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Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries

Public Library Standards –
2020/21 Performance Position



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Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries: Public Library Standards – 2020/21 Performance Position

The attached document contains the outturn results for the 2020/21 Public Library Standards which form part of the Department for Communities Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries Policy¹.

During 2020/21 Libraries NI had a resource budget of £30.327m of which £3.062m was dedicated to spend on library stock. Supporting literacy and supporting a love of reading remains the core work of Libraries NI. Public library services were severely disrupted during 2020/21 due to the global coronavirus pandemic. The disruption to the library network meant that libraries were not open to the public for much of the year. Throughout the year Libraries NI had to adapt and respond in ways that ensured library services continued to be provided to the people and communities they serve and this included an emphasis on online lending and the development of online events, activities and resources as well as the introduction of new services such as Book and Collect, Bookbox and Print and Collect.

The capital budget was £4.917m and this allowed for significant investment in upgrading the public library information technology infrastructure, completion of a number of projects carried forward from 2019/20 and expenditure on a number of new minor works and small projects in 2020/21 including a new changing places facility at Coleraine library, the refurbishment of Lurgan library and remediation of fire safety issues at Belfast Central library.

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, data collection for Continuous Household Survey (CHS) 2020/21 moved from face-to-face interviewing to telephone mode with a reduction in the number of questions. The results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the significant changes to the survey in terms of methodology and content, combined with library closures and restricted services.

¹ Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries was published in July 2006

Theme:

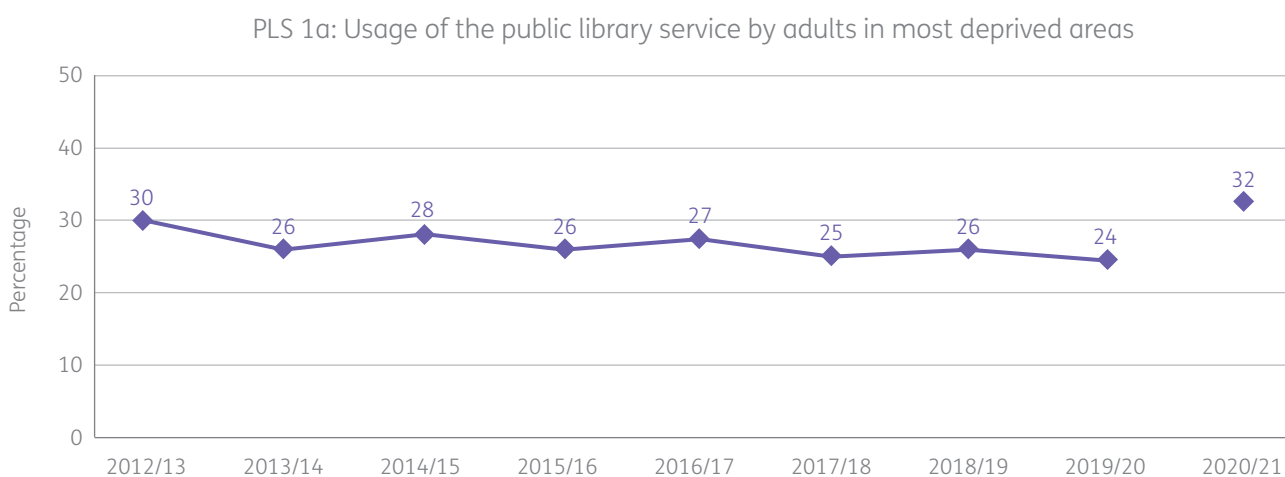
Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

Target(s):

PLS 1a: Increase library usage by adults (aged 16+) living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas by 6 percentage points over 3 years from the 2012/13 baseline.

2012/13 baseline – 30%

Position as per 2019/20: Red



Library usage by adults in the 20% most deprived areas was almost a third (32%) for 2020/21. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in survey methodology, the results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years, with 2019/20 reflecting the last reliable year of comparable data.

Data Source: Continuous Household Survey (Annual)

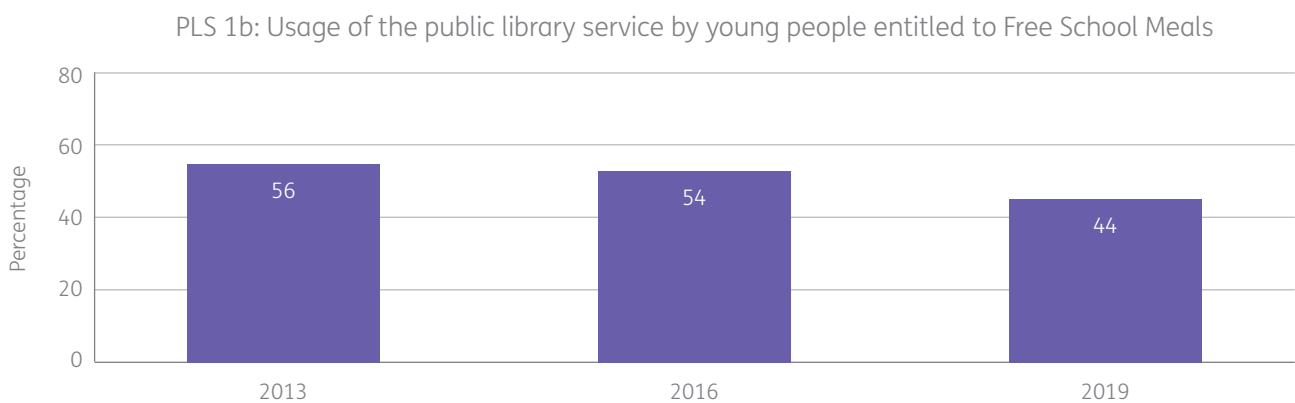
Theme:

Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

Target(s):

PLS 1b: At least 50% of young people (aged 11-16) entitled to Free School Meals to have used the public library service in the last 12 months.

Current Position: Amber



In 2019, 44% of young people entitled to Free School Meals had used the public library service.

Data Source: Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (Triennial)

Theme:

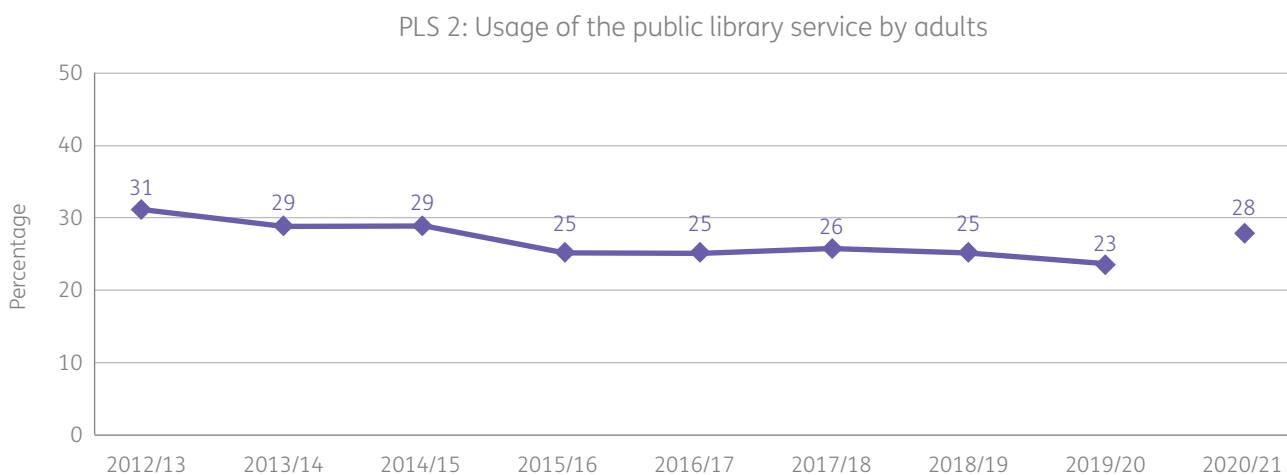
Participation

Target(s):

PLS 2: Increase by 3 percentage points, from 2012/13 baseline levels, the percentage of the adult population (aged 16+) who have used the public library service at least once in the last 12 months.

2012/13 baseline - 31%

Position as per 2019/20: Red



For 2020/21, 28% of adults (aged 16+) used the public library service at least once in the previous 12 months. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in survey methodology, the results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years, with 2019/20 reflecting the last reliable year of comparable data.

Data Source: Continuous Household Survey (Annual)

Theme:

Participation

Target(s):

PLS 3: Increase by 6% over 3 years from 2013/14 baselines, the number of instances of participation in core and regular activities organised by Libraries NI by adults, children and young people. (Genealogy was no longer delivered in 2017/18.)

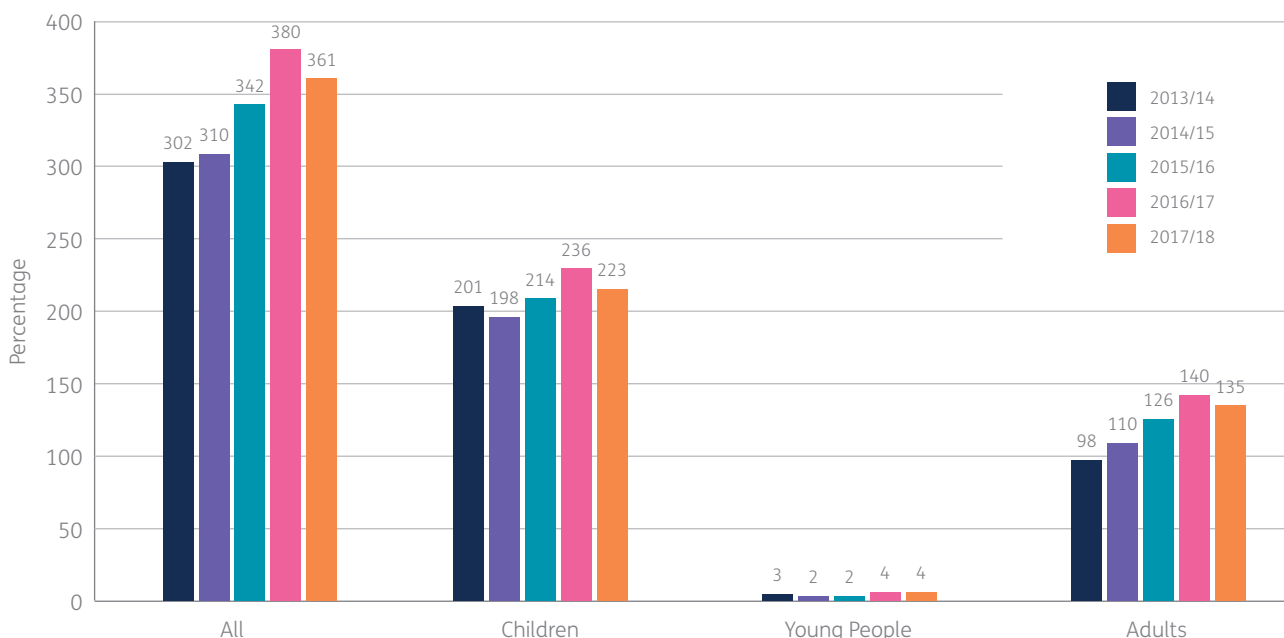
2013/14 baseline:

- All – 302,117
- Children – 200,991
- Young people – 2,678
- Adults – 98,448

Note: Data for 2018/19 – 2020/21 is not available.

Current Position: Green

PLS 3: Participation in core and regular activities



Participation in 2017/18 shows an increase of 20% compared with 2013/14. The overall number of instances of participation increased by 59,000, reflecting increases in participation of 36,000 adults, 1,000 young people and 22,000 children.

Data Source: Libraries NI Activity Database (Annual)

Theme:

Participation

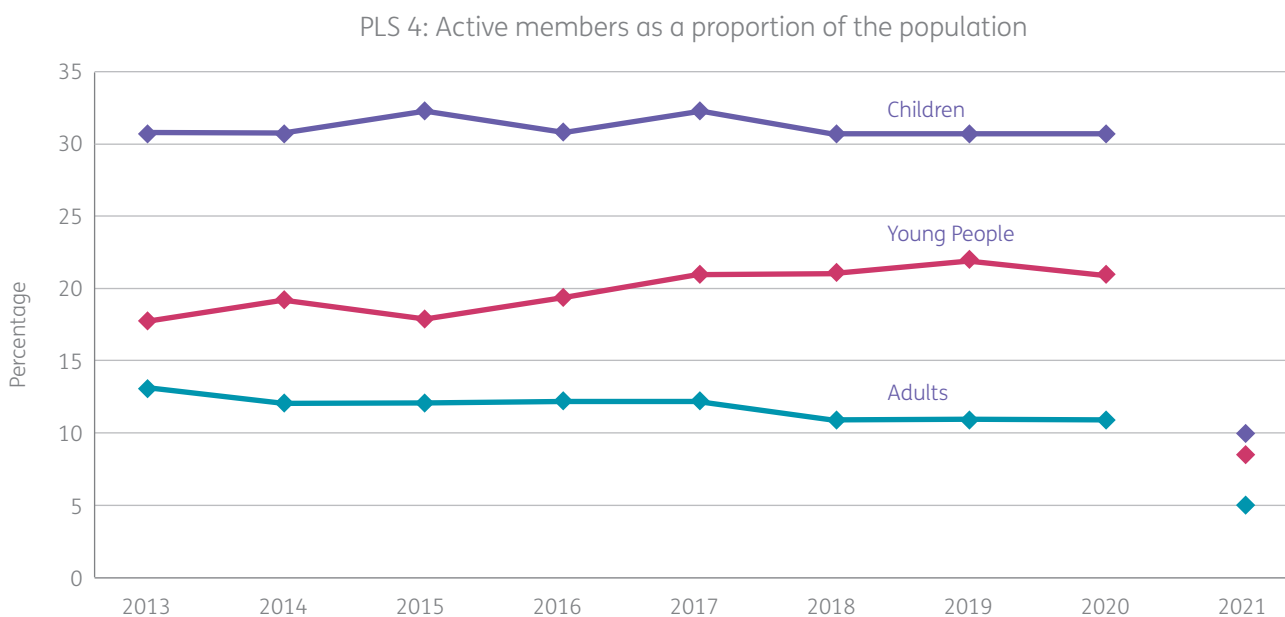
Target(s):

PLS 4: Increase the number of active members as a proportion of the population by 3 percentage points over 3 years from baseline levels at 1 April 2013 by adults, children and young people. (Excludes eBook/eAudiobook/eMagazine/eNewspaper only users.)

2013 baseline:

- All – 16%
- Children – 31%
- Young people – 18%
- Adults – 13%

Position at 1 April 2020: Red



The number of active members as a proportion of the population was 6% at 1 April 2021. Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic there were library closures in 2020, as well as restrictions on the services that could be provided (such as browsing/borrowing and IT services) when libraries re-opened in 2021 and continued in place, resulting in an adverse impact on the ability of members to be active. Therefore, the figure for 1 April 2021 should not be compared with previous years, with 1 April 2020 reflecting the last reliable date of comparable data.

Data Source: Libraries NI Management System; NISRA Mid-Year Population Estimates (Annual)

Theme:

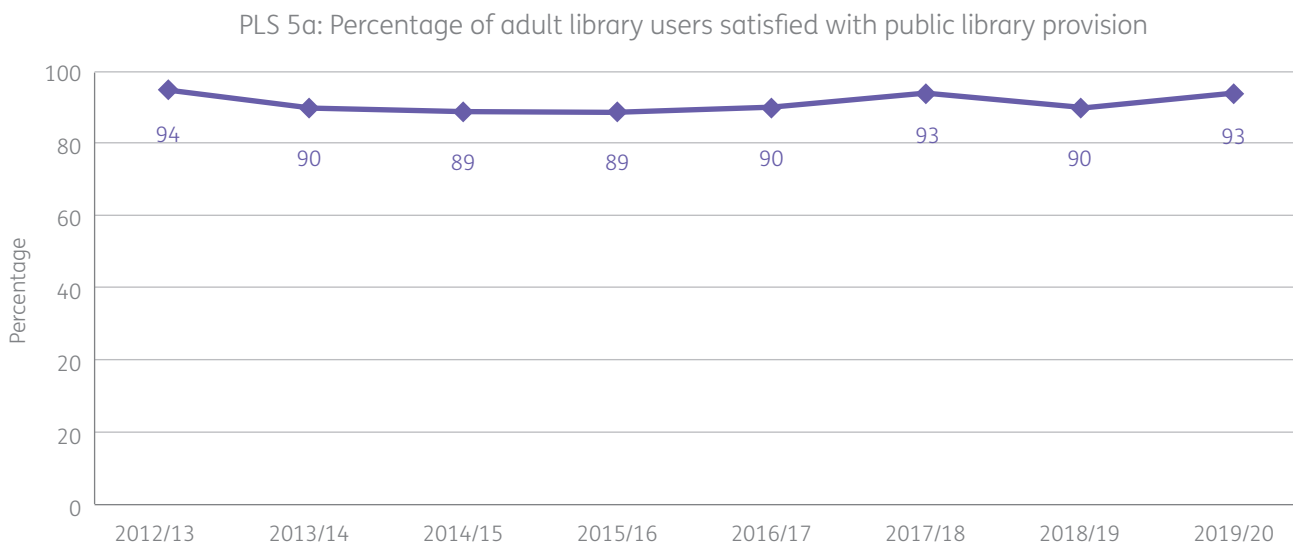
Customer Satisfaction

Target(s):

PLS 5a: At least 90% of adult library users are satisfied/very satisfied with public library provision.

Note: Data for 2020/21 is not available.

Current Position: Green



The percentage of adult library users who were satisfied with public library provision has remained stable since 2013/14.

Data Source: Continuous Household Survey (Annual)

Theme:

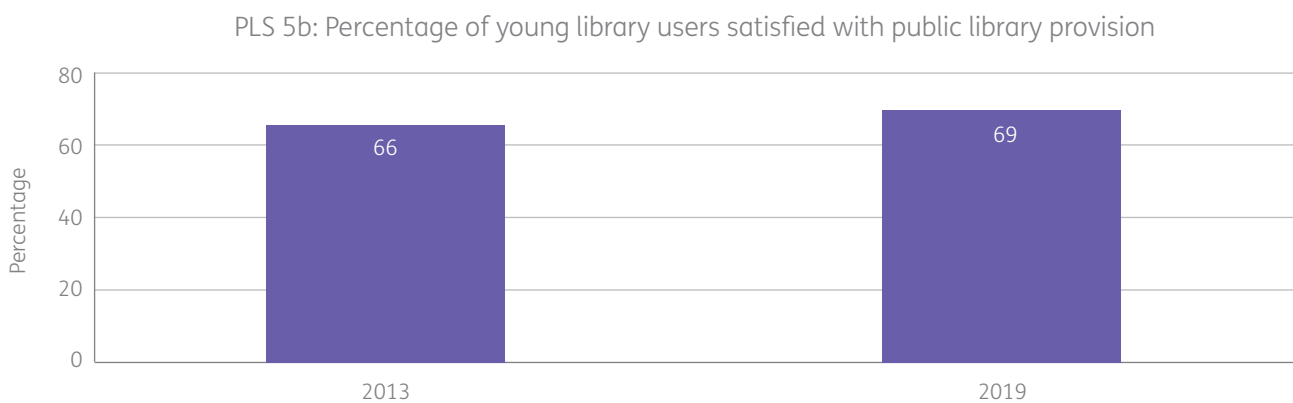
Customer Satisfaction

Target(s):

PLS 5b: At least 60% of young library users (aged 11-16) are fairly satisfied/very satisfied with public library provision.

Note: Data for 2016 is not available.

Current Position: Green



In 2019, 69% of young library users were satisfied with public library provision.

Data Source: Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (Triennial)

Theme:

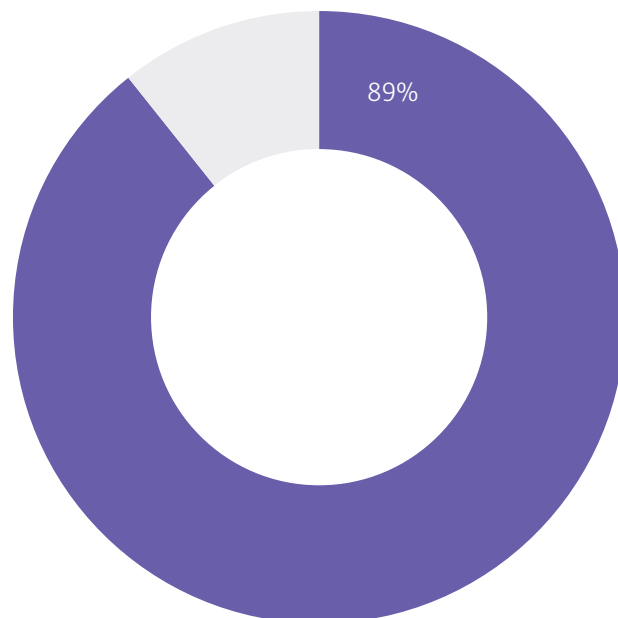
Access

Target(s):

PLS 6: At least 85% of households should have access to a library service point within 2 miles.

Current Position: Green

PLS 6: Access to a library service point within 2 miles



In 2014, 89% of households had access to a library service point within 2 miles.

Data Source: Mapping the Library Service in NI 2014 (Ad hoc)

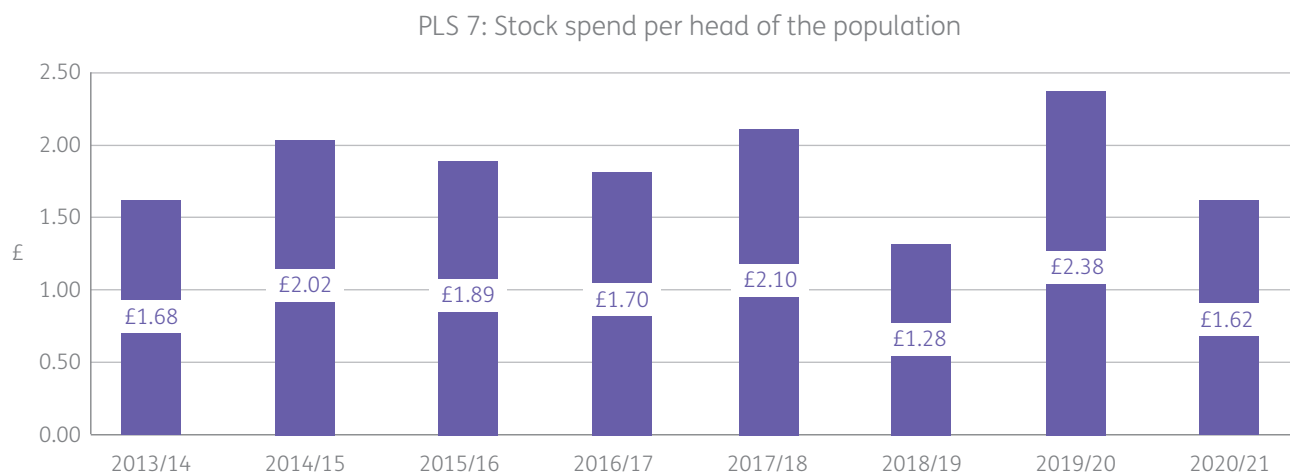
Theme:

Stock

Target(s):

PLS 7: To achieve a minimum stock spend of £2.25 per head of population.

Current Position: Red



Spend per head on stock in 2020/21 is £1.62 which is below the target of £2.25.

Data Source: Libraries NI stock spend; NISRA mid-year population estimates (Annual)

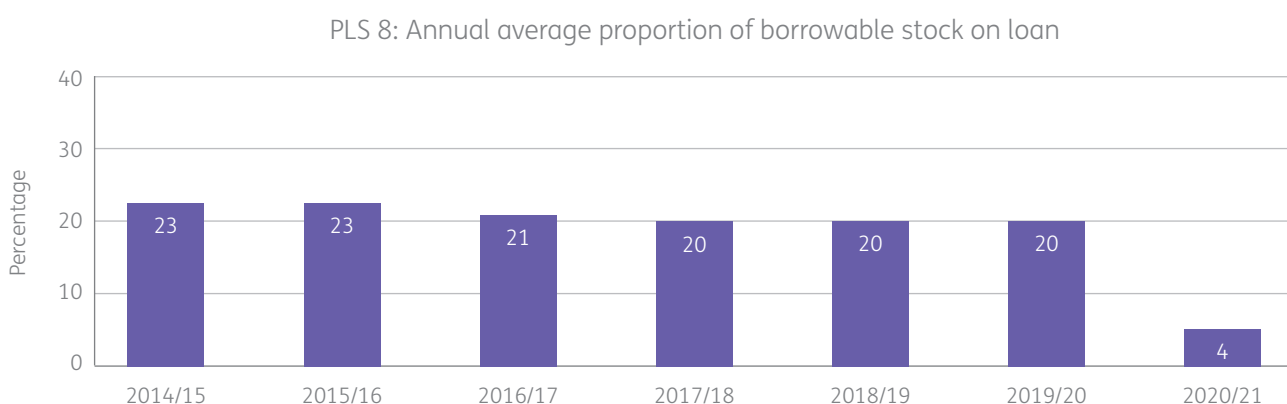
Theme:

Stock

Target(s):

PLS 8: Establish a baseline for 2014/15 of the annual average proportion of borrowable stock on loan, followed by a 3 percentage point increase over the following 2 years

Position as per 2019/20: Red



The annual average proportion of borrowable stock on loan was 4% in 2020/21. Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic there were library closures in 2020, as well as restrictions on the services that could be provided (such as browsing/borrowing and IT services) when libraries re-opened in 2021 and continued in place, resulting in an adverse impact on the ability of members to borrow stock. Therefore, the figure for 2020/21 should not be compared with previous years, with 2019/20 reflecting the last reliable year of comparable data.

Data Source: Libraries NI Library Management System (Annual)

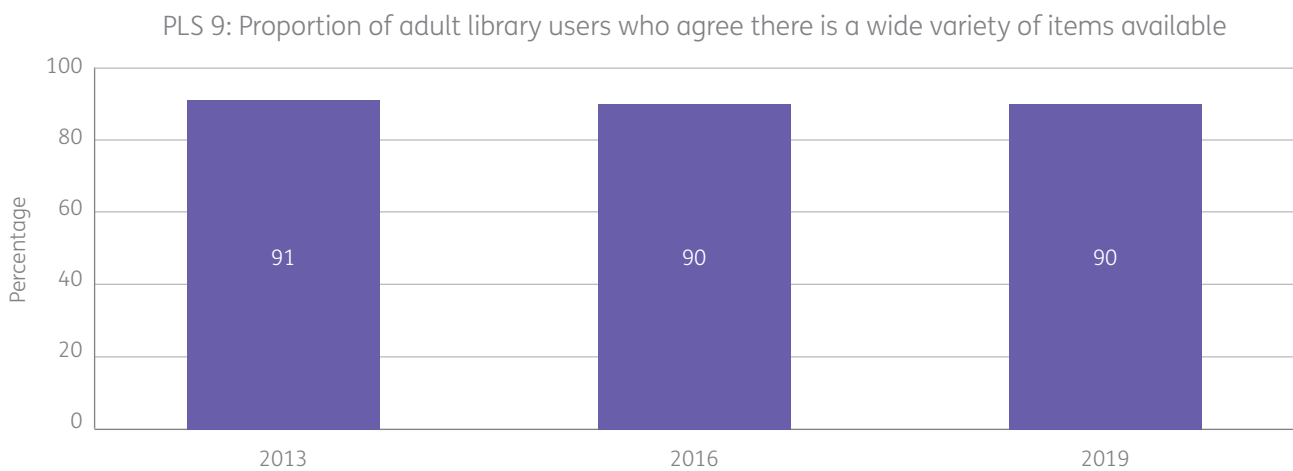
Theme:

Stock

Target(s):

PLS 9: At least 90% of adult library users (aged 16+) who have browsed through or borrowed stock in the last 12 months agree/strongly agree that there is a wide variety of items available.

Current Position: Green



In 2019, 90% of adult library users who have browsed through or borrowed stock in the last 12 months agreed that there is a wide variety of items available.

Data Source: Libraries NI Customer Survey (Triennial)

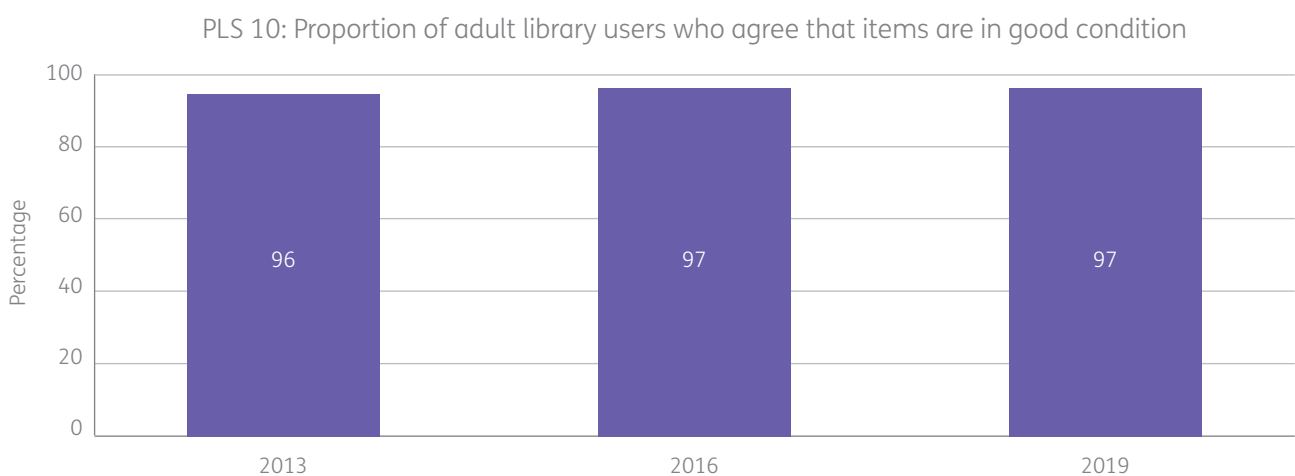
Theme:

Stock

Target(s):

PLS 10: At least 90% of adult library users (aged 16+) who have browsed through or borrowed stock in the last 12 months agree/strongly agree that the items are in good condition.

Current Position: Green



In 2019, 97% of adult library users who have browsed through or borrowed stock in the last 12 months agreed that the items are in good condition.

Data Source: Libraries NI Customer Survey (Triennial)

Theme:

Access to Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

Target(s):

PLS 11a: All static libraries to provide access to the Internet with bandwidth that is scalable to provide effective delivery of voice, data and video content to all users using recognised industry standards.

Current Position: Green

During the reporting period Libraries NI provided a Multi-Protocol Switching (MPLS) service which has applied both Quality of Service and Class of Service conditions. The associated bandwidth is delivering effective high quality voice, data and video content to Libraries NI users in line with industry standards. The service is available in all static libraries in Northern Ireland and is subject to service levels as defined in Schedule 2.2 of the e2 Contract.

In 2020/21, access to the Internet was available in all static libraries.

Data Source: e2 contract Libraries NI/Fujitsu (Annual)

Theme:

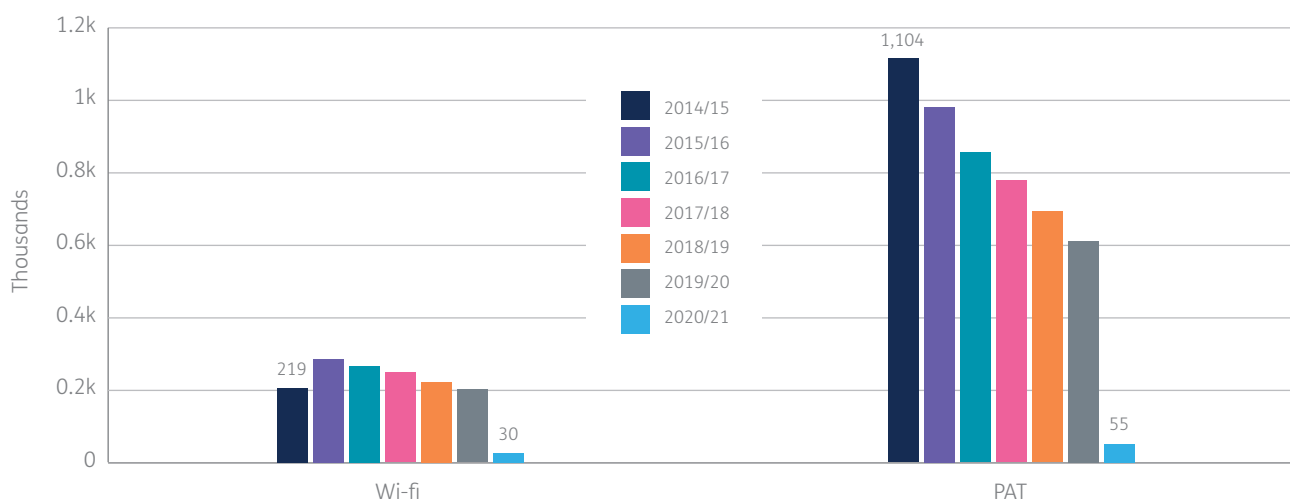
Access to Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

Target(s):

PLS 11b: To establish a baseline in 2014/15 for the number of Wi-Fi and Public Access Terminal (PAT) sessions in 2014/15 and to increase the number of Wi-Fi and PAT sessions by 2% over 2 years.

Position as per 2019/20: **Red**

PLS 11b: Number of Wi-Fi and Public Access Terminal (PAT) sessions



In 2020/21, the number of Wi-Fi sessions was 30,111 and the number of PAT sessions was 54,757. Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic there were library closures in 2020, as well as restrictions on the services that could be provided (such as browsing/borrowing and IT services) when libraries re-opened in 2021 and continued in place, resulting in an adverse impact on the ability of members to use Wi-Fi and Public Access Terminals. Therefore, the figure for 2020/21 should not be compared with previous years, with 2019/20 reflecting the last reliable year of comparable data.

Data Source: Libraries NI Library Management System (Annual)

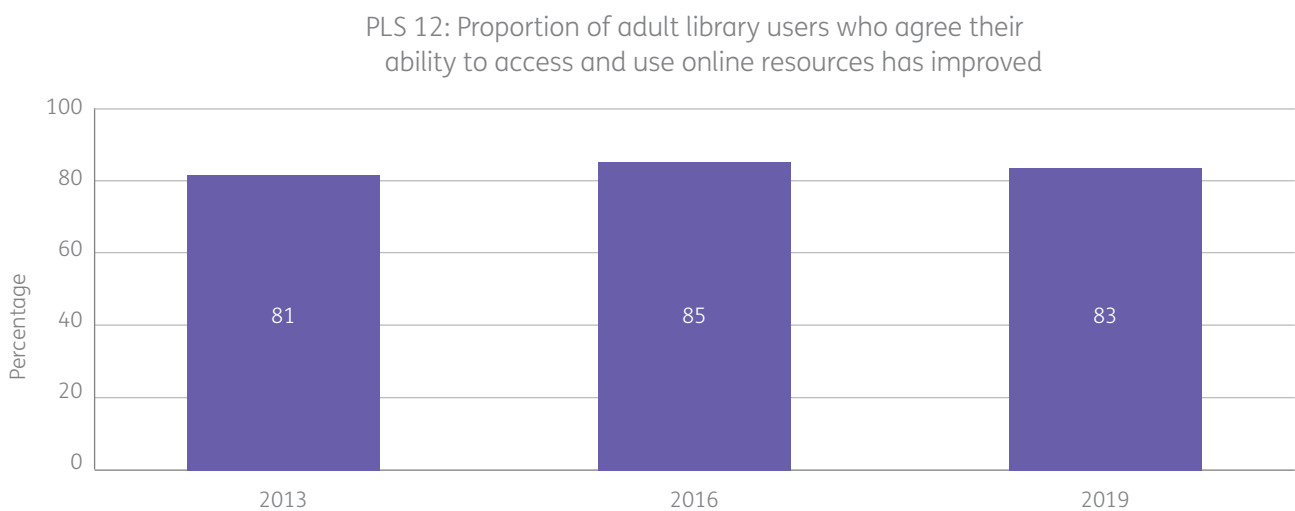
Theme:

ICT Provision

Target(s):

PLS 12: At least 80% of library users who have been supported by library staff to access/use library IT services or equipment in the last 12 months agree/strongly agree that their ability to access and use online resources/services has improved due to support provided by library staff.

Current Position: Green



In 2019, 83% of library users agreed that their ability to access and use online resources/services had improved due to support provided by library staff.

Data Source: Libraries NI Customer Survey (Triennial)

Technical Notes

1. Performance against the Public Library Standards (PLS) is presented using the traffic light system. There are two types of data used in the PLS: survey data including the Continuous Household Survey, the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey and the Libraries NI Customer Survey; and administrative data including the Libraries NI Management System and expenditure figures.

Colour: Green

Description

Survey data: Performance has improved and is expected to meet the target.

Administrative data: Performance has already or is expected to meet the target.

Colour: Amber

Description

Survey data: Performance has been maintained but has not reached the target.

Administrative data: Performance has improved but may not reach the target.

Colour: Red

Description

Survey data: Performance has declined and is unlikely to meet the target.

Administrative data: Performance has declined and is unlikely to meet the target.

2. Statistical significance: Any statements in this report regarding an increase or decrease across years from survey data are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between years are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance. Correspondingly, there are some reports against targets which look like they could have increased or decreased, but statistical tests suggest these are not actual differences and could have arisen by chance, therefore we say they are unchanged or being maintained.
3. PLS 3 and PLS 4 are both broken down by adults, children, and young people. However, it should be noted that the definitions of the age groups differ.

Group	PLS 3 age groups	PLS 4 age groups
Children	0-11 years	0-11 years
Young people	12-17 years	12-15 years
Adults	18 years and over	16 years and over

4. More information on the definitions of the PLS can be found in the Measurement Annex.

