library Service holds seven monthly reading groups at all of our libraries, delivered by staff or partners including Mind, us and Reading Ensemble. These inclusive groups support people in reading more and more diverse books and poetry, and discussing these with peers.

Hackney u3a holds a wide range of classes for their members in libraries including philosophy, art history and art. They are able to keep their annual membership fee at only £12 (significantly lower than many London u3a groups) because they use our spaces for free, have an aligned commitment to lifelong learning and are a valuable service for older people in our communities.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Libraries have long been champions of sustainability, offering a model for resource sharing that reduces consumption and waste. By providing access to books and other materials, libraries enable communities to share resources rather than each individual purchasing their own copy. This tradition of communal use fosters a sense of respect and care for library materials, ensuring their longevity and further reducing environmental impact. Hackney Library Service works closely with local schools to encourage library usage and develop a culture of borrow not buy.

With the Sustainability Team, Hackney Library Service hosts the Library of Things (LOT), a scheme that loans popular items that residents may not have the space or money to purchase at Dalston CLR James Library. Items include garden equipment, projectors, carpet cleaning machines and other home DIY equipment. In 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25 Hackney's LOT was the most popular scheme in London. It enables residents to feel better connected with their community and reduces spend and waste on equipment and encourages users to repair or recycle items.

From October 2024 Hackney Library Service has been partnering with Scope Community Disability Energy Advice Team to provide energy saving advice and fuel bill vouchers to digitally excluded and older/vulnerable/disabled residents in our libraries. Weekly drop-ins are provided alongside the Refugee Welcome Hub, at older people sessions at Dalston, Homerton and Stamford Hill Libraries, and via the Community Library Service and to our pensioner groups.

Hackney Library Service regularly hosts energy saving advice stalls with Hackney's Sustainability Team across all our libraries and within the Refugee Hub and as part of Older People's sessions.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The data indicates that all libraries serve areas in deprivation, excluding Stoke Newington Library, which predominantly serves Hackney's two least deprived wards; Clissold and Stoke Newington. However, this isn't to be taken as a lack of indication of need for the provision of service. In fact, the need for library services in affluent areas is arguably greater, given the important role that libraries play in communities that experience deprivation on a range of indicators. As well as setting out those indicators in the tables above, further discussion is included in the accompanying EqlA document, which addresses the characteristics of library catchment areas alongside the likely characteristics of communities experiencing digital exclusion.

The EqlA provides detailed data showing the difference between actual registered users in each borough and predicted registered users based on the Hackney average, as well as a number of indicators of need for each ward. These calculations show that there is a correlation between areas that have fewer registered library users than predicted based on the Hackney average and areas with high levels of need and deprivation.

Alternative Provision

Some resources, including bookshops, community halls and Voluntary and Community Sector spaces, could potentially fill gaps created by a reduction in library provision. While these will not be able to replace the full range of services offered by a library, they might be useful in mitigating some of the impacts of service reduction.

Hackney's membership of the Libraries Consortium facilitates Hackney residents' use of libraries across London, particularly those in neighbouring boroughs. Haringey, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest are all members of the Libraries Consortium. Islington Council is not a member. However, future plans for neighbouring library services may limit the mitigation.

Libraries often serve as the only universal service in a neighbourhood, welcoming everyone regardless of age, background, income or ability. Safeguarding measures are in place, and library staff are trained to provide support and ensure the safety of all users, something users don't get from other community hubs; youth hubs, children's centres, care homes.

Conclusion

The data presented in this needs assessment highlights the value and diverse usage patterns of Hackney's libraries. Despite a national trend of declining library visits, Hackney's libraries remain vital community hubs, providing essential services and resources to residents of all ages and backgrounds. The variation in peak usage times and services across different libraries points to the importance of tailoring service provision to local needs.

Although Dalston experiences the highest footfall, this is in part due to its central location and better transport links than any of the other libraries. Nevertheless, Hackney Central has more registered users than any of the other libraries.

The data suggests a higher demand for digital services in Stamford Hill and Shoreditch, aligning with wider concerns and existing data about digital exclusion in these areas. This highlights the need for continued investment in digital resources and support at medium sized libraries. The Council is committed to maintaining this investment and has provision in the current capital programme to renew digital networks and provision in all libraries.

The demographic analysis reveals that all libraries have an overrepresentation of women and young people, and all libraries (excluding Stoke Newington) serve lower levels of White residents than borough averages. This indicates a potential need for targeted engagement strategies to ensure that the library service continues to be accessible and relevant to all residents. Further information about the needs and impacts of our proposal on groups with protected characteristics is set out in the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment.

Considering the financial pressures facing many local authorities and the potential impact of neighbouring councils' library strategies, this needs assessment points to careful evaluation of options for future library provision, in consultation with residents. Hackney's expenditure on the library service has kept it in the middle of its statistical neighbours.

The data suggests considering prioritising equitable access to library services across the borough, ensuring that all residents can benefit from the diverse resources offered. This needs-led approach to provision, particularly addressing digital exclusion, should be considered alongside a different version of the existing model, where hours are allocated equally between large libraries and branch libraries, respectively, across the borough.

The future success of the library service may involve innovative approaches, such as co-locating services, expanding digital offerings, and collaborating with community partners to reach underserved populations.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a sustainable and inclusive library service that meets the evolving needs of Hackney's diverse communities.

Appendices

Average visits per day comparison Jan 2024 vs Jan 2025

Library	Day of the Week	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Difference Value	% Difference	Increase/ Decrease
Stamford Hill	Monday	400	368	-33	-8.13%	Decrease
	Tuesday	397	344	-53	-13.43%	Decrease
	Wednesday	362	375	12	3.41%	Increase
	Thursday	325	353	28	8.74%	Increase
	Friday	309	313	4	1.15%	Increase
	Saturday	146	160	14	9.78%	Increase
	Sunday	190	166	-24	-12.63%	Decrease
Shoreditch	Monday	399	389	-10	-2.57%	Decrease
	Tuesday	402	410	8	1.94%	Increase
	Wednesday	431	394	-37	-8.54%	Decrease
	Thursday	350	340	-9	-2.60%	Decrease
	Friday	309	336	27	8.74%	Increase
	Saturday	287	278	-9	-3.05%	Decrease
Homerton	Monday	210	280	70	33%	Increase

	Tuesday	226	319	93	41%	Increase
	Wednesday	142	178	36	26%	Increase
	Thursday	216	251	34	16%	Increase
	Friday	187	265	78	42%	Increase
	Saturday	168	207	39	23%	Increase
Clapton	Monday	262	275	14	5%	Increase
	Tuesday	249	265	16	6%	Increase
	Wednesday	157	181	24	16%	Increase
	Thursday	252	245	-7	-3%	Decrease
	Friday	190	216	26	14%	Increase
	Saturday	143	173	30	21%	Increase
Dalston	Monday	514	510	-4	-0.8%	Decrease
	Tuesday	525	500	-25	-4.7%	Decrease
	Wednesday	568	537	-31	-5.5%	Decrease
	Thursday	561	606	44	7.9%	Increase
	Friday	454	446	-8	-1.7%	Decrease
	Saturday	455	417	-38	-8.3%	Decrease
	Sunday	265	268	3	1.2%	Increase
Hackney Central	Monday	621	643	22	4%	Increase
	Tuesday	599	674	75	12%	Increase
	Wednesday	680	731	50	7%	Increase
	Thursday	663	661	-1	0%	Decrease
	Friday	629	602	-26	-4%	Increase
	Saturday	467	562	94	20%	Increase

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