



Shropshire
Council

Shropshire Libraries: Needs Assessment

July 2025

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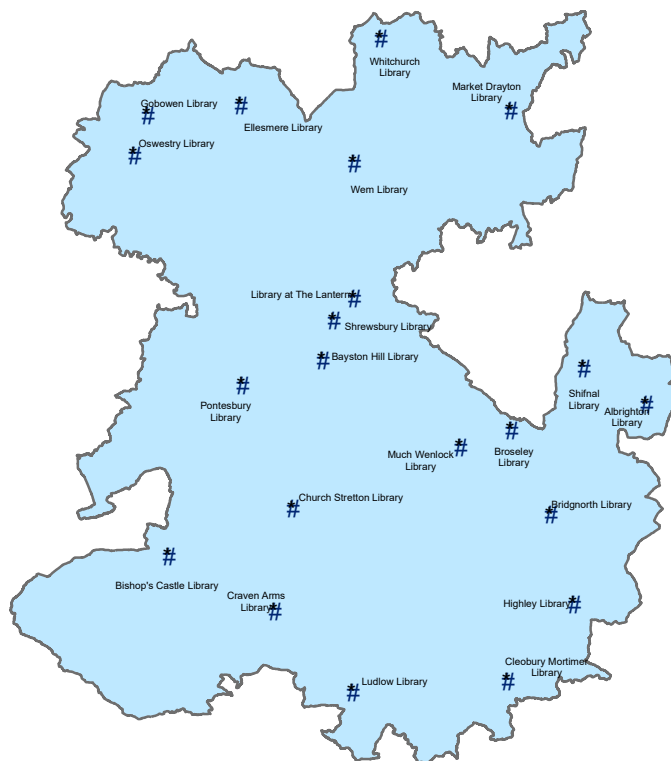
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Shropshire Libraries Needs Assessment: Introduction

Shropshire Library Service serves a population of 329,300 (Mid-2023 Population estimates, ONS). Shropshire operates a network of twenty one static libraries, a prison library (Stoke Heath), digital and development services and three mobile libraries. Together these services provide access to libraries across the County.

Map 1: Location of Shropshire Static Libraries

- 6 Core Libraries in Market Towns run by Shropshire Council: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton and Whitchurch.
- 7 local community libraries run by Shropshire Council: Gobowen, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill, Wem, Library at the Lantern, Pontesbury and Much Wenlock.
- 8 local market town community libraries run by local community groups: Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Craven Arms, Highley, Shifnal, Cleobury Mortimer and Ellesmere.
- 3 Mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council with 274 stops on a rota.
- Stoke Heath Prison Library operated under fully funded contract from His Majesty's Prisons.



Shropshire's library service cost Shropshire Council £2,769,210 in 2024/25, which is the equivalent of £8.41 per head of population.

This Needs Assessment aims to:

- Review the context in which the library service operates in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of the population the libraries serve
- Assess the catchment areas for each static library and the profile of the customers that live there
- Review usage statistics for the library service and monitor trends over time
- Assess ease of access to the library service and drive-time analysis
- The cost of operating library services

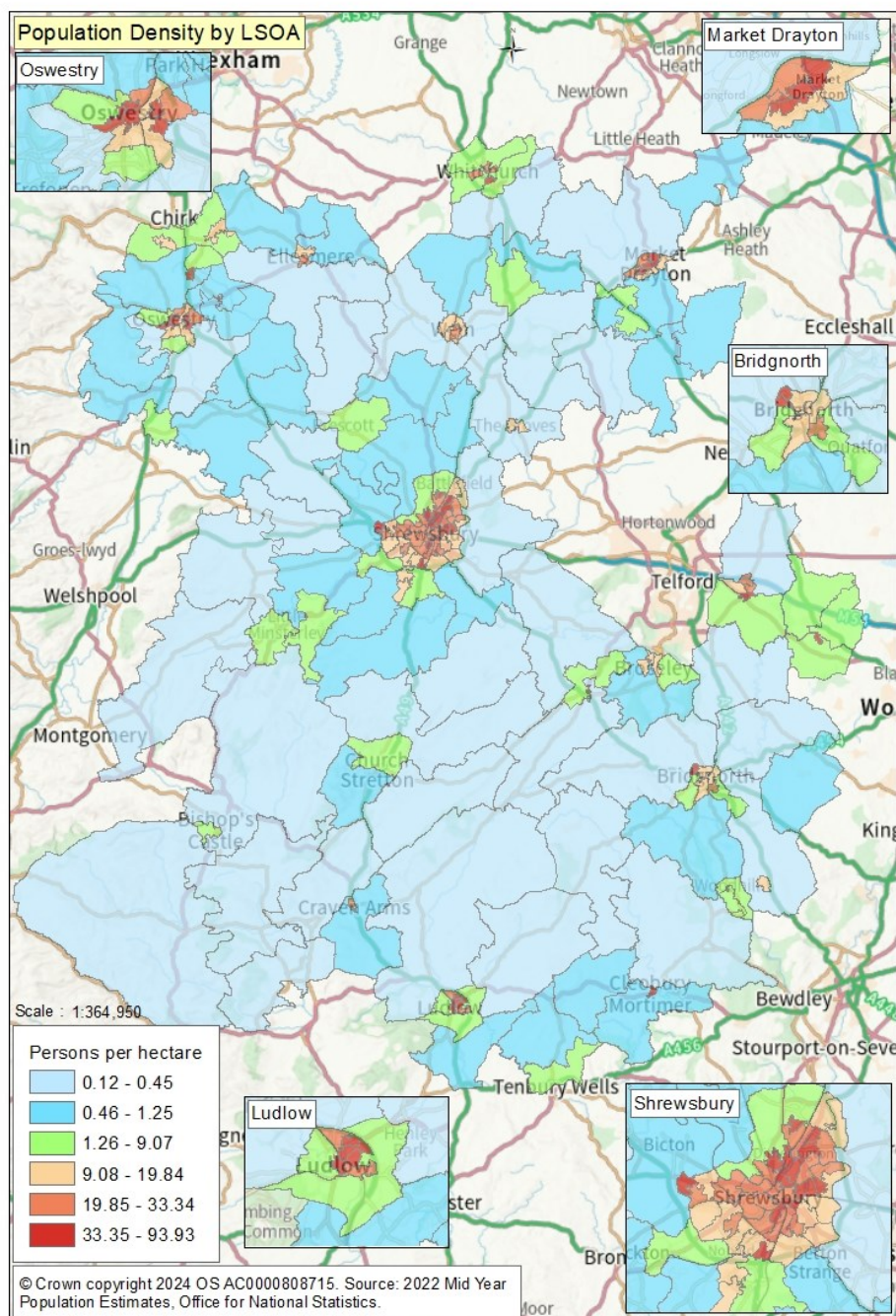
Context

Shropshire is a large rural county in the centre of the country in the West Midlands, sharing a border with Wales to the west. Shropshire is the second largest inland local authority behind Wiltshire, covering 319,730 hectares.

It has a population of 329,300 (2023 ONS Mid-Year Estimates) and is sparsely populated, with just over one person per hectare (4.3 persons per hectare in England). 97.5% of Shropshire's land mass is rural – the 2.5% of land mass that is classified as urban accommodates approximately 43% of the population.¹ Shropshire's population is spread across the entire county, with hardly any unpopulated land area. This means that the provision of services can be more challenging and more expensive than it is in more urban locations and that for much of the population, access to employment and services can be time-consuming and costly.

The map below shows the population density of Shropshire. While the county town of Shrewsbury and key market towns are more densely populated, many parts of Shropshire contain less than 0.5 persons per hectare.

Map 2: Population Density

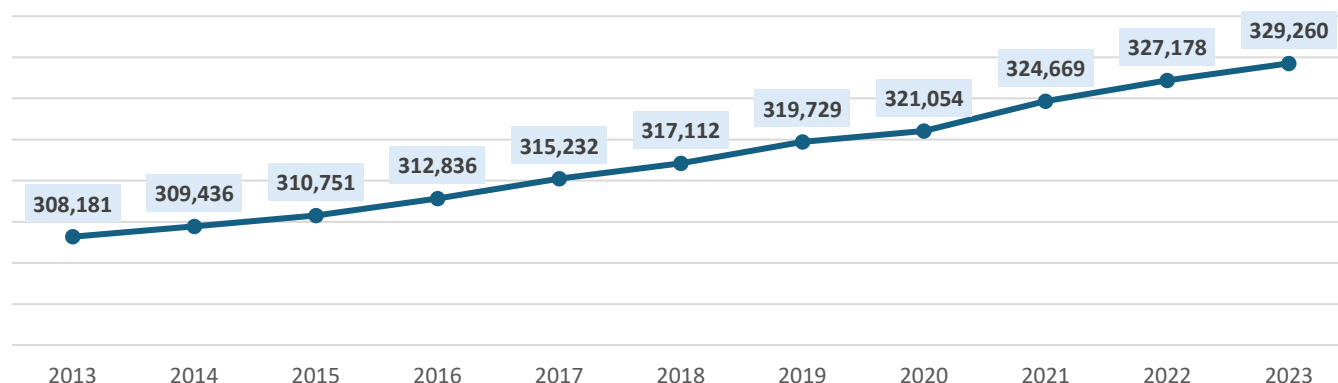


¹ According to the Rural Urban Classification 2021

Population

Over the 10 years to 2023, Shropshire's population has grown by 21,100 people (+6.8%) to 329,300.

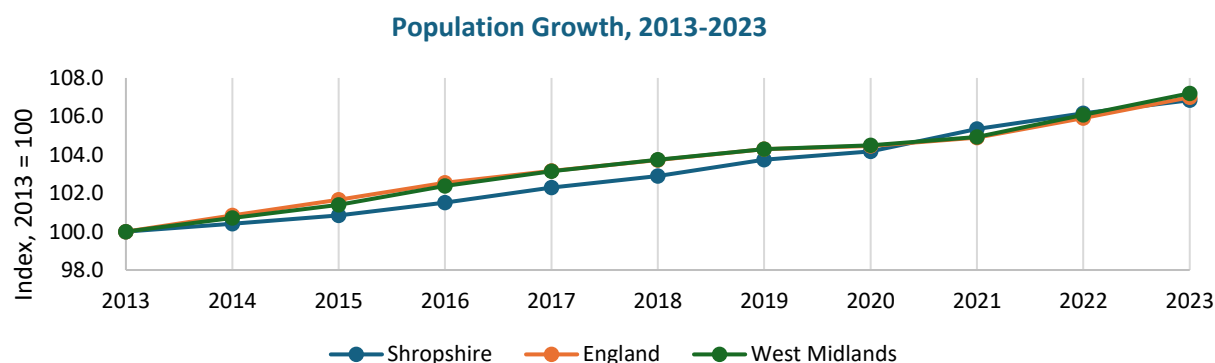
Chart 1: Population Change in Shropshire, 2013-2023



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates

The population in Shropshire has risen at a comparable rate to population growth in England and the West Midlands at an average annual rate of 0.7% per annum.

Chart 2: Population Growth, 2013-2023



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates

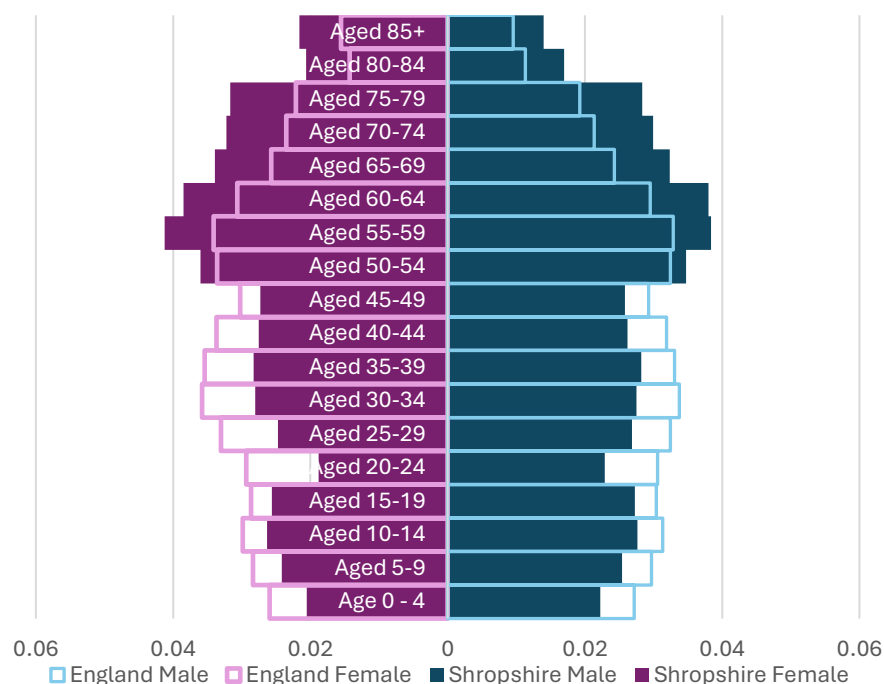
Shropshire has an ageing population, with 26.2% of the total population aged 65 and above in 2023 compared with 18.7% as an average across England. Shropshire has a lower proportion of people aged below the age of 50 than England or the West Midlands (51.5% compared to 62.0% nationally and 61.9% regionally). The “mushroom” shape of the population pyramid on the following page illustrates the ageing structure of the population in Shropshire.

Table 1: Breakdown of Population by Broad Age Band, 2023

	Shropshire		England		West Midlands	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-4	14,100	4.3%	3,064,600	5.3%	337,600	5.6%
5-19	51,500	15.6%	10,282,800	17.8%	1,136,300	18.7%
20-34	49,000	14.9%	11,247,600	19.5%	1,156,700	19.0%
35-49	53,800	16.3%	11,168,600	19.4%	1,138,500	18.7%
50-64	74,700	22.7%	11,143,600	19.3%	1,165,600	19.2%
65+	86,200	26.2%	10,783,100	18.7%	1,151,000	18.9%
Total	329,300	100.0%	57,690,300	100.0%	6,085,700	100.0%

Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2023

Chart 3: Breakdown of the Shropshire and England Populations by Age, 2023



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2023

Housing & Households

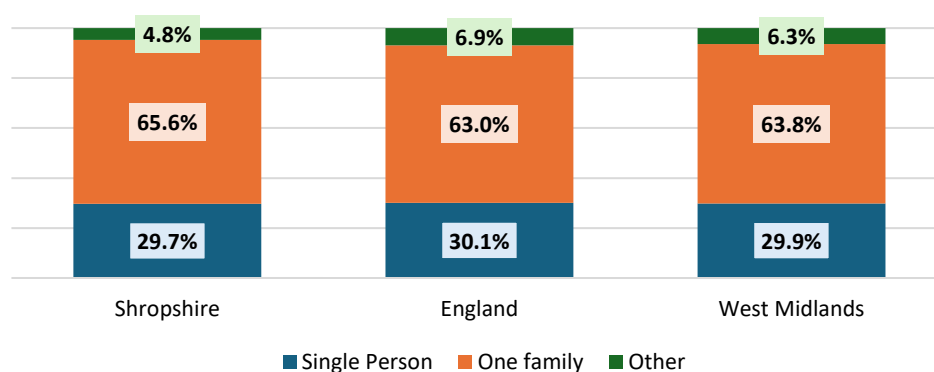
There were 139,579 households in Shropshire at the time of the 2021 Census. This represents an increase of 9,905 households since 2011, which is the equivalent of 7.6% growth. Growth in the number of households has exceeded regional and national growth (+5.9% and +6.2% respectively) and has also slightly exceeded population growth due to an increase in the number of single person households.

The average household size in 2021 in England was 2.37 people, slightly smaller than the West Midlands regional average of 2.41 people. In Shropshire, the average household size is 2.26 people.

2.3% of the Shropshire population lives in a communal establishment rather than a household. This equates to 7,300 people.

29.7% of all households in Shropshire in 2021 were single person, which is the equivalent of 41,428 people living alone. This proportion has risen from 28.9% in 2011 and constitutes an increase of 3,888 more people living by themselves. The proportion of single person households is similar in England and the West Midlands.

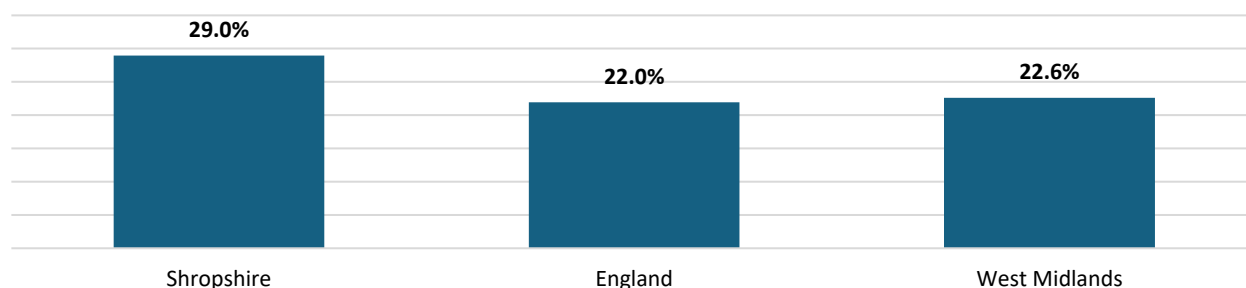
Chart 4: Breakdown of Households by Household Composition, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

29% of all Shropshire households comprise residents aged 66 and above. This compares with 22.0% in England and 22.6% in the West Midlands. More than half of these households are single person.

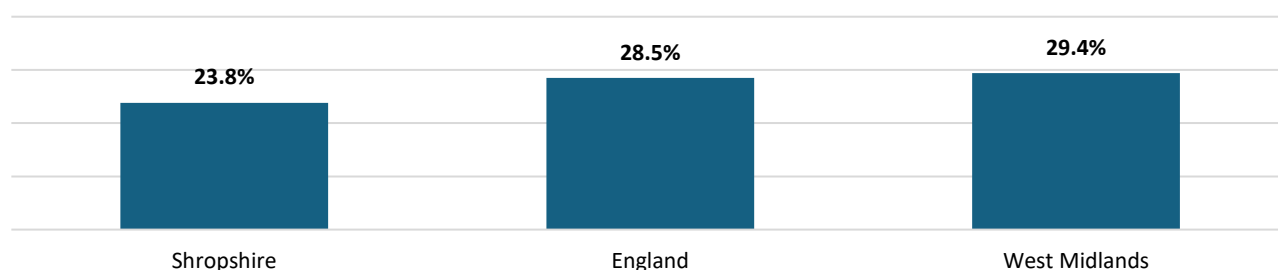
Chart 5: Proportion of Households with all Residents 66+, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

Less than a quarter of households in Shropshire contain children. This compares with 28.5% in England and 29.4% in the West Midlands.

Chart 6: Households with Dependent Children, 2021

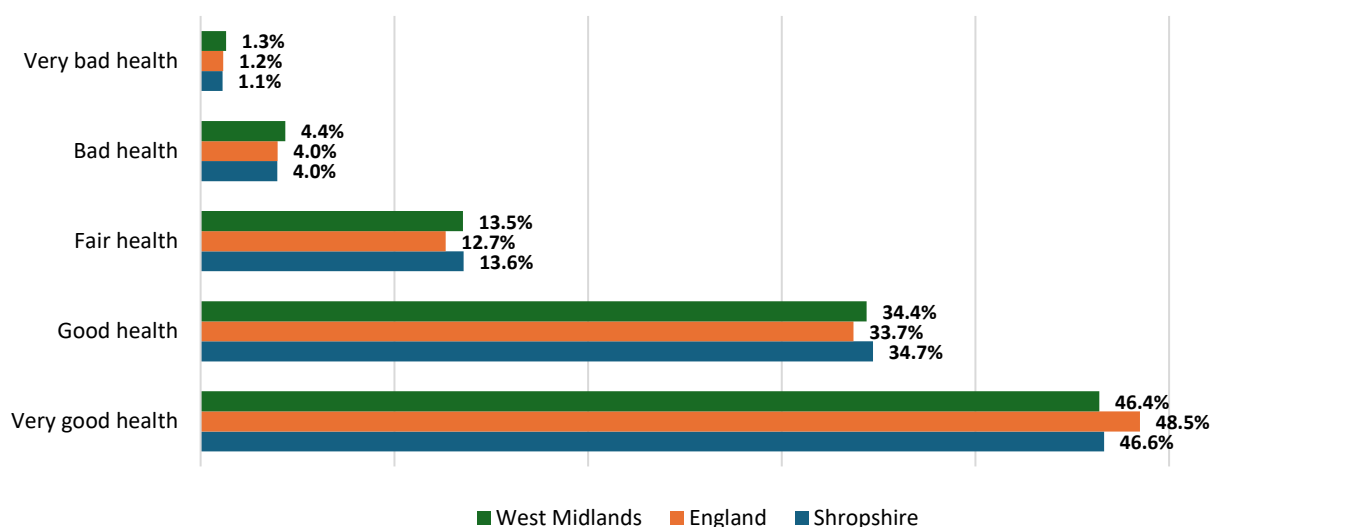


Source: ONS Census 2021

Health & Disability

More than four-fifths of the Shropshire population consider themselves to be in either good or very good health. The proportion is similar in the West Midlands and England. 5.1% consider themselves to be in either bad or very bad health. Again, this proportion is comparable to the national average (5.2%) and very slightly lower than the regional average (5.7%).

Chart 7: General Health, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

According to the 2021 Census, 18.5% of the Shropshire population is registered disabled under the Equality Act. This compares with 17.3% in England and 18.1% in the West Midlands. Of the disabled population, 40.5% (7.5% of the total population) say their day-to-day activities are limited a lot.

Over three-quarters of the population nationally and regionally are not disabled and do not have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is slightly lower at 74.1% in Shropshire. 7.4% are not disabled but do have a long term physical or mental health condition compared with 6.8% in England and 6.5% in the West Midlands.

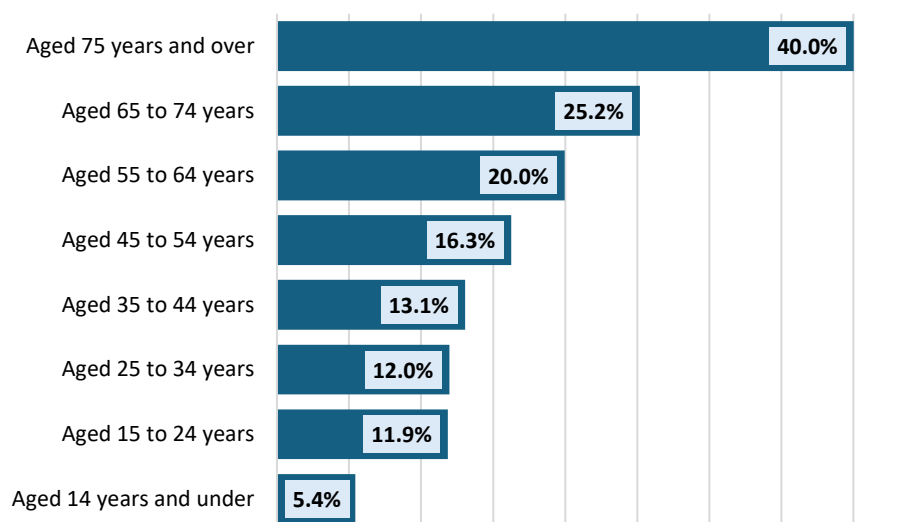
Table 2: Disability and Long-Term Health Conditions, 2021

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
Disabled under the Equality Act	18.5%	17.3%	18.1%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	7.5%	7.3%	7.9%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little	11.0%	10.0%	10.2%
Not disabled under the Equality Act	81.5%	82.7%	81.9%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	7.4%	6.8%	6.5%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions	74.1%	75.9%	75.4%

Source: ONS Census 2021

Rates of disability increase significantly with age, with 40% of the 75 plus population in Shropshire registered as disabled under the Equality Act.

Chart 8: Rates of Disability in Shropshire by Age, 2021

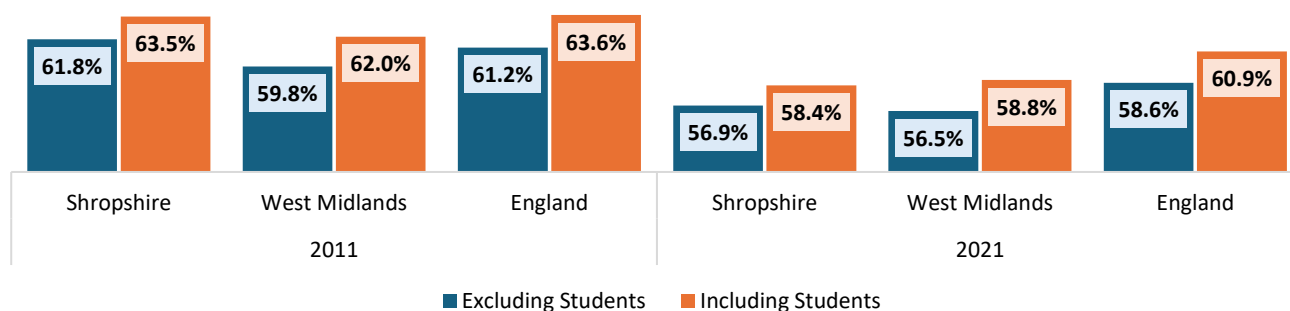


Source: ONS Census 2021

Economic Activity and Employment

58.4% of the 16+ population was economically active in 2021. This represents a decrease from 63.5% in 2011. Economic activity rates have also fallen in the West Midlands and England over the last decade. In 2021 the regional and national rates were very slightly superior to the Shropshire rate.

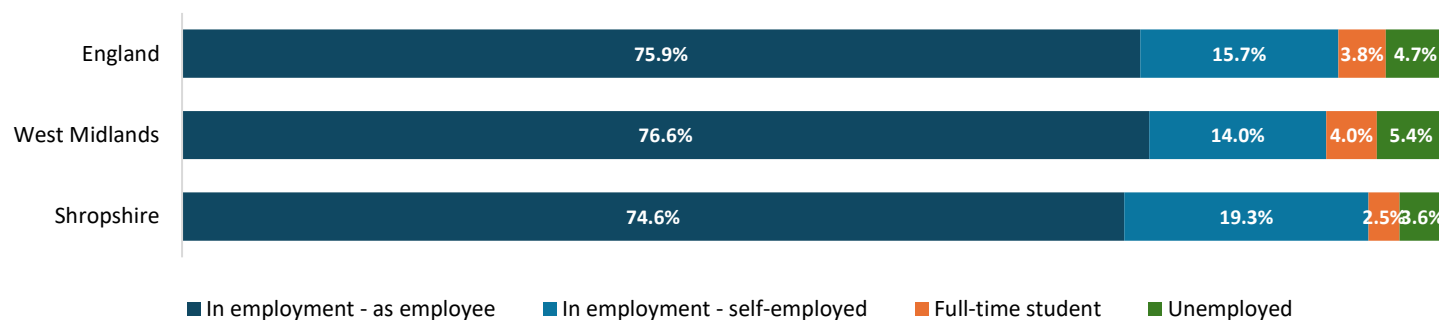
Chart 9: Economic Activity Rates, 2011 and 2021



Source: ONS Census 2011 & 2021

The following chart shows the breakdown of the economically active population according to activity. The majority are in employment as an employee. However, the proportion that are self-employed is higher in Shropshire than in the West Midlands or England.

Chart 10: Breakdown of Economically Active Population, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

43.7% of Shropshire workers are employed in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations (SOC 1 - 3). Although the proportion attributable to managers is slightly higher than it is in the West Midlands or England, the proportion attributable to professional occupations and associate professional occupations is marginally lower. Proportionally, there are fewer employed as process, plant and machine operatives or in elementary professions (SOC8-9) and more working in skilled trades and in caring and leisure occupations.

Table 3: Breakdown of Employment by Occupation, 2021

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	13.9%	12.9%	12.8%
2. Professional occupations	17.6%	20.3%	20.2%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	12.2%	13.3%	13.2%
SOC 1-3	43.7%	46.5%	46.2%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	8.7%	9.3%	9.3%
5. Skilled trades occupations	13.8%	10.2%	10.3%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	10.0%	9.3%	9.4%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	7.1%	7.5%	7.5%
SOC 4-7	39.6%	36.3%	36.5%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	6.7%	6.9%	7.0%
9. Elementary occupations	9.9%	10.5%	10.5%
SOC 8-9	16.6%	17.4%	17.5%

Source: ONS Census 2021

Educational Attainment and Qualifications

The average attainment 8 score in Shropshire in 2022/23 was 44.0. This compares with an average of 46.3 across all state funded schools in England. 38.2% of Shropshire students achieved a grade of 5 or above in English and mathematics compared with 45.3% of their national counterparts.

43% of the Shropshire population of traditional working age (16-64) are qualified to level RQF4 or above (about degree level). This is slightly higher than in the West Midlands, but lower than in England. Just over a tenth of the population have no qualifications or RQF1 level only.

Table 4: Breakdown of 16-64 Population by Qualification Level, 2023

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
RQF4+	43.0%	46.7%	42.5%
RQF3	24.2%	20.7%	21.1%
RQF2	19.4%	19.2%	20.7%
RQF1	3.0%	2.6%	3.2%
Other Qualifications	2.7%	4.7%	5.2%
No Qualifications	7.7%	6.2%	7.3%
Low and No Qualifications*	10.7%	8.8%	10.5%

Source: Annual Population Survey

* Note: No Qualifications or Level 1

Deprivation

Overall Deprivation

According to the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, Shropshire is ranked as the 174th most deprived lower tier local authority in England out of 317. In comparison with 2015, Shropshire has become slightly more deprived in relation to other local authorities (185th out of 326 authorities).

In Shropshire, there are two lower-level super output areas (LSOAs) in the 10% most deprived areas of England – one in Harlescote electoral division and the other in Ludlow East. The former was also in the most deprived decile in 2015, while the latter moved from the 20% most deprived in 2015 to the 10% most deprived in 2019.

Approximately 5% of Shropshire's population live in the most deprived 20% of areas within England and 54% live within the least deprived 50% of areas.

The table below shows in which LSOAs individual libraries are located and to which national decile they belonged in 2015 and 2019. Decile 1 represents the most deprived and decile 10 the least deprived. This shows that Oswestry, Market Drayton and the Lantern libraries are in the most deprived areas and that Cleobury Mortimer, Ellesmere and Albrighton are in the least deprived. The LSOAs in which Bridgnorth, Shifnal and Bayston Hill are located have become relatively more deprived since 2015 with Shrewsbury and Cleobury Mortimer becoming relatively less deprived.

Table 5: Overall IMD 2015 & 2019: National Deciles

Library	LSOA Code	Shropshire Council Area	National Decile 2015	National Decile 2019	Change in Decile
Oswestry	E01028906	North	2	2	No Change
Lantern	E01028983	Central	2	2	No Change
Market Drayton	E01028873	North	2	2	No Change
Whitchurch	E01028891	North	3	3	No Change
Gobowen	E01028912	North	3	3	No Change
Ludlow	E01033526	South	3	3	No Change
Craven Arms	E01029014	South	3	3	No Change
Highley	E01028849	South	4	4	No Change
Bishop's Castle	E01028992	South	4	4	No Change
Broseley	E01028841	South	4	4	No Change
Wem	E01028886	North	5	5	No Change
Bridgnorth	E01028832	South	6	5	More Deprived
Shrewsbury	E01028946	Central	5	6	Less Deprived
Much Wenlock	E01028852	South	6	6	No Change
Church Stretton	E01028998	South	7	7	No Change
Pontesbury	E01028977	Central	8	8	No Change
Shifnal	E01028854	South	9	8	More Deprived
Bayston Hill	E01028936	Central	9	8	More Deprived
Cleobury Mortimer	E01029001	South	8	9	Less Deprived
Ellesmere	E01028865	North	9	9	No Change
Albrighton	E01028845	South	10	10	No Change

Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 & 2019

Barriers to Housing & Services

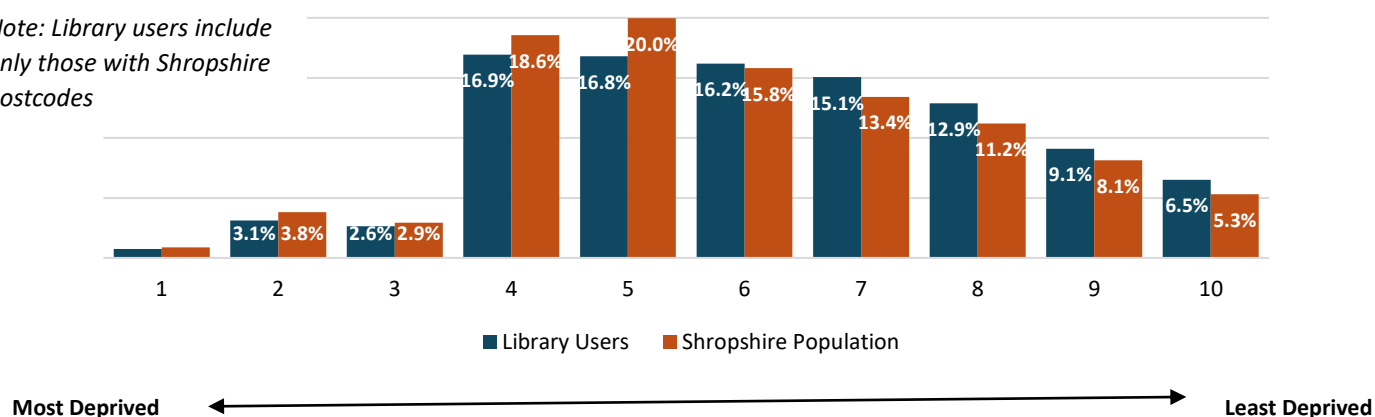
47 LSOAs in Shropshire fall within the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England according to the Barriers to Housing and Services domain of the IMD. 35 are within the most deprived 5% and eight are within the 1% most deprived LSOAs nationally. More than a quarter of the Shropshire population live in the 47 LSOAs that are in the 10% most deprived areas in England, which means that they are more likely to struggle to access the services that they need.

Active Library Users

6.5% of all active users of Shropshire's libraries live in the 30% most deprived areas nationally, as shown in the chart following. 15.6% live in the least deprived 20% of England. The breakdown of library users according to their IMD decile is broadly in line with the breakdown of the Shropshire population, albeit slightly less deprived.

Chart 11: Overall IMD: Proportion of Active Library Users and Shropshire Population in each National Decile, 2019

Note: Library users include only those with Shropshire postcodes

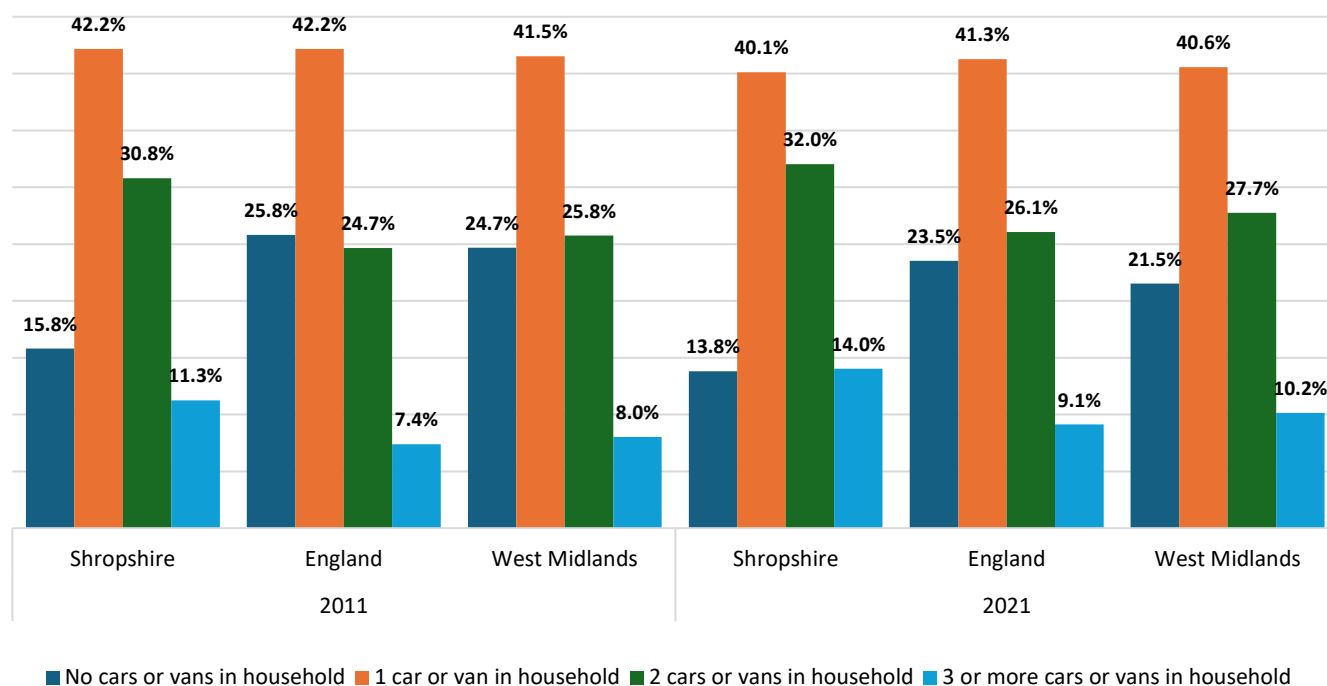


Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019

Car Ownership

As a large rural county, car ownership can be a necessity rather than a privilege, and there are relatively few households that do not have access to a car or van at 13.8% in 2021. This represents a reduction from 15.8% in 2011. More than a fifth of households in both the West Midlands and England do not have access to a motor vehicle.

Chart 12: Car/Van Availability, 2011 & 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

Broadband Availability

Over 99% of premises in Shropshire have access to superfast broadband (download speeds >30mbps), with the number edging upwards over the last two years. Coverage is marginally better in Shropshire than it is nationally (98.3% June 2025 according to Think Broadband). The remaining gaps tend to be in very rural hard-to-reach locations.

Gigabit broadband technology (speeds of >1,000mbps) has been rolled out rapidly in the UK over the last few years, with 87.6% of UK premises having access by June 2025. The roll-out in rural areas like Shropshire is much more difficult and consequently has been slower. However, 74.7% of Shropshire premises are now gigabit-capable.

Catchment Analysis

A catchment has been identified for each library based on the area from which it derives the major share of its customers based on registered users' home postcodes. Across Shropshire, each output area² has been allocated to the library to which the highest proportion of its residents are registered to create discreet catchment areas. These are shown on Map 3 on page 13. To ensure that each catchment is a contiguous area, in a small minority of cases, an output area has been allocated to the most appropriate catchment even though a higher share of residents may use an alternative library. Naturally, some library users in all catchments use alternative library provision in other catchments. **Please note that the designation of catchment areas is based on the 2024 database of users.**

Many of Shropshire's libraries also attract users who live outside the local authority boundary. Non-Shropshire output areas have been included within in each library's catchment when there are at least nine active users for the main six libraries and at least four active library users for all other libraries. Using this methodology means that these wider catchments (shown on Map 4 on page 13) are not necessarily contiguous.

Shrewsbury is the largest catchment, accounting for 17% of Shropshire's land mass, ahead of Ludlow, Bridgnorth and Bishop's Castle. Oswestry is the third largest when considering cross border catchment. As well as Oswestry, a sizeable proportion of the Whitchurch and Ludlow catchments are outside Shropshire. The catchments for the Lantern, Gobowen, Highley and Bayston Hill are the smallest, together accounting for less than 1% of Shropshire hectares. The Lantern and Bayston Hill catchments are entirely subsumed within the Shrewsbury catchment, while Gobowen is completely enclosed within Oswestry. The smallest catchments tend to be close to an alternative larger library.

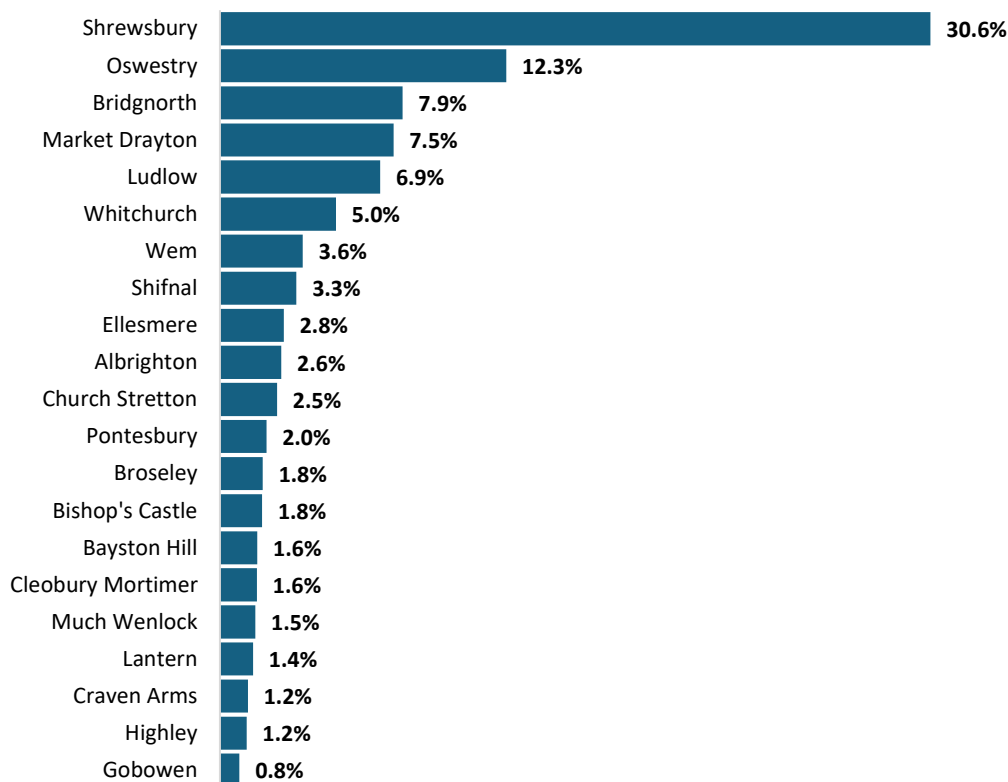
Table 6: Catchments ranked by Size (Shropshire Land Mass)

Catchment	Shropshire Area (Hectares)	% of Shropshire Area	Total Area (Hectares)	Cross Border as % Total Area
Shrewsbury	54,507	17.0%	55,146	1%
Ludlow	44,684	14.0%	58,220	23%
Bridgnorth	34,243	10.7%	34,243	0%
Bishops Castle	30,544	9.6%	35,975	15%
Oswestry	26,072	8.2%	40,620	36%
Market Drayton	22,702	7.1%	27,515	17%
Church Stretton	17,740	5.5%	17,740	0%
Wem	13,948	4.4%	14,962	7%
Ellesmere	12,841	4.0%	13,689	6%
Whitchurch	11,892	3.7%	19,125	38%
Much Wenlock	10,051	3.1%	10,055	0%
Cleobury Mortimer	8,540	2.7%	9,452	10%
Pontesbury	8,253	2.6%	8,253	0%
Shifnal	6,398	2.0%	6,415	0%
Craven Arms	6,138	1.9%	6,138	0%
Albrighton	6,105	1.9%	7,441	18%
Broseley	3,272	1.0%	3,339	2%
Bayston Hill	864	0.3%	864	0%
Highley	638	0.2%	638	0%
Gobowen	151	>0.0%	151	0%
Lantern	143	>0.0%	143	0%
Total	319,726	100.0%	370,124	14%

² The lowest level of geographical area for census statistics. Each Output Area is made up of between 40 and 250 households and a usually resident population of between 100 and 625 persons

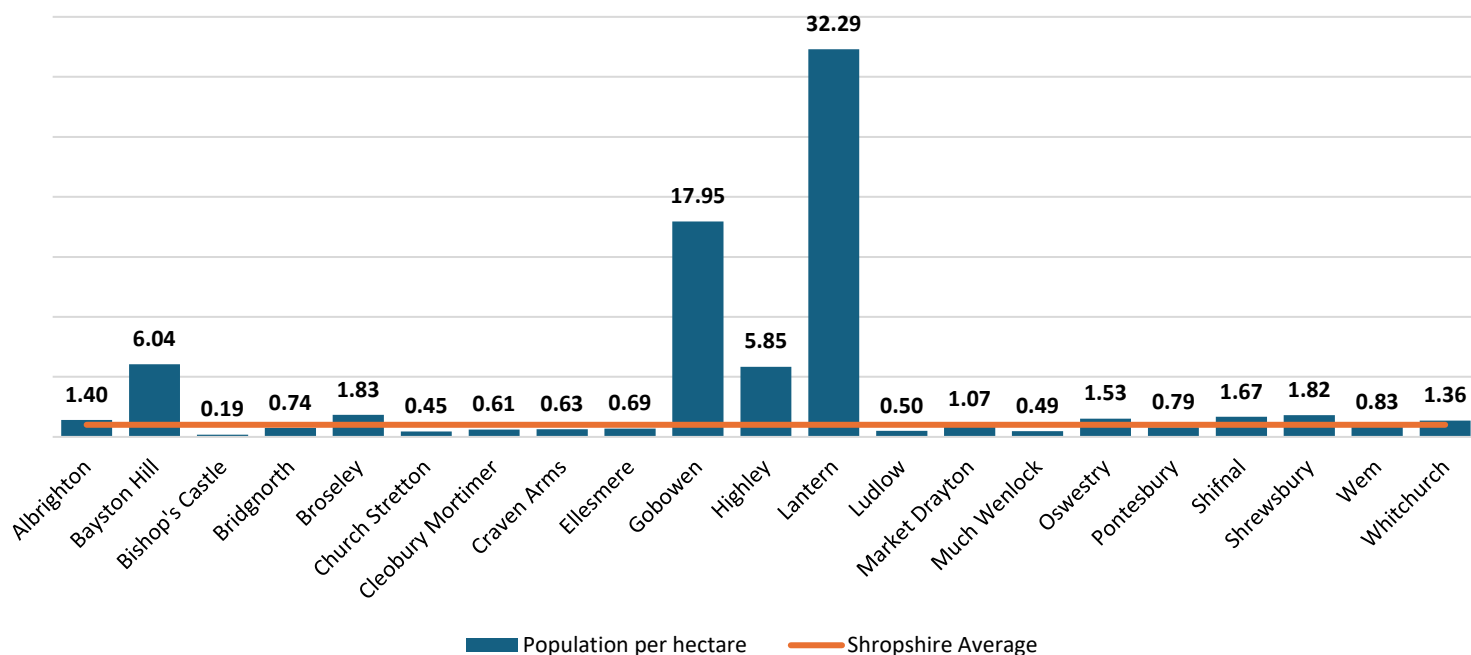
Shrewsbury is also the largest catchment in terms of population, accounting for just over 30% of the Shropshire population. Oswestry ranks second, taking a share of 12.3%. Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Ludlow and Whitchurch make up the top six.

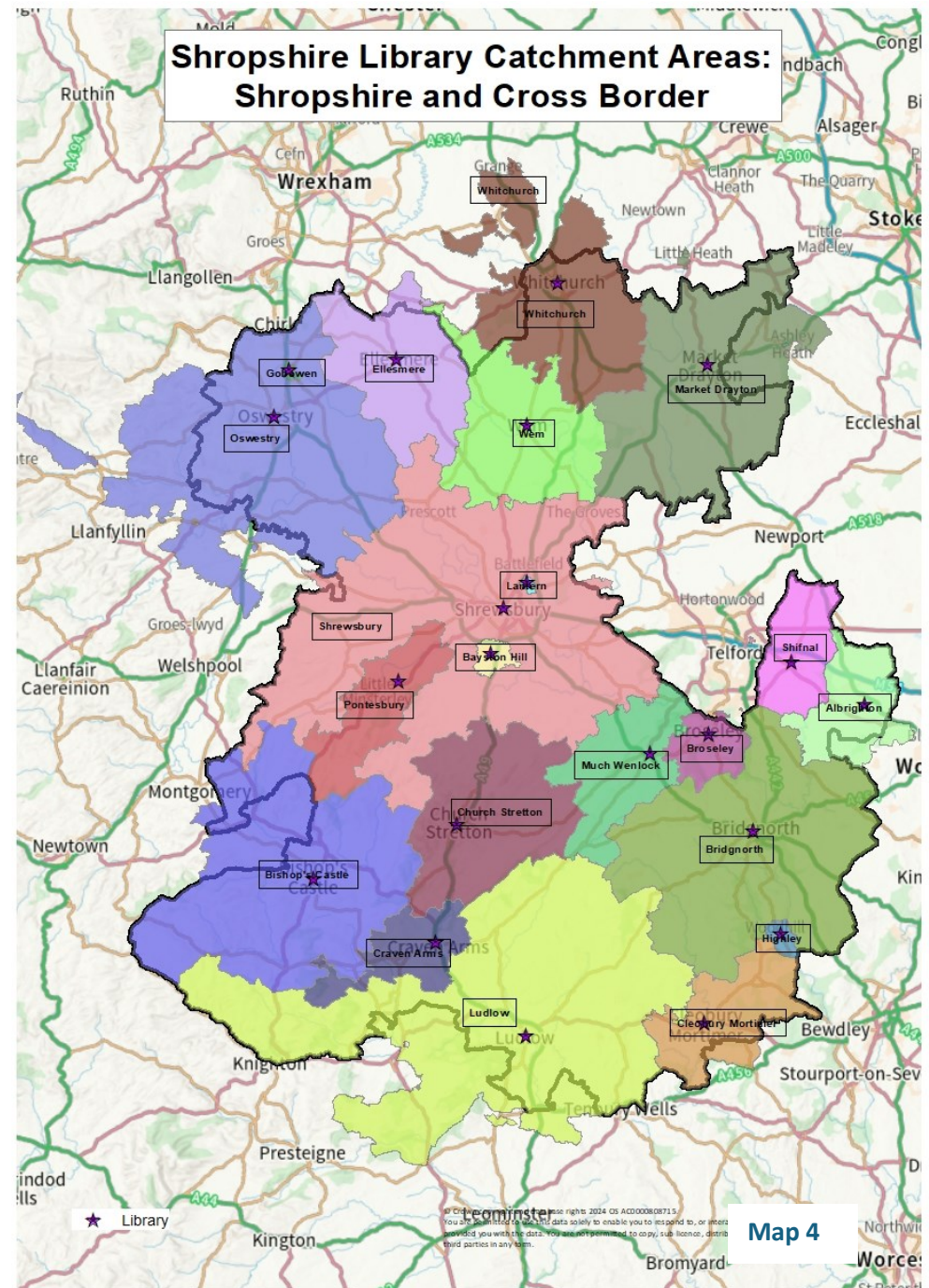
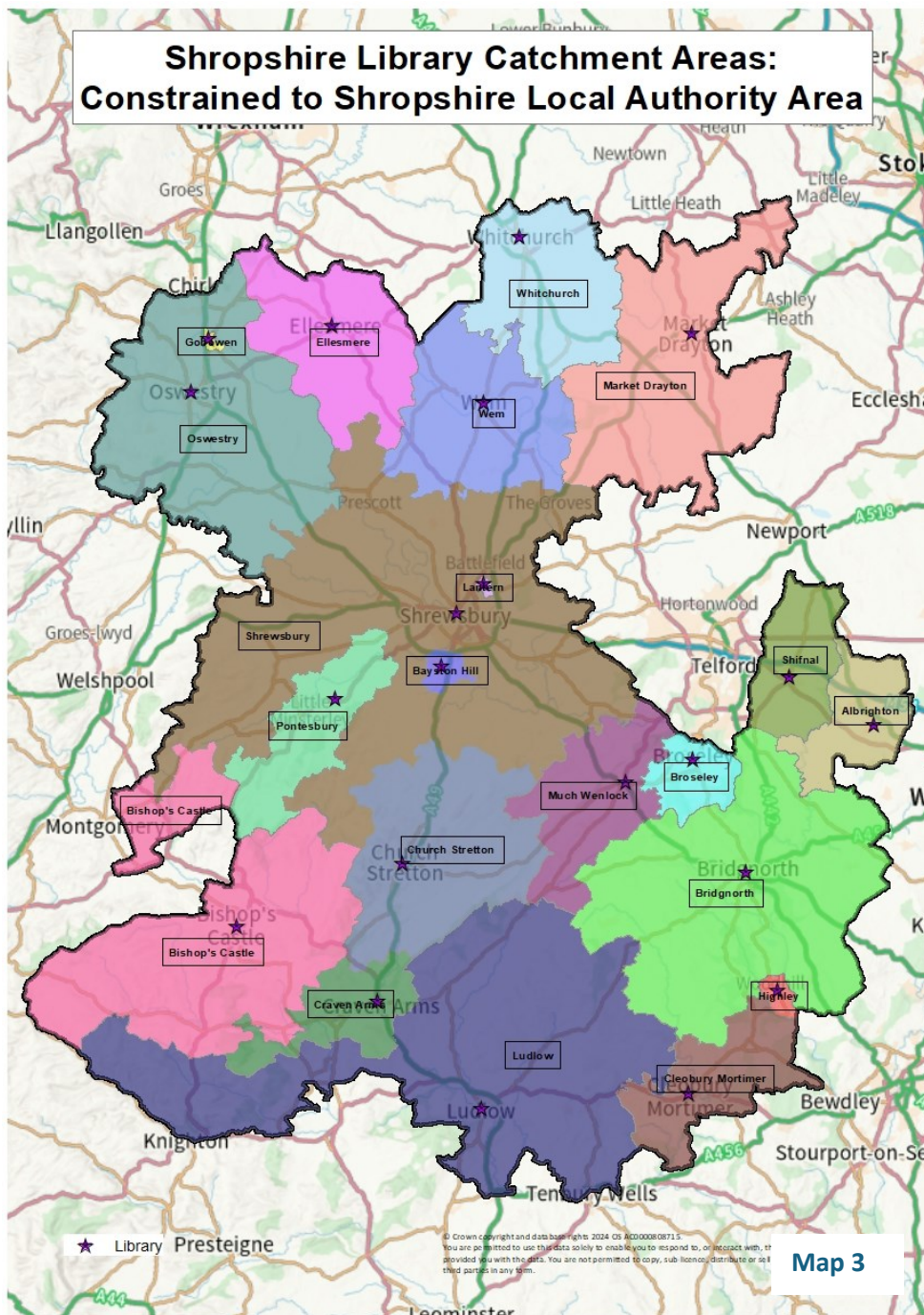
Chart 13: Catchments ranked by Shropshire Population



Average population per hectare across Shropshire is just over one person. The chart below illustrates how this varies by library catchment. The smallest catchments – the Lantern, Gobowen, Highley and Bayston Hill are much more densely populated than many of the larger catchments. Population density is much lower than average for Bishop’s Castle. Bridgnorth, Church Stretton, Cleobury Mortimer, Craven Arms, Ellesmere, Ludlow, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury and Wem.

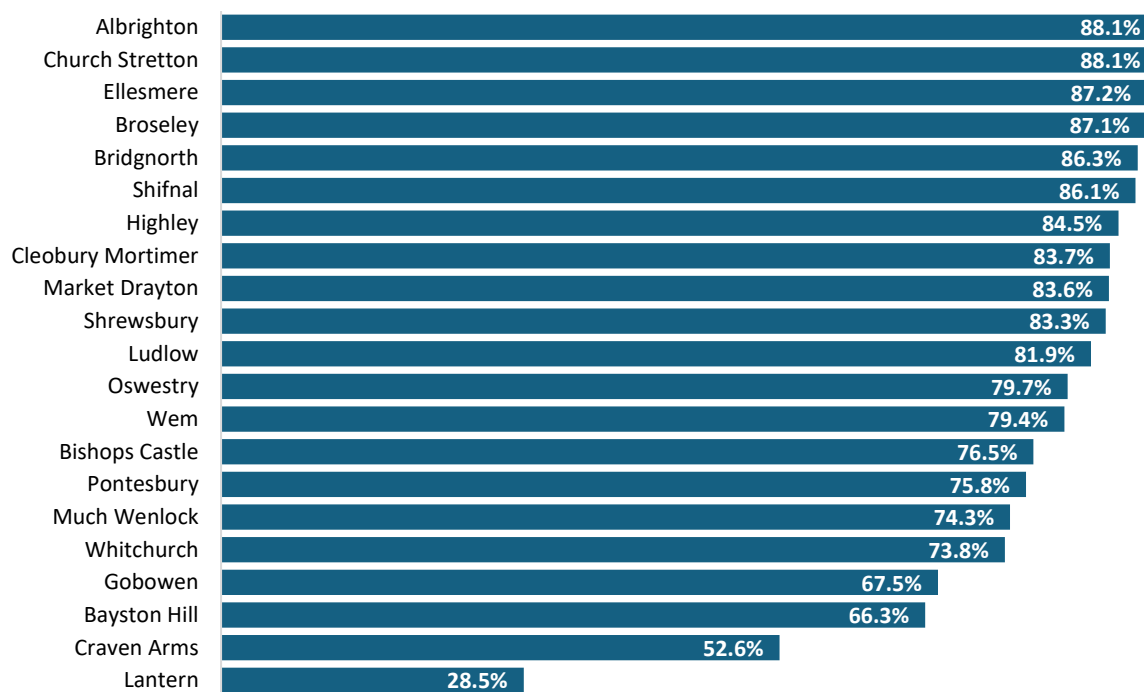
Chart 14: Population Density by Library Catchment





More than 85% of Albrighton, Church Stretton, Ellesmere, Broseley, Bridgnorth and Shifnal active library users live in their library's designated catchment area. Not surprisingly, the smallest catchment areas tend to accommodate a lower proportion of the library's active users – less than 30% of users of the Lantern live within the Lantern's catchment. Likewise, around two-thirds of users or fewer of Bayston Hill, Gobowen and Craven Arms libraries live in their respective catchment areas. All these libraries are within relatively proximity of another library with a larger catchment area.

Chart 15: Proportion of Active Users Living in Catchment Area



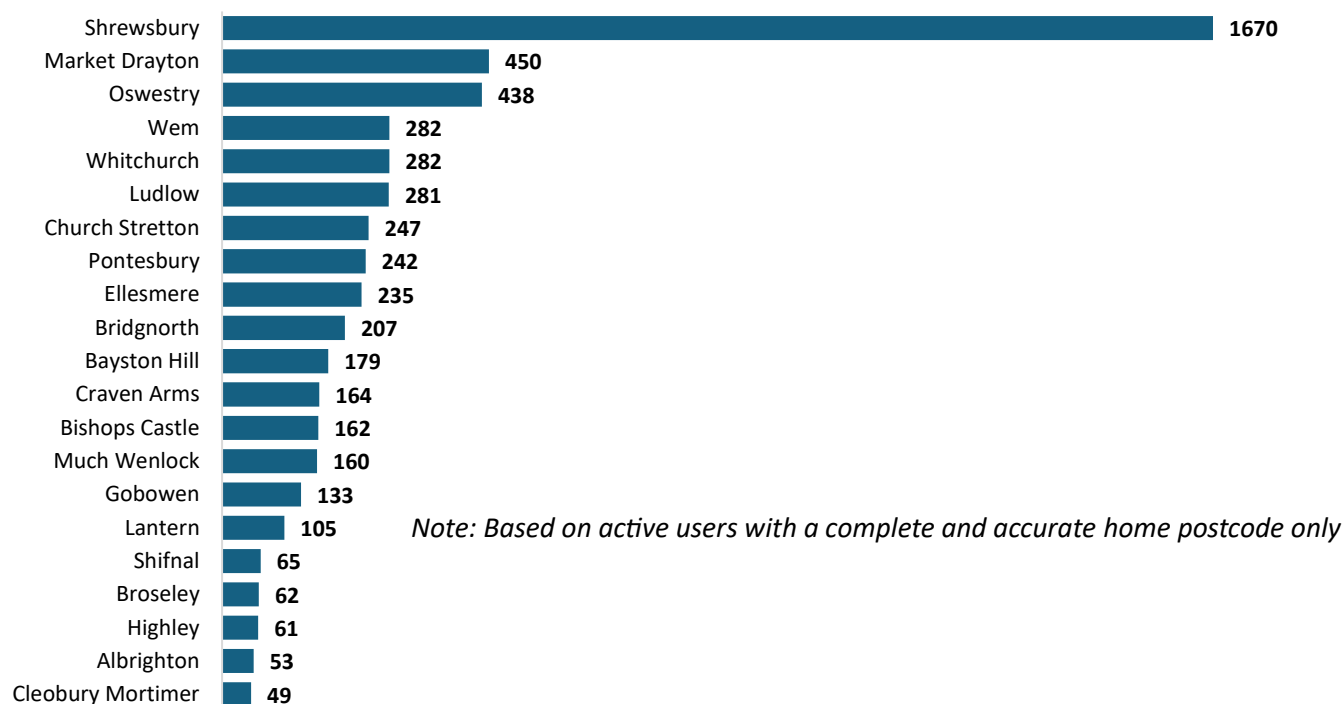
Note: Based on active users with a complete and accurate home postcode only

All library catchments contain residents who are active users of an alternative library. The highest number is in the Shrewsbury catchment, where there are 1,670 users of other libraries across Shropshire. 481 users of the Lantern live in the Shrewsbury catchment area (61.7% of all Lantern users) as well as 246 Bayston Hill Library users (29.9% of all Bayston Hill library users). 438 people living in the Oswestry catchment area use alternative libraries – of these, 159 use Shrewsbury library and 63 use Gobowen. A quarter of Gobowen library users live in the Oswestry catchment.

Comparatively few users of alternative libraries live in the Cleobury Mortimer, Albrighton, Highley, Broseley or Shifnal catchments.

It should be noted that users of mobile libraries are included within these up-dated 2025 figures (having been excluded in 2024). This means that the proportion of library users living in their designated catchment area has declined slightly for most libraries and that the number using alternative library provision had increased.

Chart 16: Number of Users Living in each Catchment Using Alternative Libraries



Library Catchments Average IMD Score

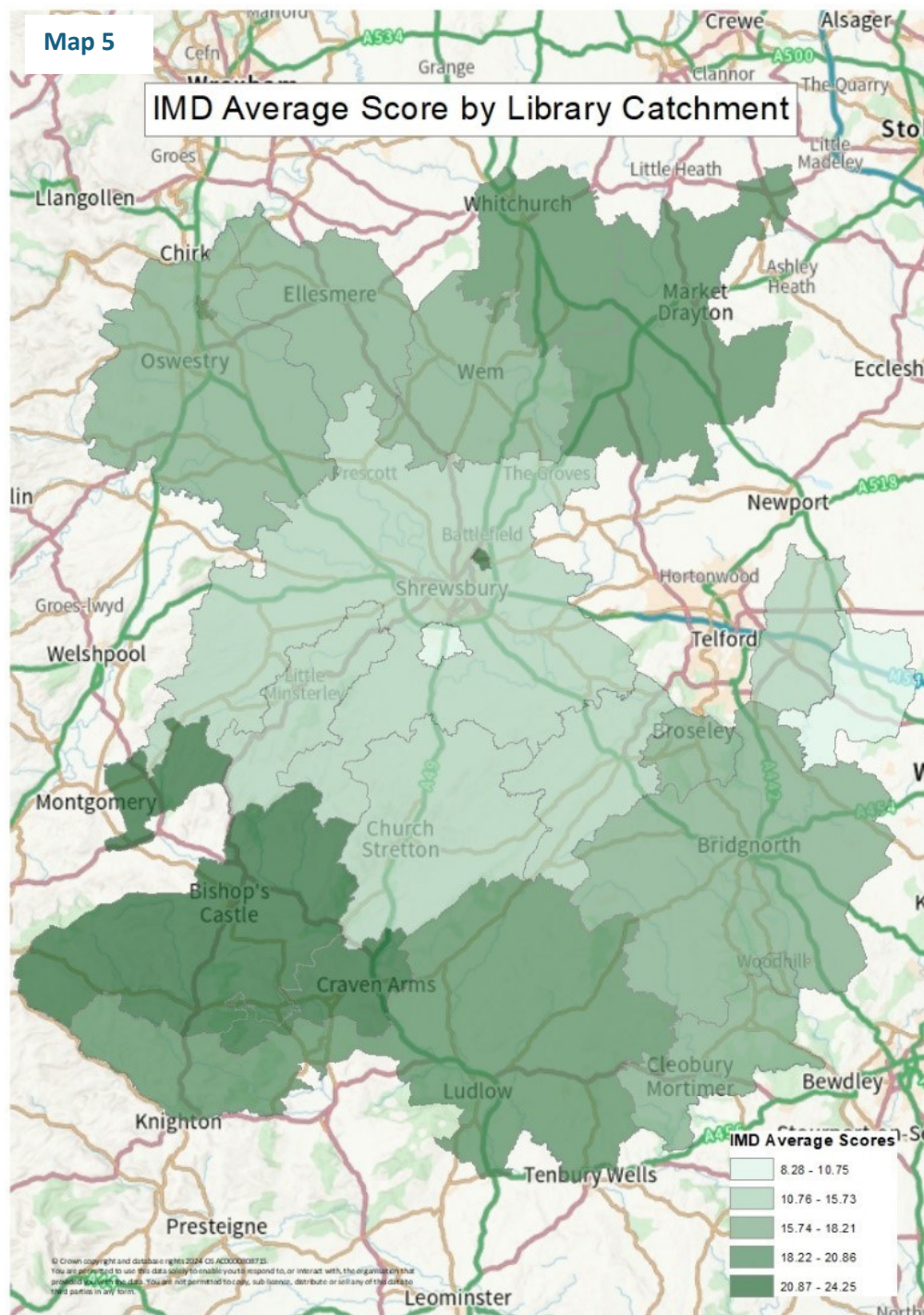
Average IMD scores have been calculated for each Shropshire library catchment (see map 5 on page 16 for catchment areas). This shows that Bayston Hill and Albrighton are the least deprived and that the Lantern and Bishop's Castle are the most deprived.

Table 7: Average IMD Score by Library Catchment

Library Catchment	Rank (1= most deprived)	Average Score for Catchment
Lantern	1	24.2
Bishop's Castle	2	22.0
Craven Arms	3	21.9
Gobowen	4	20.9
Whitchurch	5	20.3
Market Drayton	6	19.6
Ludlow	7	19.5
Oswestry	8	18.2
Ellesmere	9	18.2
Highley	10	17.7
Broseley	11	17.1
Wem	12	17.0
Cleobury Mortimer	13	16.5
Bridgnorth	14	16.2
Shrewsbury	15	15.7
Much Wenlock	16	15.3
Church Stretton	17	14.6
Pontesbury	18	14.4
Shifnal	19	13.9
Albrighton	20	10.8
Bayston Hill	21	8.3

Map 5

IMD Average Score by Library Catchment



Shropshire Libraries: Demand and Usage Analysis

Library usage data provides a good indication of how much libraries are used by the population and the level of demand that exists across a range of different activities. Analysing trend data over time gives insights into changing demand and patterns of usage also incorporating the evolving digital offer.

This data can show clear variations between different libraries - libraries across Shropshire have different offers, strengths, environments, buildings, catchments, socio-economic characteristics, local communities and so on. It is also useful to compare these trends with the national picture. This data is sourced from Shropshire Council Library Systems.

Library Demand Data Indicators

Includes rank table based on

- Number of Active Library Users
- Number of Visits
- Number of Issues/Loans
- Event Participation
- Public Access Computer User Hours

Library Demand Trend Analysis

The analysis below shows trends in library usage over the last five years. During this period, the Covid-19 Pandemic took place when libraries were closed for periods of time in national lockdowns. As to be expected, this caused a decline in demand and activity, but it is interesting to see how demand changed after this timeframe and how trends in digitalisation and e-books has evolved. The time frame under review (2019/20 to 2024/25) has also been a period of change in consumer expectations, unprecedented rises in the cost of living and more financially challenging budgets for local authorities.

The library usage data below shows library activity trends overtime, from April to March 2019/20 to April to March 2024/25. It excludes mobile libraries and headquarters.

Library usage dipped hugely during the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020/21 but the number of people using libraries for different activities has steadily increased year on year since 2021. Whilst numbers are lower than pre-pandemic levels, there is a year-on-year recovery in numbers and growth since 2020/21. However, between 2023/24 and 2024/25 numbers have begun to plateau or slightly fall in some areas.

The number of active library users (Chart 17) has fallen from 40,100 in 2019/20 to 33,362 in 2024/25. This is a decline of 17.0%. All libraries experienced a huge decline in usage during the Covid-19 Pandemic. There has been a good steady recovery in the number of active users since 2020/21 but levels have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. Despite this, however, there has been year on year growth in active library users to 82% of pre-pandemic levels (2018/19) in 2024/25. This trend has slightly changed in the last year as between 2023/24 and 24/25 the number of active users has fallen slightly from 34,643 to 33,362, a 3.7% fall. In four Shropshire libraries the number of active users has recovered to pre-pandemic levels; these are Pontesbury, Much Wenlock, Brosely and Bayston Hill.

The number of visits (Chart 18) has declined from 827,342 in 2019/20 to 640,560 in 2024/25, a decline of 22.6%. This is greater than the decline in the number of active users, suggesting users are visiting less often. The number of visits in 2024/25 was 74% of the pre-pandemic levels of 2018/19. All libraries have seen a decline in visits over the 5-year period, although there is a steady year on year increase since the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020/21, as the number of visits continues to grow. Some libraries had a particularly strong percentage increase in visits between 2022/3 to 2024/5 these were Bridgnorth (25% increase), Oswestry (31%), Albrighton (45%), Gobowen (76%) Highley (29%) Cleobury Mortimer (24%) and Broseley (24%).

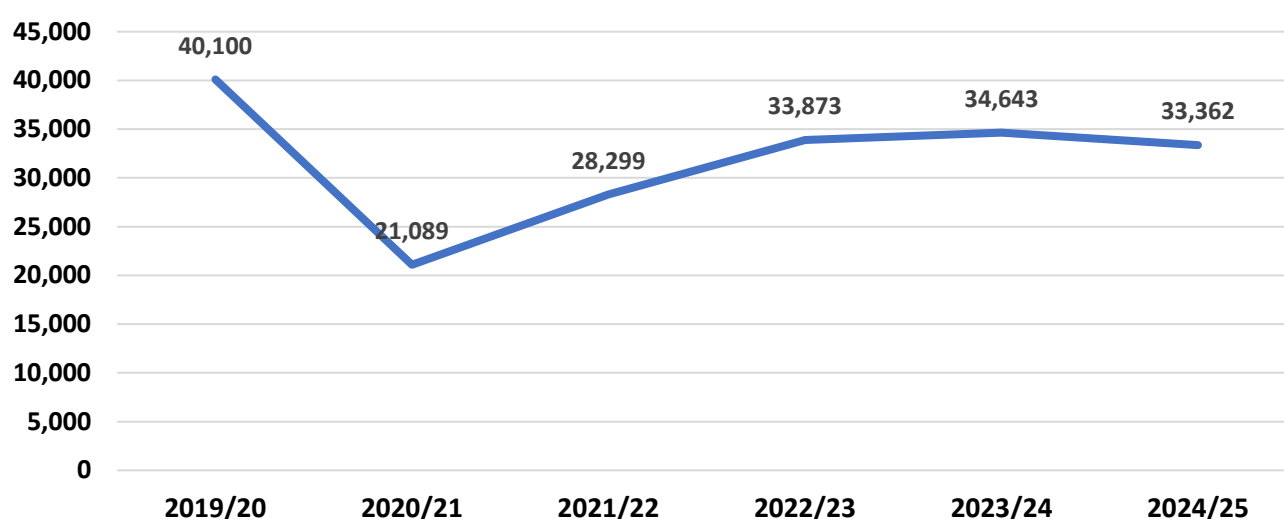
The number of E-loans has continued to increase, although down since the Covid-19 Pandemic peak, e-loans have steadily risen from 68,104 in 2019/20 to 79,514 in 2024/25, a rise of 17%. E-loans now represent 12% of total loans

compared to 6% in 2018/19. The increase in e-loans has had a small impact on physical loans; physical loans were 88% of total loans in 2024/25 compared to 89.5% in 2019/20 and 94.1% in 2018/19. The number of physical loans has decreased by 18% since 2019/20, but numbers have been increasing steadily, year on year since 2020/21, however the number of physical loans slightly fell from 592,057 in 2023/24 to 563,510 in 2024/25. The number of total loans slightly fell from 756,222 in 2019/20 to 643,024 in 2024/25; this suggests while active users and visits are increasing people are borrowing fewer items on each visit.

Public computer usage has been slower to recover to pre pandemic levels compared to other activities. In 2019/20 computer use in hours was 51,857.97; in 2023/24 this has fallen by over half to 21,158.5 hours. However there has been a steady increase year on year since 2020/21.

Event attendance has recovered well since the Pandemic and has been growing fast since 2021 at a greater level than traditional library activities. Attendance in 2019/20 was 48,666 this has risen to 77,621 or by 59.5% and continues to grow year on year. During the last 12 months event attendance has risen by 15.3%. This supports the increasing role libraries have as community hubs.

Chart 17: Number of Active Library Users 2019/20 to 2024/25 (Year-end March, Static Libraries)



Active Users (borrowers) are registered library users (registered at a certain branch) who have actively used the library in the last 12 months.

Chart 18: Number of Visits to Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25

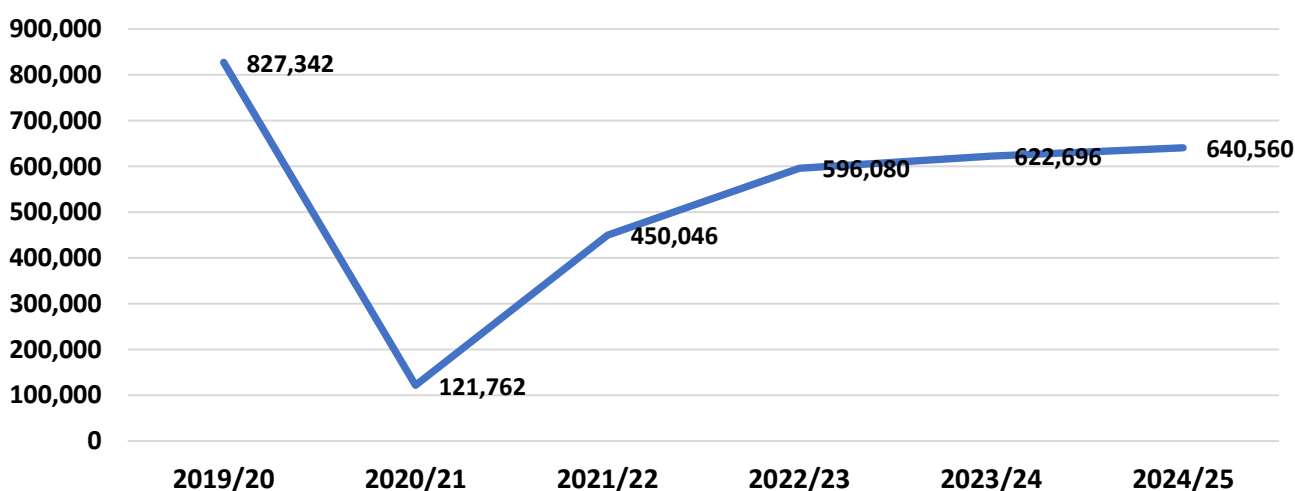


Chart 19: Number of Loans Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25

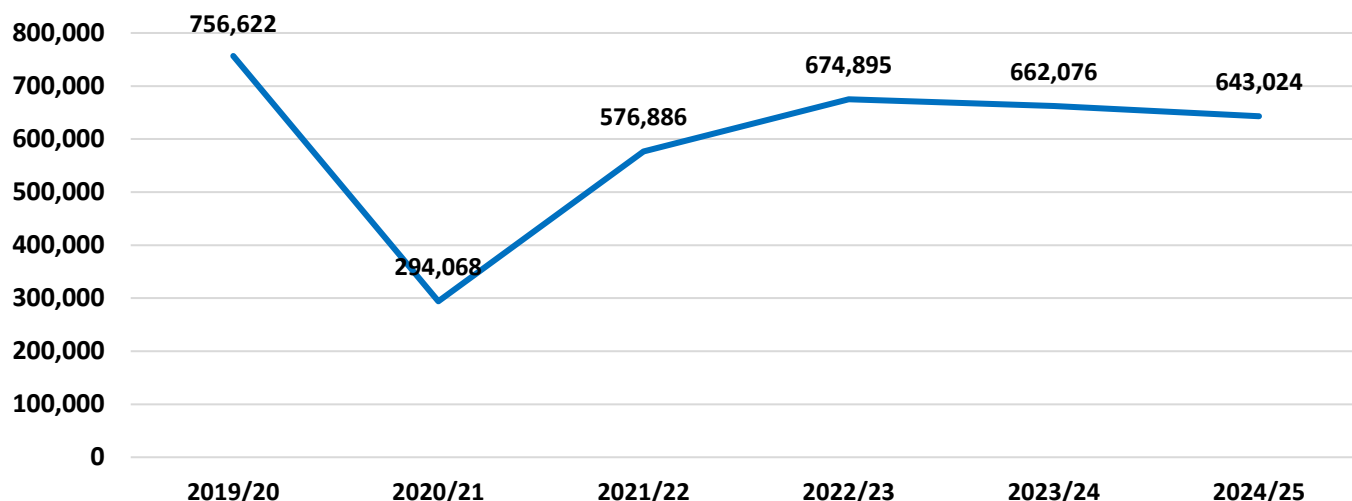


Chart 20: Number of Physical Issues Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25

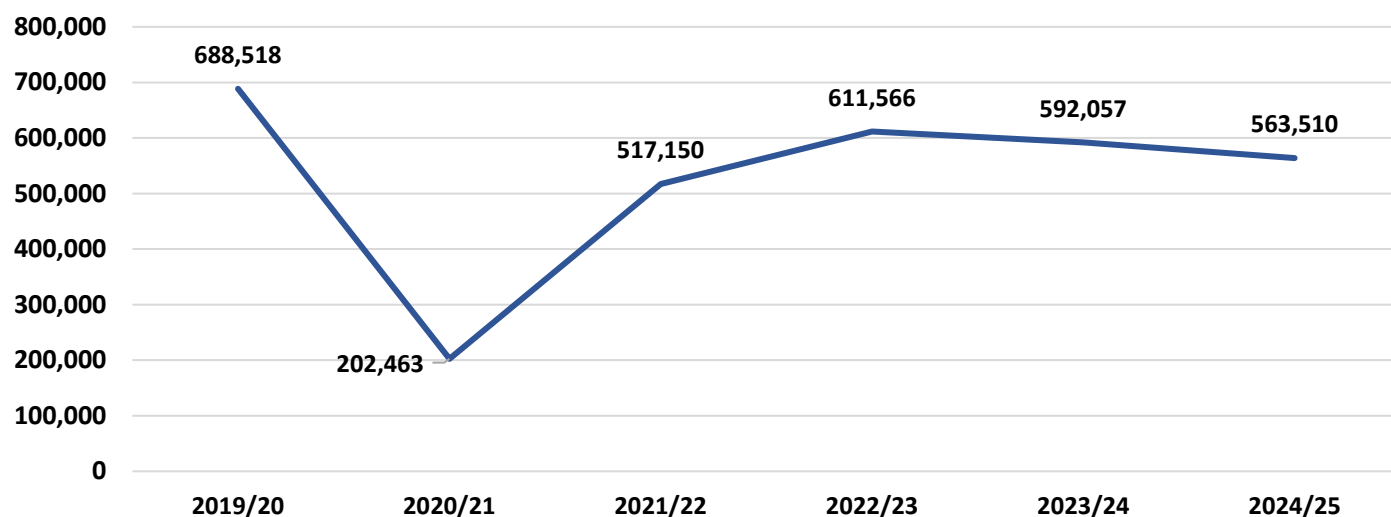
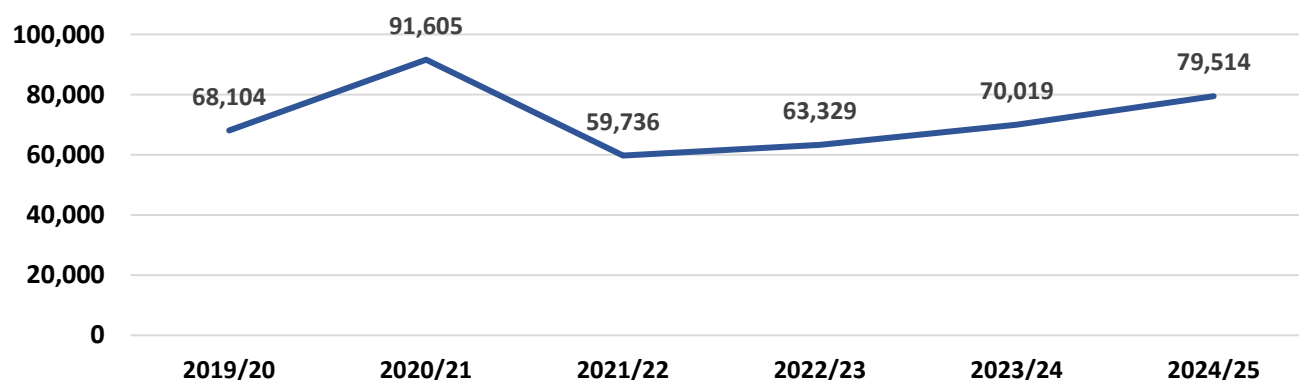


Chart 21: Number of E-Loans Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25



E-loans includes e-books and e-audio.

E-mags/newspapers aren't 'issued' in the same way, they're just available to view. In 2024/25 there were 2,107 unique users using the libraries for reading newspapers or magazines and 232,871 sessions. The number of unique

users has risen from 316 in 2018/19 to 2,107 in 2024/25. The number of unique users has had a rising trend since 2018/19 rising by 1,791 between 2018/19 and 2024/25 a more than 5-fold increase.

Table 8 Newspapers and Magazine Readers

	sessions	unique users
18/19	14423	316
19/20	52782	753
20/21	163353	1360
21/22	162931	1102
22/23	182729	1405
23/24	184798	1649
24/25	232871	2107

Chart 22 Newspapers and Magazine Readers 2018/19 to 2024/25

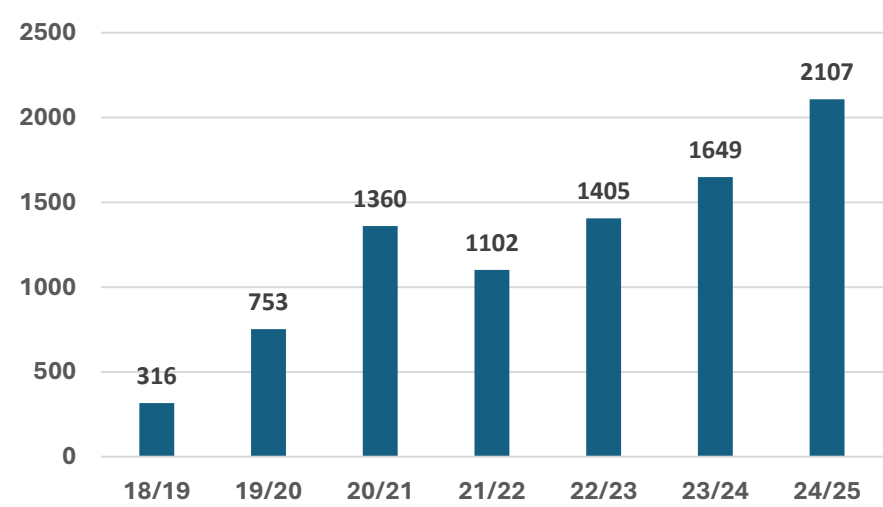
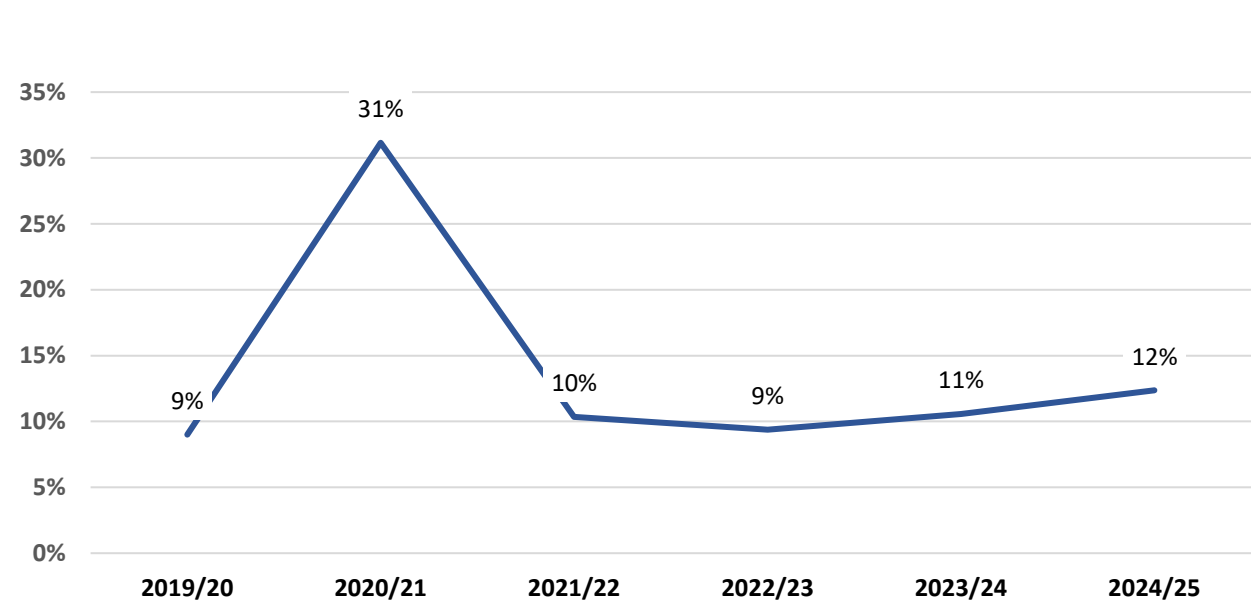


Chart 23: Number of E-Loans as a Percentage of Total Loans Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25



This data on loans excludes Mobile Libraries and HQ.

Chart 24: Public Computer Use Time in Hours Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25

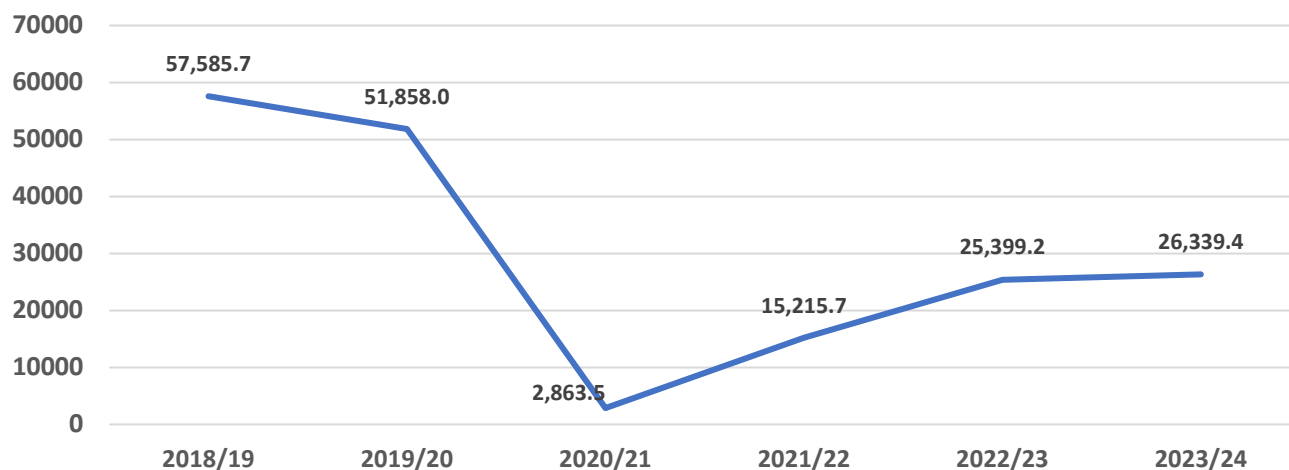


Chart 25: Event Attendance Static Libraries 2019/20 to 2024/25

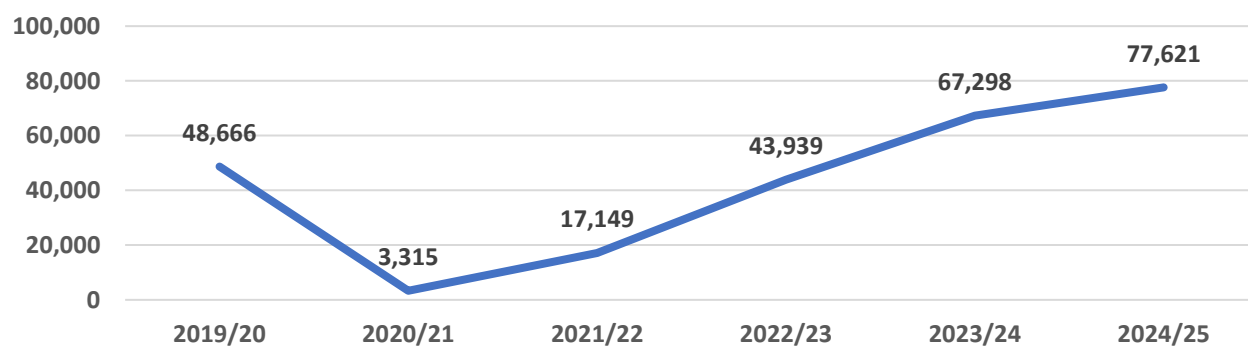


Table 9 below shows library usage over time with percentage change for all libraries.

Table 9: Summary of Shropshire Libraries Usage Data

Library Activity	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Change 2019/20 to 2024/25	% Change 2023/24 to 2024/25
Active Library Users	40,100	21,089	28,299	33,873	34,643	33,362	-17%	-3.7%
Total Loans	756,622	294,068	576,886	674,895	662,076	643,024	-15%	-2.9%
Physical Loans	688,518	202,463	517,150	611,566	592,057	563,510	-18.0%	-4.8%
E-Loans	68,104	91,605	59,736	63,329	70,019	79,514	17%	13.6%
E-Loans as a % of all loans	9%	31%	10%	9%	11%	12%	3.0%	2.0%
Public Computer User	51,857.0	2,863.5	15,215.7	25,399.2	26,339.4	21,158.5	-59.2%	-19.7%
Event Attendance	48,666	3,315	17,149	43,939	67,298	77,621	59.5%	15.3%

Note: excludes mobile libraries

Table 10 shows demand data by each library where data was reviewed for each activity type and ranked 1-22, where 1 indicates comparatively highest usage and 22 comparatively the lowest usage. The top 5 libraires were Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Market Drayton and Bridgnorth. The bottom 5 were Highley, Gobowen, Craven Arms, Much Wenlock and Cleobury Mortimer.

Table 11 shows active library users by library 2018/19 to 2023/24.

Table 10: Library Demand/Usage Ranked 2024/25

Library	Rank of Active Users	Rank of Total Visits	Rank of Computer Use	Rank of Total Loans	Rank of Events	Overall Rank
Shrewsbury	1	1	1	1	5	3
Oswestry	2	2	2	2	1	1
Ludlow	3	3	3	3	4	2
Market Drayton	4	4	5	4	3	4
Bridgnorth	5	5	4	5	2	5
Church Stretton	6	7	6	6	7	6
Wem	7	6	7	9	6	7
Whitchurch	8	19	0	18	17	14
Stoke Heath	9	18	0	11	22	12
Bayston Hill	10	11	11	7	19	9
The Lantern	11	10	8	8	8	8
Ellesmere	12	14	13	12	10	13
Albington	13	13	9	15	9	10
Bishops Castle	14	9	12	10	14	10
Shifnal	15	16	10	13	16	16
Pontesbury	16	15	17	14	11	17
Broseley	17	8	15	16	21	18
Much Wenlock	18	17	14	17	13	20
Cleobury Mortimer	19	12	0	21	15	15
Craven Arms	20	21	0	19	18	19
Gobowen	21	20	16	20	12	21
Highley	22	22	18	22	20	22

Each type of library usage was added up to a total score and then an overall rank of the score was given. 1 = the most used and 22 the least used based on these measures. Also need to take into account the population size of the location.

Table 11 – Active Library Users by Library

Library	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Albrighton	865	904	492	641	735	779	786
Bayston Hill	803	796	471	652	754	831	834
Bishops Castle	901	938	502	668	727	762	752
Bridgnorth	2,971	2,896	1,423	1,979	2,411	2528	2384
Broseley	602	595	270	385	459	572	642
Church Stretton	1,468	1,445	954	1,078	1,207	1140	1219
Cleobury Mortimer	532	547	295	317	444	442	366
Craven Arms	397	411	253	344	413	353	322
Ellesmere	913	923	541	628	744	765	754
Gobowen	271	306	135	185	193	231	257
Highley	414	380	90	166	184	176	217
The Lantern	1,125	1,114	404	670	775	769	781
Ludlow	3,615	3,470	1,791	2,424	2,986	3280	3143
Market Drayton	2,995	2,861	1,435	2,085	2,616	2761	2466
Much Wenlock	436	430	278	404	461	488	496
Oswestry	5,863	5,441	2,596	3,566	4,469	4406	4355
Pontesbury	545	554	380	548	617	645	648
Shifnal	806	848	435	571	640	659	673
Shrewsbury	10,590	10,535	5,787	7,690	9,208	9496	9346
Wem	1,223	1,258	600	839	1,024	1094	1166
Whitchurch	2,542	2,511	1,340	1,603	1,857	1539	921
Stoke Heath	864	937	617	856	949	927	834
Total	40,741	40,100	21,089	28,299	33,873	34643	33,362

Trends in Active Library Users by Library

Chart 25 below shows percentage change in the number of active users for each library. Those indicated in green are the core six libraries of Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth and Whitchurch.

Largest % decline in Active Users 5 Years:

Highley –42.9%

The Lantern –29.9%

Oswestry – 20.0%

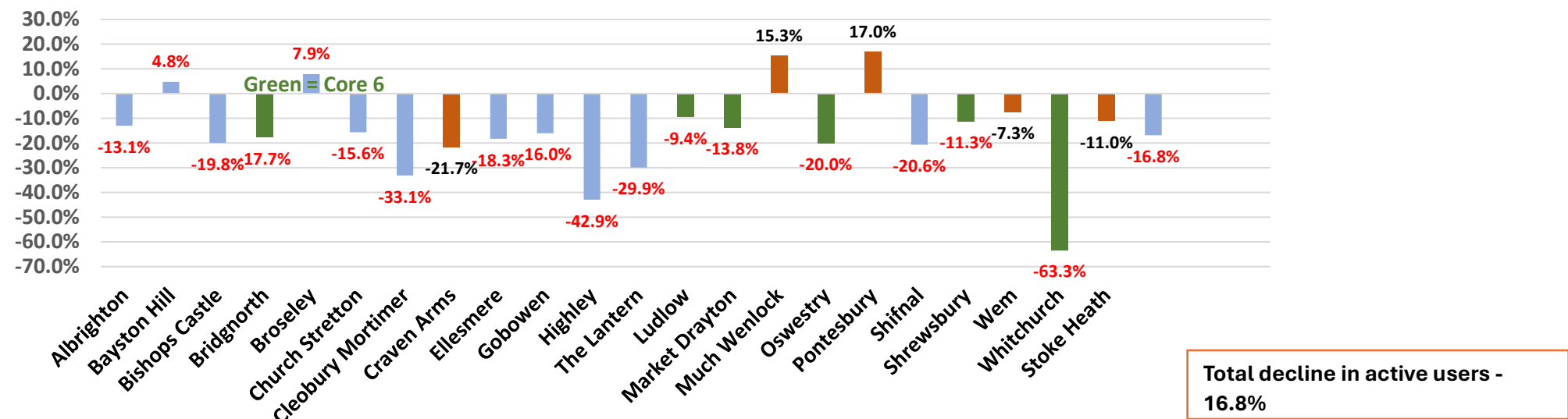
Whitchurch –63.3% **(Note: Whitchurch Library has been closed in recent months)**

Cleobury Mortimer –33.1%

Shifnal – 20.6%

Some libraries have increased the number of active users; Bayston Hill, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury and Broseley.

Chart 26: Library Active Users Percentage Change Five Years



Mobile Libraries

There are three mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council covering 237 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. [Map of routes](#). The number of active borrowers was 1,132 in 2024/25. See appendix for list of mobile library stops.

The number of active library users (Chart 26) for mobile libraries has declined from 1,458 in 2019/20 to 1,132 in 2024/25. This is a decline of -326 (-22.4%). Numbers declined during the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020/21 but have slowly recovered in subsequent years. The number of users of mobile libraries has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels and in 2023/24 the number of users was 77.6% of the number in 2019/20. The last three-year trend, whilst increasing, has begun to plateau.

The number of visits to mobile libraries (Chart 27) shows a decline from 23,400 in 2019/20 to 23,052 in 2024/25, a decline of -348 (-1.5%). The number of visits has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels however in 2024/25 the number of visits were 98% of 2018/19 levels. In the three years since the Covid-19 Pandemic the number of visits has shown a year-on-year significant rise.

In terms of the number of loans (Chart 28) there has been a decline of 2,661 (-16%) from 58,810 in 2019/20 to 56,149 in 2024/25. The number of loans has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels and in 2023/24 loans were 95% of 2019/20 levels. There has been a significant recovery in the number of loans since the Covid-19 Pandemic with 2021/22 figures showing a particularly high of 60,298, more recently, in the last year there is a significant increase in the number of loans from 49,349 in 2023/24 to 56,149 in 2024/25.

Chart 27: Number of Active Library Users 2019/20 to 2024/25 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)

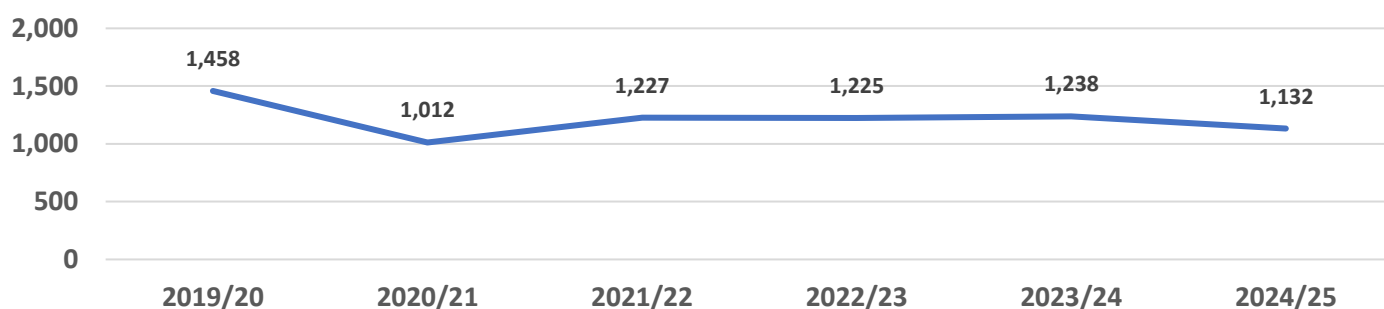


Chart 28: Number of Visits to Mobile Libraries 2018/19 to 2023/24 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)

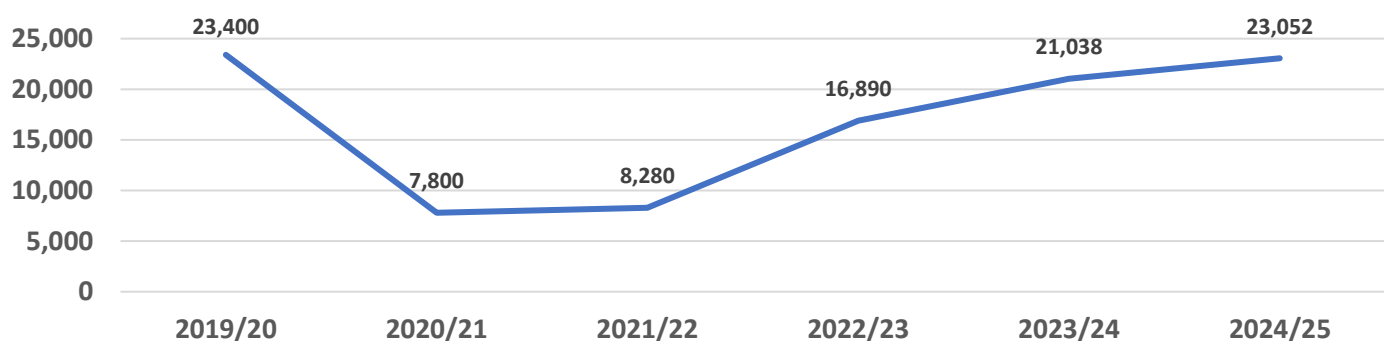
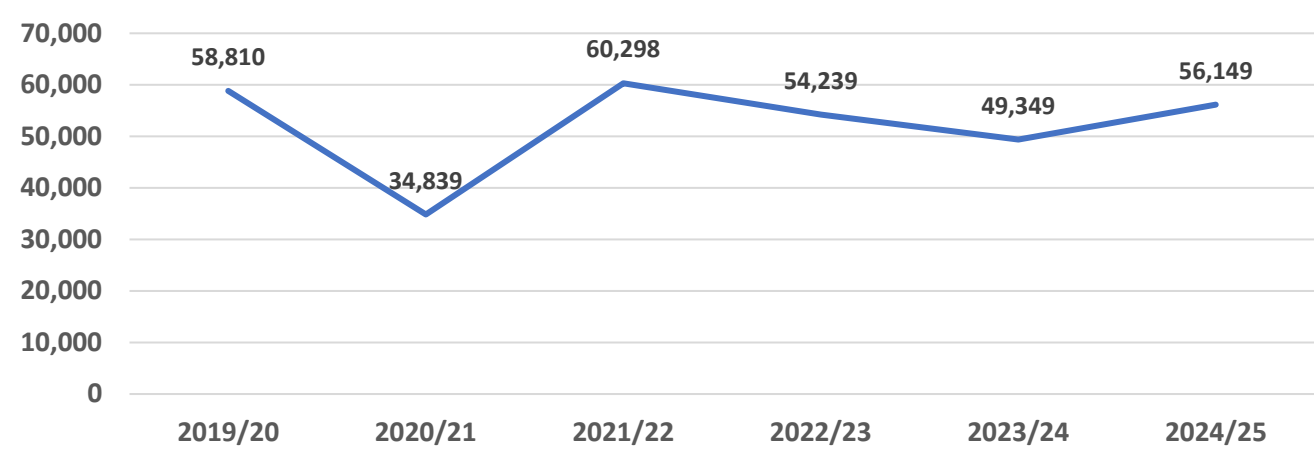


Chart 29: Number of Loans Mobile Libraries 2018/19 to 2023/24 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)

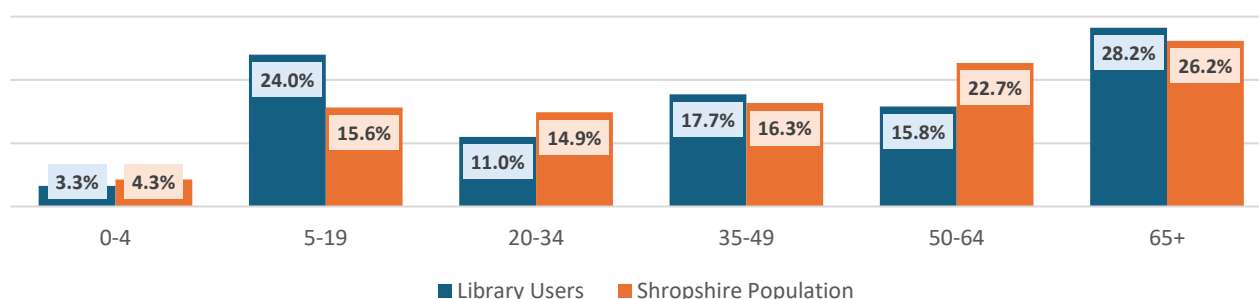


Profile of Shropshire Library Users

Age and Gender

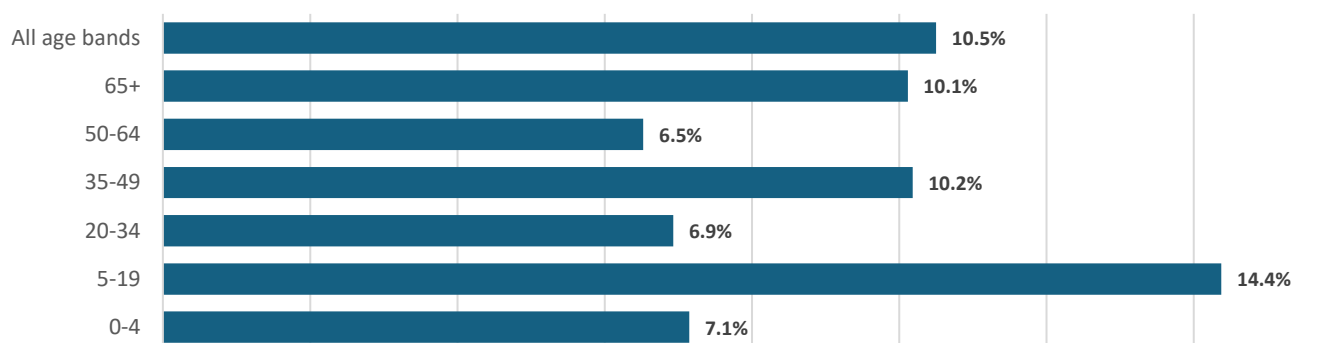
The Shropshire library user base is primarily female, with women accounting for 65% of all users. In comparison, just over half (50.7%) of the Shropshire population is female (ONS Mid-Year estimates, 2023). The age profile of library users is also slightly different to the base population, with a much higher representation of children and young adults. People under the age of 20 account for 27.2% of library users but represent less than a fifth of the Shropshire population. The use of libraries by younger people demonstrates libraries do still have an appeal to the younger population, which perhaps contradicts the perception of library users as being predominantly older. The proportion attributable to over 65's is aligned to the Shropshire population (28.2% of library users against 26.2% of the population). Consequently, the 20-64 age band is under-represented, accounting for 44.5% of library users (53.9% of the Shropshire population).

Chart 30: Age Profile of Shropshire Library Users



Just over a tenth of the Shropshire population is an active library user. As shown in the chart below, the usage rate is almost 50% higher than the average for those aged 5-19 and much lower than average for those aged 20-34 and 50-64.

Chart 31: Library Users as Proportion of Population by Age



Note: Overall usage rate includes library users for whom the age band is not known. Also includes approximately 2,500 Shropshire library users resident outside of Shropshire

Concessionary Users

Just over 3,000 active users of the Shropshire library service have concessionary membership. This equates with 8.7% of all library users. Concessionary membership can be usefully used as a proxy for members who have a disability. According to the 2021 Census, 59,990 Shropshire residents are registered as disabled under the terms of the Equality Act. This translates into a user rate of 5% of the disabled population and suggests that the cohort is under-represented given an overall user rate across the population of over 10%. However, it should be noted that users with a disability may use the library services under standard membership.

Access to Library Services

Shropshire's 21 static libraries (excluding Stoke Heath) are spread across the county, with at least one per place plan area³. This means that most people are within relatively straightforward access by car of at least one library.

More than three-quarters of Shropshire's population (77%) live within a 10-minute drive of at least one library. Currently, just 1% of the population have to travel further than 25 minutes by car to access library services.

Access to the main six libraries is also achievable for most people within 25 minutes' drive, although 9% of the population (28,777 people) live outside this catchment. 21% live outside a 20-minute drive of a main library, which is the equivalent of 66,971 people. Just over half of the population live within a 10-minute car journey of one of the main six libraries.

Table 12: Proportion of Shropshire Population within Drive Times of Libraries

	All Libraries		Main Libraries*	
	Number	% of Population	Number	% of Population
Within 10 minutes	249,691	77%	168,878	52%
Within 15 minutes	282,742	87%	207,034	64%
Within 20 minutes	308,660	95%	256,629	79%
Within 25 minutes	320,465	99%	294,823	91%

Note: *Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch

The following table shows the proportion of active library users for each library which lives within certain walk and drive times.

Across all library users, almost a third live within a 15-minute walk of the library for which they are registered. This proportion rises to over half if the length of the walk is doubled to half an hour. Libraries where a particularly high proportion of users live very locally include Albrighton, Bayston Hill, Broseley, Cleobury Mortimer, Gobowen, Highley and Shifnal. In contrast, users of the main six libraries are much less likely to live within a 15-minute walk which reflects the much larger catchments that these libraries represent.

93.7% of all library users live within a 25-minute drive of the library that they use. This proportion exceeds 90% in all libraries except Ludlow which attracts relatively high numbers of users from its rural hinterland and from across the border in Herefordshire. Given that 99% of the Shropshire population live within a 25-minute drive of their closest library (see Table 10 above), it is clear that some library users are not registered with their closest facility.

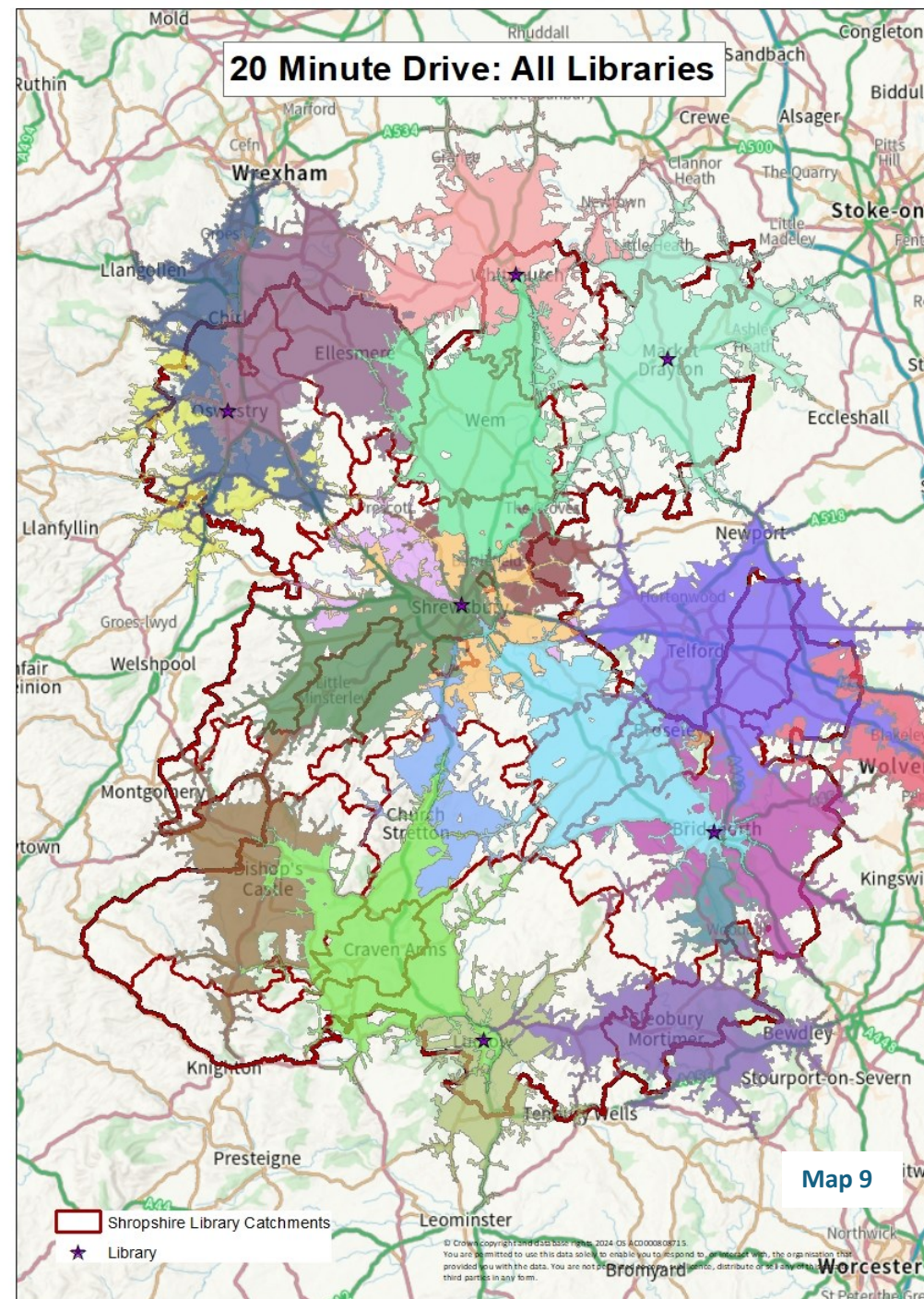
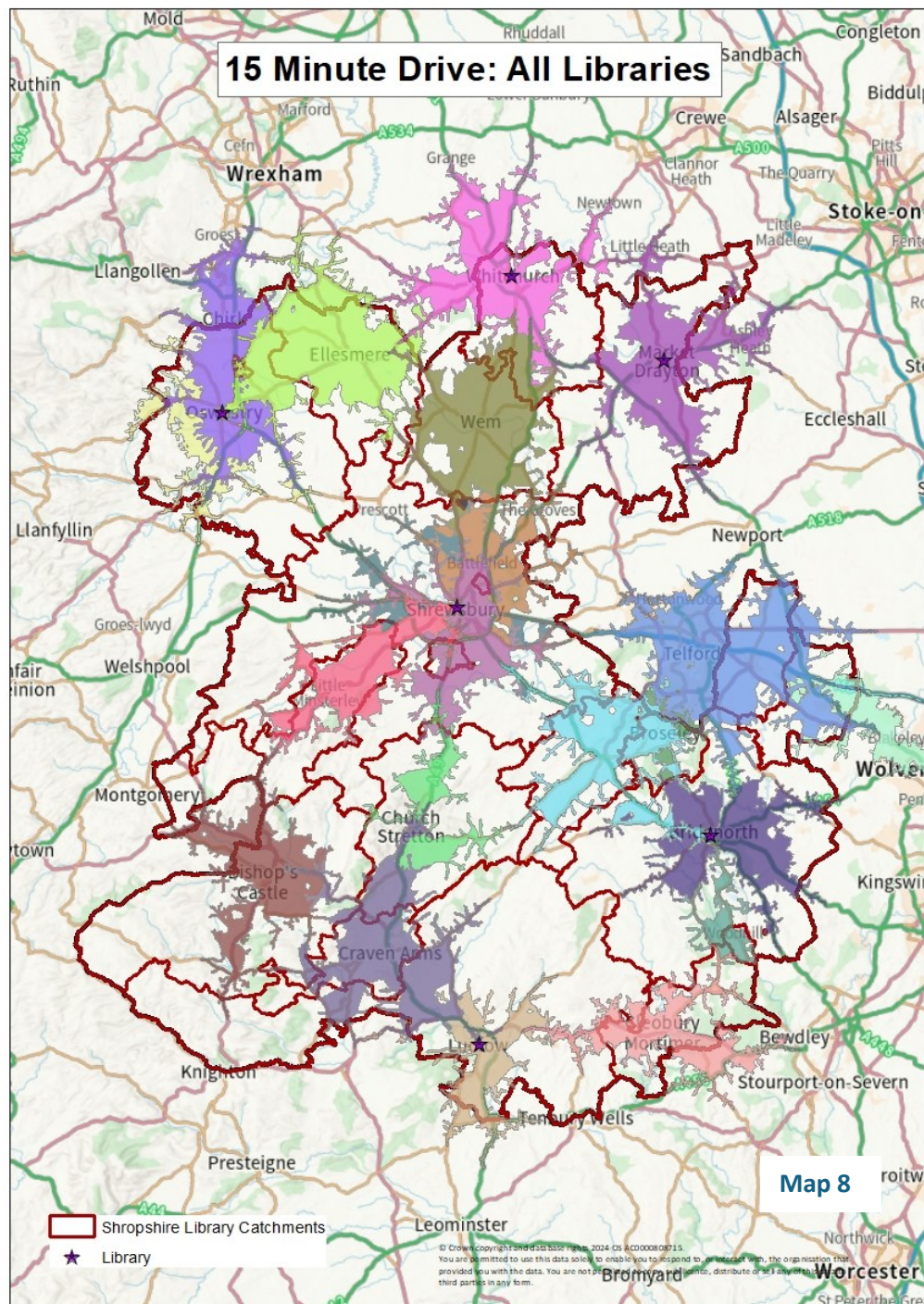
³ Shropshire is divided into 18 Place Plan areas for planning policy purposes. These are areas of varying size, served by a main town and with a rural hinterland.

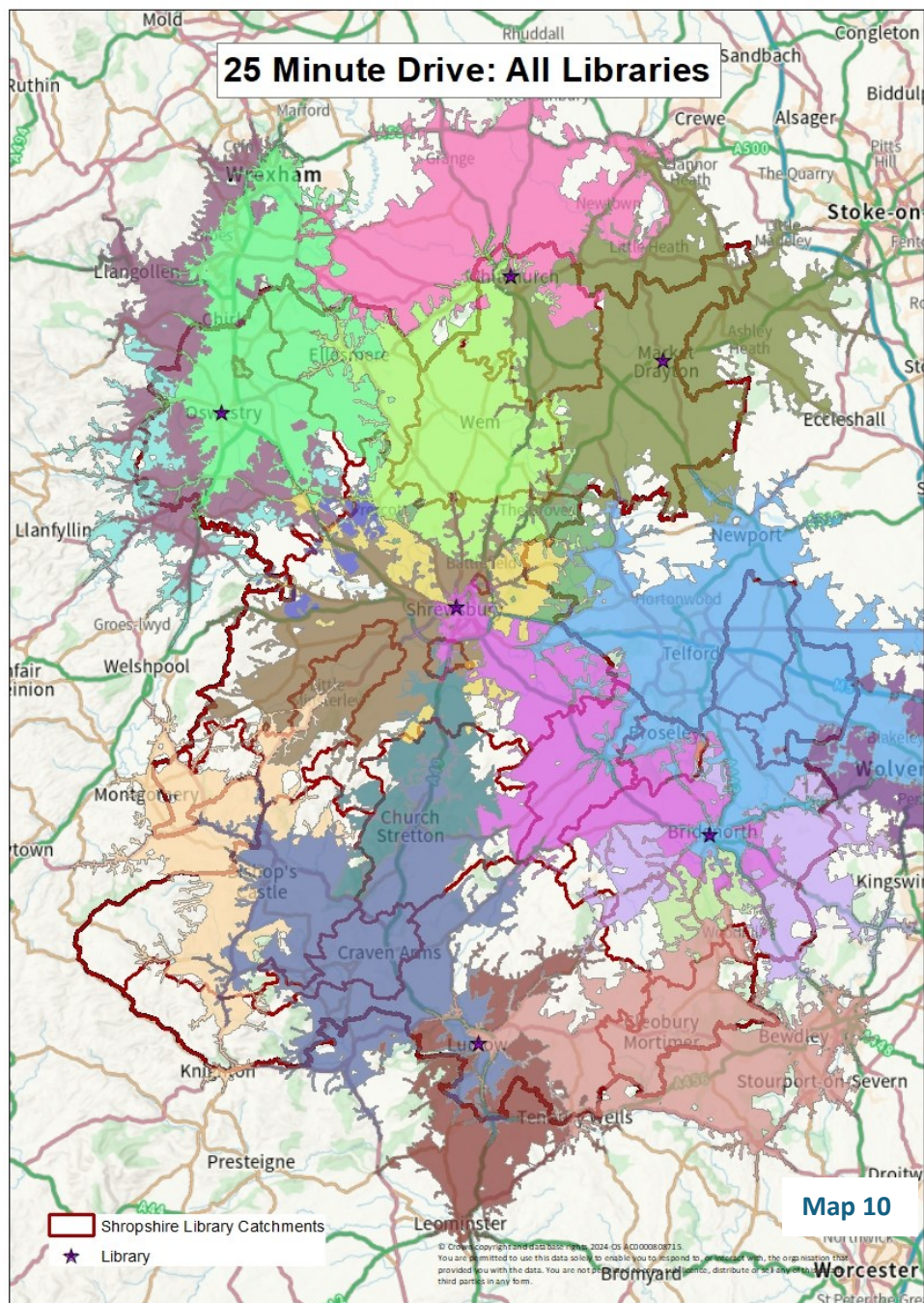
Table 13: Proportion of Active Library Users within Walk and Drive Times by Library

	% within 15 minute walk	% within 30 minute walk	% within 10 minute drive	% within 15 minute drive	% within 20 minute drive	% within 25 minute drive
Albrighton	66.1%	79.8%	83.9%	90.1%	95.8%	97.7%
Bayston Hill	61.6%	67.4%	88.8%	94.3%	96.6%	97.3%
Bishop's Castle	38.7%	43.2%	54.7%	72.8%	86.5%	92.9%
Bridgnorth	28.5%	60.3%	69.6%	78.6%	89.2%	93.0%
Broseley	69.3%	86.1%	91.4%	93.8%	96.5%	97.6%
Church Stretton	49.2%	65.6%	77.3%	84.9%	89.8%	94.3%
Cleobury Mortimer	65.2%	67.4%	79.5%	88.5%	93.5%	97.2%
Craven Arms	29.9%	39.0%	53.2%	70.8%	80.5%	90.3%
Ellesmere	53.9%	60.1%	82.2%	92.3%	95.4%	97.5%
Gobowen	73.2%	78.0%	91.5%	94.7%	95.5%	96.7%
Highley	77.8%	86.0%	89.9%	92.3%	94.2%	95.2%
Library at the Lantern	37.6%	57.1%	83.6%	91.7%	94.2%	96.8%
Ludlow	34.1%	57.4%	59.9%	73.3%	82.6%	89.1%
Market Drayton	32.0%	57.9%	67.6%	84.0%	92.5%	96.6%
Much Wenlock	47.5%	54.0%	70.9%	82.6%	92.7%	96.7%
Oswestry	23.9%	42.5%	58.4%	78.3%	88.6%	93.3%
Pontesbury	36.3%	43.8%	70.3%	83.9%	94.4%	96.7%
Shifnal	68.4%	82.8%	88.6%	94.7%	97.6%	98.6%
Shrewsbury	10.7%	38.5%	76.3%	81.5%	87.6%	92.3%
Wem	53.7%	58.0%	68.9%	83.9%	90.8%	96.0%
Whitchurch	39.8%	51.6%	64.7%	80.6%	89.4%	93.8%
All Users	31.5%	52.0%	71.4%	82.0%	89.4%	93.7%

Note: Walk and drive times refer to the library to which each user is registered. They may live closer to alternative library provision.

The following maps show walk and drive times for all of Shropshire's 21 static libraries.





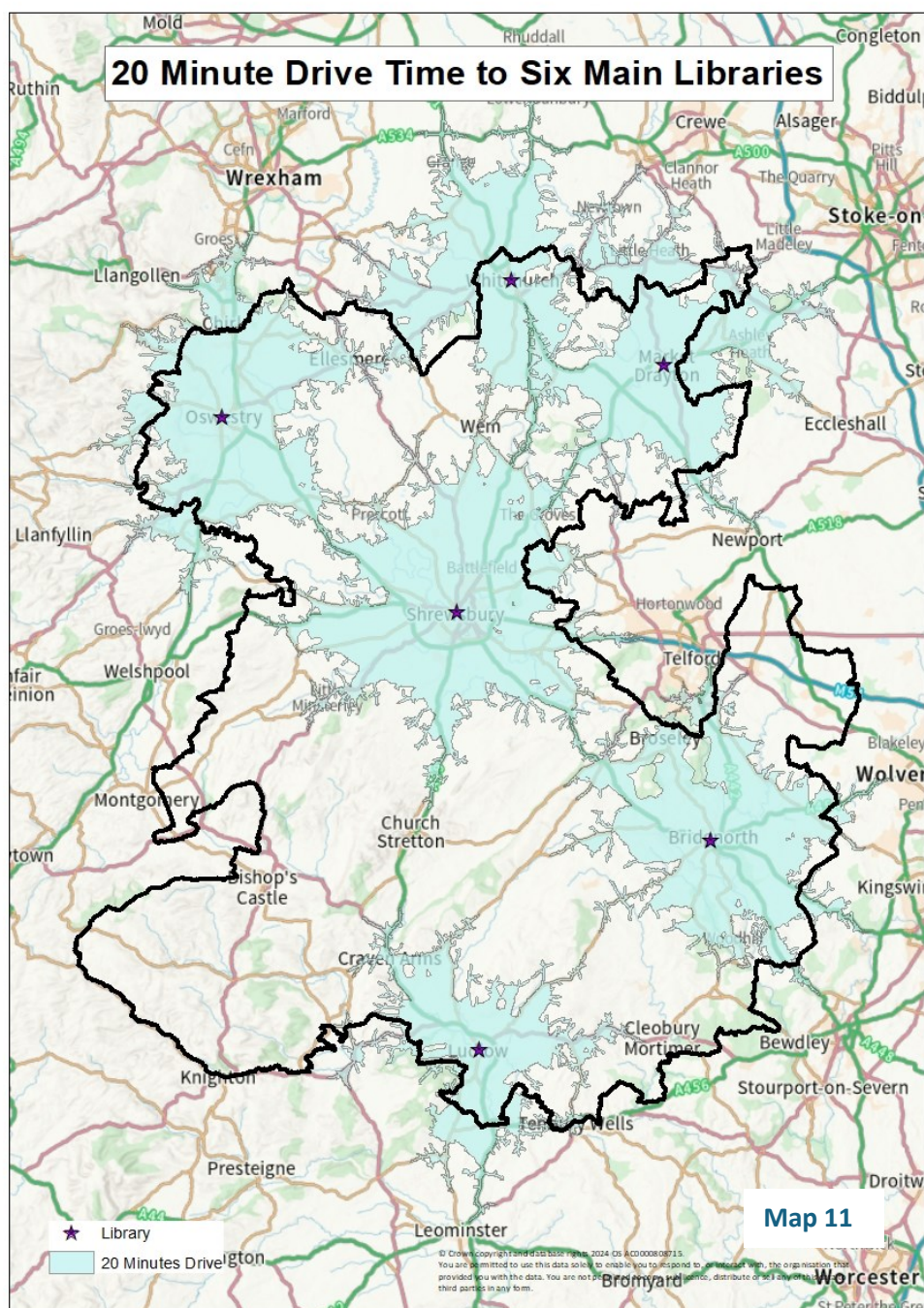
Currently, 98% of library users live within a 25-minute drive of their closest library (which is not necessarily the library to which they are registered). Almost three-quarters live within a 10-minute drive. The time required to travel to one of the main libraries is much longer. 48% of current users (of all libraries) need to travel for more than 10 minutes to access one of the main libraries while one in ten lives more than a 25-minute drive away.

Table 14: Library Users: Travel Times to Closest Library

	All Libraries		Main Libraries	
	Number	% of Library Users	Number	% of Library Users
More than 10 minutes	7,731	23%	15,670	48%
More than 15 minutes	3,739	11%	11,506	35%
More than 20 minutes	1,470	4%	7,067	21%
More than 25 minutes	564	2%	3,266	10%

Note: Includes only library users for whom a valid postcode is held

The map below shows the areas of Shropshire which are within a 20-minute drive of one of the main six libraries.



The table below shows the closest alternative library to the 15 smaller Shropshire libraries and the closest main library, with associated travel times.

Table 15: Alternative Library Provision

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Albrighton	Shifnal	5.6 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	11.2 miles	22 mins	Train to Shifnal, 114 bus to Bridgnorth	1.5-2 hours
				Shrewsbury	24.0 miles	32 mins	Train to Shrewsbury	50 minutes
Bayston Hill	Shrewsbury	4.2 miles	13 mins	Shrewsbury	4.2 miles	13 mins	27 Bus	20-30 mins
Bishop's Castle	Craven Arms	11.1 miles	22 mins	Ludlow Shrewsbury	18 miles 22 miles	31 mins 41 mins	553 bus to Shrewsbury, train to Ludlow 553 bus	2-3 hours 1 hour
Broseley	Much Wenlock	4.5 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	6.4 miles	12 mins	8 Bus to Bridgnorth	20 mins
Church Stretton	Craven Arms	7.8 miles	13 mins	Ludlow	15.5 Miles	25 mins	Train 435 bus to Ludlow	15 mins 45 mins
Cleobury Mortimer	Highley	8.6 miles	16 mins	Ludlow	11.7 miles	22 mins	292 bus	25 mins
Craven Arms	Ludlow	7.9 miles	13 mins	Ludlow	7.9 miles	13 mins	435 bus to Ludlow Train	20 mins 10 mins
Ellesmere	Gobowen	7.5 miles	13 mins	Oswestry	8.2 miles	17 mins	53 bus to Oswestry	39 mins
Gobowen	Oswestry	3 miles	8 mins	Oswestry	3 miles	8 mins	T12 bus	20-25 mins
Highley	Bridgnorth	7.4 miles	14 mins	Bridgnorth	7.4 miles	14 mins	125 bus to Bridgnorth	25 mins
Library at The Lantern	Shrewsbury	2.1 miles	8 mins	Shrewsbury	2.1 miles	8 mins	24 or 511 bus	20-25 mins
Much Wenlock	Broseley	4.5 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	8.1 miles	14 mins	436 bus	35 mins
Pontesbury	Bayston Hill	8.1 miles	14 mins	Shrewsbury	8.1 miles	19 mins	552 or 553 Bus	33 ins
Shifnal	Albrighton	5.6 mins	10 mins	Bridgnorth	11.7 miles	20 mins	114 bus to Bridgnorth	1 hr
Wem	Whitchurch	9 miles	18 mins	Whitchurch	9 miles	18 mins	Train to Whitchurch or 512 bus	12 mins (train) 35-45 mins (bus)

Note: Drive time calculations using AA route planner. Public transport sourced from www.travelline.info

Shropshire Library Costs

Chart 32 shows annual running costs attributable to Shropshire Council per library; the larger libraries had larger annual costs. Shrewsbury Library had the highest costs at £500,530 followed by Ludlow and Oswestry. The lowest costs were Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley. The total cost for all static libraries was £2,573,850. The average cost was £116,993.18. Annual running costs are influenced by the size of the library and often the building it is located in as well as the role Shropshire Council plays in its operation.

Chart 32: Annual Costs per Library 2024/25 (Annual Budget)

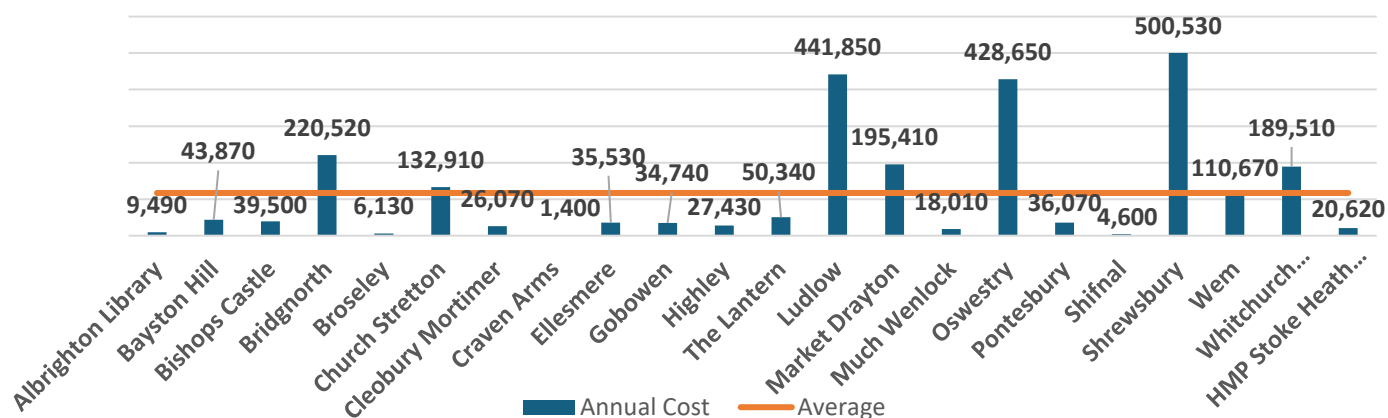


Chart 33 shows Ludlow Library had the highest cost per opening hour followed by Shrewsbury and Oswestry libraries. Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley had the lowest cost. The average cost for all libraries was £66.37 per opening hour.

Chart 33: Cost Per Opening Hour 2024/25

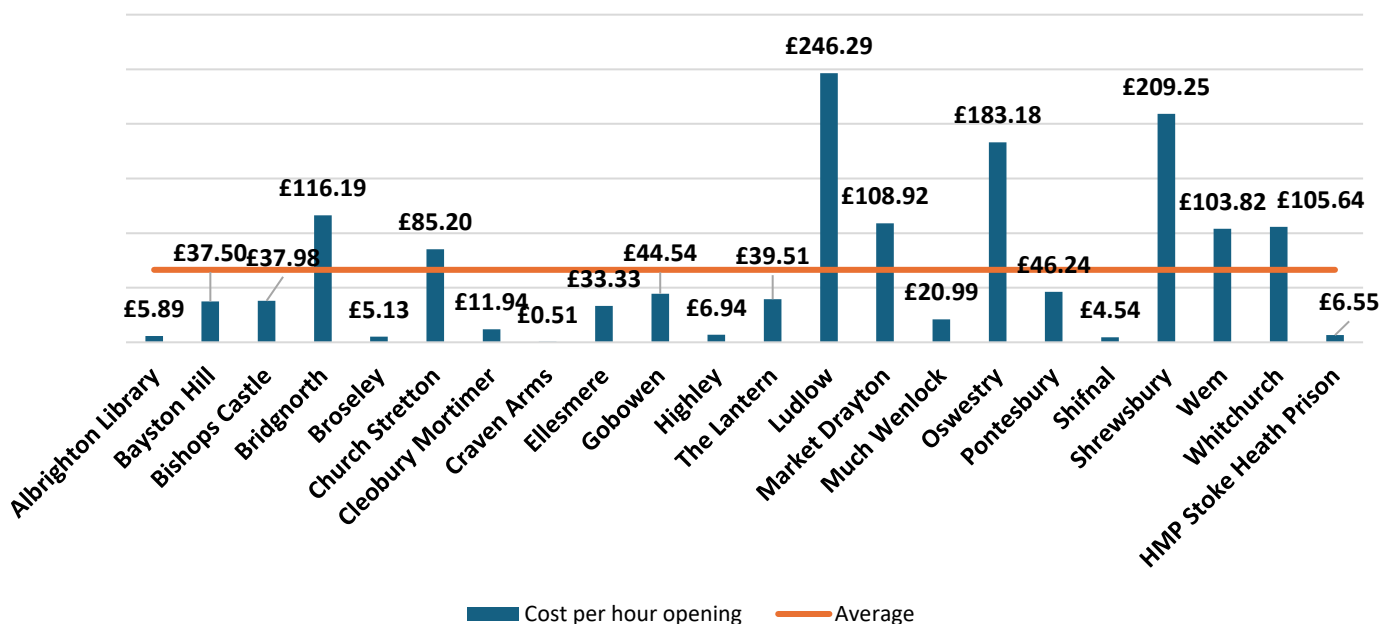


Chart 34 shows Whitchurch Library had the highest cost per active borrower (this library has been closed therefore this has altered these figures). Ludlow Library had the second highest cost per active library user followed by Gobowen and Highley libraries. The lowest cost libraries were Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley. The average cost per active user was £71.50.

Chart 34: Cost per Active Library Borrower/User 2024/25

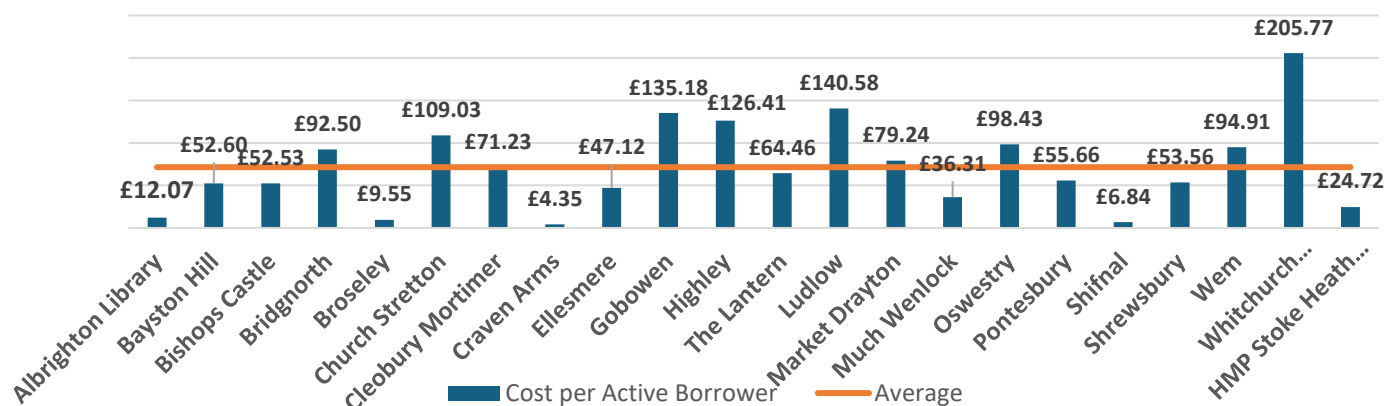


Chart 35 shows Whitchurch had the highest cost per book loan (this library has been closed for a period of time). Highley had the second highest cost per book loan, followed by Ludlow. Craven Arms, Broseley and Shifnal libraries had the lowest costs per book loan. The average cost was £4.50.

Chart 35: Cost per Book Loan 2024/25

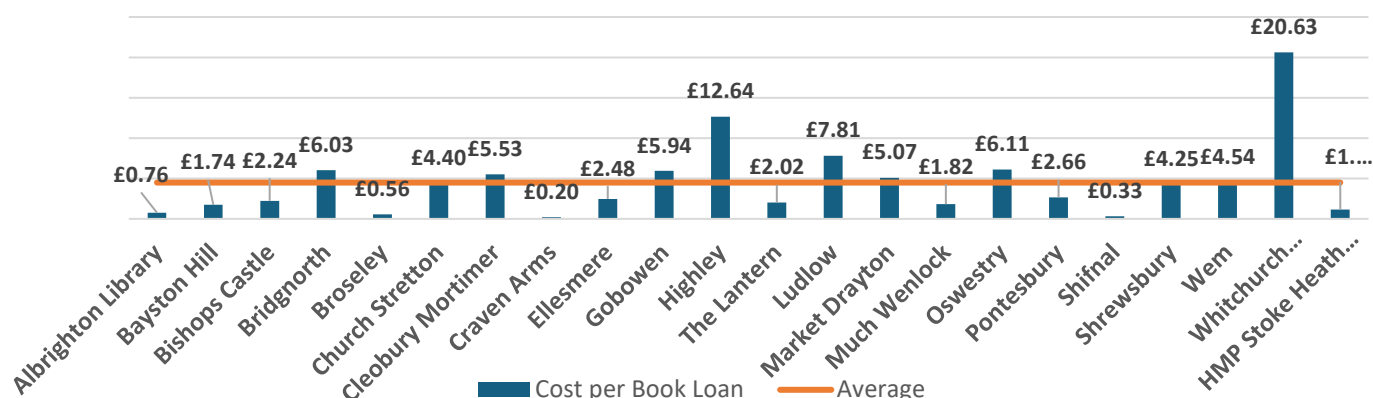


Chart 36 shows Whitchurch had the highest cost per individual footfall at £33.67 followed by Highley (£32.23) and Gobowen (£8.47) compared to an average for all libraries of £5.71. Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley had the lowest cost per individual footfall.

Chart 36: Cost Per Individual Walk in Footfall 2024/25

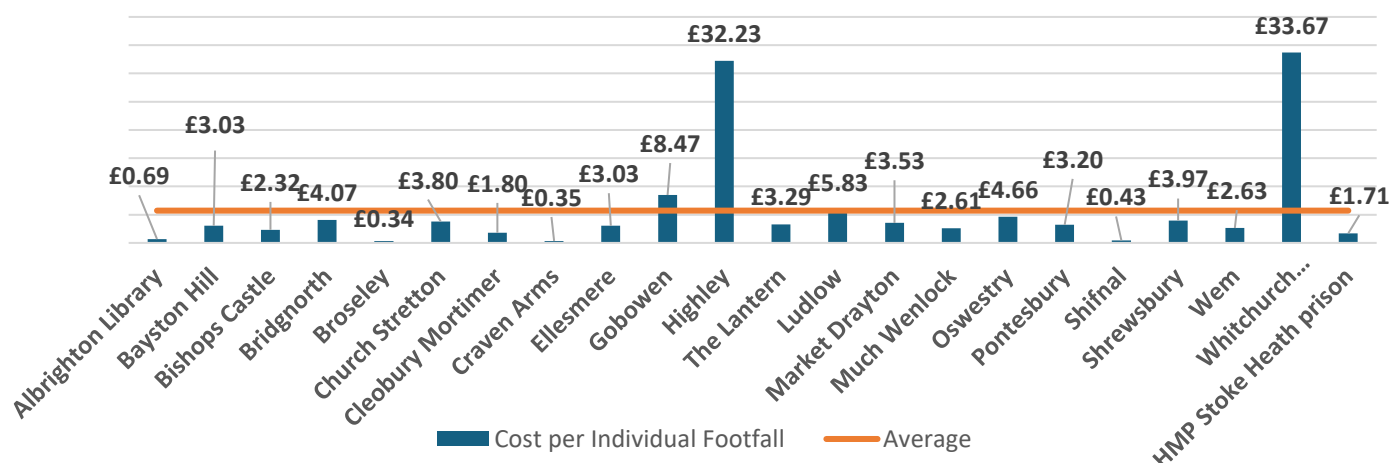


Table 16: Library Costs Ranked 2024/25

Library	Cost Per Opening Hour Rank	Cost per Active Borrower Rank	Cost per Individual Walk In (footfall) Rank	Cost Per Book Loan Rank	Overall Rank
Craven Arms	1	1	2	1	1
Shifnal	2	2	3	2	2
Broseley	3	3	1	3	3
HMP Stoke Heath prison	5	5	5	5	5
Much Wenlock	8	6	8	7	6
Albrighton Library	4	4	4	4	4
Bayston Hill	10	9	10	6	7
Bishops Castle	11	8	7	9	7
Ellesmere	9	7	11	10	9
Cleobury Mortimer	7	13	6	16	10
The Lantern	12	12	13	8	11
Pontesbury	14	11	12	11	12
Wem	16	16	9	14	13
Shrewsbury	21	10	16	12	14
Church Stretton	15	18	15	13	15
Market Drayton	18	14	14	15	15
Highley	6	19	21	21	17
Bridgnorth	19	15	17	18	18
Gobowen	13	20	20	17	19
Oswestry	20	17	18	19	20
Ludlow	22	21	19	20	21
Whitchurch	17	22	22	22	22

Each rank of cost was added up to a total score and then an overall rank of the score was given. 1 = the least expensive and 22 the most expensive based on these measures.

Whitchurch Library was the most expensive library ranked 22 with the highest overall score, followed by Ludlow, Oswestry and Gobowen. Highley was ranked one of the most expensive in all aspects but was less expensive on the cost per opening hour. Craven Arms was the least expensive ranked 1, followed by Shifnal, Broseley and Stoke Heath.

Library Running Cost versus Library Users

The bubble matrix below shows how library total running costs per library compare with the total number of active users in 2024/25.

Chart 37 – Users by Running Cost Smaller Libraries

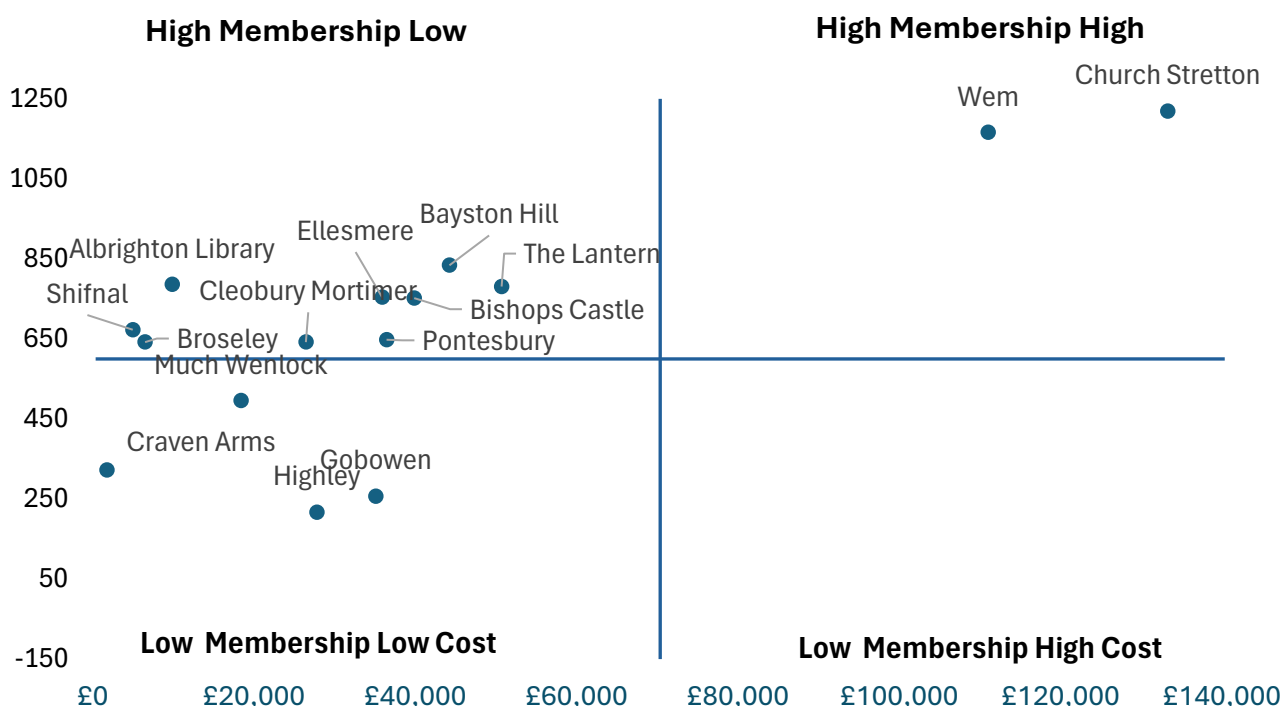


Chart 38 – Users by Running Cost Main Libraries

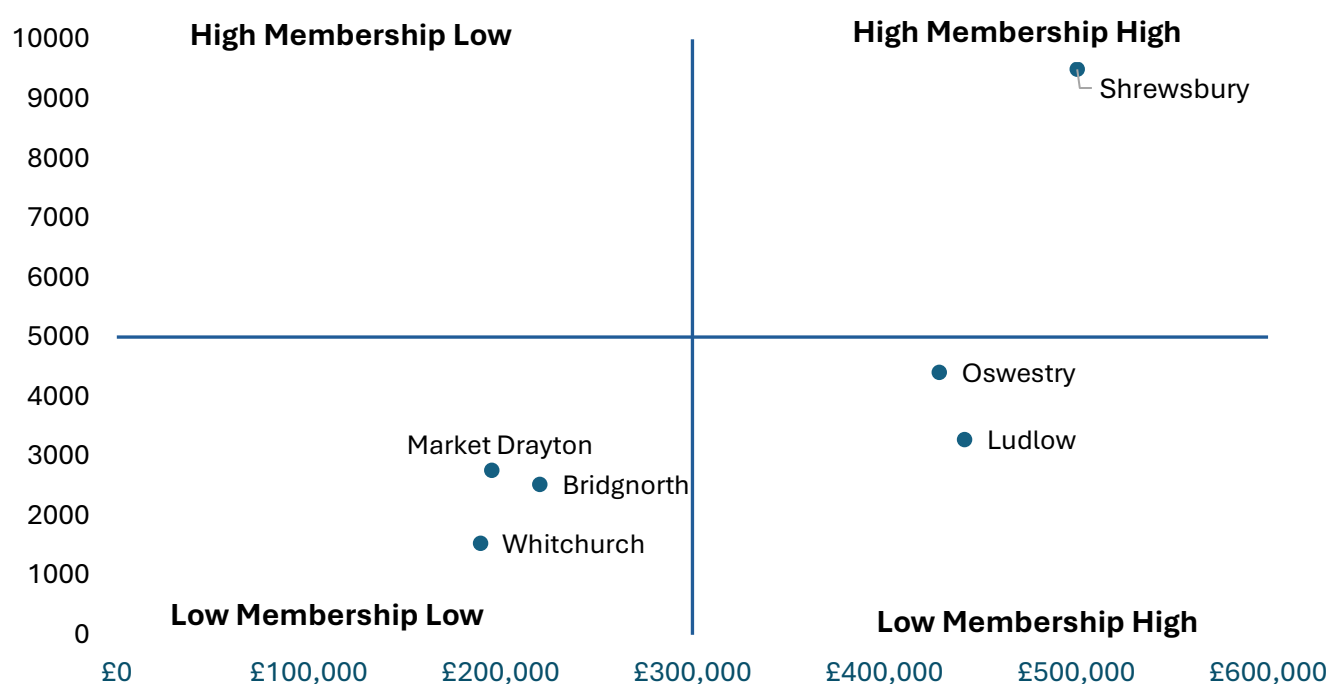


Table 17: Library Opening Hours 2024/25

Library	Opening Hours Per Week	Opening Hours Per Annum
Albrighton Library	31	1,612
Bayston Hill	22.5	1,170
Bishops Castle	20	1,040
Bridgnorth	36.5	1,898
Broseley	23	1,196
Church Stretton	30	1,560
Cleobury Mortimer	42	2,184
Craven Arms	52.5	2,730
Ellesmere	20.5	1,066
Gobowen	15	780
Highley	76	3,952
The Lantern	24.5	1,274
Ludlow	34.5	1,794
Market Drayton	34.5	1,794
Much Wenlock	16.5	858
Oswestry	45	2,340
Pontesbury	15	780
Shifnal	19.5	1,014
Shrewsbury	46	2,392
Wem	20.5	1,066
Whitchurch	34.5	1,794
HMP Stoke Heath prison	60.5	3,146

Mobile Libraries

There are three mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council covering 237 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. [Map of routes](#). The number of active borrowers was 1,132 in 2024/25.

The cost to run mobile libraries is relatively high compared to the average for all static libraries. It is also relatively high in relation to the number of active borrowers. The cost of running three mobile libraries is similar to the cost of running a library in one of the large market towns.

However, the mobile libraries do provide a valuable service to rural communities and for people who find accessing static libraries more difficult.

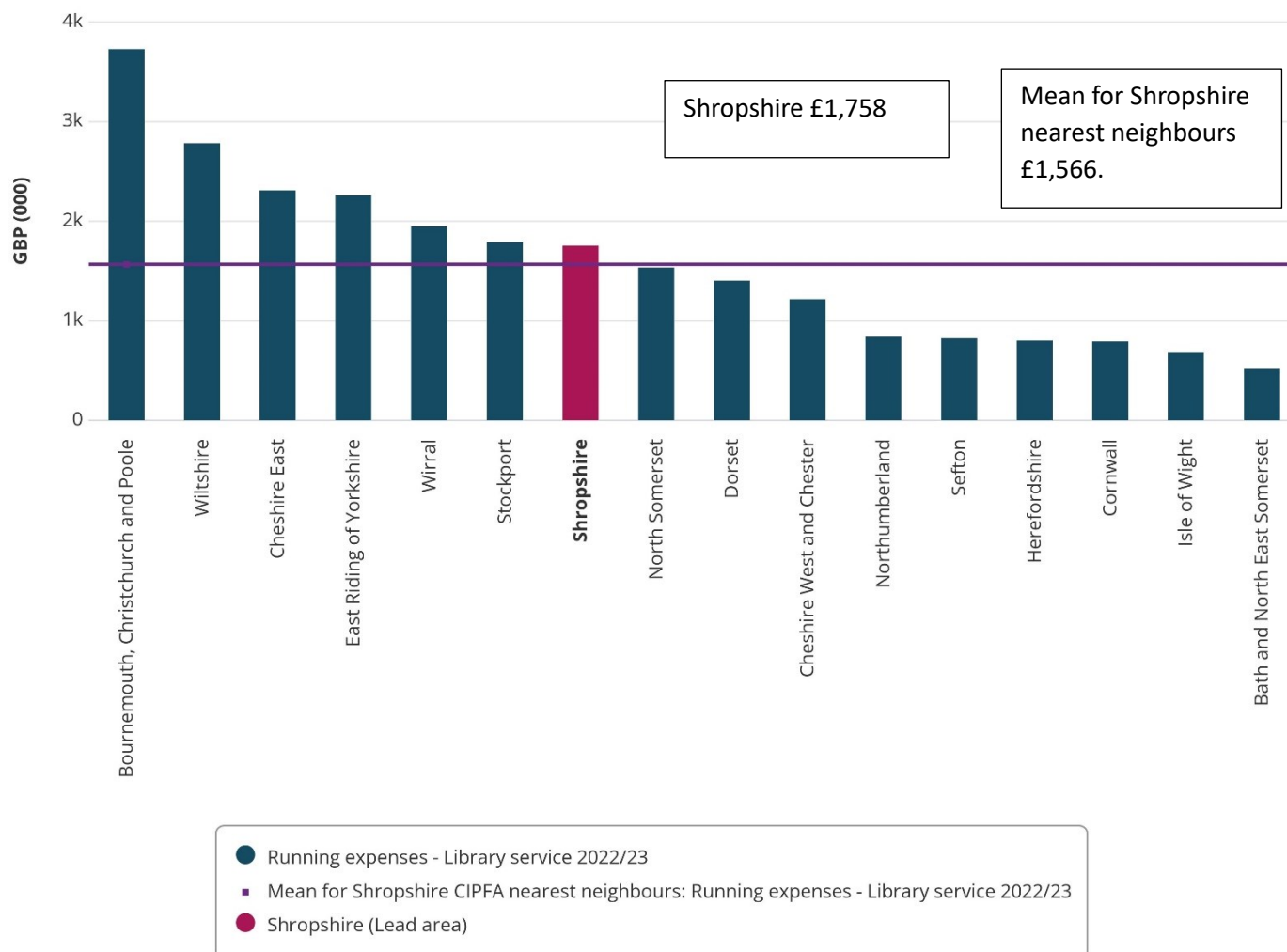
The mobile libraries are open for 46.75 hours per week and 2,431 hours per annum. However additional time and costs are involved in drive times and vehicle maintenance.

Table 18: Mobile Library Costs, 2023/24

Mobile Libraries	Annual Budget	Cost per Hour Opening	Cost per Active Borrower	Cost per Individual Walk in (Footfall)	Cost per book loan
Mobile Libraries	£195,360.00	£80.36	£172.58	£8.47	£3.48
Shropshire Static Library Average	£116,993.18	£66.37	£71.50	£5.71	£4.50

Costs Compared to CIPFA Nearest Neighbours

Chart 39: Library Running Costs (£ millions) 2022/23 compared with CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Powered by LG Inform

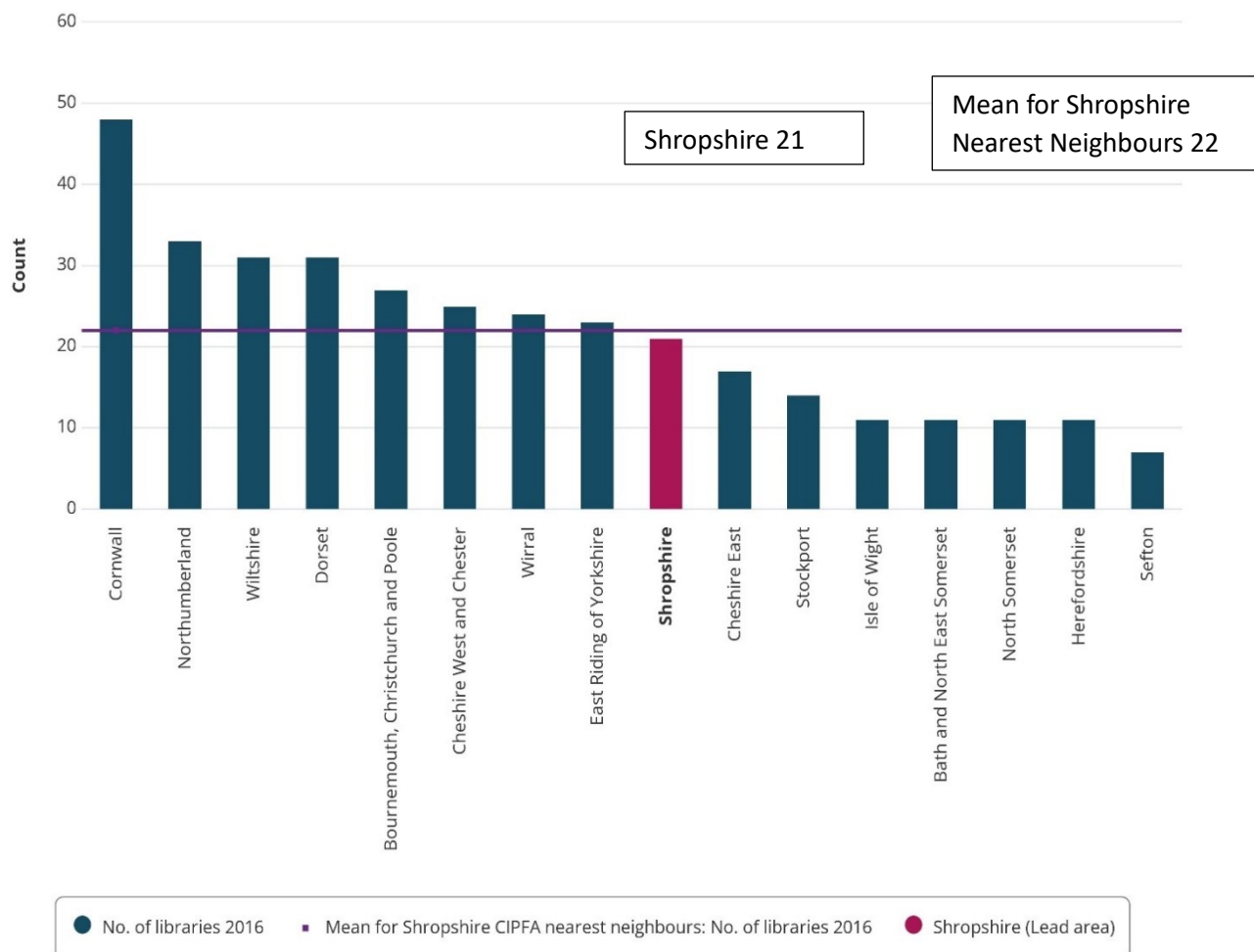
Annual Cost. Running expenses exclude employee costs.

Library Data Comparison (CIPFA)

The following data has been extracted from LG Inform and uses CIPFA nearest neighbour as a comparator.

Chart 40 shows Shropshire had only slightly fewer libraries compared to the mean number for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours in 2016.

Chart 40: Library Count (2016) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:

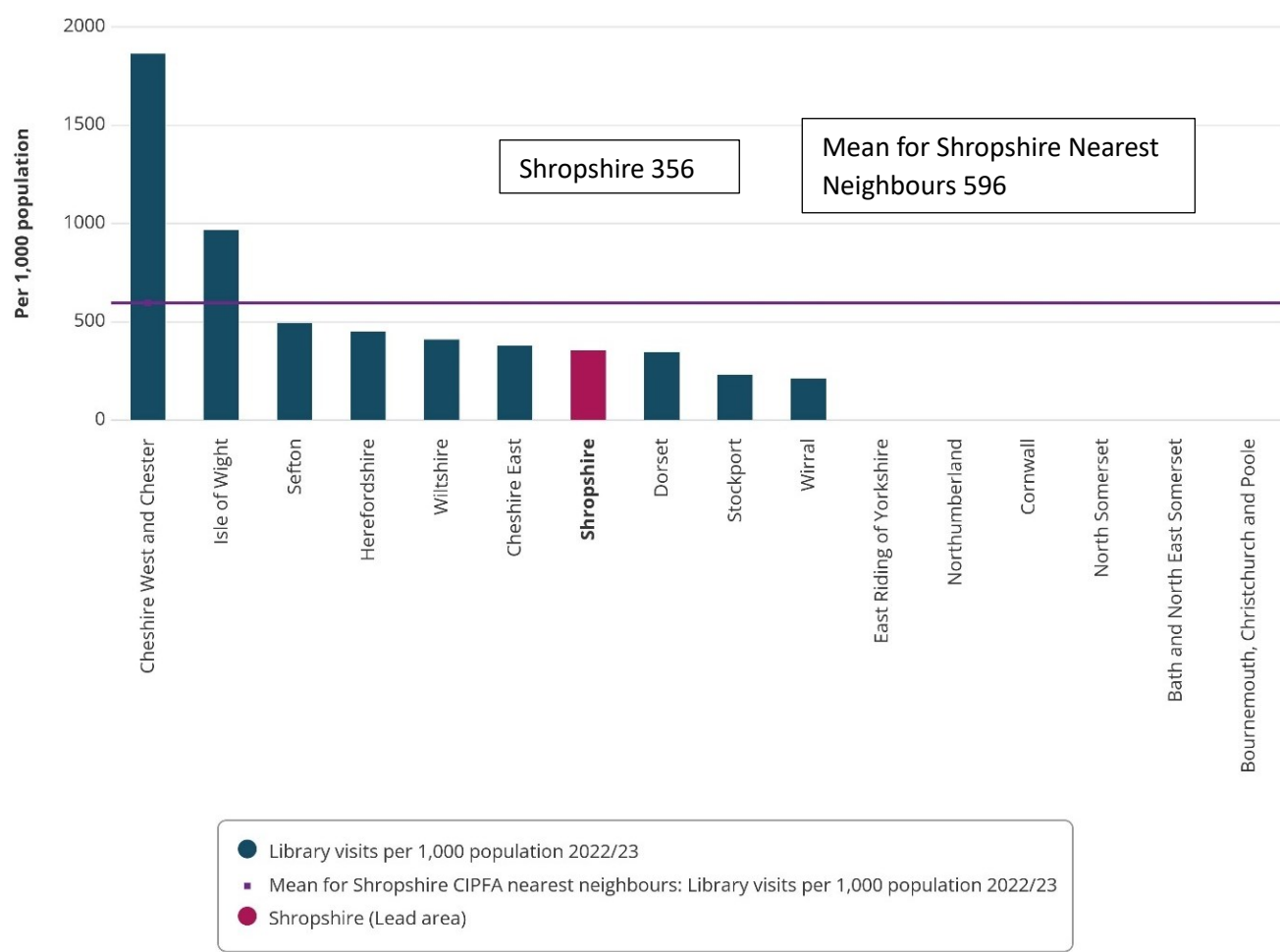
Local collection

Powered by LG Inform

In 2022/23, the number of physical visits to the library service, per 1,000 people, in Shropshire was 356, which was less than the mean number of visits for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours of 596.

The maximum for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours was 1,865 for Cheshire West and Chester and the minimum was 212 for Wirral. The mean for all English unitary authorities was 593.

Chart 41: Number of Physical Visits to Libraries per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours

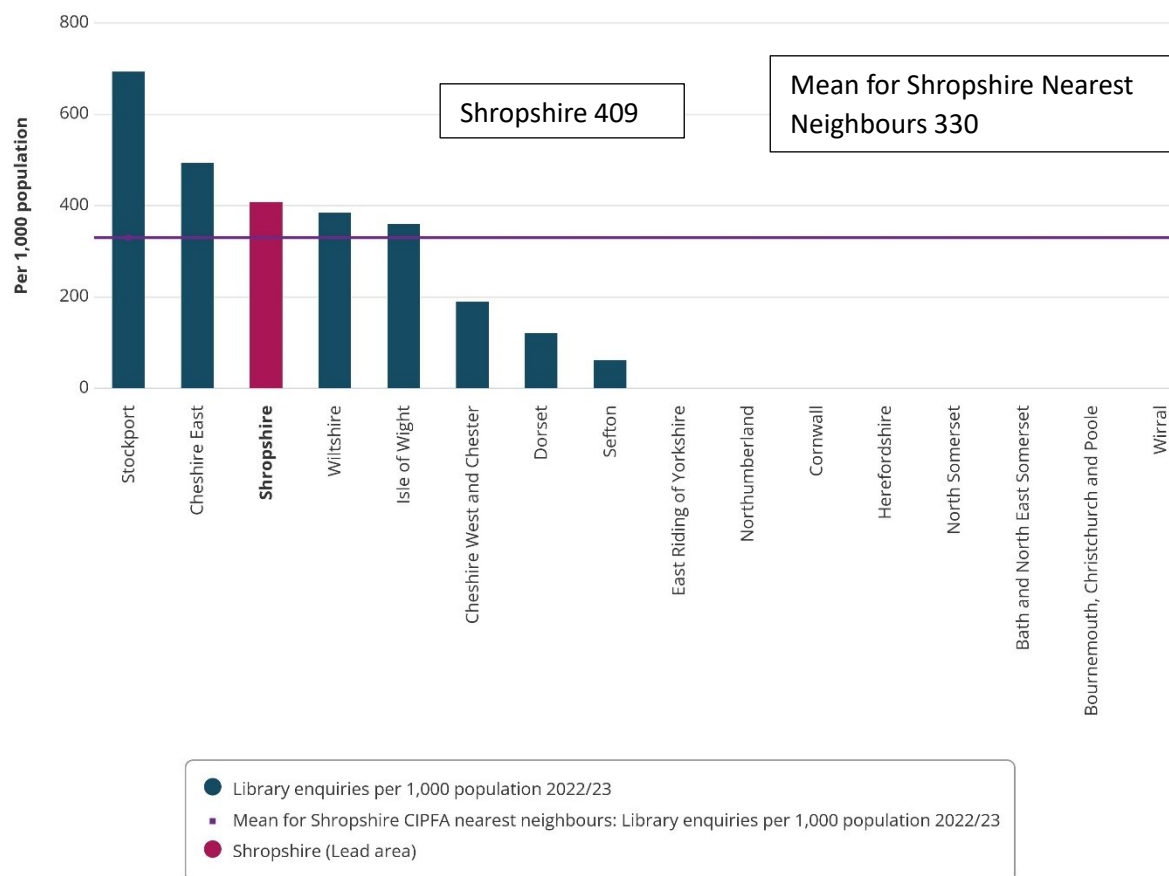


Source:
CIPFA Statistical Information Services
Powered by LG Inform

In 2022/23 there were 409 enquiries to the Shropshire Library Service per 1,000 population, higher than the mean number of enquiries for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours of 330.

The maximum for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours was 694 in Stockport and the minimum was 63 for Sefton. The mean for all English Unitary authorities was 593.

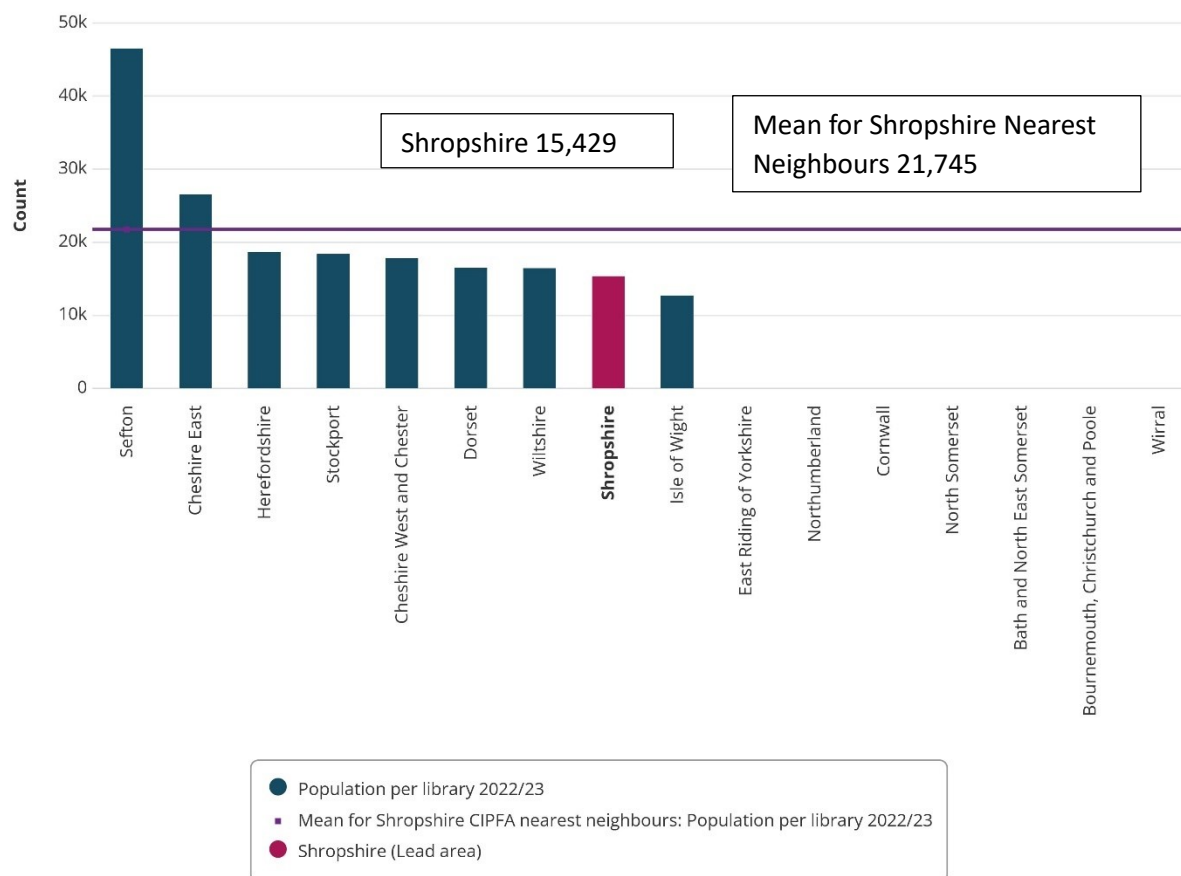
Chart 42: Number of Enquiries to the Library Service per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:
 CIPFA Statistical Information Services
 Powered by LG Inform

In 2022/23, the population per library service point in Shropshire was 15,429 which was less than the average of 21,745 for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours. The maximum for Shropshire's nearest neighbours was 46,556 in Sefton and the minimum was 12,770 in the Isle of Wight.

Chart 43: Population per Library Service Point (open 10 hours or more including mobiles) (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:
CIPFA Statistical Information Services
Powered by LG Inform

Appendix

Albrighton Library Profile
Bayston Hill Library Profile
Bishop's Castle Library Profile
Bridgnorth Library Profile
Broseley Library Profile
Church Stretton Library Profile
Cleobury Mortimer Library Profile
Craven Arms Library Profile
Ellesmere Library Profile
Gobowen Library Profile
Highley Library Profile
Library at the Lanter Library Profile
Ludlow Library Profile
Market Drayton Library Profile
Much Wenlock Library Profile
Oswestry Library Profile
Pontesbury Library Profile
Shifnal Library Profile
Shrewsbury Library Profile
Wem Library Profile
Whitchurch Library Profile

Albrighton Library Profile

Background

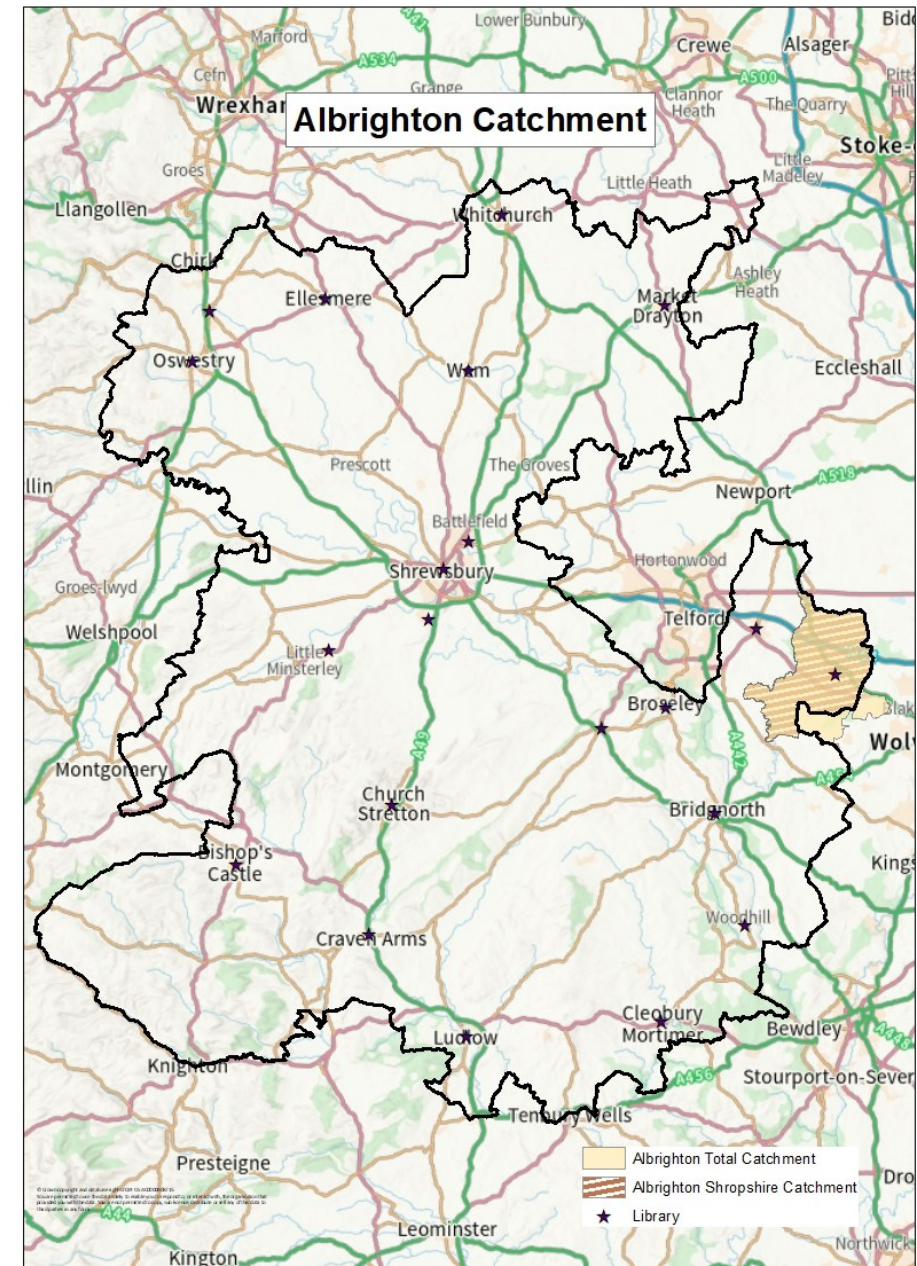
- Albrighton is a large village in the east of Shropshire, approximately two miles from the border with Wolverhampton.
- The library is located in the centre of the village, less than 10 minutes' walk from the railway station, which is on the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton route.
- It is a single storey building, owned by Shropshire Council and leased to Albrighton Parish Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 6,100 hectares within Shropshire – about 2% of the county's land mass. As shown in the map opposite, the catchment also crosses the border with Wolverhampton.
- The total population within the Albrighton library catchment area is 9,000 comprising 3,196 households.
- 432 people in the catchment live outside Shropshire (4.8%).

Opening Hours

The library is open 29 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Tuesday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Friday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

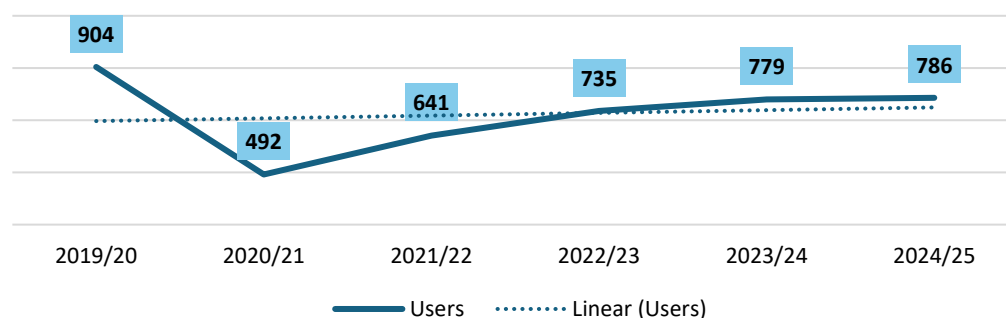
- The library employs 0.8 FTE persons with no volunteer support in 2024/24.



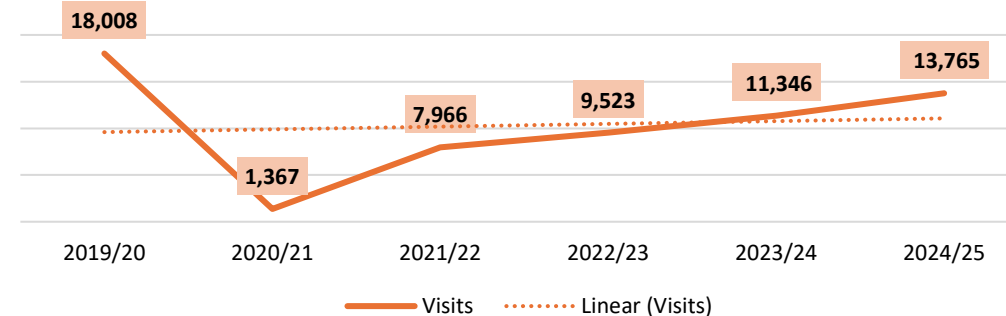
Library Users

- Albrighton library had 786 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.1% of the Albrighton catchment population are active library users (all Shropshire libraries).
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly fewer children and young adults and a higher proportion of people aged 50 and above.

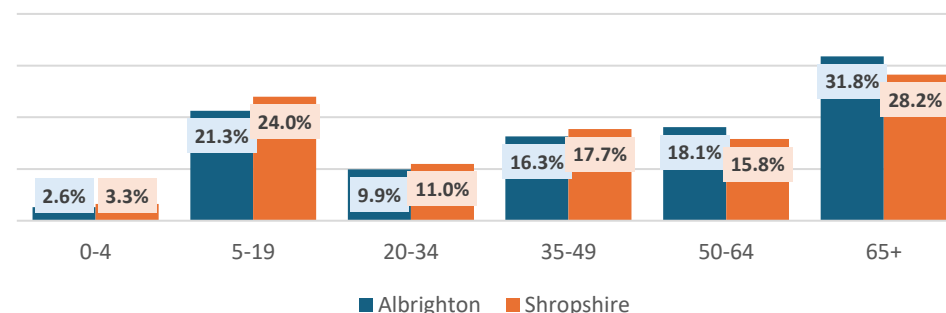
Albrighton: Number of Active Users



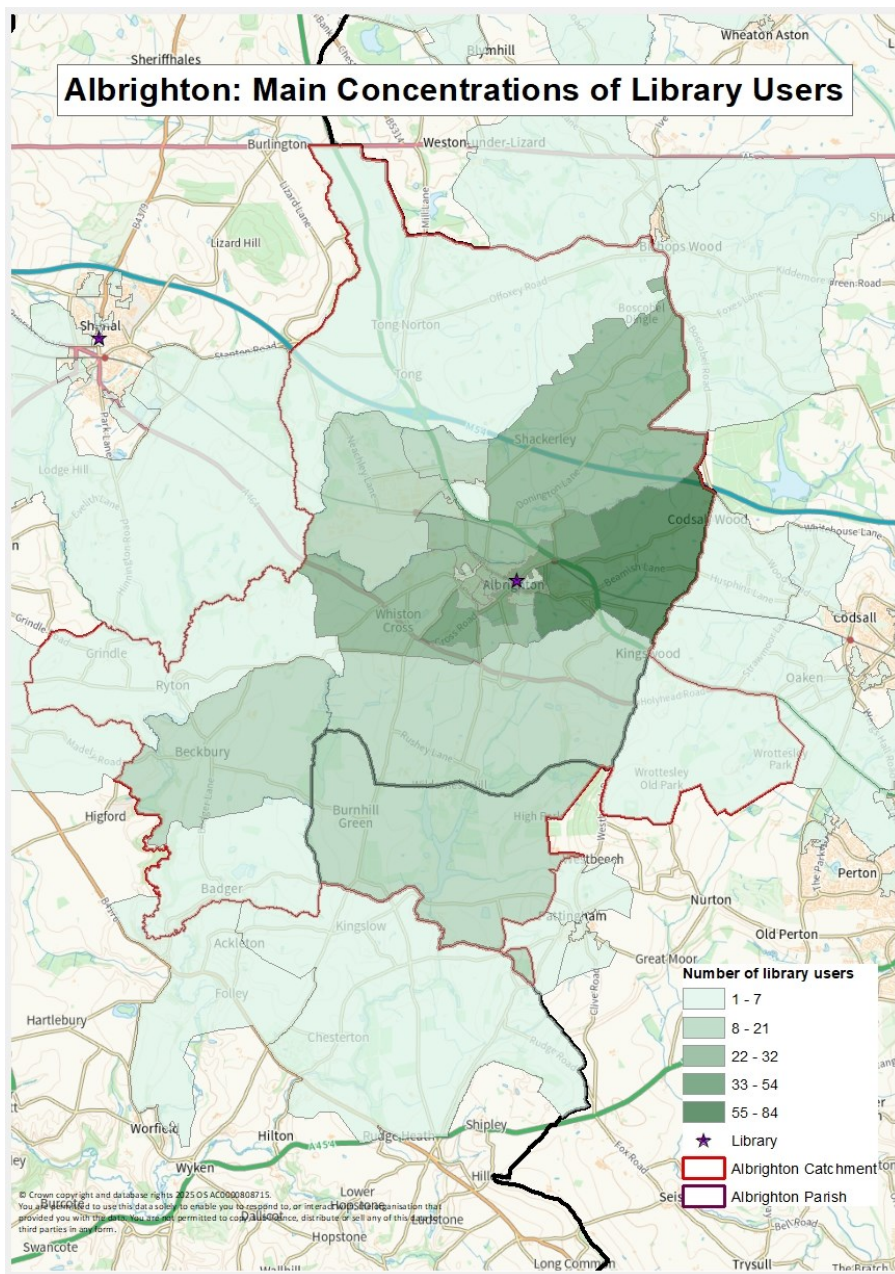
Albrighton: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Albrighton Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year, although numbers have yet to recover to pre-pandemic. The rate of recovery has slowed over the last year.
- The decline in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 118 users (-13.1%) which is slightly lower than the average decline across all 21 Shropshire libraries (-16.9%).
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 13,765, which is the equivalent of about 18 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and although recovery has occurred in the 2021/22-2024/25 period, each library user is still making fewer visits than they used to (20 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 23.6% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 12,475 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 16 per active user and just under 1 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 4% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library also fell by 8% and computer time used was down by 21%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- Almost 90% of all Albrighton library users live within the main catchment area, with concentrations of users in the main town centre area.
- Nearly two-thirds of users live within Albrighton parish.
- 7.7% of the population in the catchment area are Albrighton active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to almost 20%. Please note that this only includes users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 10% of Albrighton library users that do not live in the catchment, about 4% live within the adjoining catchments of Shifnal and Bridgnorth (about 2% in each case).
- Small numbers of people that live in the Albrighton catchment are registered with an alternative library – most usually Shifnal (19 people) or Bridgnorth (20 people).
- Over the six months to March 2025, 92.8% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Albrighton library were to Albrighton, and these accounted for 93.3% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Albrighton include Shrewsbury, Shifnal, Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth.

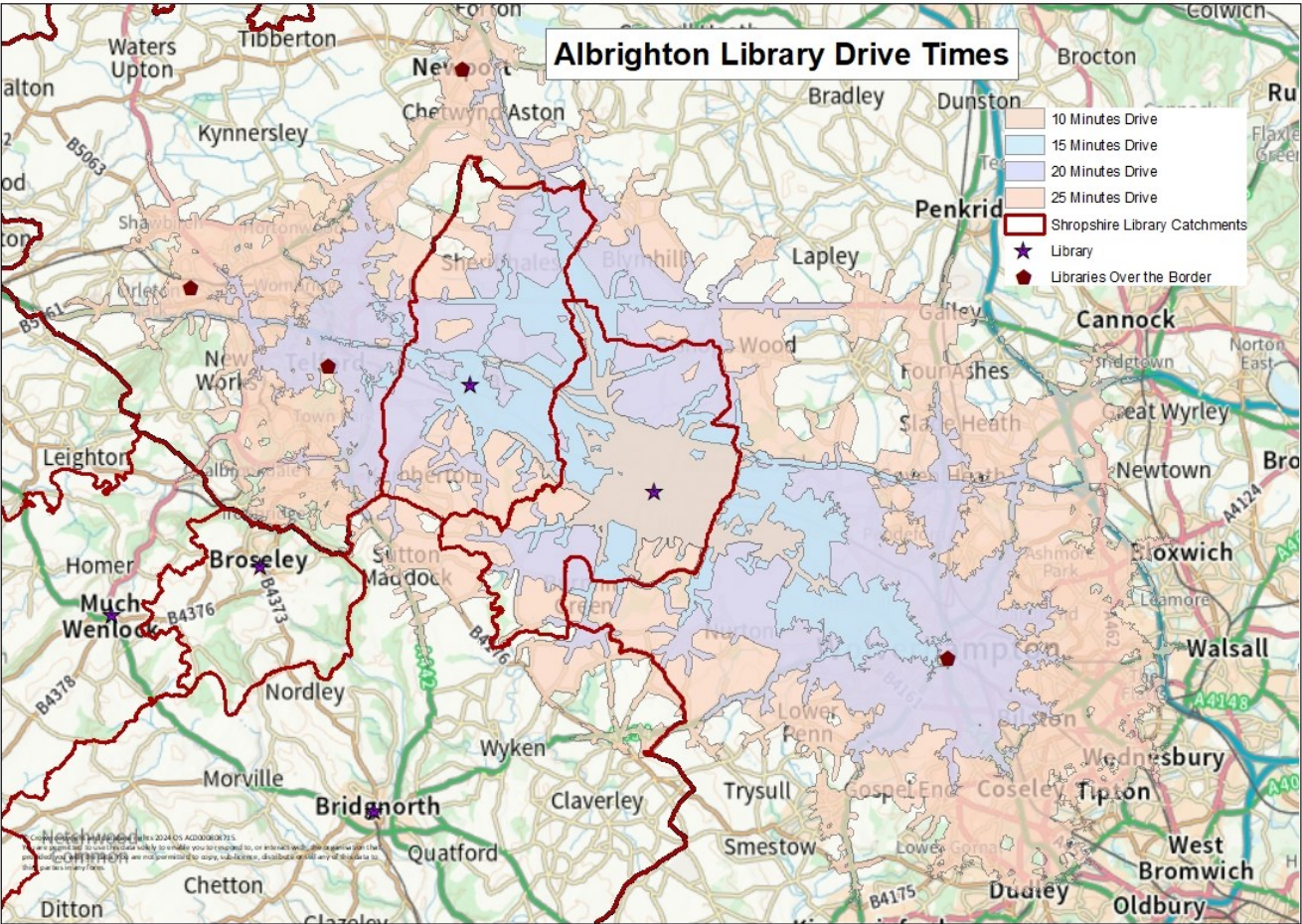
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Albrighton library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	66.1%
30 Minute Walk	79.8%
10 Minute Drive	83.9%
15 Minute Drive	90.1%
20 Minute Drive	95.8%
25 Minute Drive	97.7%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- The road and rail infrastructure that serves Albrighton means that it is easier to travel eastwards and westwards rather than north to south. This means that the only Shropshire library that is accessible within a 10-to-15-minute drive is Shifnal. Several libraries located outside of Shropshire are also more readily accessible than alternative Shropshire provision including Wolverhampton, Newport and Telford.
- Shifnal library is 5.6 miles from Albrighton library. Bridgnorth is the closest main Shropshire library (11.2 miles away). According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 22 minutes.
- Albrighton is on the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton train line. This means that it is relatively straightforward to travel between Albrighton and Shifnal, and that it is easier to access Shrewsbury library than Bridgnorth using public transport. The former can be reached by train in 50 minutes via an hourly service at peak times. Access to Bridgnorth library by public transport requires taking a train to Shifnal and then the 114 bus to Bridgnorth.



Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Albrighton	Shifnal	5.6 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	11.2 miles	22 mins	Train to Shifnal, 114 bus to Bridgnorth	1.5-2 hours
				Shrewsbury	24.0 miles	32 mins	Train to Shrewsbury	50 minutes

Costs

- Albrighton is the fourth least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley.
- The annual cost to Shropshire Council is £9,490 (2024/25)
- Albrighton library costs less than average per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£5.89	£66.37	4th
Per Active User	£12.07	£71.50	4th
Per Visit	£0.69	£5.71	4th
Per Book Loan	£0.76	£4.50	4th

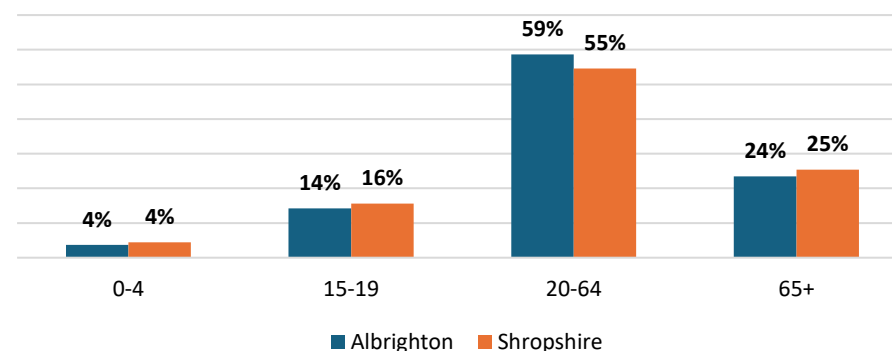
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Albrighton Catchment Area

Population

- Albrighton library catchment is the 10th largest in terms of population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 8,566 people and a total population of 8,998.
- The age breakdown of the population is similar to the Shropshire breakdown, although there is a higher representation of adults of working age and slightly fewer aged 15–19 and 65+.
- There are 3,196 households in the catchment, with 1,617 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.31 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

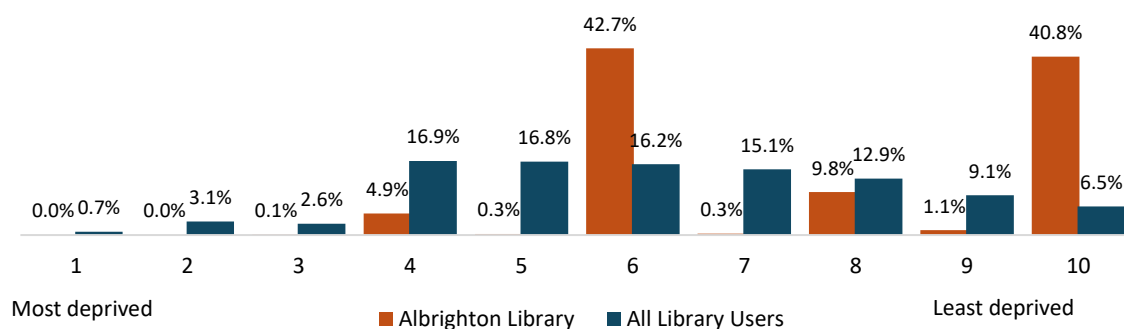
Age Breakdown of Albrighton Catchment



Albrighton catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Albrighton Library Users by IMD Decile



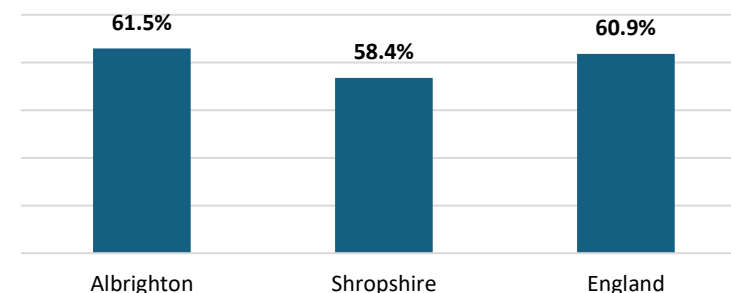
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Albrighton library is in one of the least deprived locations in Shropshire, and its catchment also draws from people living in predominantly un-deprived areas.
- The adjacent chart shows that 40.8% of Albrighton library users live in the least deprived 10% of England compared with 6.5% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- A significant proportion are also resident in decile six (42.7% compared with 16.2% of all Shropshire library users).
- Less than 6% of Albrighton library users live in the most deprived 50% of the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Albrighton library catchment is higher than the Shropshire average at 61.5% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also higher than the England rate of 60.9%. While Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market, Albrighton's younger age profile bucks this trend.
- The economic activity rate in the Albrighton library catchment area is the third highest in Shropshire behind Shifnal and the Lantern.

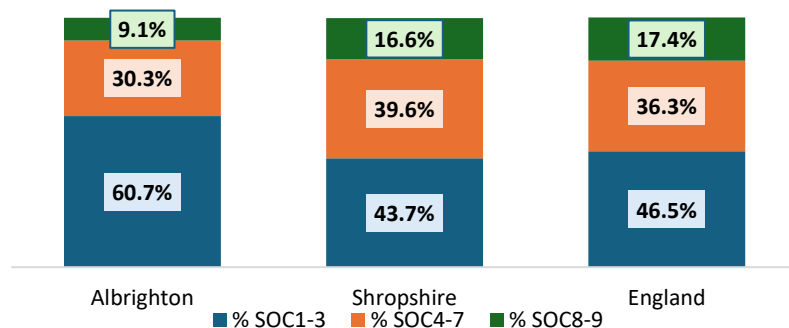
Albrighton: Economic Activity Rate



Employment

- 4,725 people in Albrighton were in employment in 2021, which equates with 59.8% of the 16+ population.
- A very high proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) at 60.7% compared with 43.7% in Shropshire and 46.5% in England. In contrast, fewer are employed in care and leisure occupations (SOC 4-7) or in elementary occupations and process and plant operatives (SOC 8-9).

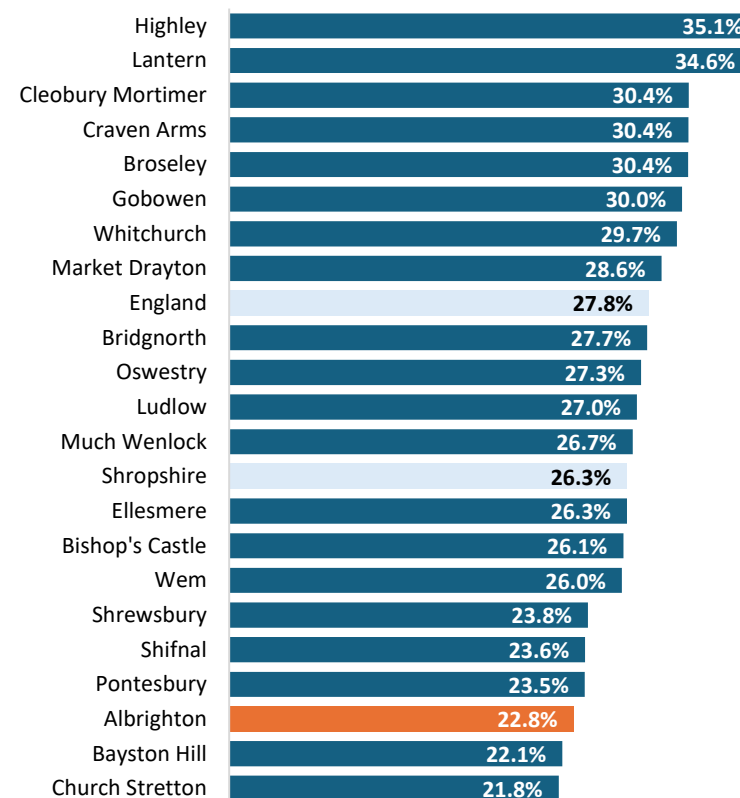
Albrighton: Occupation Types



Qualifications

- The Albrighton population is amongst the best qualified in Shropshire, with just 22.8% with low (NVQ level 1) or no qualifications. This is lower than the Shropshire and national averages (26.3% and 27.8% respectively) and corresponds with the high proportion of people employed in SOC 1-3 occupations.

% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



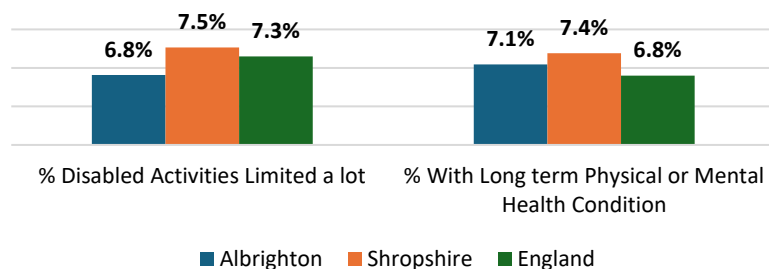
Unemployment

- 182 people living in the Albrighton catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 6.8% of residents in the Albrighton library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is marginally lower than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.1% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. Again, this proportion is slightly lower than it is across Shropshire (7.4%) but it is slightly higher than the English average (6.8%).

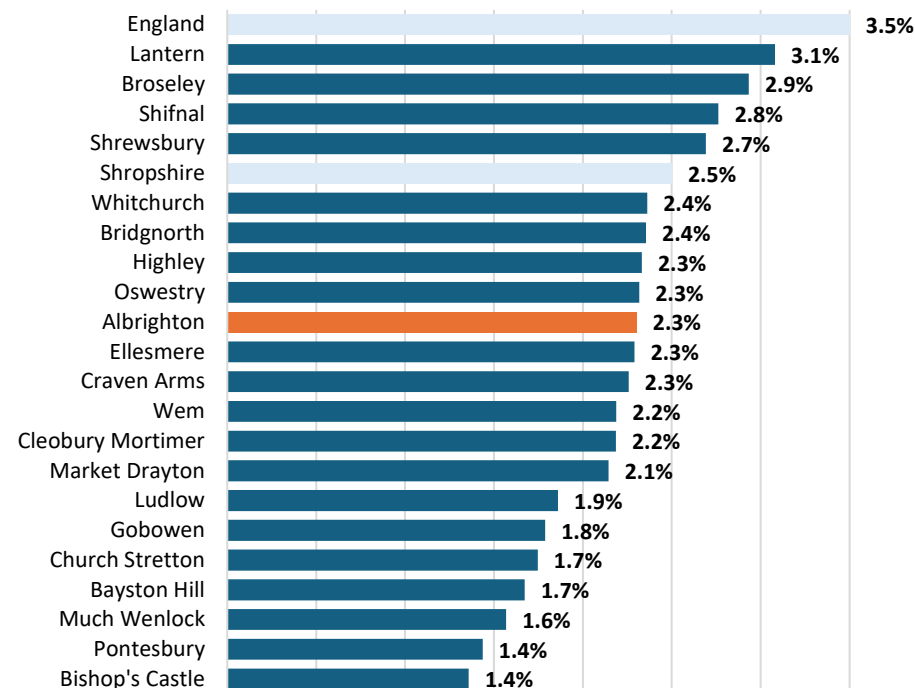
Albrighton: Health Conditions



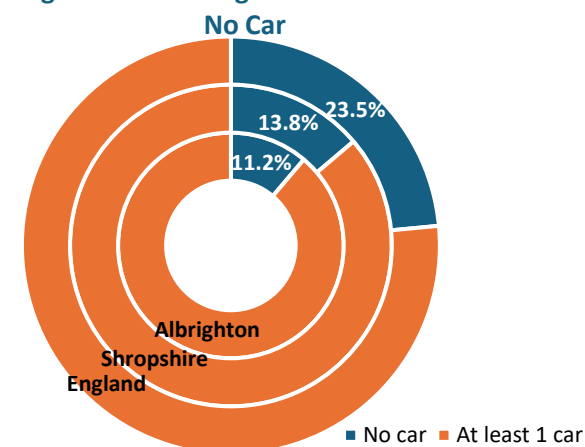
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Albrighton households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.2%.

Unemployment rate



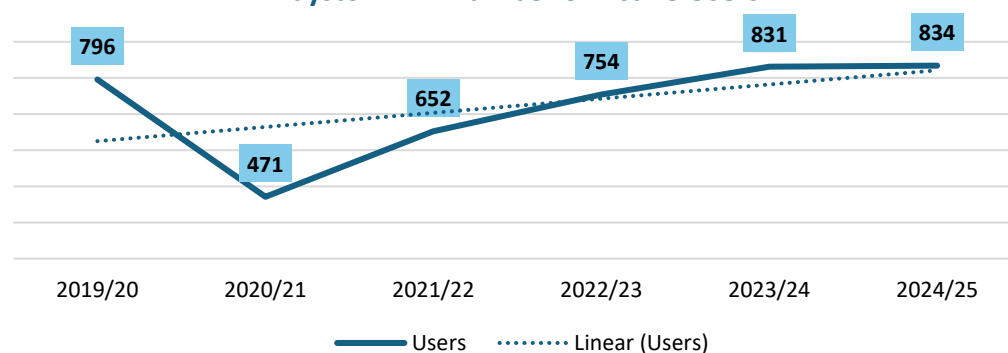
Albrighton: Percentage of Households with



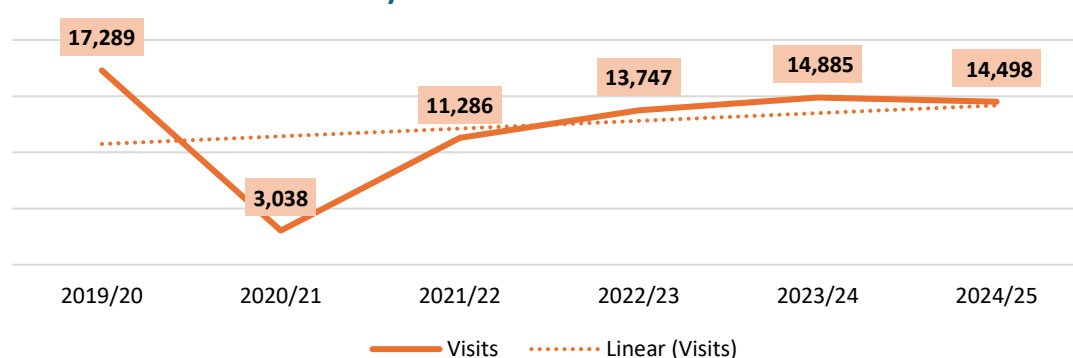
Library Users

- Bayston Hill library had 834 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.6% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 13.9% of the Bayston Hill catchment population are active library users, which is higher than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (64%) (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more children and young people and a lower proportion of people aged 50 and above.

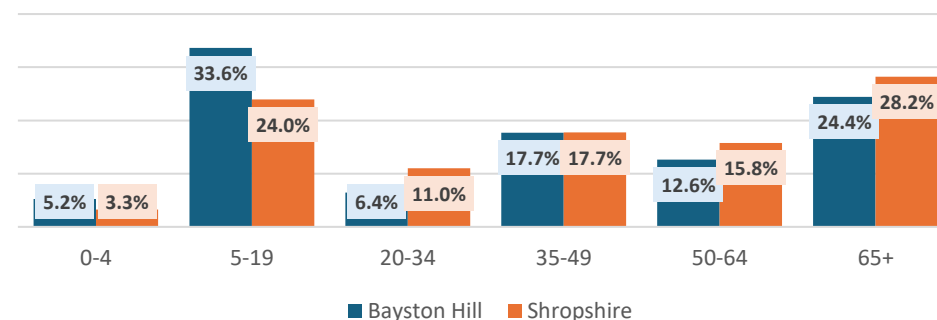
Bayston Hill: Number of Active Users



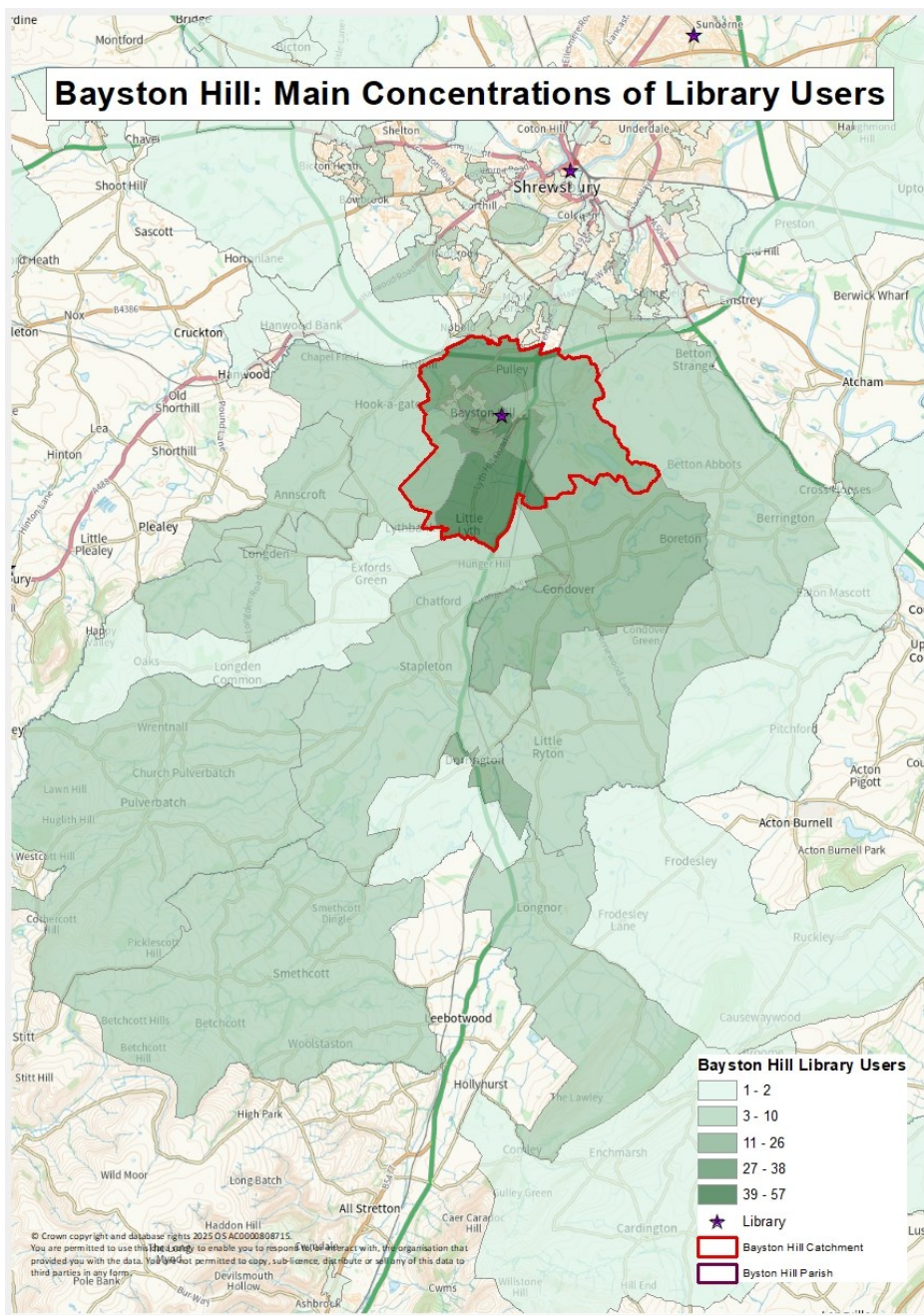
Bayston Hill: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Bayston Hill Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery and by 2023/24 numbers had surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Growth in the number of users in 2024/24 was much more muted.
- The increase in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 38 users (+4.8%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 14,498, which is the equivalent of about 17 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and although recovery has occurred in the 2021/22-2024/25 period, each library user is still making fewer visits than they used to (22 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 16.1% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 25,241 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 30 per active user and just over 1.7 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 8% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 8%.
- Computer time used was down by 16%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- Just under two-thirds (66.3%) of all Bayston Hill library users live within the main catchment area. This is amongst the lowest proportions of all Shropshire libraries.
- 10.4% of the population in the catchment area are Bayston Hill active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 6% to around 16%. **This includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.**
- Of the 33.7% of Bayston Hill library users that do not live in the catchment, significant numbers live within the Shrewsbury catchment. Around 30% of all Bayton Hill library users have a Shrewsbury catchment postcode. Small numbers are resident in Church Stretton.
- A significant number of people that live in the Bayston Hill catchment are registered with Shrewsbury library (approximately 1.7% of all Shrewsbury active users).
- Over the six months to March 2025, 86.1% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bayston Hill library were to Bayston Hill, and these accounted for 87.0% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bayston Hill include Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, the Lantern and Oswestry as well as the Sabrina mobile library.

Walk/Drive Times

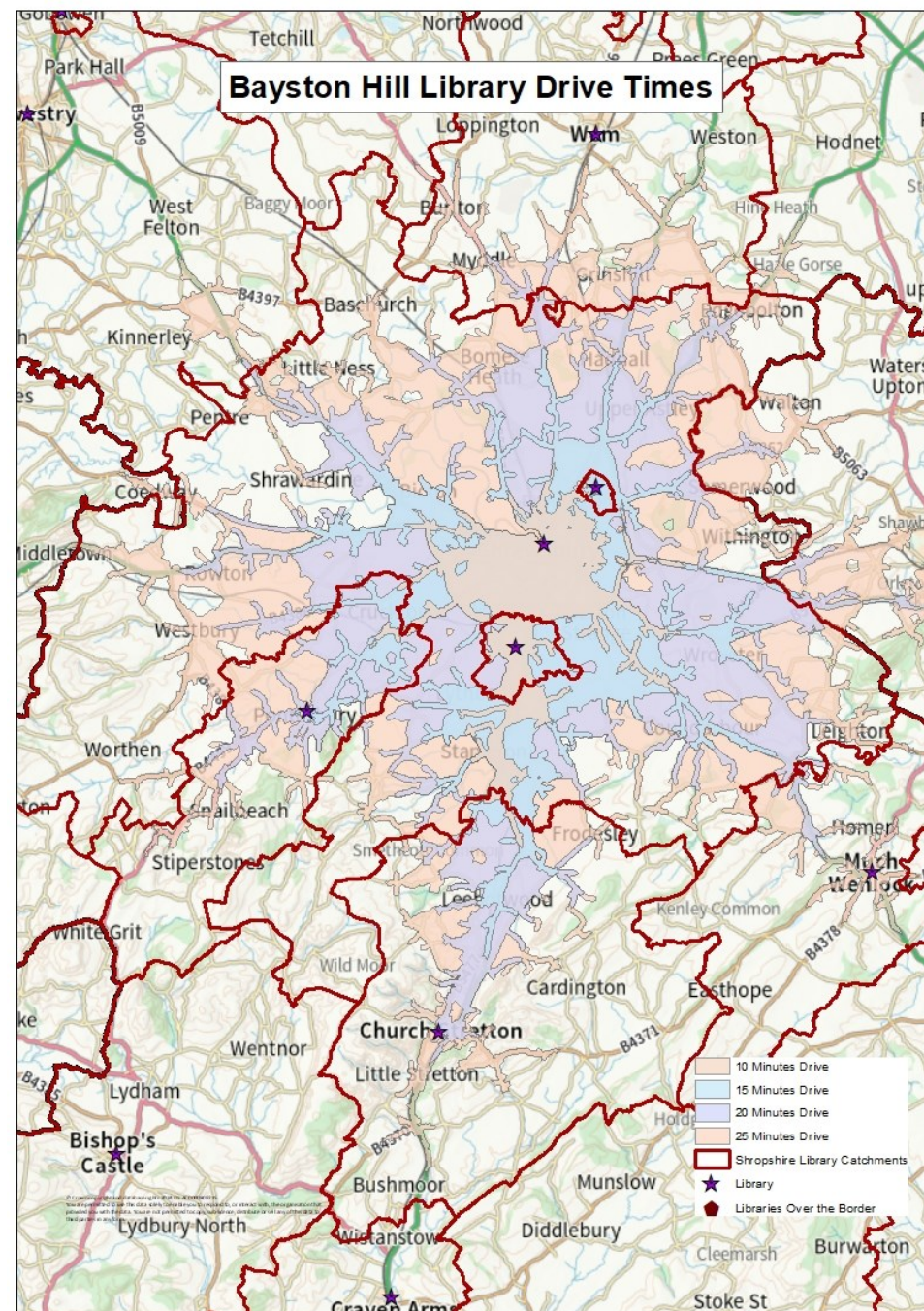
- The following table shows the proportion of active Bayston Hill library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	61.6%
30 Minute Walk	67.4%
10 Minute Drive	88.8%
15 Minute Drive	94.3%
20 Minute Drive	96.6%
25 Minute Drive	97.3%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Bayston Hill is just to the west of the A49 between Shrewsbury and Church Stretton, and this means that both alternative libraries are within relatively easy reach.
- The closest library to Bayston Hill library is Shrewsbury, which is located 4.2 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes.
- Bayton Hill is not on the rail network. However, there are frequent buses to Shrewsbury town centre meaning that is possible to travel between the two libraries using public transport within about half an hour.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Bayston Hill	Shrewsbury	4.2 miles	13 mins	27 Bus	20-30 Minutes



Costs

- Bayston Hill is the tenth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the fourth most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual running costs are £43,870 (2024/25)
- Bayston Hill library costs less than average per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£37.50	£66.37	10th
Per Active User	£52.60	£71.50	9th
Per Visit	£3.03	£5.71	10th
Per Book Loan	£1.74	£4.50	6th

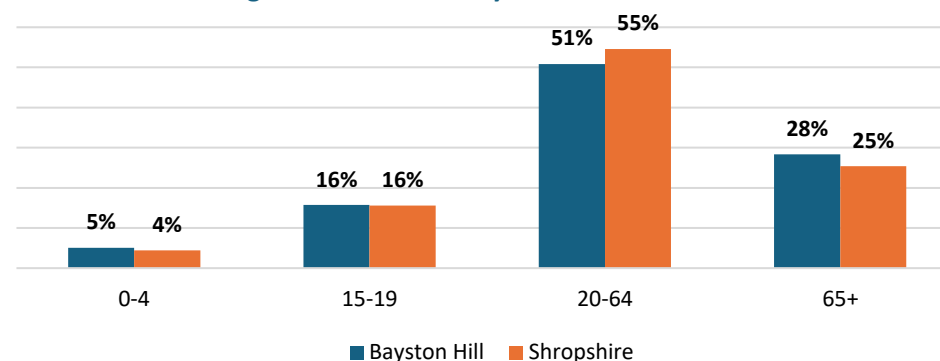
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bayston Hill Catchment Area

Population

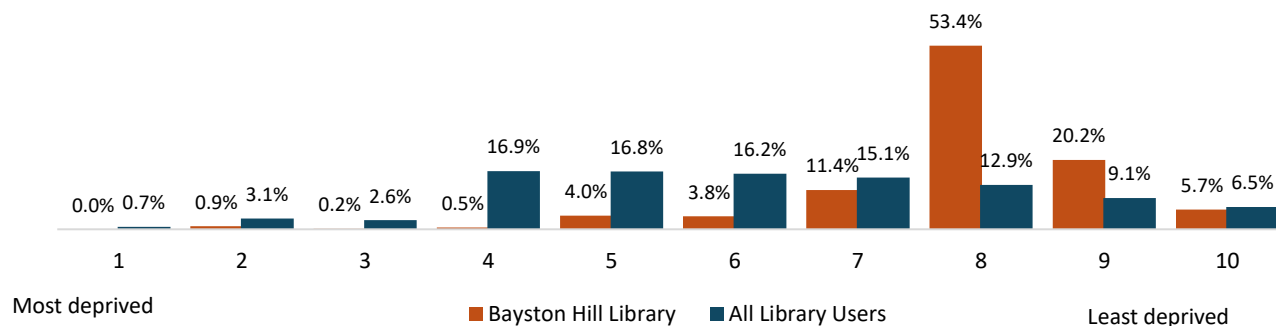
- Bayston Hill library catchment is the 15th largest in terms of population size, accommodating a total population of 5,221.
- The age breakdown of the population is similar to the Shropshire breakdown, although there is a lower representation of adults of working age and slightly more aged 65+.
- There are 2,208 households in the catchment, with 53 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.34 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Bayston Hill Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Bayston Hill Library Users by IMD Decile



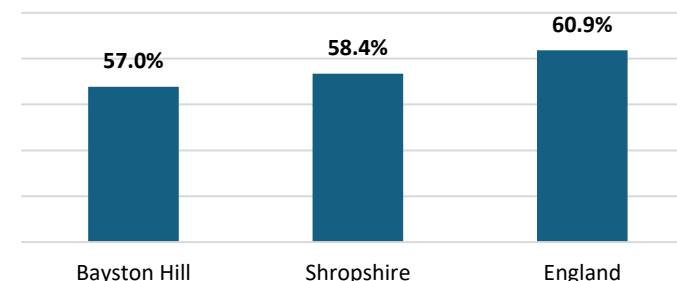
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Bayston Hill library is in one of the least deprived locations in Shropshire, and its catchment also draws from people living in predominantly un-deprived areas.
- The adjacent chart shows that more than three-quarters of Bayston Hill library users live in the least deprived 30% of England compared with 28.5% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- Just 5.6% of Bayston Hill library users live in the most deprived 50% of the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Bayston Hill library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 57.0% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Bayston Hill catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Bayston Hill library catchment area is the 11th highest in Shropshire.

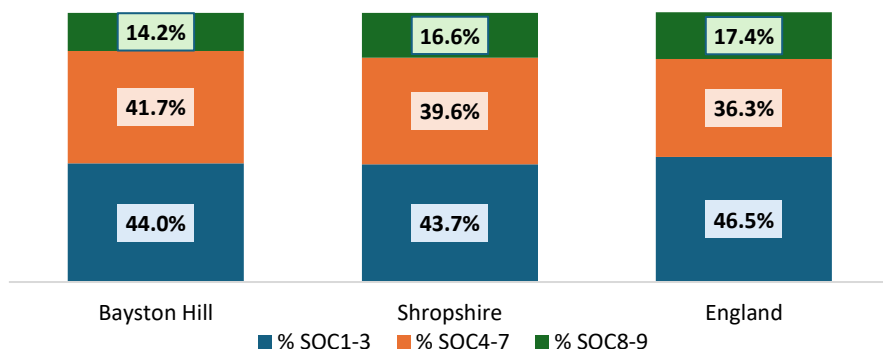
Bayston Hill: Economic Activity Rate



Employment

- 2,391 people in Bayston Hill were in employment in 2021, which equates with 55.6% of the 16+ population.
- A similar proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 44.0%. Slightly fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and slightly more in service and caring occupations (SOC 4-7).

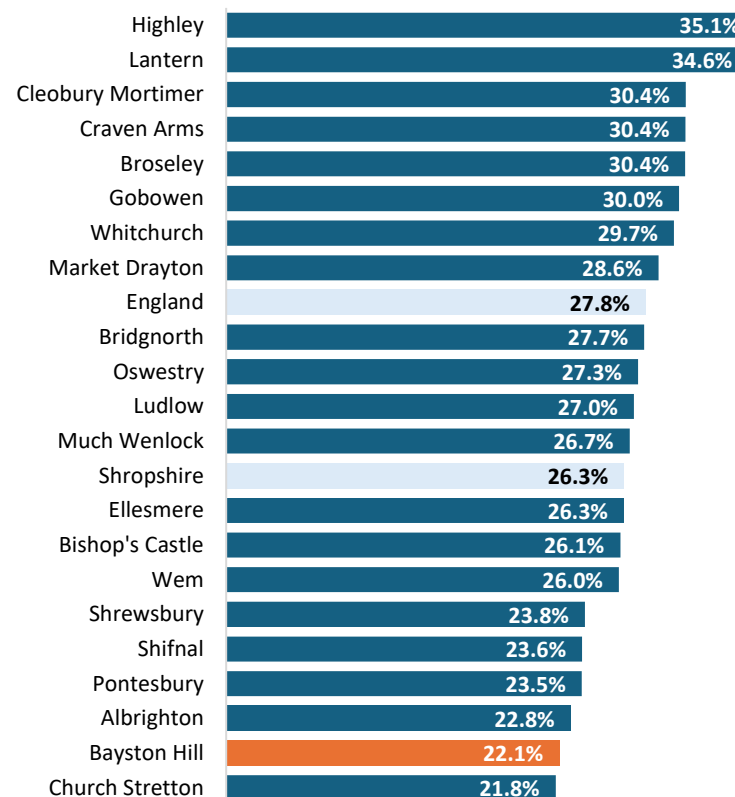
Bayston Hill: Occupation Types



Qualifications

- The Bayston Hill population is amongst the best qualified in Shropshire, with just 22.1% with low (NVQ level 1) or no qualifications. This is lower than the Shropshire and national averages (26.3% and 27.8% respectively) and corresponds with the high proportion of people employed in SOC 1-3 occupations.

% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



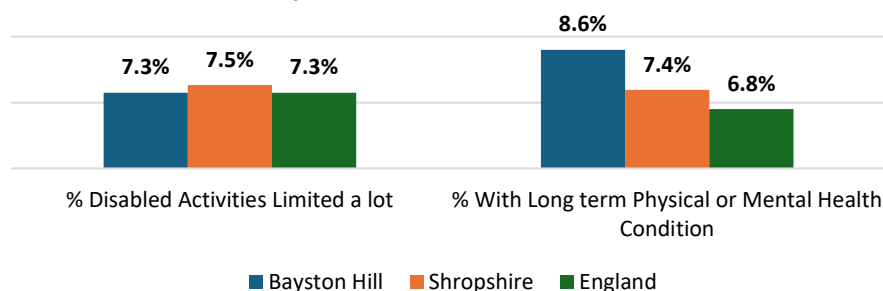
Unemployment

- 72 people living in the Bayston Hill catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.7%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 7.3% of residents in the Bayston Hill library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is marginally lower than for Shropshire (7.5%) and the same as in England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 8.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is higher than it is across Shropshire (7.4%) and England (6.8%).

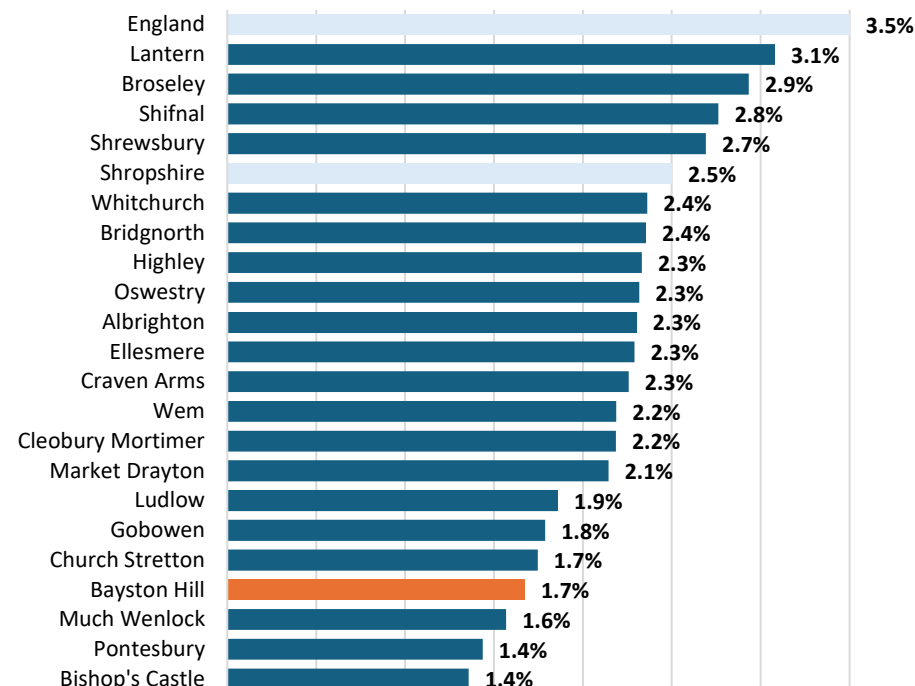
Bayston Hill: Health Conditions



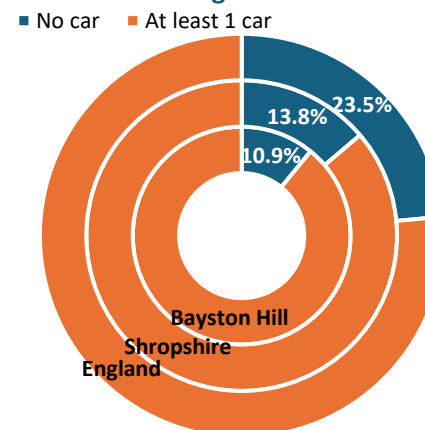
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bayston Hill households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 10.9%.

Unemployment rate



Bayston Hill: Percentage of Households with No Car



Bishop's Castle Library Profile

Background

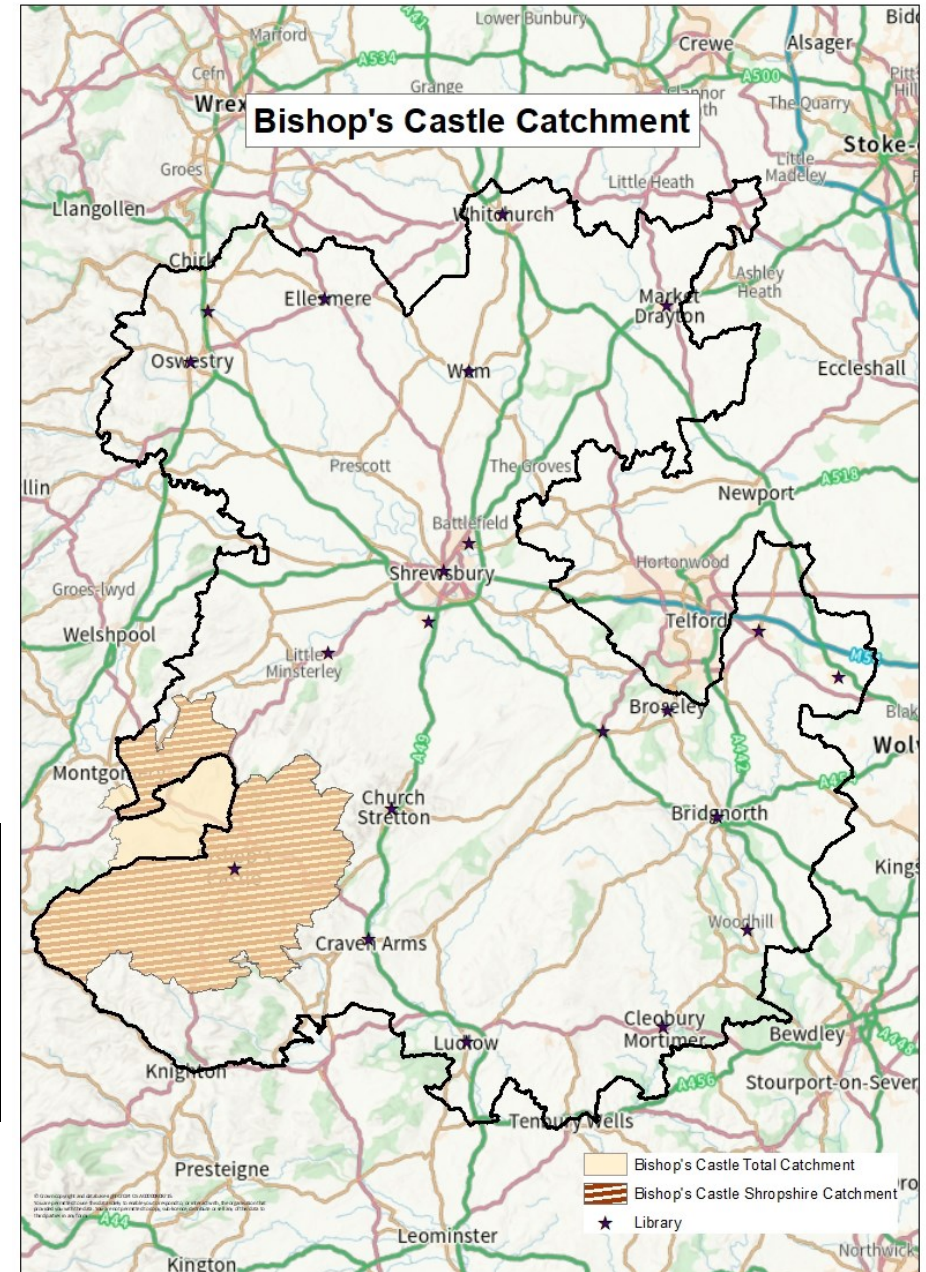
- Bishop's Castle is a small town in the rural south west of Shropshire, approximately two miles from the Welsh border.
- The library is located in the centre of the town in the Enterprise House building which also has general office space and printing and photocopying facilities.
- The library building is owned by Shropshire Council but leased to Enterprise South West.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 30,544 hectares within Shropshire which is about 9.6% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. 15% of the catchment area is in Wales as shown on the adjacent map.
- The total population within the Bishop's Castle library catchment area is 7,617 comprising 3,420 households. The Shropshire population (5,877 people) accounts for 77.2% of the total catchment population. The catchment is the most sparsely populated, with just 0.19 people per hectare.

Opening Hours

The library is open 20 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

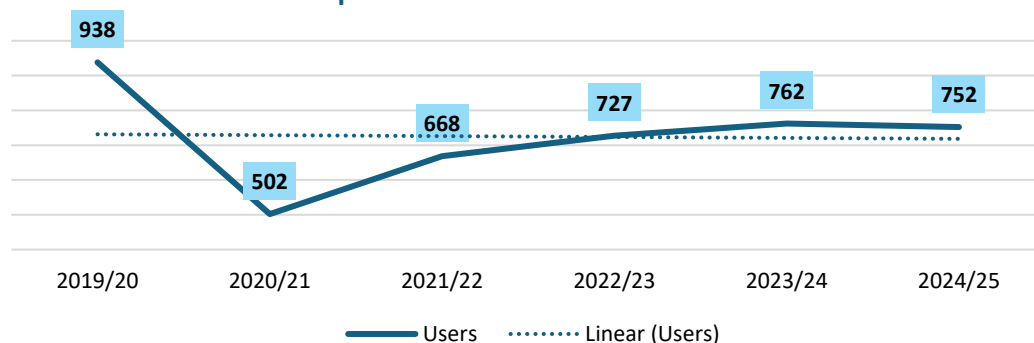
- The library employs 1 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 16 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 201 volunteer hours.



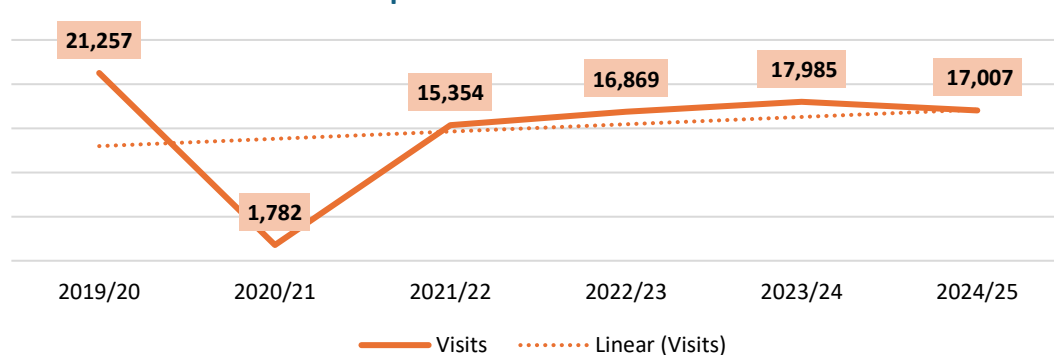
Library Users

- Bishop's Castle library had 752 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.2% of the Bishop's Castle catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average (including all Shropshire libraries).
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and more users aged 65 and above but fewer adults of working age.

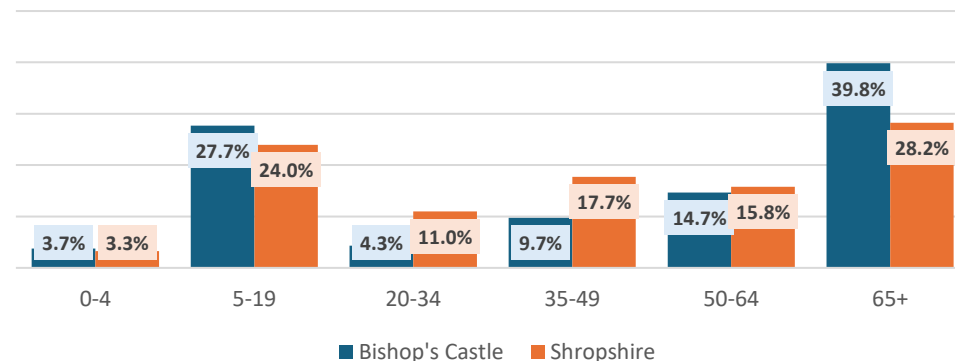
Bishop's Castle: Number of Active Users



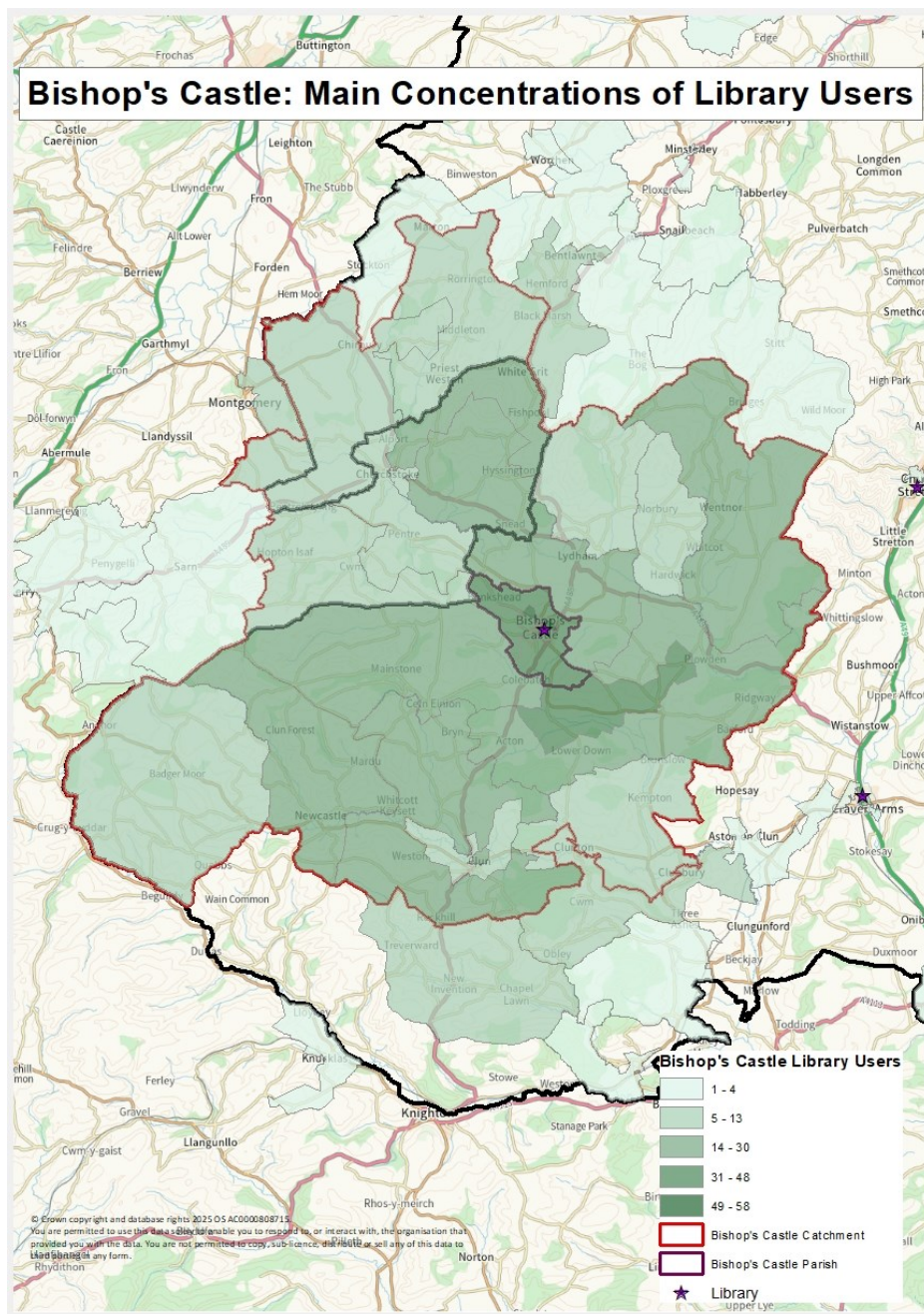
Bishop's Castle: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although this now appears to have plateaued, and numbers remains well below pre-pandemic levels.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 186 users (-19.8%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 17,007, which is the equivalent of about 23 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at almost once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels.
- The overall number of visits was 20% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 17,634 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 23 per active user and about 1 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 5% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 4%.
- Computer time was down by 15%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 76.5% of all Bishop's Castle library users live within the main catchment area.
- 38.2% live within Bishop's Castle Parish.
- 8.0% of the population in the catchment area are Bishop's Castle active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to around a quarter.
- Of the 23.5% of Bishop's Castle library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in either Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ludlow, Shrewsbury or Pontesbury catchments.
- People that live in the Bishop's Castle catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ludlow, Shrewsbury or Pontesbury libraries.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 90.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bishop's Castle library were to Bishop's Castle, and these accounted for 91.0% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bishop's Castle include Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Ludlow and Craven Arms as well as the Sabrina mobile library.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Bishop's Castle library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

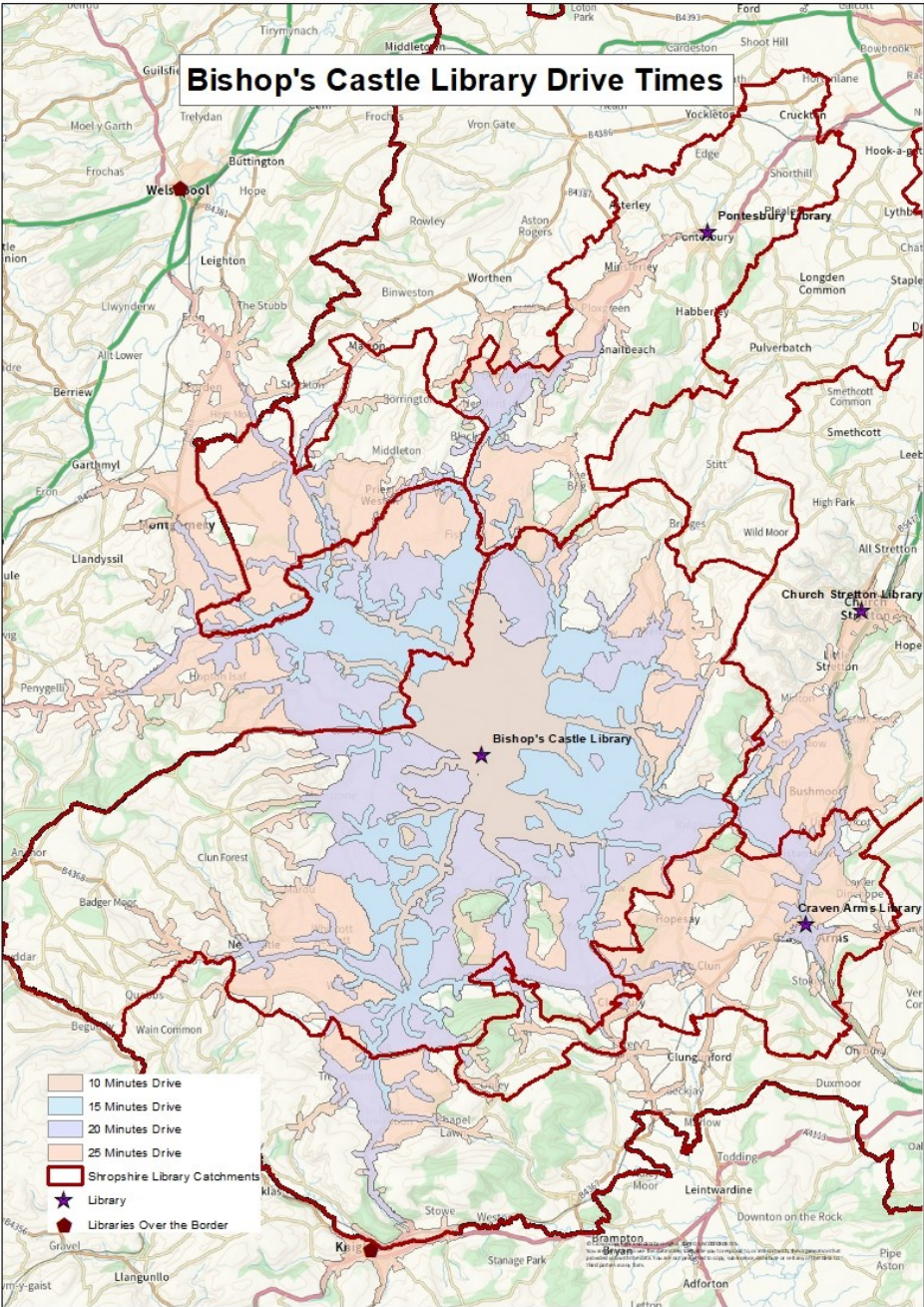
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	38.7%
30 Minute Walk	43.2%
10 Minute Drive	54.7%
15 Minute Drive	72.8%
20 Minute Drive	86.5%
25 Minute Drive	92.9%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Bishop’s Castle is in the south west of Shropshire close to the Welsh border. It is in a very rural location and serves a substantial very sparsely populated hinterland.
- The closest library to Bishop’s Castle library is in Craven Arms, which is located 11.1 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 22 minutes.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Ludlow, which is approximately 18 miles away with a drive time of 31 minutes. Shrewsbury is slightly further afield at 22 miles, or a 41-minute drive.
- Bishop’s Castle is not on the rail network. However, there is a bus service to Shrewsbury town centre which takes about an hour.
- Accessing Ludlow via public transport is more challenging. A direct bus service is infrequent.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Bishop’s Castle	Craven Arms	11.1 miles	22 mins	745 Bus	55 Mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Bishop’s Castle	Ludlow	18 miles	31mins	553 bus to Shrewsbury then train	2-3 hours
	Shrewsbury	22 miles	41 mins	553 bus	1 hour



Costs

- Bishop's Castle is the eleventh most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the fifth most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual costs to the Council are £39,500 (2024/25)
- Costs are lower per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan than the average across all 21 libraries.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£37.98	£66.37	11th
Per Active User	£52.53	£71.50	8th
Per Visit	£2.32	£5.71	7th
Per Book Loan	£2.24	£4.50	9th

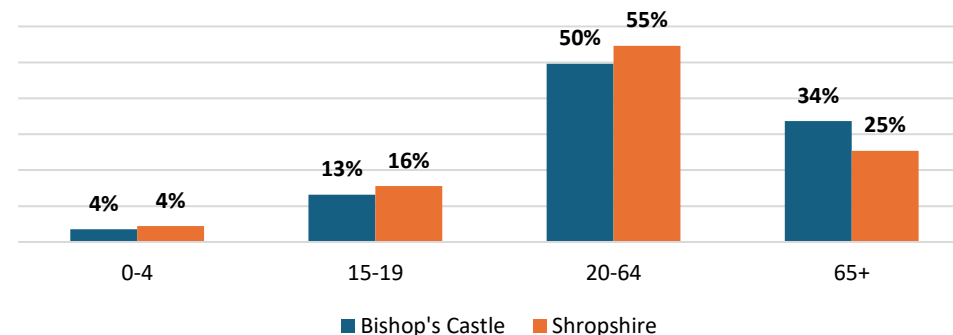
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bishop's Castle Catchment Area

Population

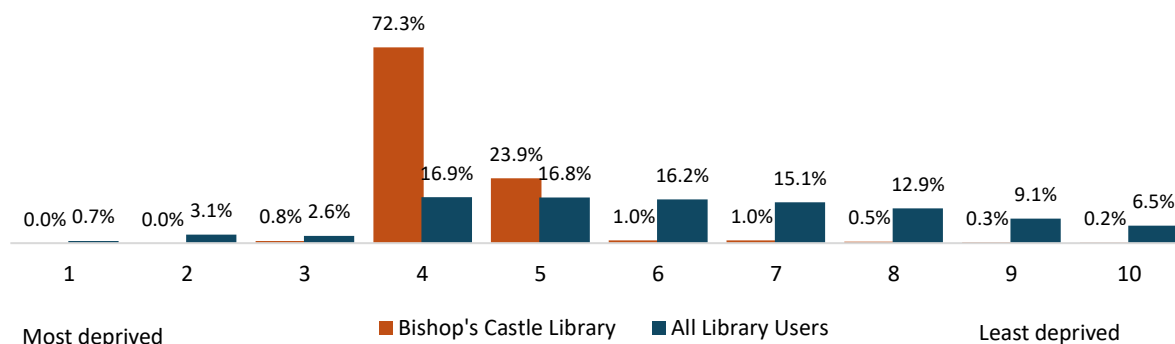
- Bishop's Castle library catchment is the 14th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 7,617 and a Shropshire population of 5,877.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There are 3,420 households in the catchment, with 114 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.19 which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Library Users by IMD Decile



Bishop's Castle catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

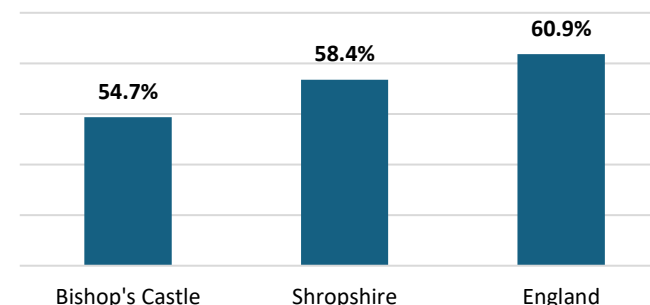
- Bishop's Castle library is in one of the more deprived locations in Shropshire, in a large part due to its rural location.
- The adjacent chart shows that more than 95% of Bishop's castle library users live in the most deprived 50% of England compared with 40.2% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- Most of these people live in deciles four and five rather than in the most deprived 30% of the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Bishop's Castle library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 54.7% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Bishop's Castle catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Bishop's Castle library catchment area is the 6th lowest in Shropshire.

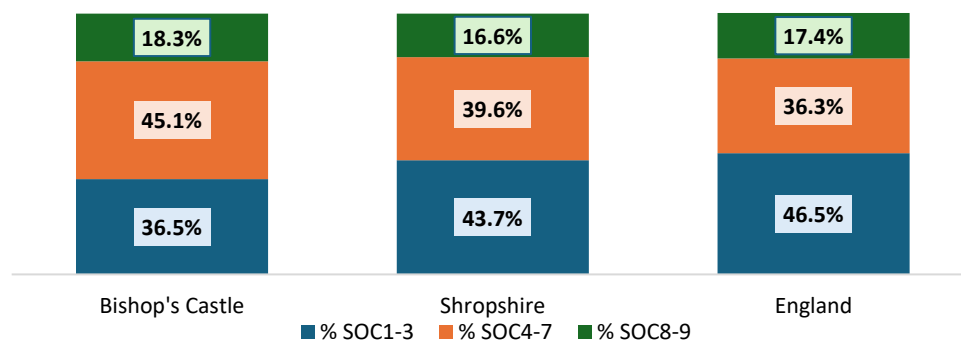
Bishop's Castle: Economic Activity Rate



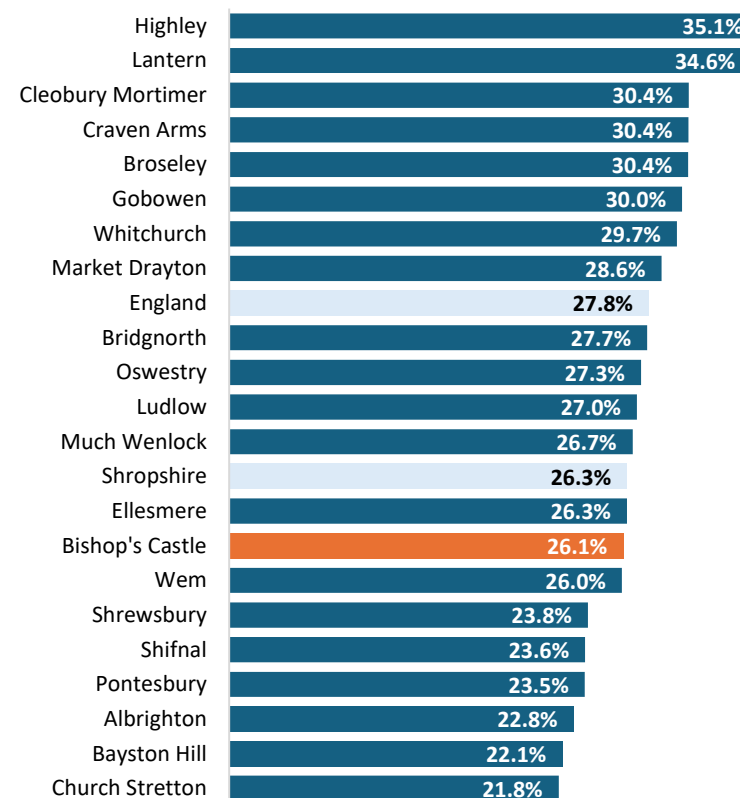
Employment

- 3,514 people in Bishop's Castle were in employment in 2021, which equates with 53% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 36.5%. Slightly more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). A particularly high proportion are employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services).

Bishop's Castle: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Bishop's Castle population have no or low qualifications to the Shropshire average at 26.1%. This is lower than the national average of 27.8%

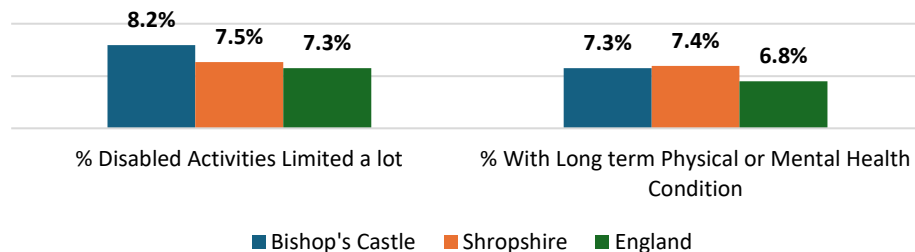
Unemployment

- 90 people living in the Bishop's Castle catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.4%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is lower than any other catchment in Shropshire.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 8.2% of residents in the Bishop's Castle library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is marginally higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.3% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).

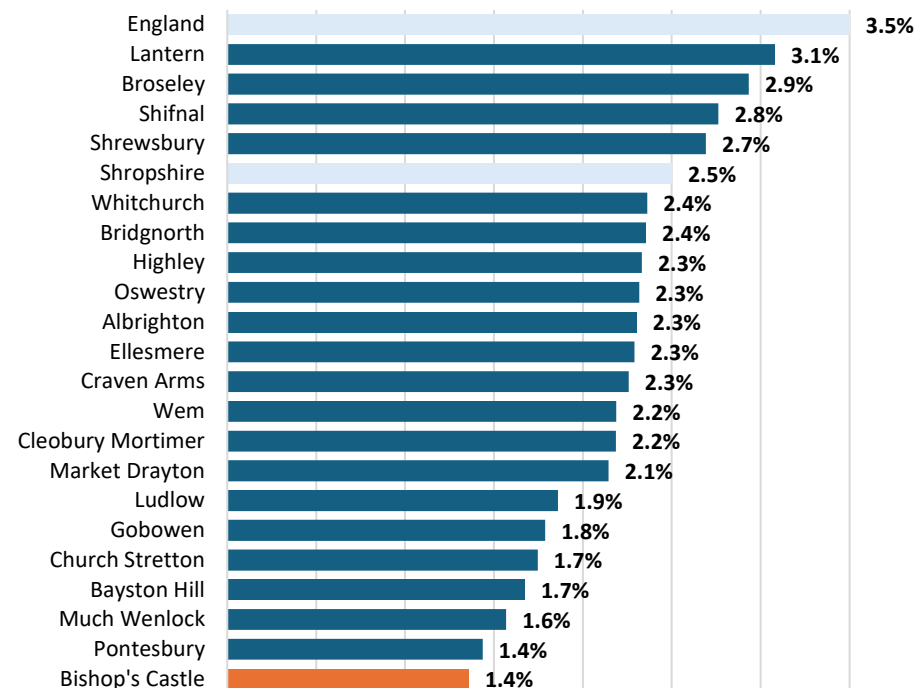
Bishop's Castle: Health Conditions



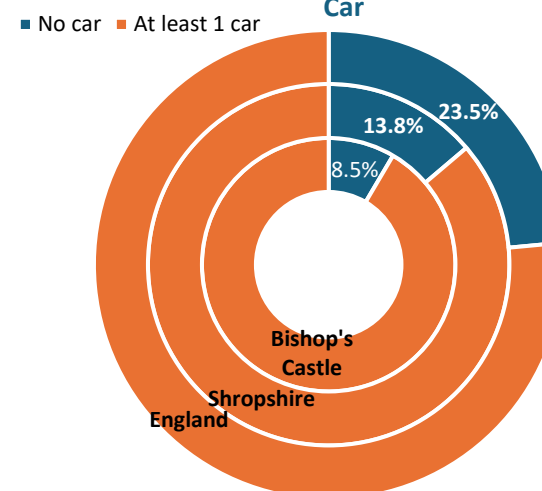
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bishop's Castle households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 8.5%.

Unemployment rate



Bishop's Castle: Percentage of Households with No Car



Bridgnorth Library Profile

Background

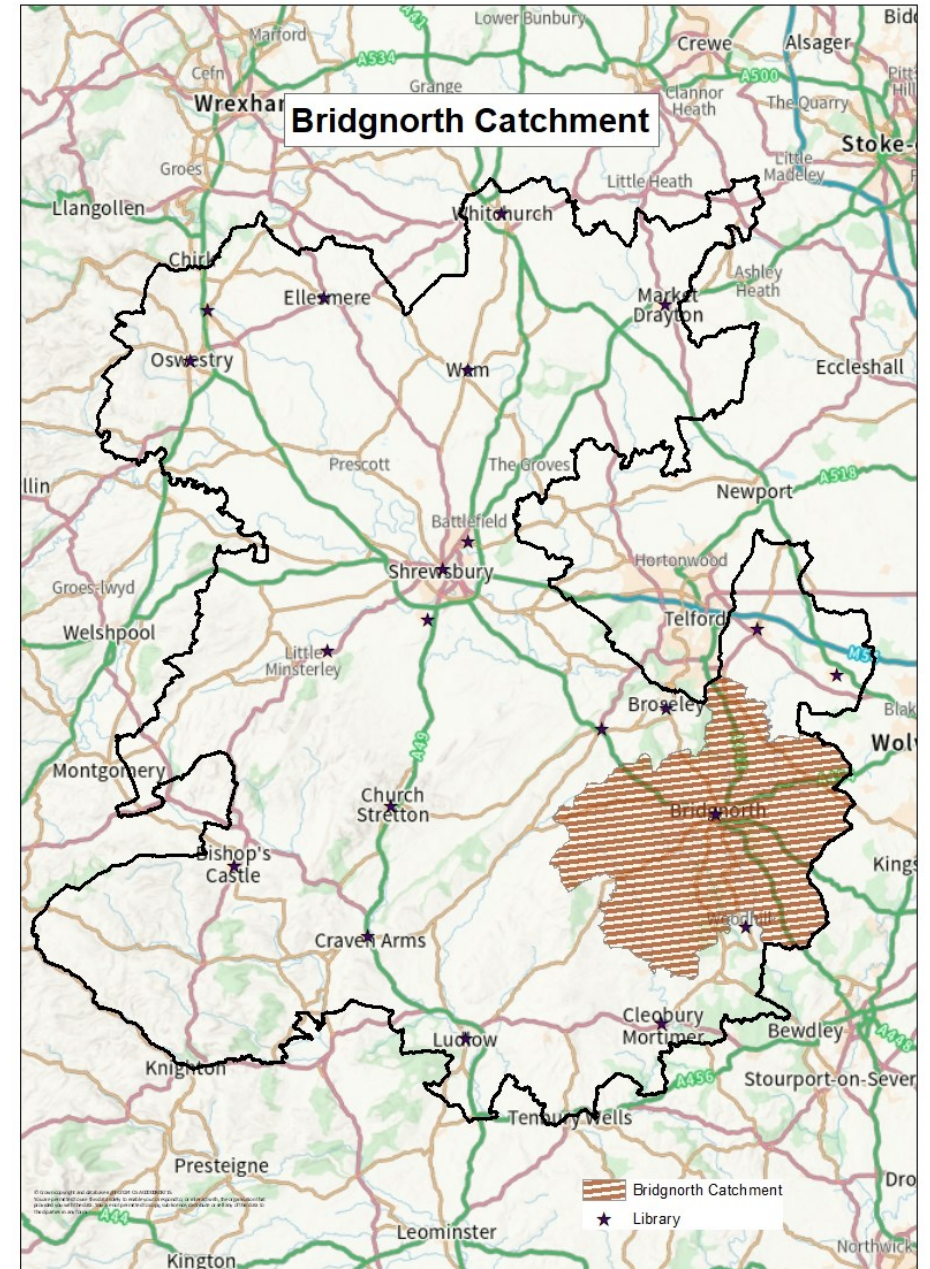
- Bridgnorth is a town in the south east of Shropshire on the River Severn. It is approximately 7 miles from the Shropshire border and 14 miles from Wolverhampton.
- The library is a single storey building located in the centre of the town, with parking to the rear. The building is owned by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 34,243 hectares within Shropshire which is about 10.7% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment is contained within Shropshire.
- The total population within the Bridgnorth library catchment area is 25,493 comprising 11,025 households. In terms of the population it serves, Bridgnorth is the third largest catchment in Shropshire.

Opening Hours

The library is open 36.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-15.00pm	5.5
Sunday	Closed	0

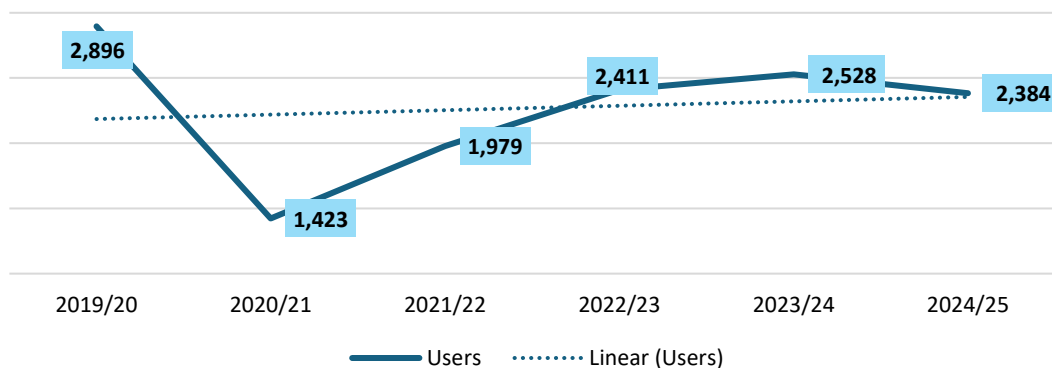
- The library employs 4.38 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 26 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 637 volunteer hours.



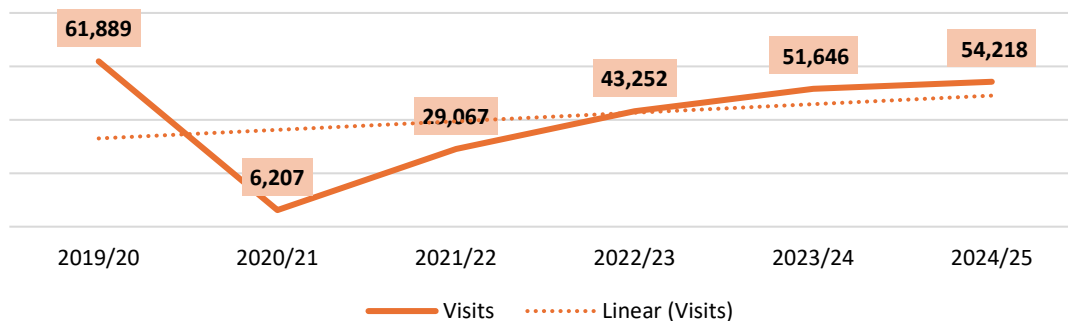
Library Users

- Bridgnorth library had 2,384 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 7.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.6% of the Bridgnorth catchment population are active library users, which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average. This includes usage of all Shropshire libraries, not just Bridgnorth.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and adults aged 20-49 and more users aged 50 and above.

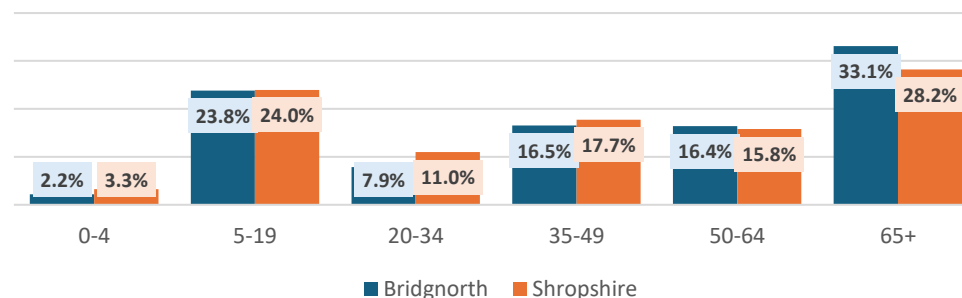
Bridgnorth: Number of Active Users



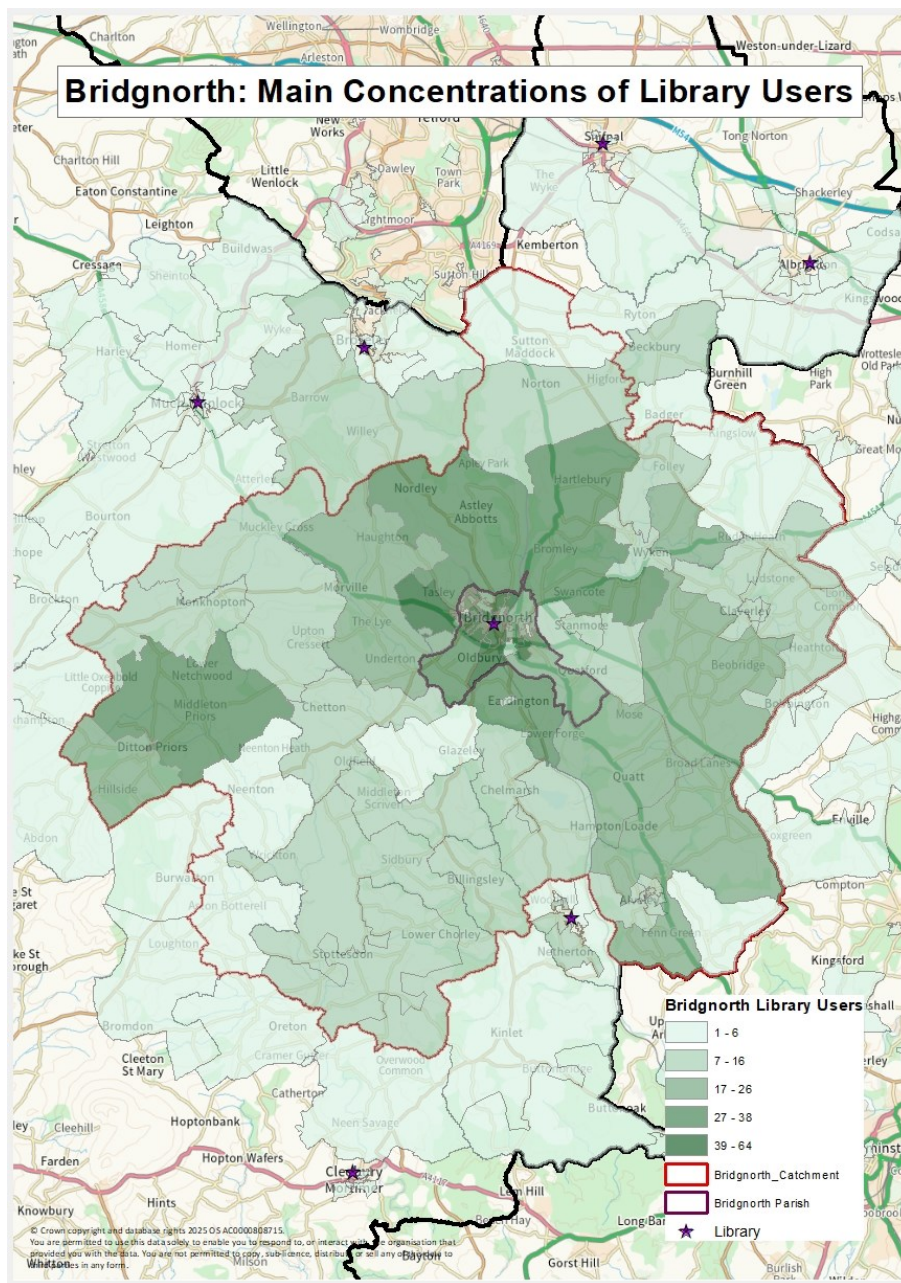
Bridgnorth: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Bridgnorth Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there was considerable recovery until 2023/24 before user numbers dipped in 2024/25. The number of users remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 512 users (-17.7%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2023/24 stood at 54,218, which is the equivalent of about 23 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library remains is now slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels (21 visits per user).
- The overall number of visits was 12.4% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 36,570 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 15 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 11% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 6% over the last year.
- Computer time was down substantially (-25%).



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 86.3% of all Bridgnorth library users live within the main catchment area.
- 53.9% live within the Bridgnorth town council area.
- 7.8% of the population in the catchment area are Bridgnorth active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to over 15%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 13.7% of Bridgnorth library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in Broseley, Much Wenlock or Highley, with smaller numbers in Shrewsbury Albrighton, Shifnal and Ludlow.
- People that live in the Bridgnorth catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury, Highley or Ludlow library or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 87.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bridgnorth library were to Bridgnorth, and these accounted for 88.2% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bridgnorth include Much Wenlock, Broseley, Shrewsbury and Ludlow as well as the Brookes mobile.

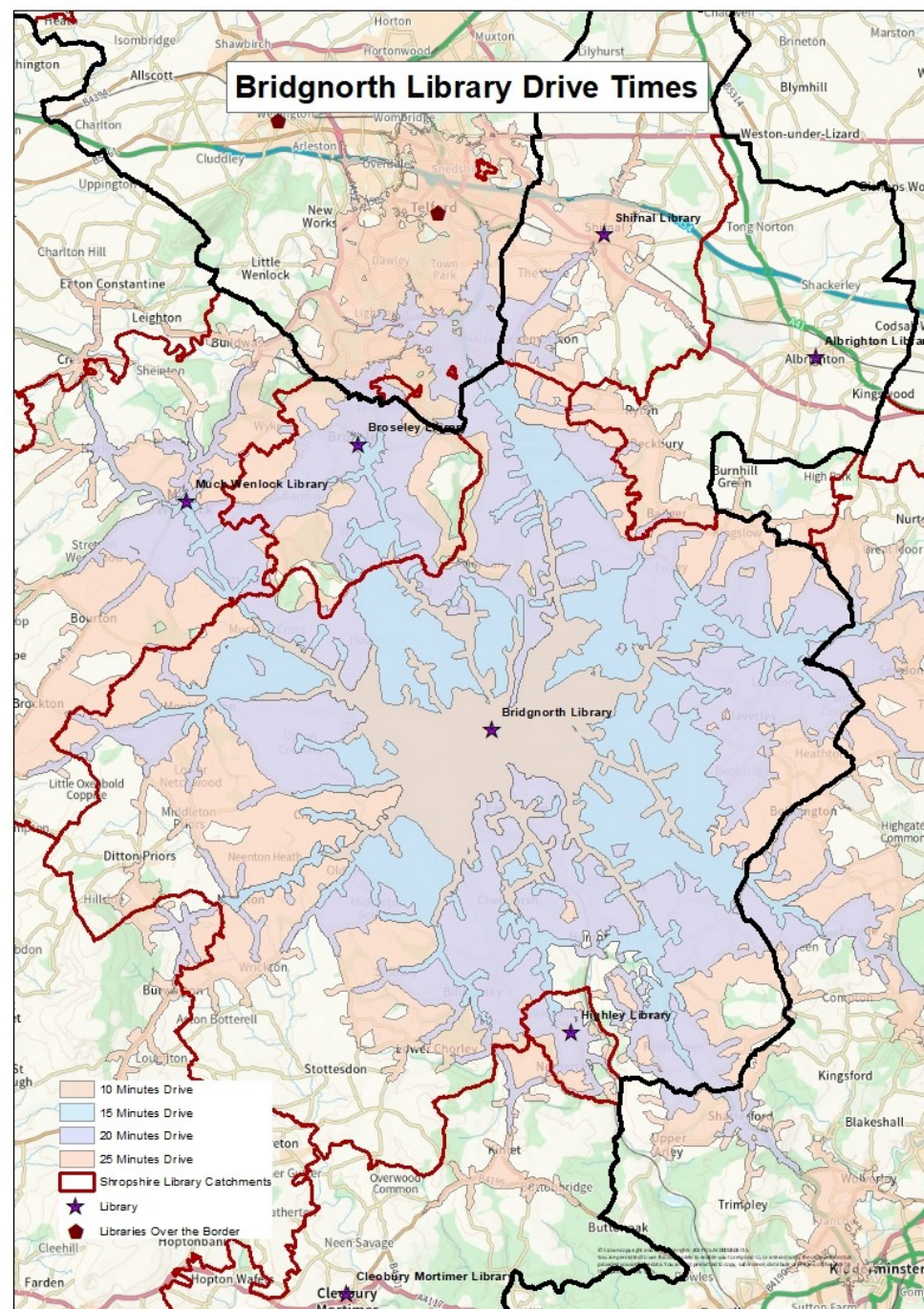
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Bridgnorth library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	28.5%
30 Minute Walk	60.3%
10 Minute Drive	69.6%
15 Minute Drive	78.6%
20 Minute Drive	89.2%
25 Minute Drive	93.0%

Access

- Bridgnorth is in the south east of Shropshire with easy access to the West Midlands conurbation.
- Broseley, Much Wenlock and Highley libraries are all within an approximate 10-20 minute drive from Bridgnorth, with Shifnal and Albrighton slightly further afield.
- The nearest of other main six libraries is Ludlow, which is approximately 19.5 miles away with a drive time of 35 minutes. Shrewsbury is slightly further afield at 22.9 miles, or a 39-minute drive.



Costs

- Bridgnorth is the fourth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Oswestry
- Annual running costs are £220,520 (2024/25)
- Bridgnorth library costs more than average per hour open, per active user and per book loan but less per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£116.19	£66.37	19th
Per Active User	£92.50	£71.50	15th
Per Visit	£4.07	£5.71	17th
Per Book Loan	£6.03	£4.50	18th

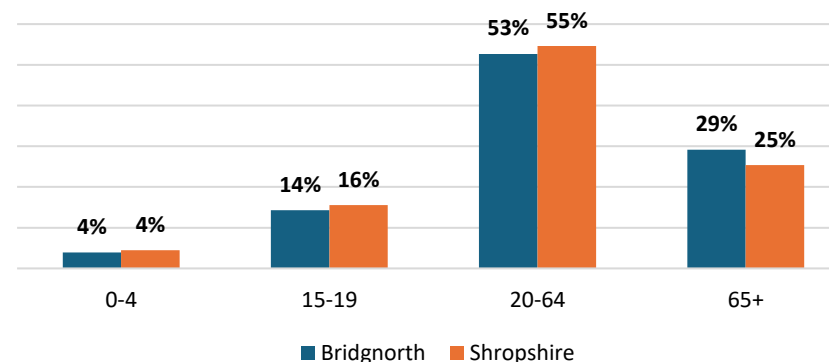
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bridgnorth Catchment Area

Population

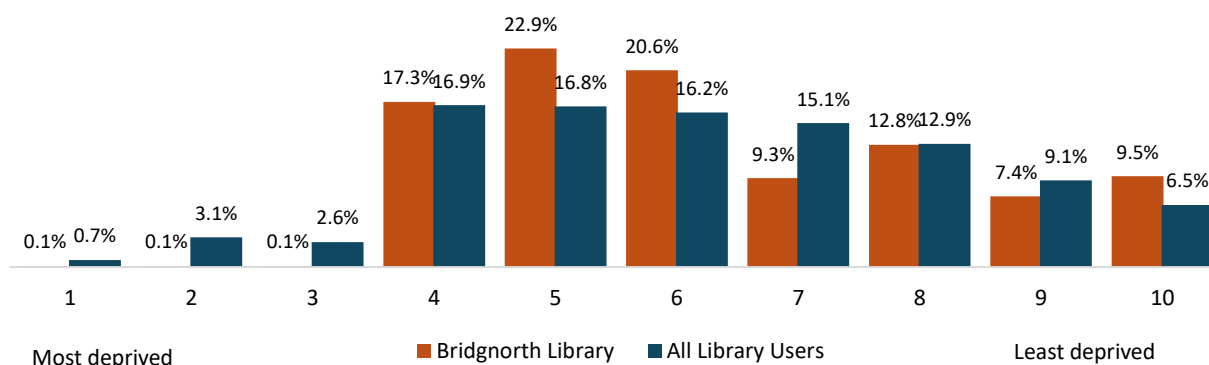
- Bridgnorth library catchment is the third largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 25,493.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There are 11,025 households in the catchment, with 379 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.28 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Bridgnorth Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Bridgnorth Library Users by IMD Decile



- Bridgnorth library is in one of the least deprived locations in Shropshire, and most active users live in less deprived areas, although the spread is comparatively wide.
- The adjacent chart shows that less than 1% of Bridgnorth library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (6.5% for all Shropshire library users)
- 60.8% of users are drawn from deciles four, five and six, with 39.0% living in the least deprived 40% of England.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

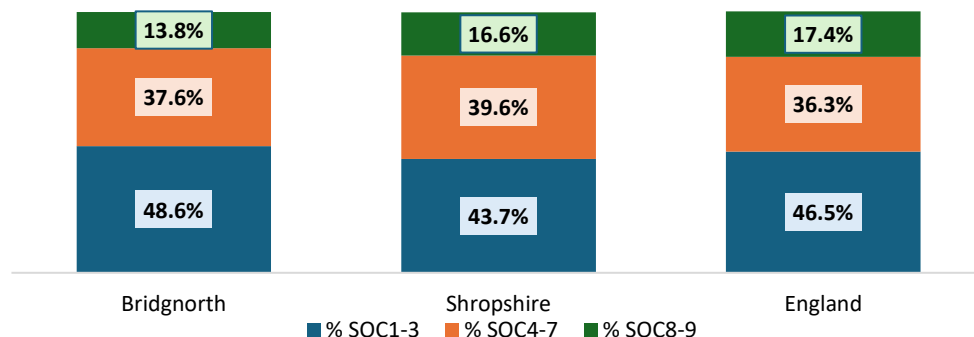
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Bridgnorth library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 56.6% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Bridgnorth catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Bridgnorth library catchment area is the 9th lowest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 11,926 people in Bridgnorth were in employment in 2021, which equates with 54.6% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 48.6%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) or in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services).

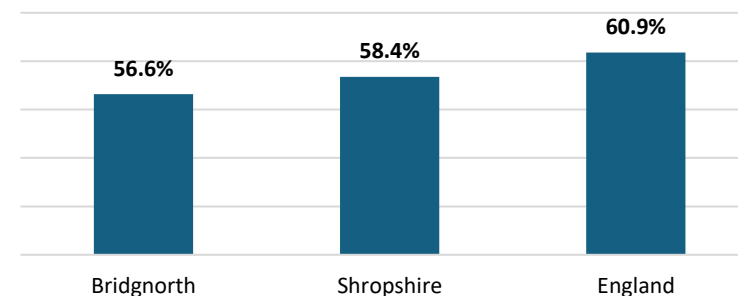
Bridgnorth: Occupation Types



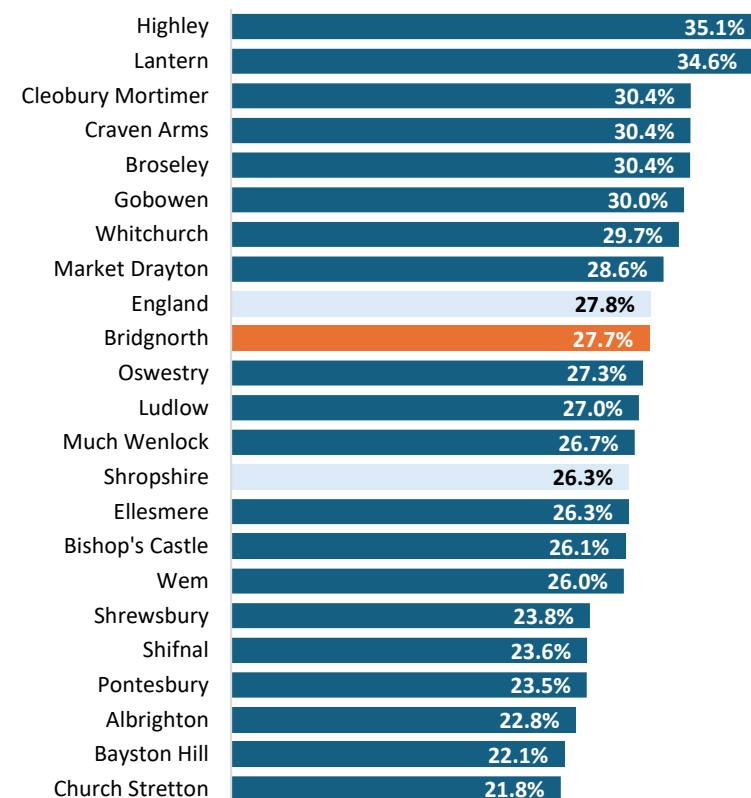
Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Bridgnorth population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.7%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average (26.3%).

Bridgnorth: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

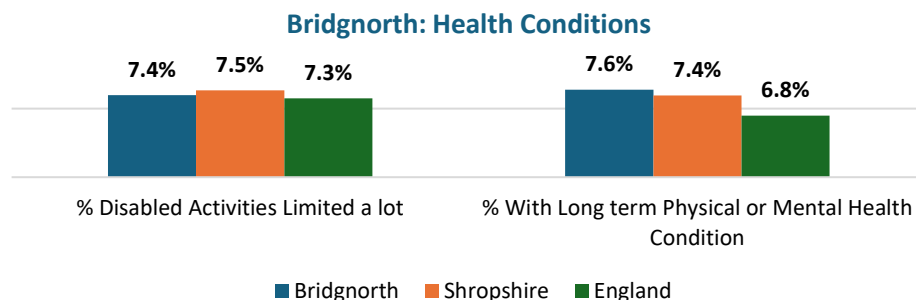


Unemployment

- 514 people living in the Bridgnorth catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.4%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

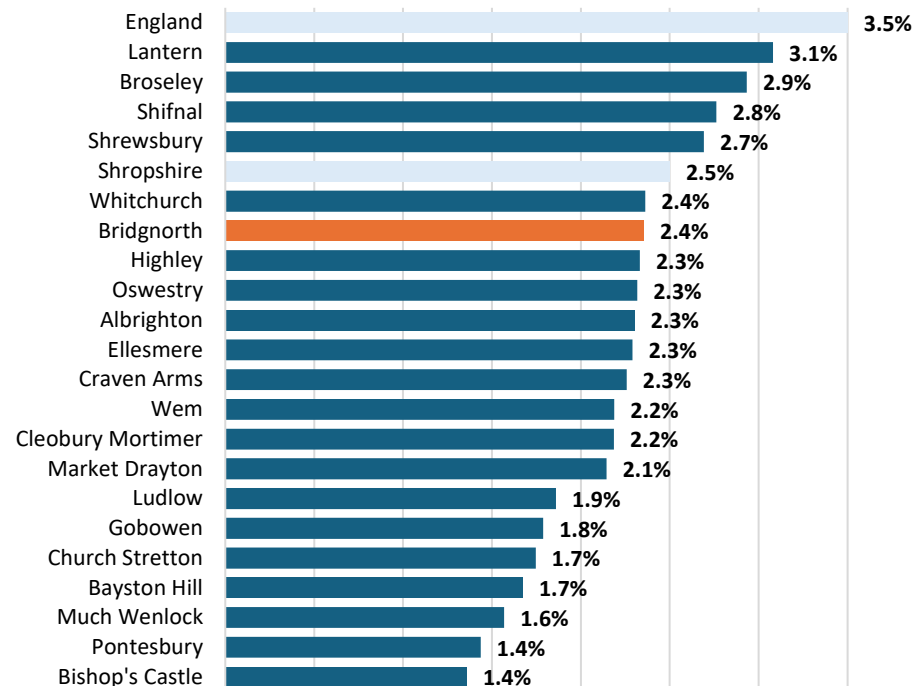
- 7.4% of residents in the Bridgnorth library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable with the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



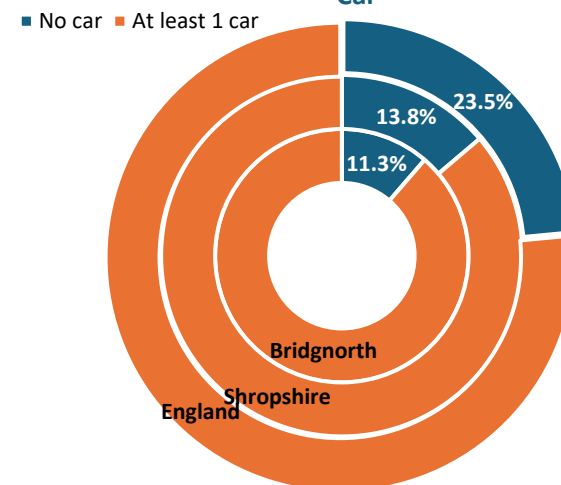
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bridgnorth households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.3%.

Unemployment rate



Bridgnorth: Percentage of Households with No Car



Broseley Library Profile

Background

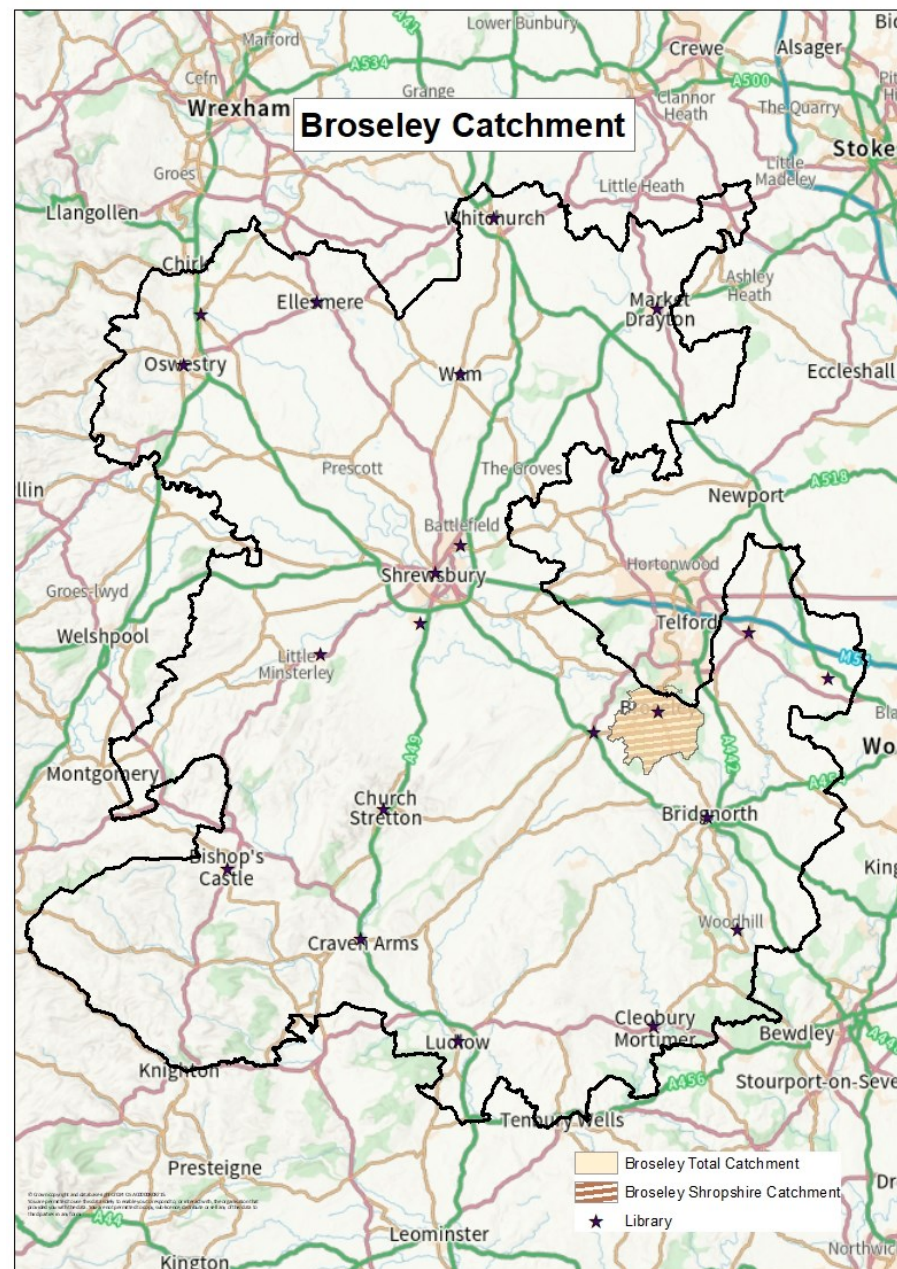
- Broseley is a small town in the east of Shropshire, close to the Ironbridge Gorge and the border with Telford & Wrekin.
- The library is located in the centre of the town with an adjacent car park.
- The library building is late 19th century and is a converted school house. Library services are commissioned by Shropshire Council and run by the town council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 3,272 hectares within Shropshire which is about 1% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the smallest in Shropshire. A small proportion of the catchment is outside Shropshire in Telford and Wrekin (the equivalent of 67 hectares).
- The total population within the Broseley library catchment area is 6,287 comprising 2,737 households. The Shropshire population (5,981 people) accounts for 95.1% of the total catchment population.

Opening Hours

The library is open 33.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Tuesday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Wednesday	9.30am-13.30pm	4
Thursday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Friday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

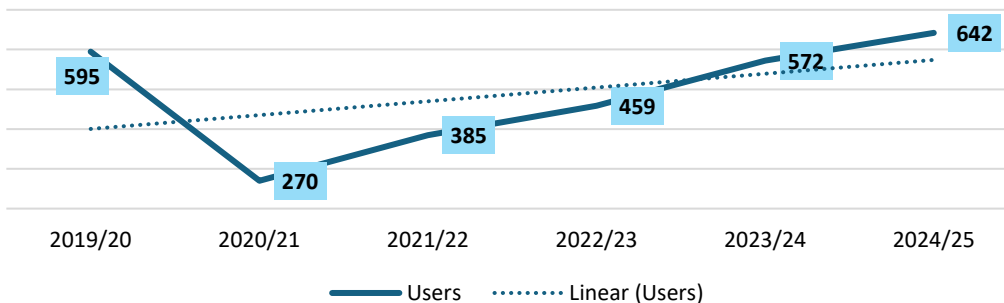
- In 2024/25 the library benefited from three volunteers, contributing 690 volunteer hours throughout the year.



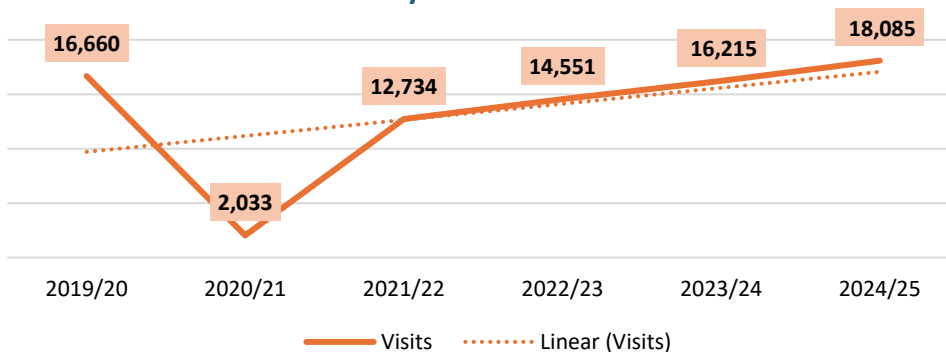
Library Users

- Broseley library had 642 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.0% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.7% of the Broseley catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and fewer adults of working age.

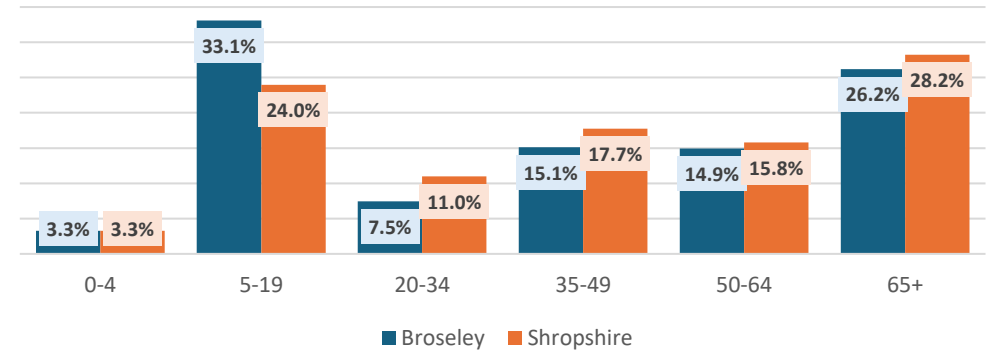
Broseley: Number of Active Users



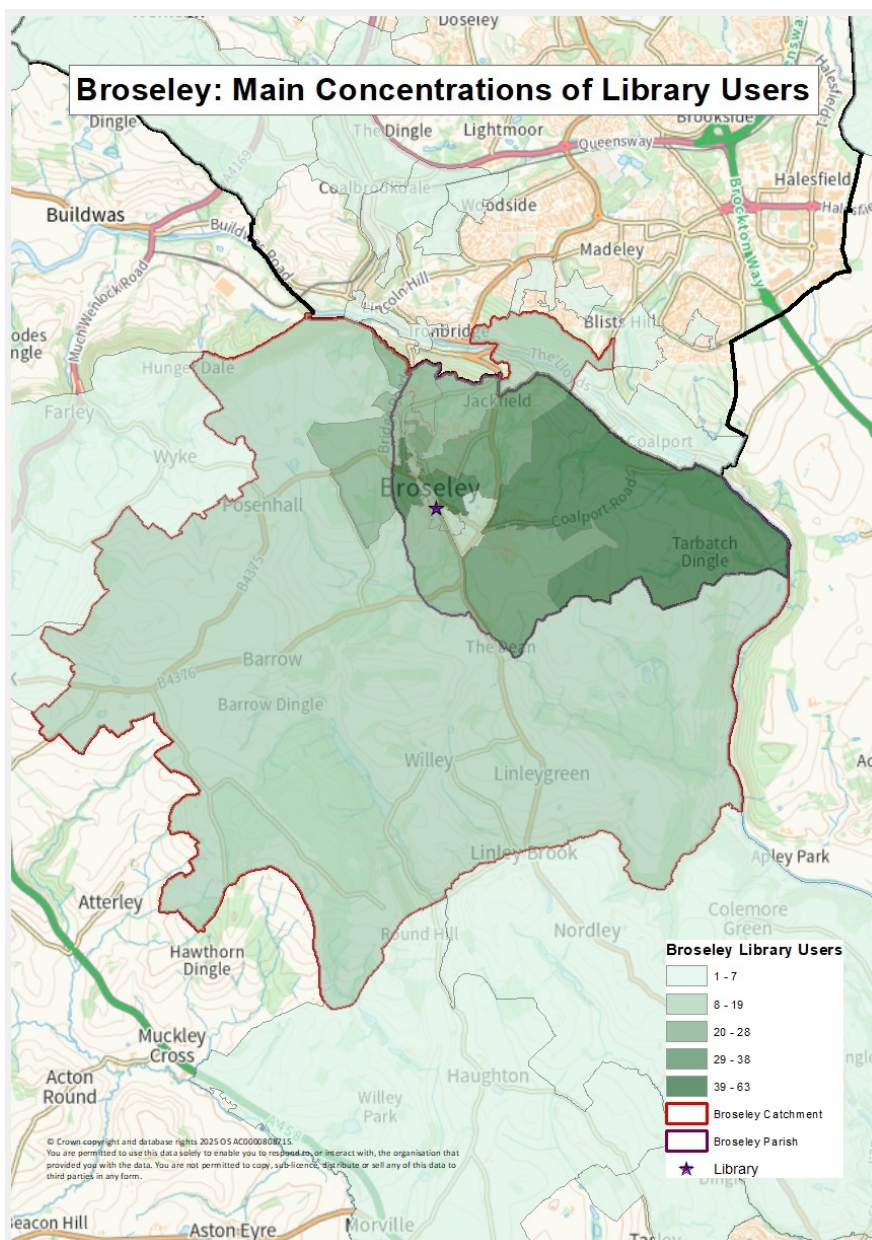
Broseley: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Broseley Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year, and by 2024/25 numbers had reached 642 which is higher than pre-pandemic levels.
- The increase in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 47 users (+7.9%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 18,085, which is the equivalent of about 28 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at just over once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels (28 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 8.6% higher in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 10,867 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 17 per active user and about 0.6 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 6% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 35%.
- Computer time fell by a significant 27%.



Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.1% of all Broseley library users live within the main catchment area.
- 77.8% live within Broseley Parish.
- 8.9% of the population in the catchment area are Broseley active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from around 4% to around 16%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 12.9% of Broseley library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in either Much Wenlock or Bridgnorth catchments or have an out-of-county postcode.
- People that live in the Broseley catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Bridgnorth library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 93.4% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Broseley library were to Broseley, and these accounted for 92.9% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Broseley include Bridgnorth, Church Stretton and Much Wenlock.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Broseley library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	69.3%
30 Minute Walk	86.1%
10 Minute Drive	91.4%
15 Minute Drive	93.8%
20 Minute Drive	96.5%
25 Minute Drive	97.6%

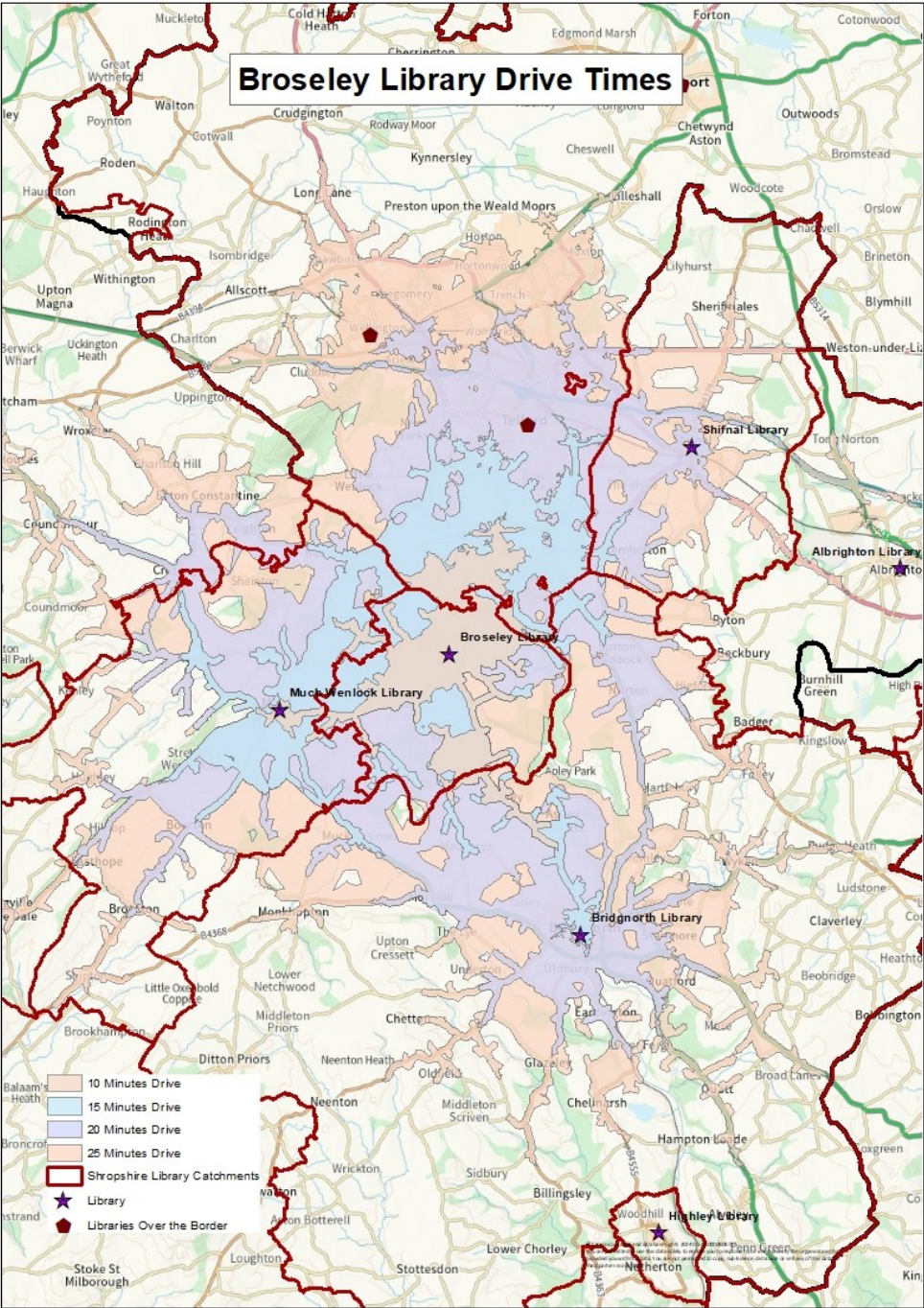
Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Broseley is in the east of Shropshire close to the border with Telford & Wrekin.
- The closest library to Broseley library is Much Wenlock, which is located 4.5 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 10 minutes. There is also a bus every two hours which takes 20 minutes.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Bridgnorth which is approximately 6.4 miles away with a drive time of 12 minutes.
- Bridgnorth is easily accessible by public transport with the number 8 bus running about every two or three hours and taking about 20 minutes.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Broseley	Much Wenlock	4.5 miles	10 mins	8A Bus	20 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Broseley	Bridgnorth	6.4 miles	12 mins	8 Bus	20 mins



Costs

- Broseley is the third least expensive library in Shropshire for Shropshire Council to operate behind Craven Arms and Shifnal.
- Annual Council costs are £6,130 (2024/25)
- Broseley ranks third compared with all Shropshire libraries in relation to costs per hour open, per active user and per book loan. It is the cheapest per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£5.13	£66.37	3rd
Per Active User	£9.55	£71.50	3rd
Per Visit	£0.34	£5.71	1st
Per Book Loan	£0.56	£4.50	3rd

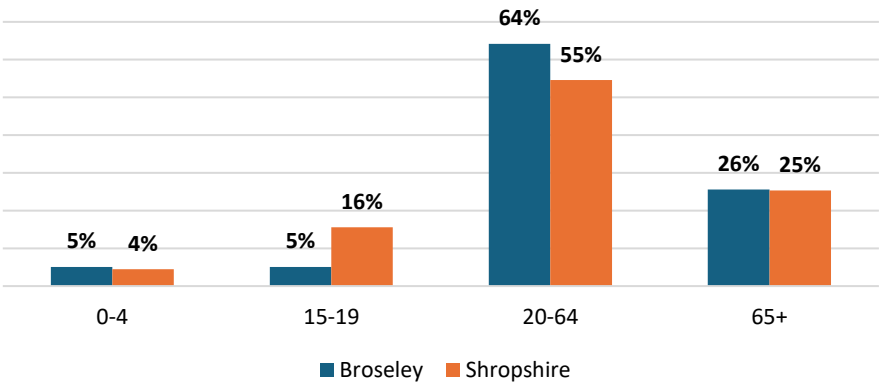
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Broseley Catchment Area

Population

- Broseley library catchment is the 13th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 6,287 and a Shropshire population of 5,981.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a higher proportion of adults aged 20-64 (64% compared with 55% for Shropshire).
- There are 2,737 households in the catchment, with 32 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.29 which is comparable to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

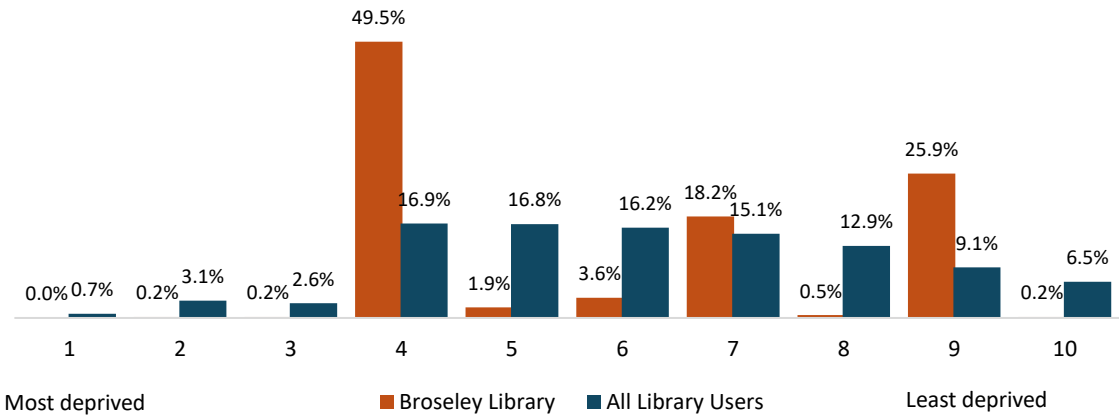
Age Breakdown of Broseley Catchment



Broseley catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Broseley Library Users by IMD Decile



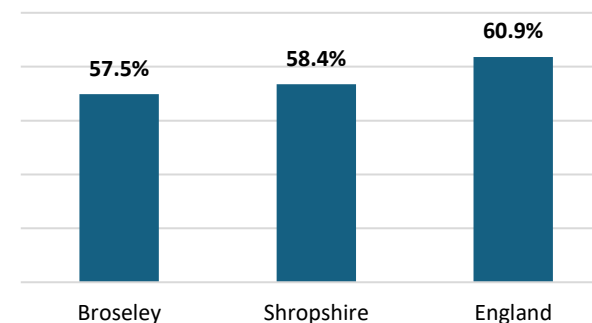
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Broseley library is in decile 4 according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that 49.5% of Broseley library users live in this decile compared with 16.9% of all Shropshire library users.
- A high proportion also live in the least deprived 20% of the country (albeit all in decile 9 rather than decile 10).

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Broseley library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 57.5% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Broseley library catchment area is the 9th highest in Shropshire.

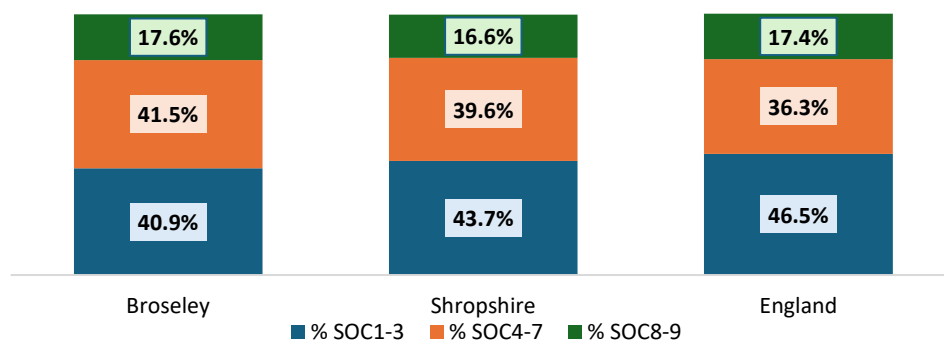
Broseley: Economic Activity Rate



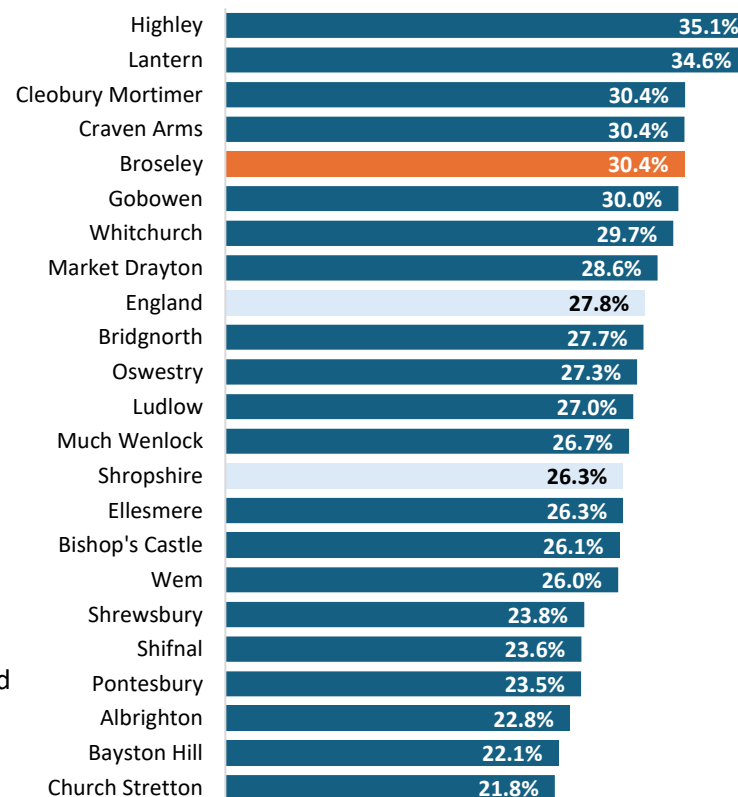
Employment

- 2,862 people in Broseley were in employment in 2021, which equates with 54.5% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 40.9%. Slightly more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). A particularly high proportion are employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services).

Broseley: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

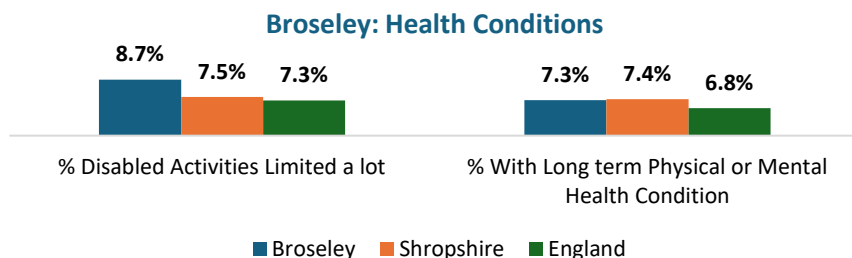
- A higher proportion of the Broseley population have no or low qualifications compared to the Shropshire average at 30.4%. This is also higher than the national average.

Unemployment

- 154 people living in the Broseley catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.9%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is higher than any other catchment in Shropshire except the Lantern.
- Other catchments with relatively high levels of unemployment include Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

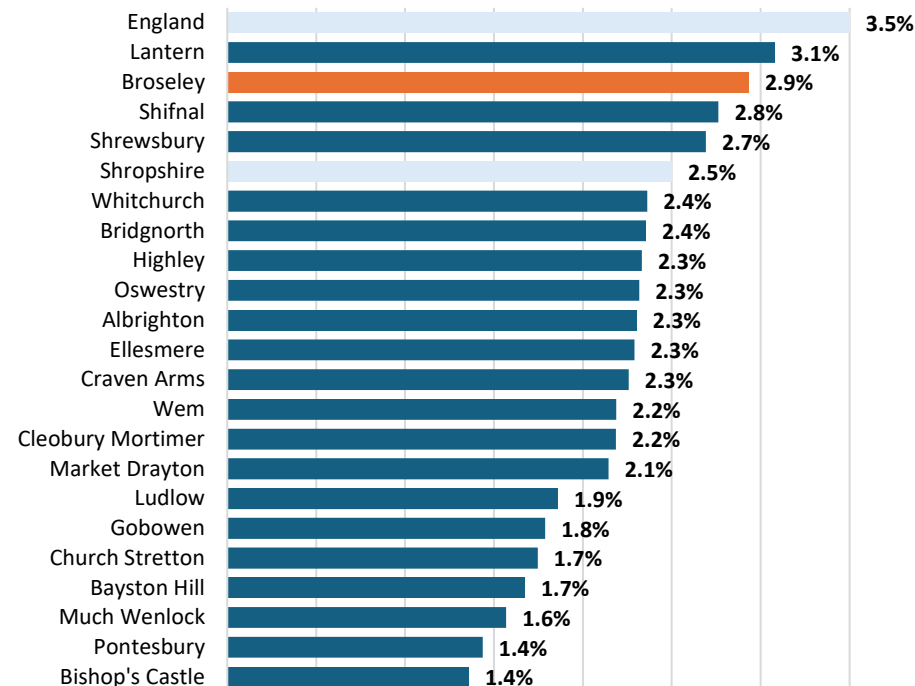
- 8.7% of residents in the Broseley library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is notably higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.3% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



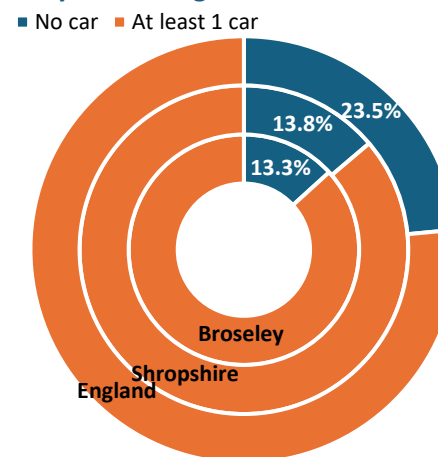
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Broseley households that do not have access to a car or van is comparable to the Shropshire average at 13.3%.

Unemployment rate



Broseley: Percentage of Households with No Car



Church Stretton Library Profile

Background

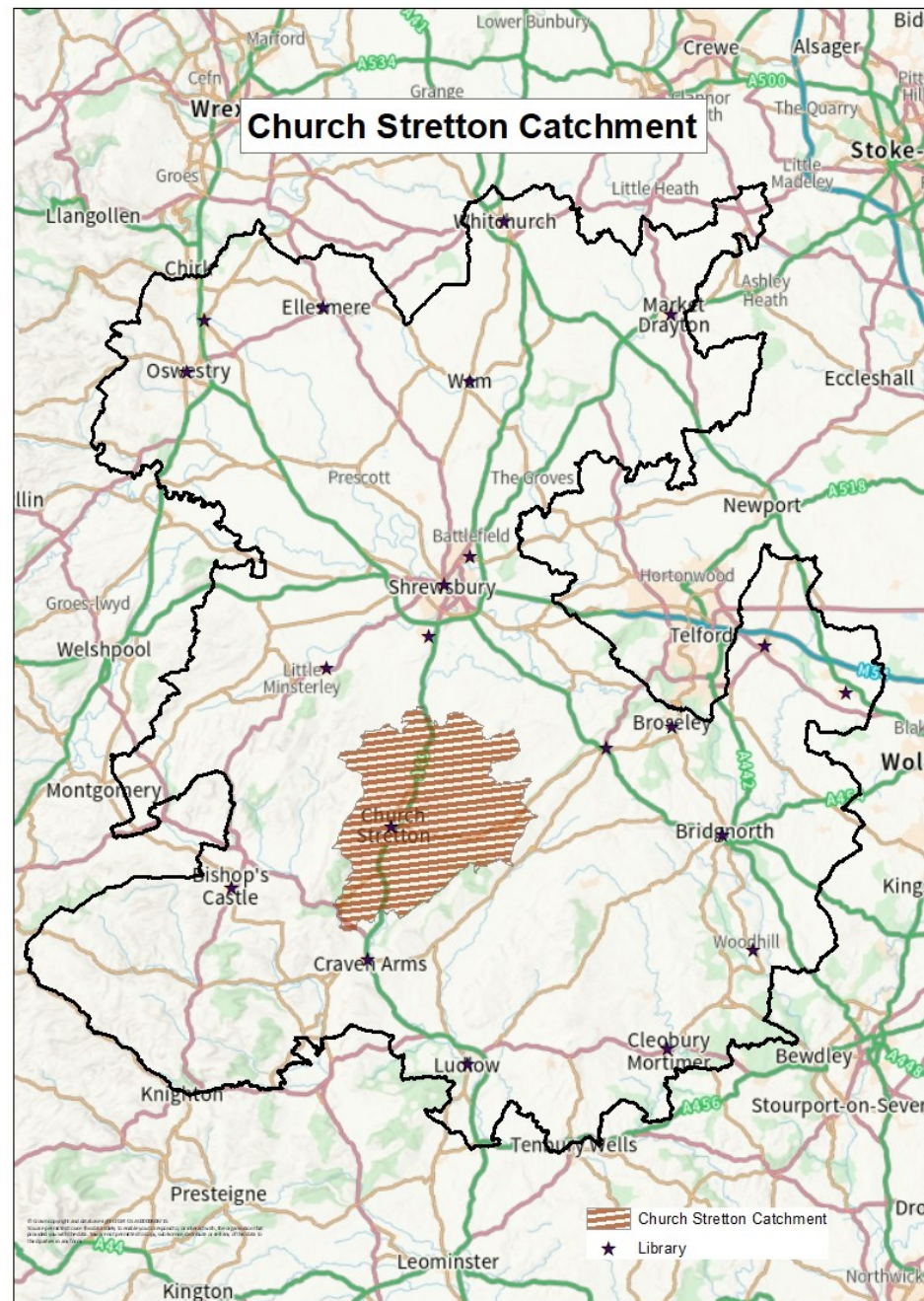
- Church Stretton is a small town in the south of Shropshire, located on the A49 between Shrewsbury and Ludlow. It is located within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The library is the centre of the town on Church Street with a small car park to the rear.
- The library building, owned by Shropshire Council, is mid-19th century and is a converted schoolhouse. The building also houses the town's Visitor Information Centre.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 17,740 hectares within Shropshire which is about 5.5% of the county's land mass. The catchment, which is entirely within Shropshire, accounts for the seventh largest share of Shropshire hectares, and other than Bishop's Castle is the largest catchment outside of the six main libraries.
- The total population within the Church Stretton library catchment area is 7,963 comprising 3,691 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 30 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Sunday	Closed	0

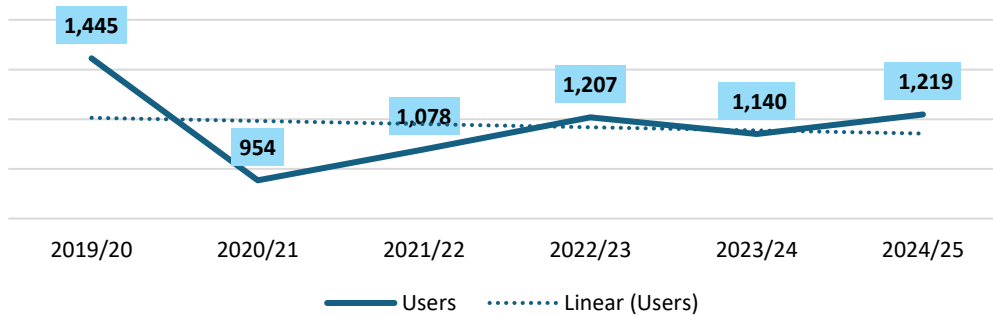
- The library employs 2.27 FTEs and in 2024/25 benefited from 58 volunteers, contributing 1,459 volunteer hours throughout the year.



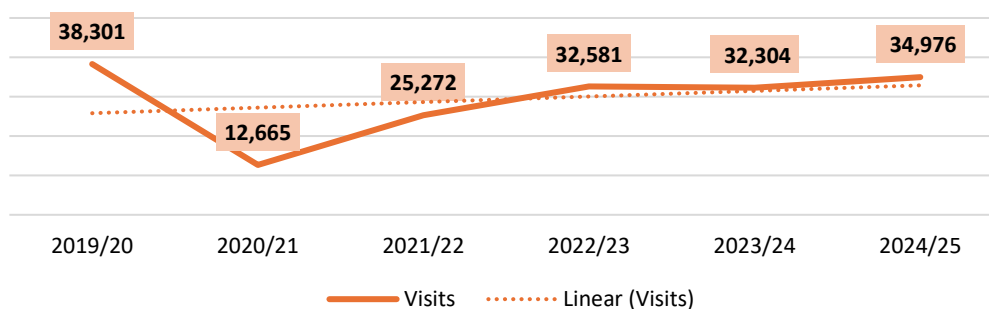
Library Users

- Church Stretton library had 1,219 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 3.7% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 16.2% of the Church Stretton catchment population are active library users (all Shropshire libraries), which is higher than any other catchment in Shropshire.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more users aged 50 and above (63.1% of all users) and fewer children and young adults.

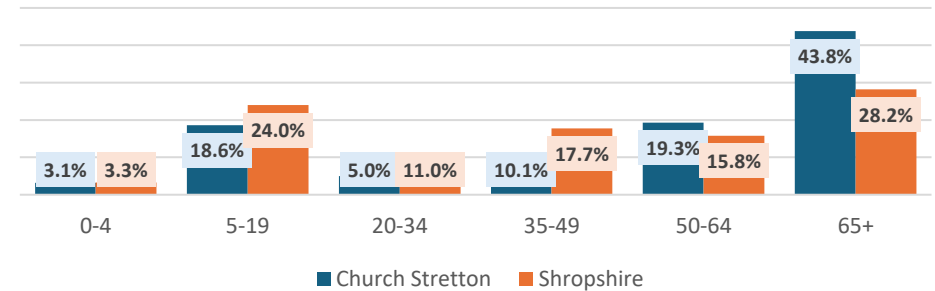
Church Stretton: Number of Active Users



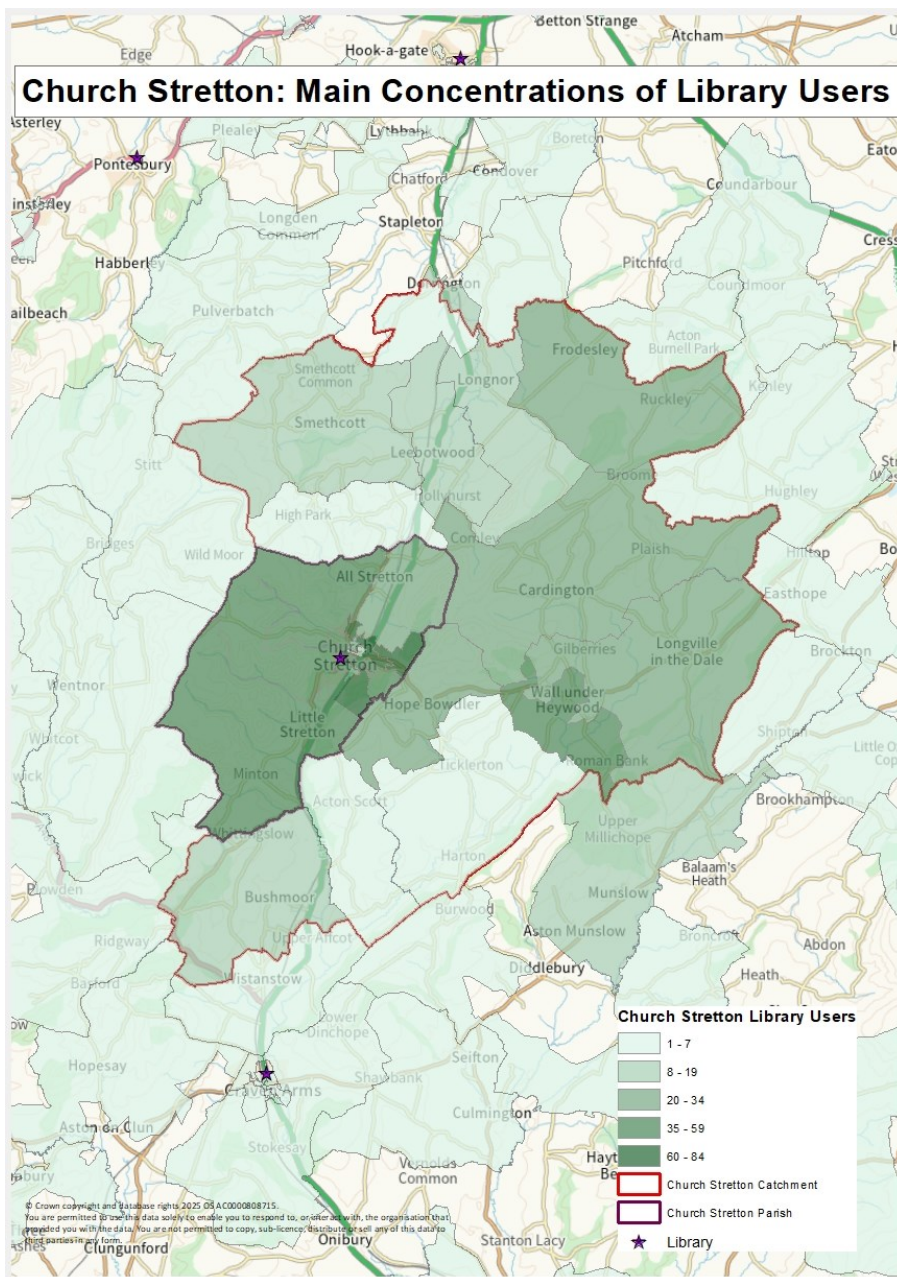
Church Stretton: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Church Stretton Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although numbers dipped again in 2023/24 before picking up again in 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 226 users (-15.6%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.0% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2023/24 stood at 34,976, which is the equivalent of about 29 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at just over once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels (27 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 8.7% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 30,216 loans were made in 2023/24, which equates with 25 per active user and just under 1 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 1% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 14%.
- Computer time was also down (by 9%).



Geographic Location of Library Users

- 88.1% of all Church Stretton library users live within the main catchment area.
- 67.3% live within Church Stretton Parish.
- 13.1% of the population in the catchment area are Church Stretton active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to over a quarter. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 11.9% of Church Stretton library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in Shrewsbury, Craven Arms, Bishop's Castle and Ludlow catchments.
- People that live in the Church Stretton catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 86.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Church Stretton library were to Church Stretton, and these accounted for 87.2% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Church Stretton include Shrewsbury,

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Church Stretton library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

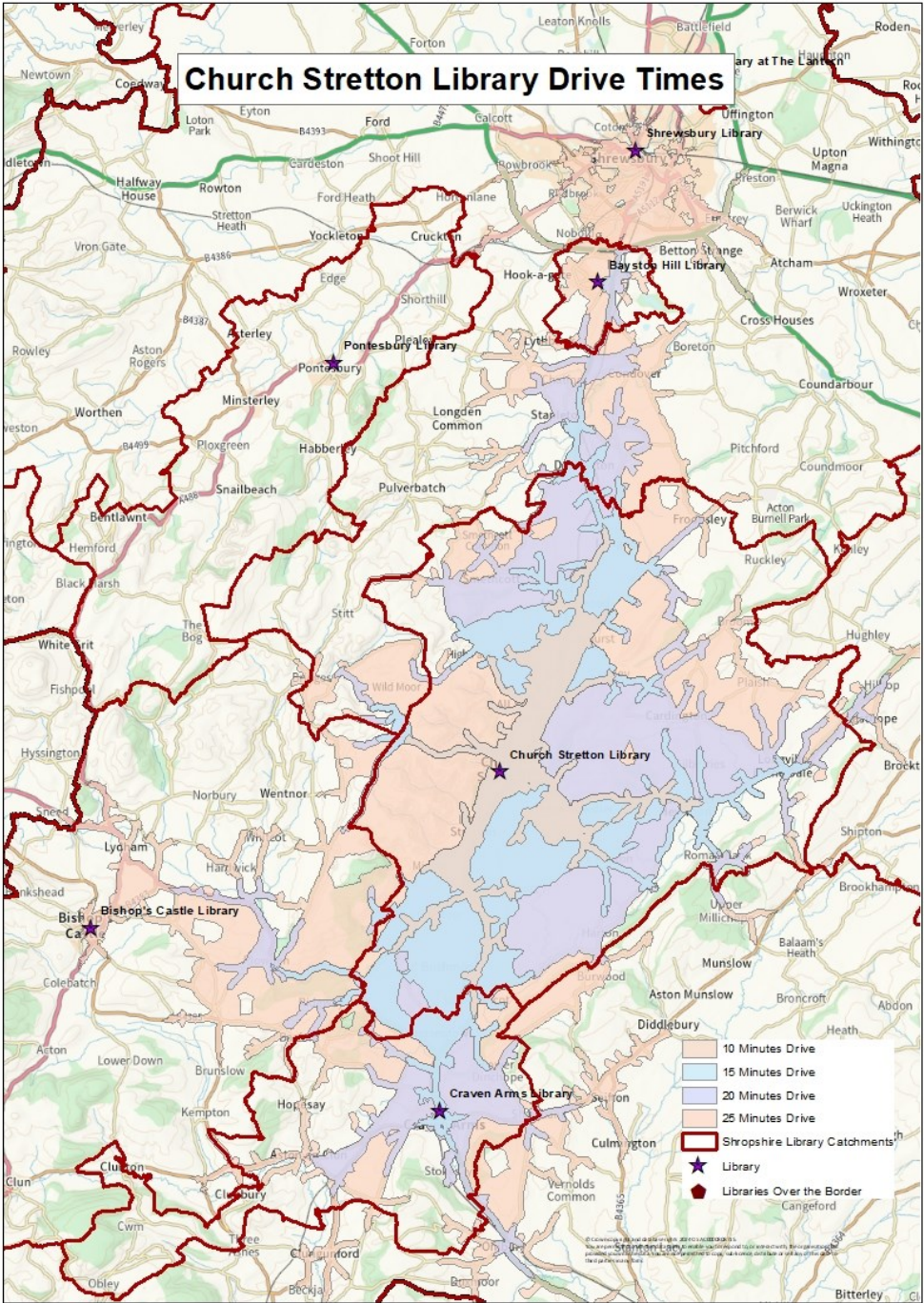
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	49.2%
30 Minute Walk	65.6%
10 Minute Drive	77.3%
15 Minute Drive	84.9%
20 Minute Drive	89.8%
25 Minute Drive	94.3%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Church Stretton is in the south of Shropshire on the A49 between Shrewsbury and Ludlow.
- It benefits from a train station which is on the Shrewsbury to Cardiff line.
- The closest library to Church Stretton library is Craven Arms, which is located 7.8 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes. There is also a relatively frequent train service and a regular bus service.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Ludlow which is approximately 15.5 miles away with a drive time of 25 minutes.
- Ludlow is easily accessible from the centre of Church Stretton via train or bus.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Church Stretton	Craven Arms	7.8 miles	13 mins	Train 435 Bus	8 mins 20 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Church Stretton	Ludlow	15.5 miles	25 mins	Train 435 Bus	15 mins 45 mins



Costs

- Church Stretton is the seventh most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual running costs are £132,910 (2024/25)
- Church Stretton library costs more than average per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£85.20	£66.37	15th
Per Active User	£109.03	£71.50	18th
Per Visit	£3.80	£5.71	15th
Per Book Loan	£4.40	£4.50	13th

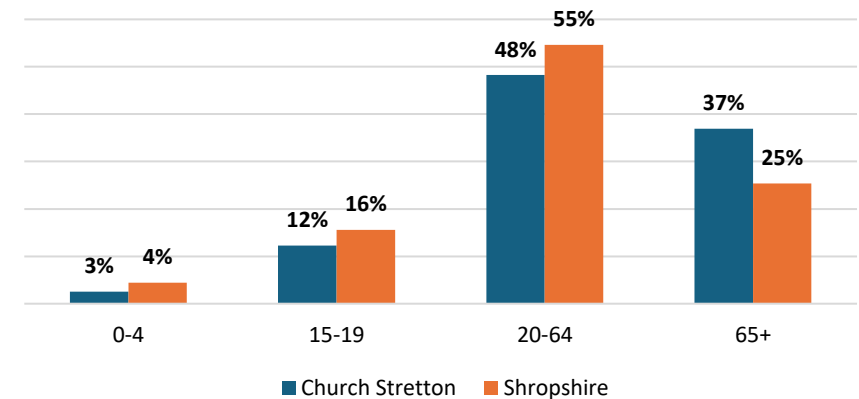
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Church Stretton Catchment Area

Population

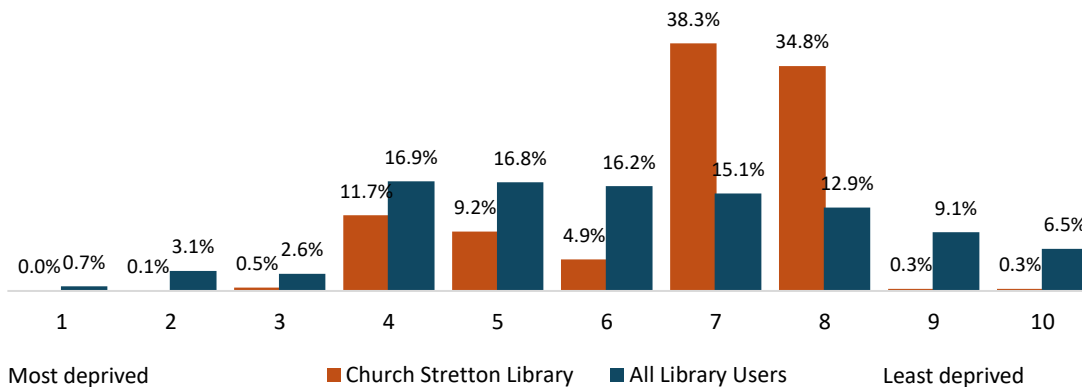
- Church Stretton library catchment is the 11th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 7,963.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a much higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (37% compared with 25% for Shropshire).
- There are 3,691 households in the catchment, with 135 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.12 which is smaller than the Shropshire average of 2.27

Age Breakdown of Church Stretton Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Church Stretton Library Users by IMD Decile



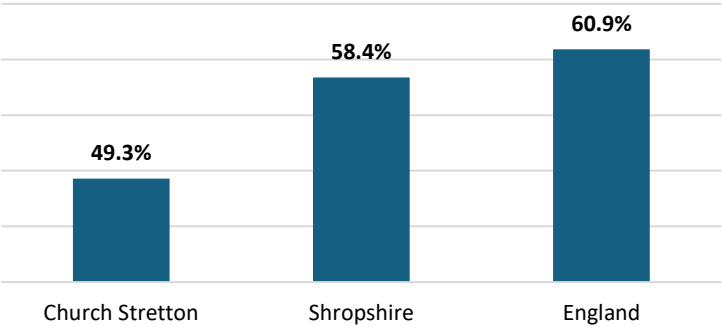
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Church Stretton library is in a relatively un-deprived location (decile 7 according to the IMD 2019), and most users also reside in the comparatively un-deprived parts of the county.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost three-quarters of Church Stretton library users live in the least deprived 40% of the country (43.6% for all Shropshire library users).
- Less than 1% live within the 30% most deprived areas of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Church Stretton library catchment is significantly lower than the Shropshire average at 49.3% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire’s older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Church Stretton area is particularly skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Church Stretton library catchment area is the lowest in Shropshire.

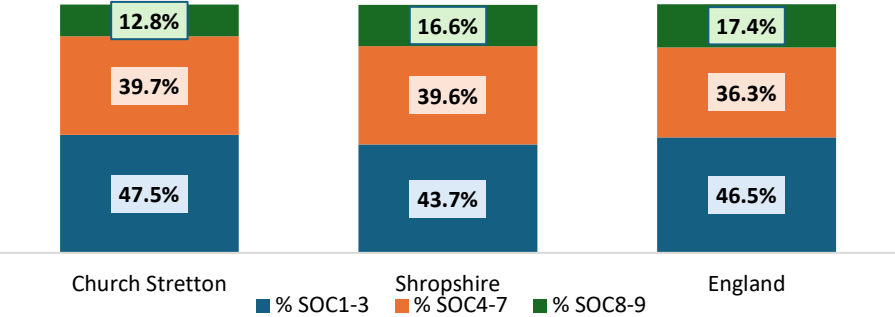
Church Stretton: Economic Activity Rate



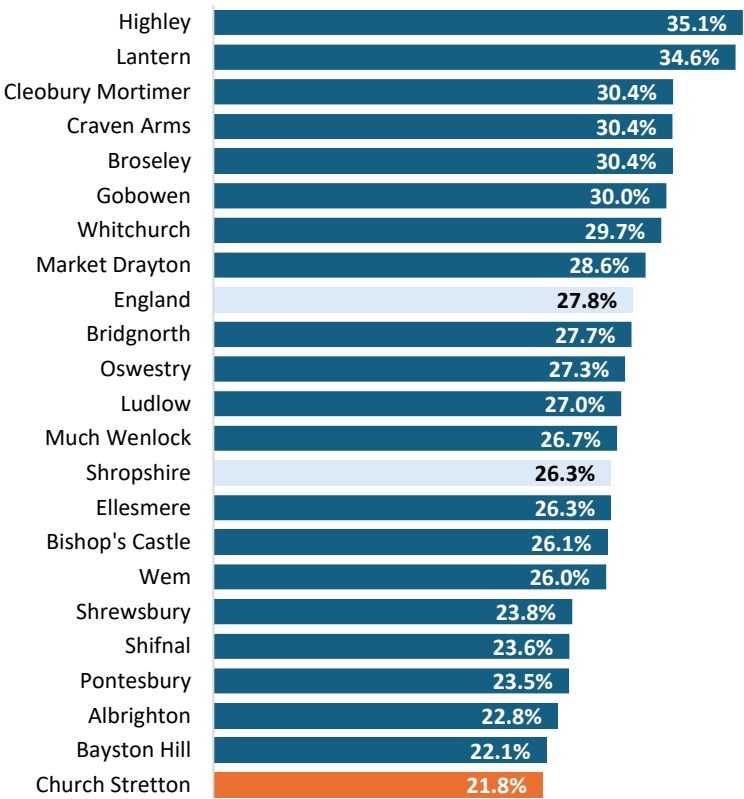
Employment

- 3,384 people in Church Stretton were in employment in 2021, which equates with 48% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 47.5%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). The proportion employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations is comparable to the Shropshire average.

Church Stretton: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Church Stretton population with no or low qualifications is the lowest in Shropshire at 21.8% of the 16+ population. This corresponds with the high proportion of workers in SOC 1-3 occupations.

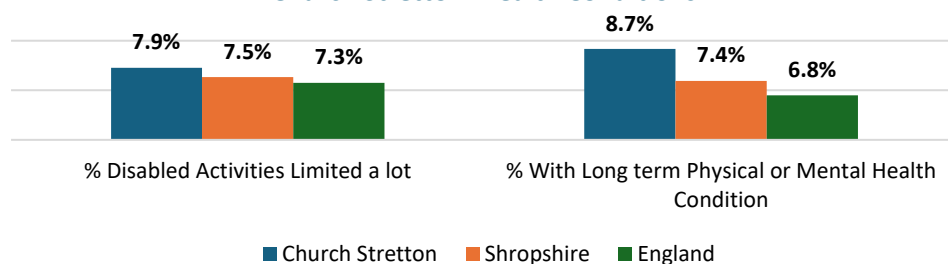
Unemployment

- 123 people living in the Church Stretton catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.7%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is amongst the lowest of all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 7.9% of residents in the Church Stretton library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is slightly higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 8.7% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is notably higher than the Shropshire and England averages (7.4% and 6.8% respectively).

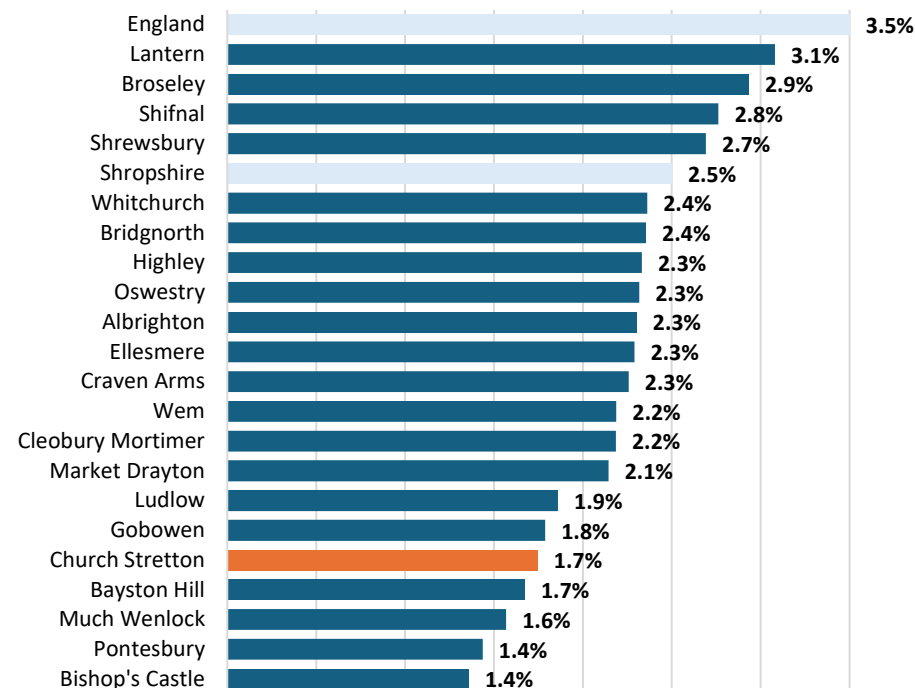
Church Stretton: Health Conditions



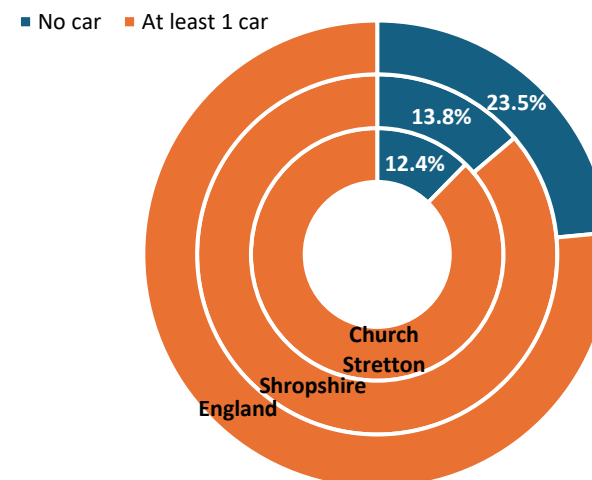
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Church Stretton households that do not have access to a car or van is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 12.4%.

Unemployment rate



Church Stretton: Percentage of Households with No Car



Cleobury Mortimer Library Profile

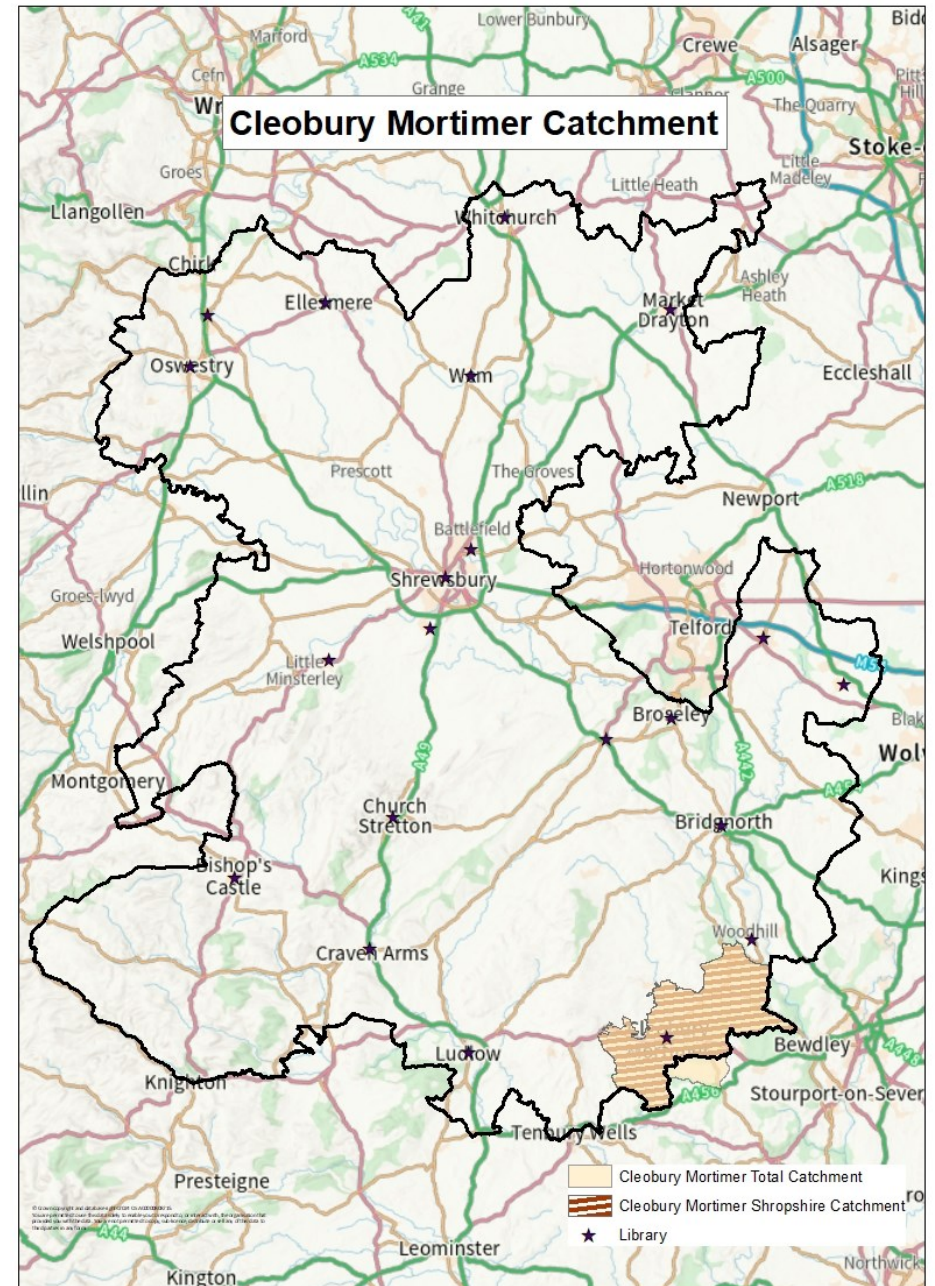
Background

- Cleobury Mortimer is a small town in the south east of Shropshire, located close to the Worcestershire border.
- The library is located in the centre of the town and offers parking.
- The library building is purpose built and single storey. It is owned by Shropshire Council and leased to Cleobury Country for a peppercorn rent.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 8,540 hectares within Shropshire which is about 2.7% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends beyond Shropshire into Worcestershire, with the overall catchment covering 9,452 hectares.
- The total population within the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment area is 5,715 comprising 2,509 households. The Shropshire population is 5,180.

Opening Hours

The library is open 42 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

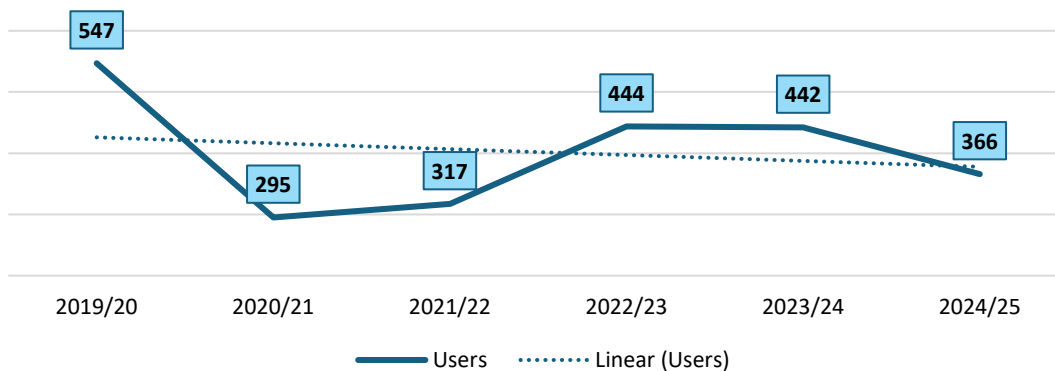
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Tuesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Wednesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Thursday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Friday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Saturday	10.00am-12.00pm	2
Sunday	Closed	0



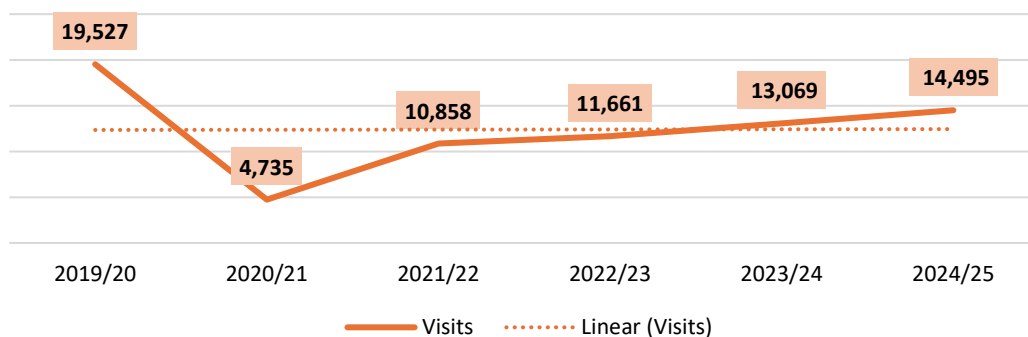
Library Users

- Cleobury Mortimer library had 366 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 6.1% of the Cleobury Mortimer catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries.
- 57.4% of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more children and young adults and fewer adults in all age brackets. Indeed, over half of users are under the age of 20.

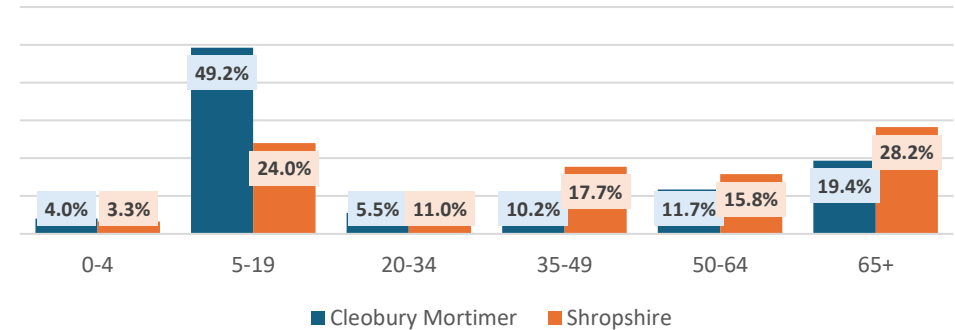
Cleobury Mortimer: Number of Active Users



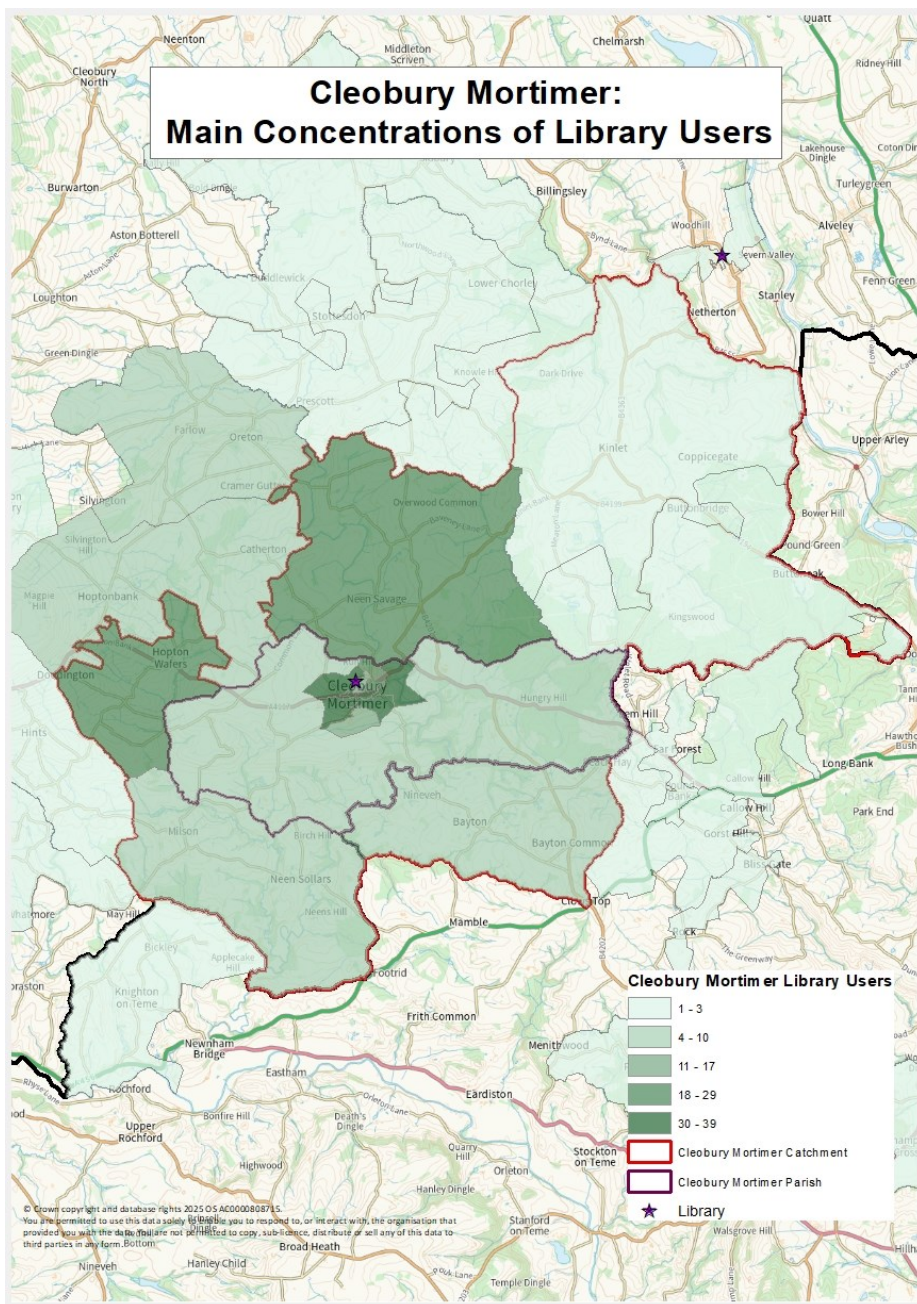
Cleobury Mortimer: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although numbers were flat in 2023/24 and declined in 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 181 users (-33.3%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2023/24 stood at 14,495, which is the equivalent of about 40 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at around three times a month average, has crept back up to pre-pandemic levels (36 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 25.8% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 4,714 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 13 per active user and 0.3 per visit, suggesting that the majority of visits are not associated with book loans.
- The number of loans decreased by 10% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 16%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 83.7% of all Cleobury Mortimer library users live within the main catchment area.
- 65.5% live within Cleobury Mortimer Parish.
- 5.3% of the population in the catchment area are Cleobury Mortimer active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 10.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 16.3% of Cleobury Mortimer library users that do not live in the catchment, most live the Bridgnorth and Ludlow catchments or out-of-county.
- People that live in the Cleobury Mortimer catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Bridgnorth or Ludlow libraries or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 91.6% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Cleobury Mortimer library were to Cleobury Mortimer, and these accounted for 89.7% of all issues.
- Ludlow was the most frequently visited alternative library.

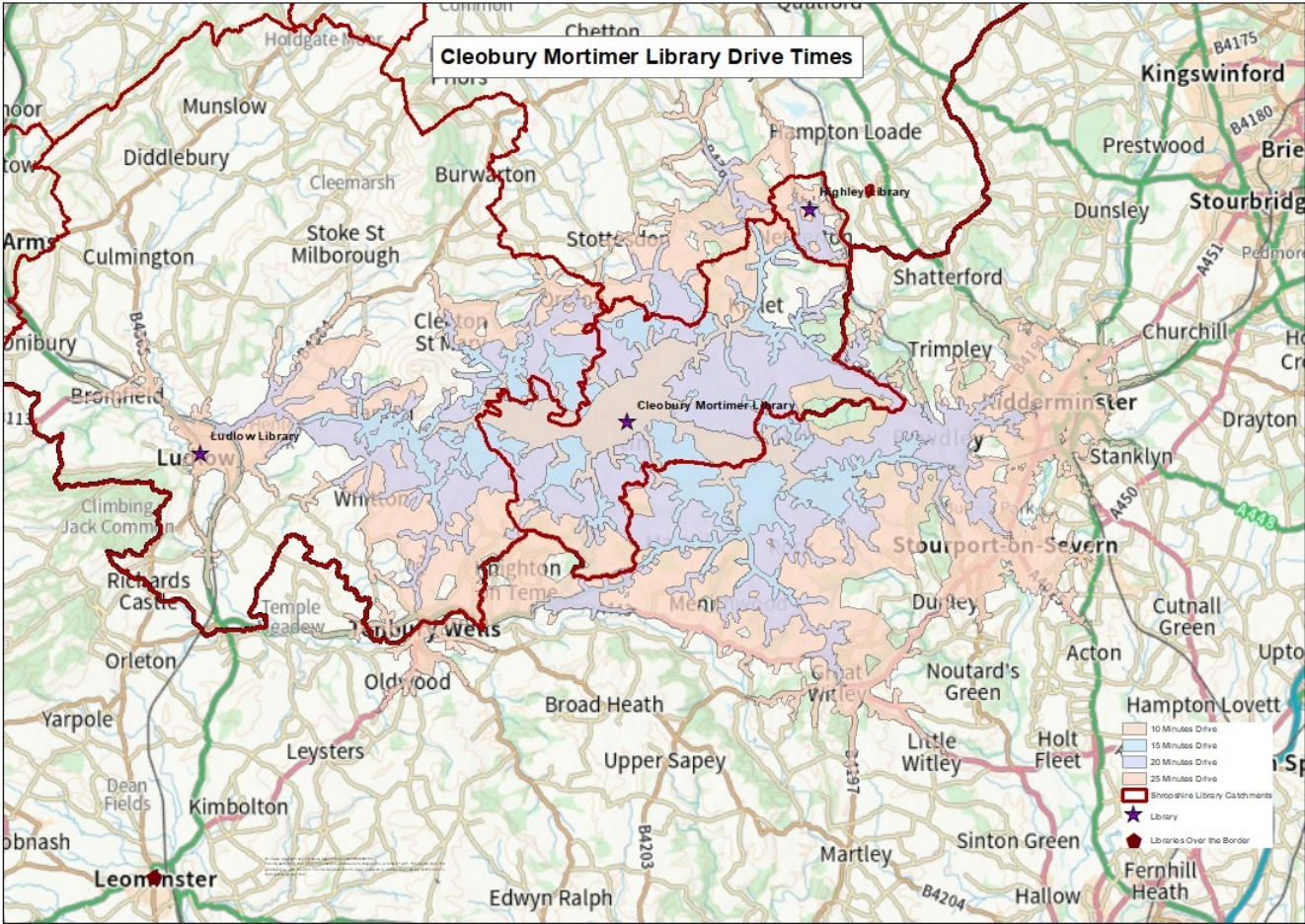
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Cleobury Mortimer library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	65.2%
30 Minute Walk	67.4%
10 Minute Drive	79.5%
15 Minute Drive	88.5%
20 Minute Drive	93.5%
25 Minute Drive	97.2%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Cleobury Mortimer is in the south of Shropshire close to the border with Worcestershire.
- It is located in a relatively rural location, although Ludlow is within a 25 minute drive, as are Stourport and Kidderminster in Worcestershire.
- The closest library to Cleobury Mortimer library is Highley, which is located 8.6 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 16 minutes.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Ludlow which is approximately 11.7 miles away with a drive time of 22 minutes.
- Ludlow is easily accessible from the centre of Cleobury Mortimer by the 292 bus, which runs frequently with a journey time of about 25 minutes.



Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Cleobury Mortimer	Highley	8.6 miles	16 mins	Ludlow	11.7 miles	22 mins	292 bus	25 minutes

Costs

- Cleobury Mortimer is the sixth least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £26,070 (2024/25).
- Cleobury Mortimer library costs more than average per book loan, around average per user, but less per visit and opening hour.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£11.94	£66.37	7th
Per Active User	£71.23	£71.50	13th
Per Visit	£1.80	£5.71	6th
Per Book Loan	£5.53	£4.50	16th

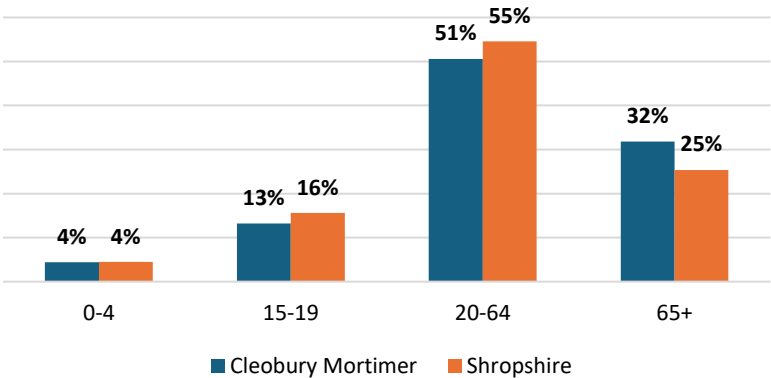
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Cleobury Mortimer Catchment Area

Population

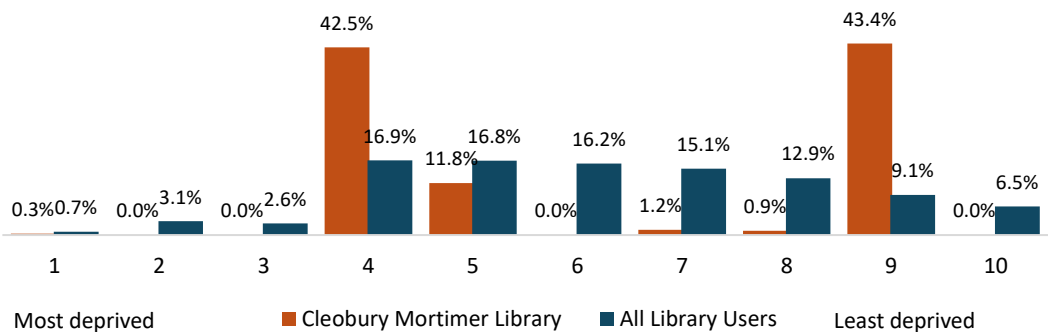
- Cleobury Mortimer library catchment is the 6th smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 5,180 and a total population of 5,715.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a much higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (32% compared with 25% for Shropshire).
- There are 2,509 households in the catchment, with 43 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

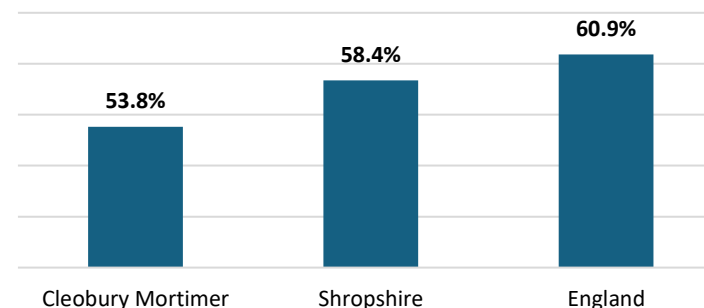
Cleobury Mortimer catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

- Cleobury Mortimer library is in a relatively un-deprived location (decile 9 according to the IMD 2019), and most users also reside in the comparatively un-deprived parts of the county.
- The adjacent chart shows that 43.4% of users live within the least deprived 20% of England (15.6% for all library users)
- Over 40% also live in decile 4.
- Less than 1% live within the 30% most deprived areas of England, although all of these do reside in decile 1 (most deprived 10%).

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment is significantly lower than the Shropshire average at 53.8% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Cleobury Mortimer area is skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment area is the fourth lowest in Shropshire.

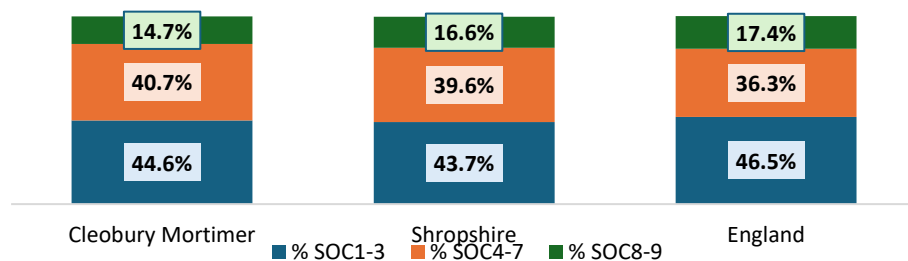
Cleobury Mortimer: Economic Activity Rate



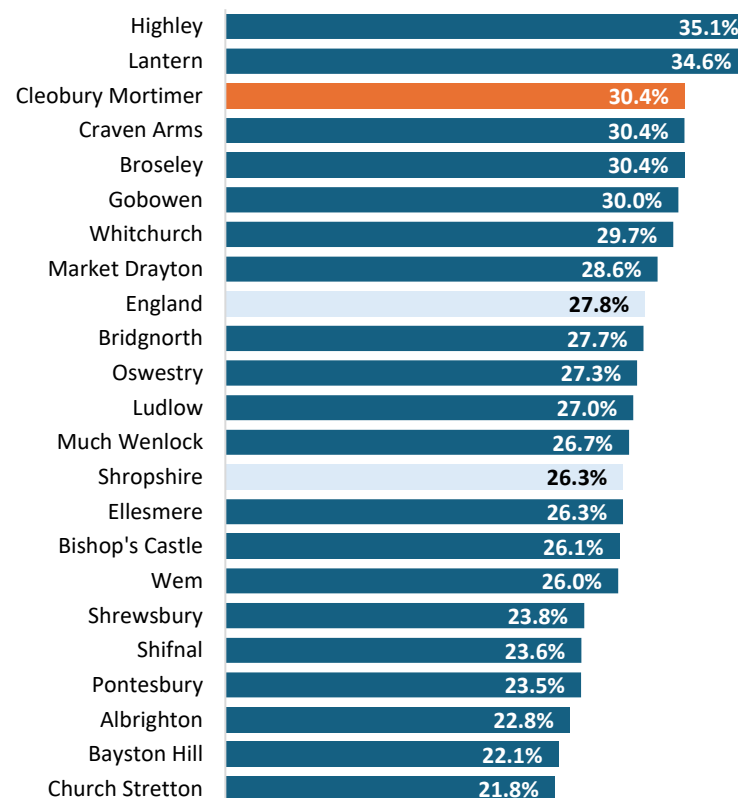
Employment

- 2,546 people in Cleobury Mortimer were in employment in 2021, which equates with 52% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 44.6%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). The proportion employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations is very slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

Cleobury Mortimer: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Cleobury Mortimer population with no or low qualifications is amongst the highest in Shropshire at 30.4% of the 16+ population.

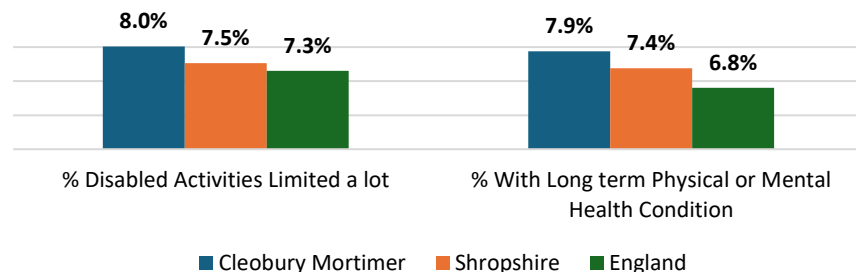
Unemployment

- 107 people living in the Cleobury Mortimer catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.2%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is at the lower end of all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 8.0% of residents in the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is slightly higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.9% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

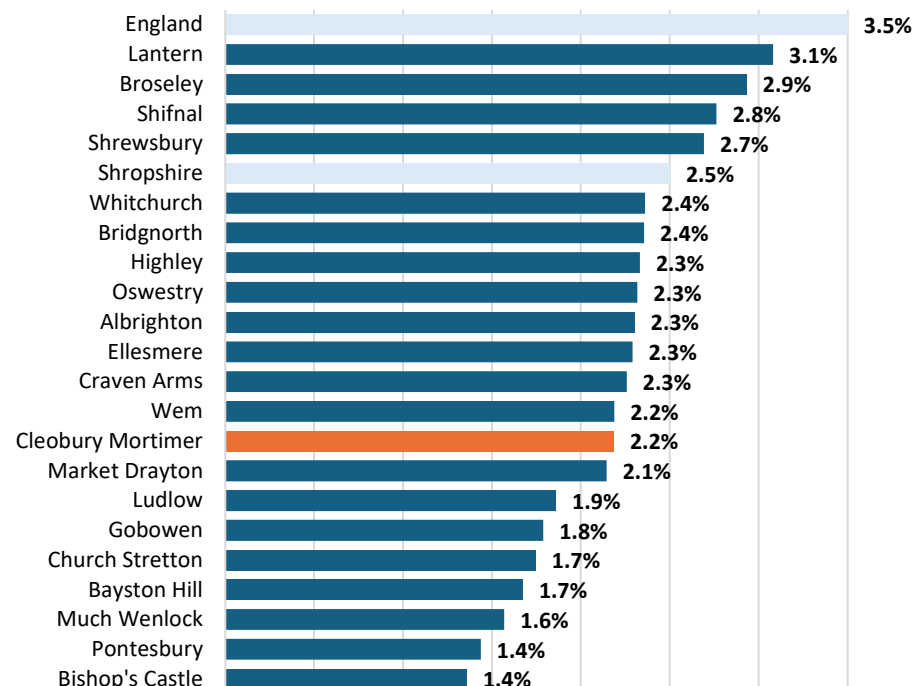
Cleobury Mortimer: Health Conditions



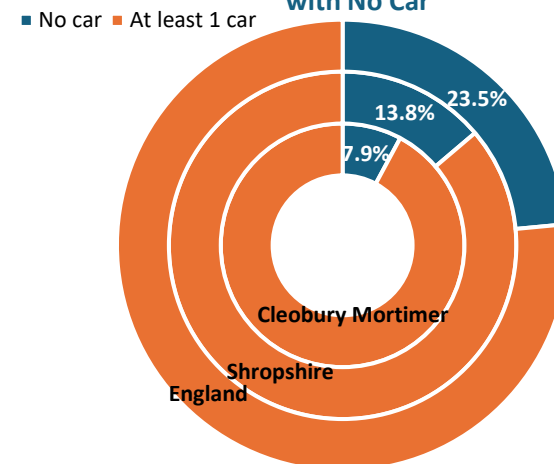
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of households in Cleobury Mortimer without a car is the lowest in Shropshire at 7.9%.

Unemployment rate



Cleobury Mortimer: Percentage of Households with No Car



Craven Arms Library Profile

Background

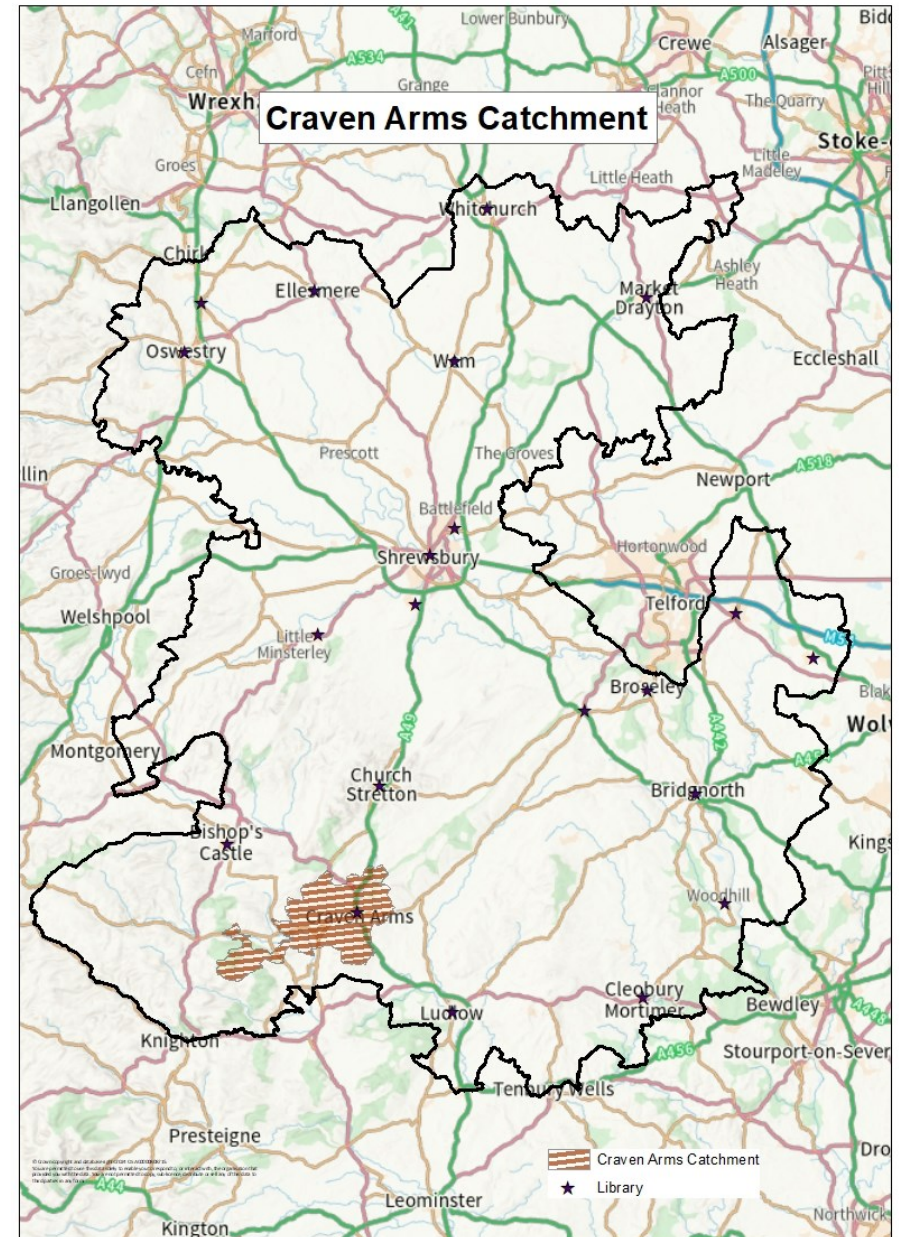
- Craven Arms is a small town in the south of Shropshire, located along the A49 between Church Stretton and Ludlow.
- The library is located in Craven Arms Community Centre and offers free parking. The venue also has meeting rooms, a sports hall, gym and pre-school nursery.
- The library is run by Halo on behalf of Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 6,138 hectares which is about 1.9% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely contained within Shropshire.
- The total population within the Craven Arms library catchment area is 3,895 comprising 1,715 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 47.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.00am-20.00pm	11
Tuesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Wednesday	9.00am-21.00pm	12
Thursday	9.00am-19.00pm	10
Friday	9.00am-15.50pm	6.5
Saturday	Closed	0
Sunday	Closed	0

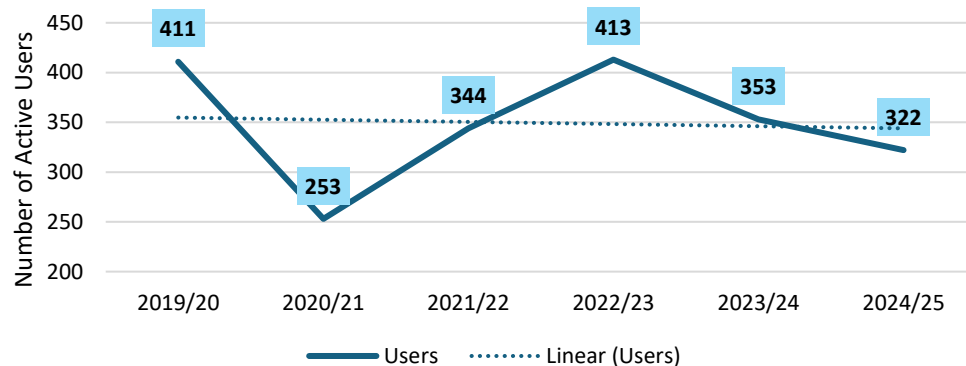
- The library employs 1.62 FTE.



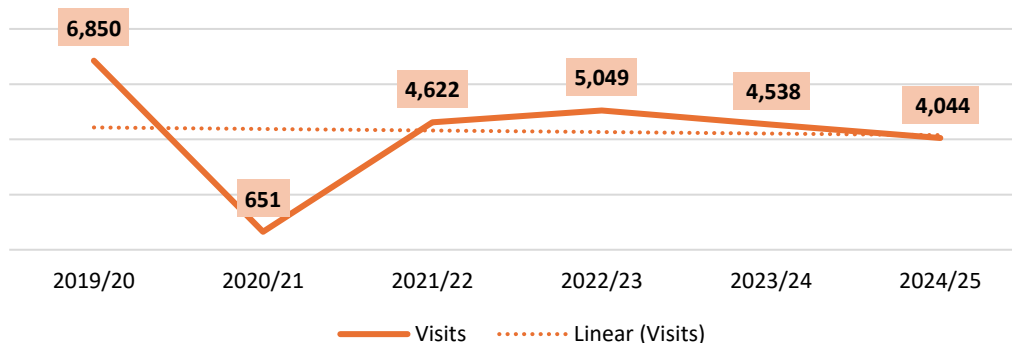
Library Users

- Craven Arms library had 322 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.0% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.4% of the Craven Arms catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries, not just Craven Arms.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more people aged 50+ and lower numbers of people aged 20-49.

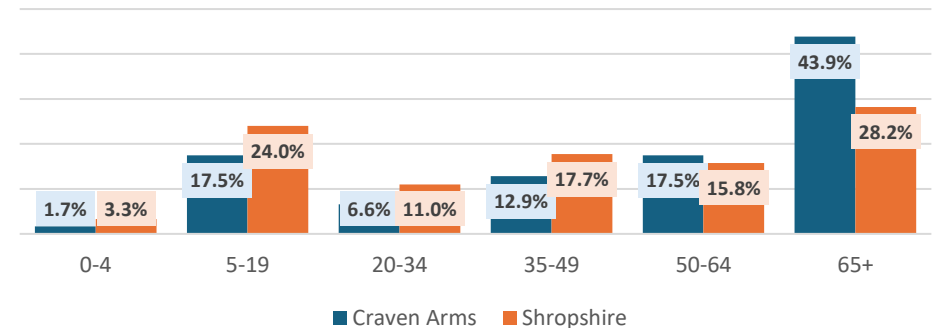
Craven Arms: Number of Active Users



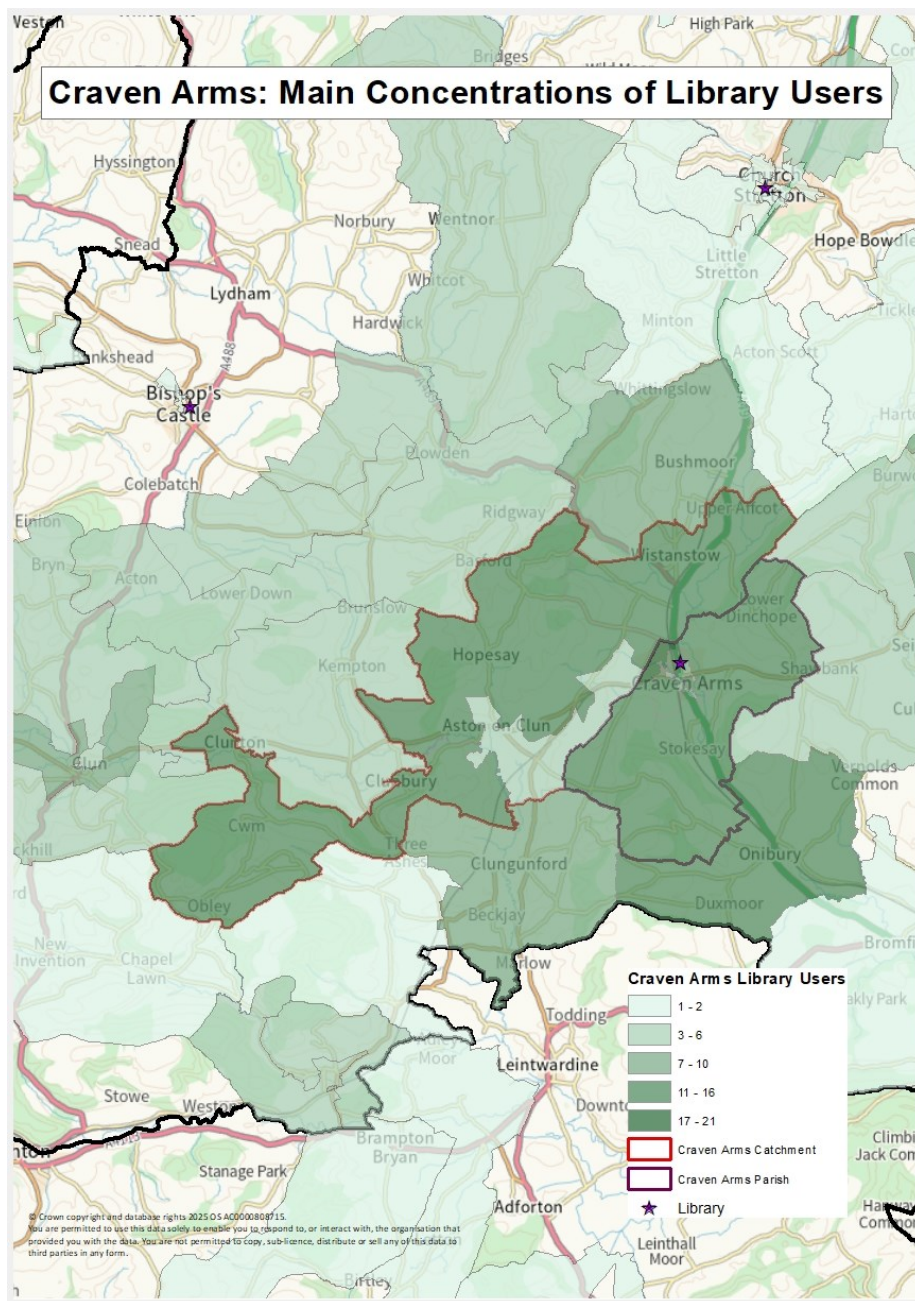
Craven Arms: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Craven Arms Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although numbers fell back down by 60 in 2023/24 and by a further 31 in 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 89 users (-16%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2023/24 stood at 4,044, which is the equivalent of about 13 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at about once every four weeks on average, remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (17 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 41.0% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 7,007 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 22 per active user and 1.7 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 5% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 6%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 52.6% of all Craven Arms library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is the lowest in Shropshire.
- 35.4% live within Craven Arms Parish.
- 4.2% of the population in the catchment area are Craven Arms active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1.6% to 5.5%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 47.4% of Craven Arms library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in the Ludlow, Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle catchments.
- People that live in the Craven Arms catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Ludlow library, although a significant number also use services in Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 73.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Craven Arms library were to Craven Arms, and these accounted for 73.2% of all issues.
- Ludlow and Church Stretton were the most frequently visited alternative libraries.

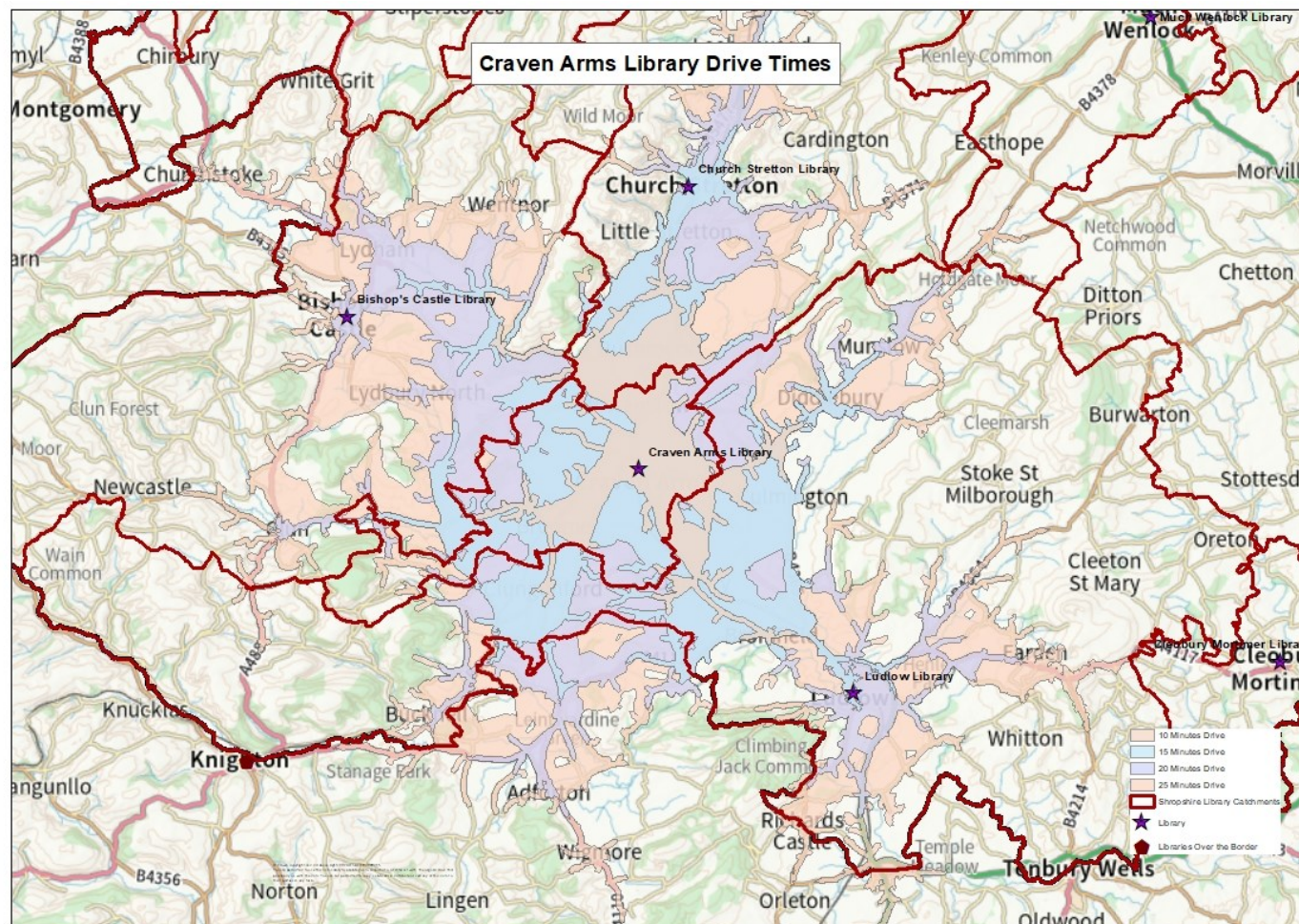
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Craven Arms library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	29.9%
30 Minute Walk	39.0%
10 Minute Drive	53.2%
15 Minute Drive	70.8%
20 Minute Drive	80.5%
25 Minute Drive	90.3%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Craven Arms is in the south of Shropshire between Church Stretton and Ludlow.
- It is located in a relatively rural location, but its proximity to the A49 offers easy access northwards to Church Stretton and southwards to Ludlow.
- Craven Arms has a railway station and is on the Shrewsbury to Cardiff line.
- The closest library to Craven Arms library is Ludlow, which is located 7.9 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes.
- Ludlow is easily accessible from the centre of Craven Arms by the 435 bus, which runs frequently with a journey time of about 20 minutes. Alternatively, Craven Arms is just one stop from Ludlow by train.



Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Craven Arms	Ludlow	7.9 miles	13 mins	435 bus Train	20 minutes 10 minutes

Costs

- Craven Arms is the least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £1,400 (2024/25)
- Craven Arms ranks as the cheapest library per hour open, per active user and per book loan and second cheapest per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£0.51	£66.37	1st
Per Active User	£4.35	£71.50	1st
Per Visit	£0.35	£5.71	2nd
Per Book Loan	£0.20	£4.50	1st

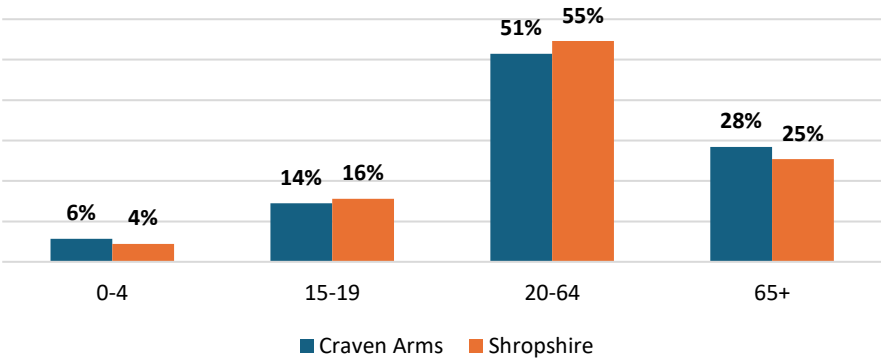
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Craven Arms Catchment Area

Population

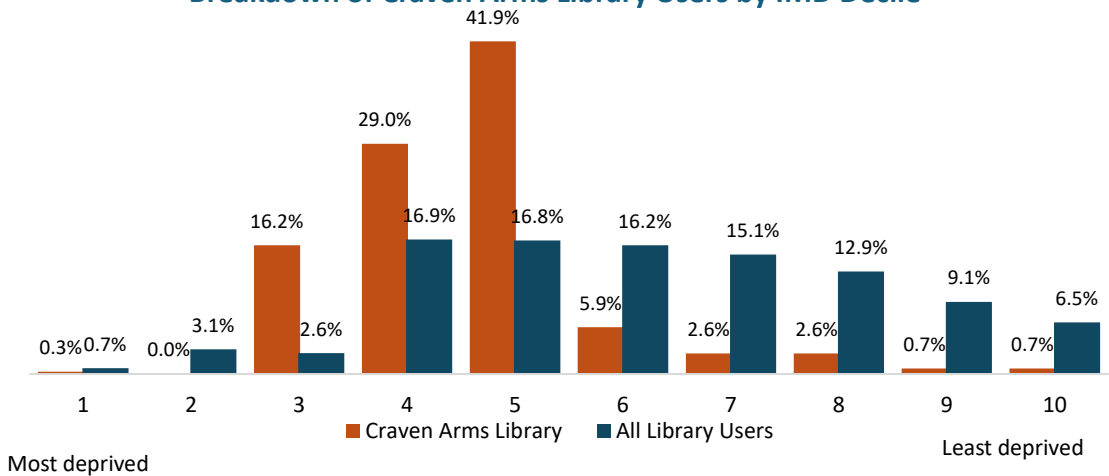
- Craven Arms library catchment is the 3rd smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 3,895.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion aged 65+ but also a slightly higher proportion of 0–4-year-olds.
- There are 1,715 households in the catchment, with 27 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Craven Arms Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Craven Arms Library Users by IMD Decile



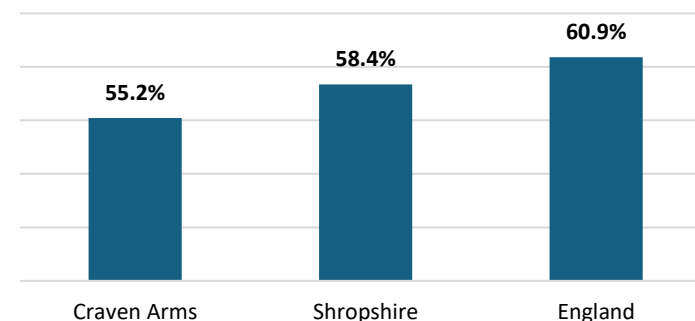
- Craven Arms library is in the third decile according to the IMD (2019), which means it is one the seven libraries in Shropshire located in the 30% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that the majority of users live within the most deprived half of the country, with more than 85% living in deciles 3 to 5.
- Just 4.0% live in the least deprived 30% of the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Craven Arms library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 55.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Craven Arms area is slightly skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Craven Arms library catchment area is the seventh lowest in Shropshire.

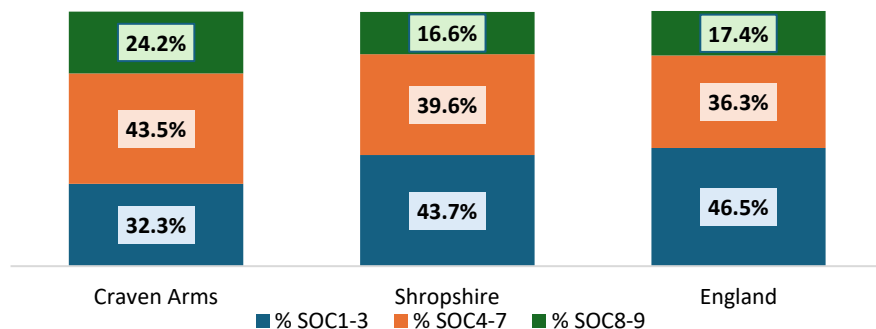
Craven Arms: Economic Activity Rate



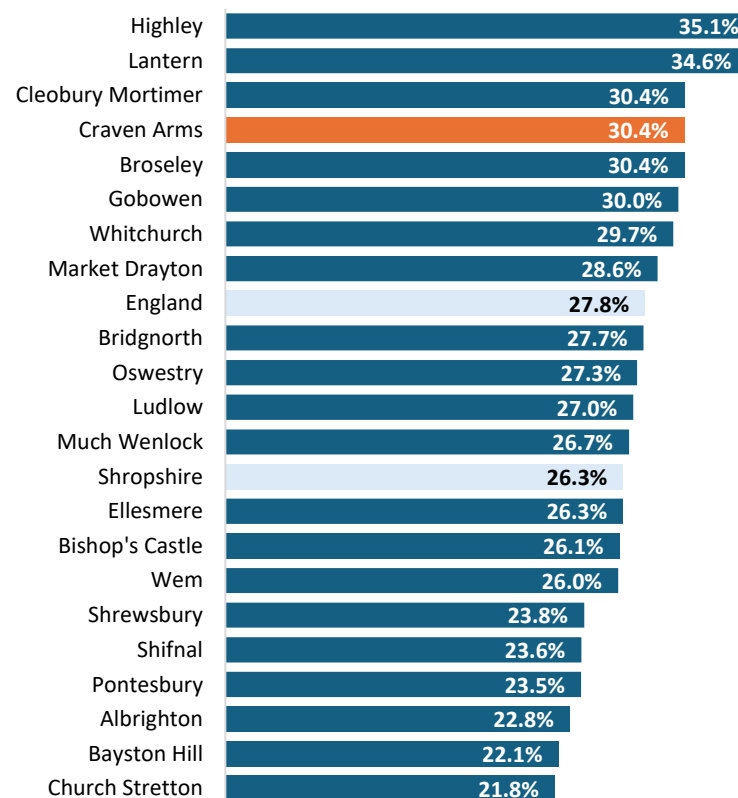
Employment

- 1,718 people in Craven Arms were in employment in 2021, which equates with 53.1% of the 16+ population.
- A much lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 32.3%. More are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Craven Arms: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Craven Arms population with no or low qualifications is amongst the highest in Shropshire at 30.4% of the 16+ population.

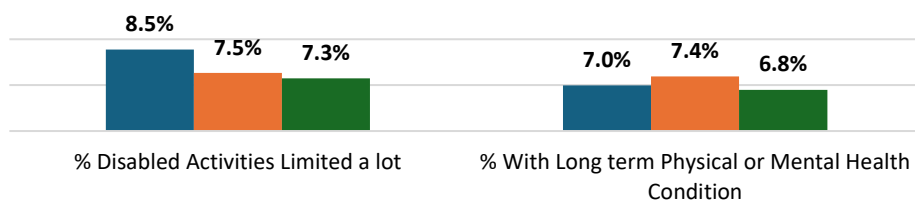
Unemployment

- 73 people living in the Craven Arms catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is at the lower end of all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 8.5% of residents in the Craven Arms library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.0% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

Craven Arms: Health Conditions

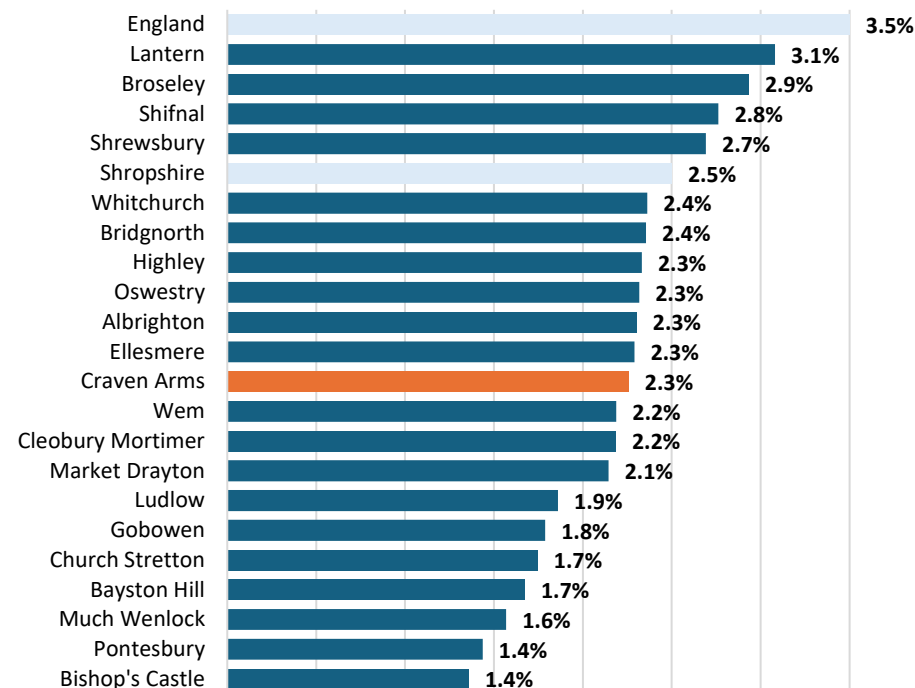


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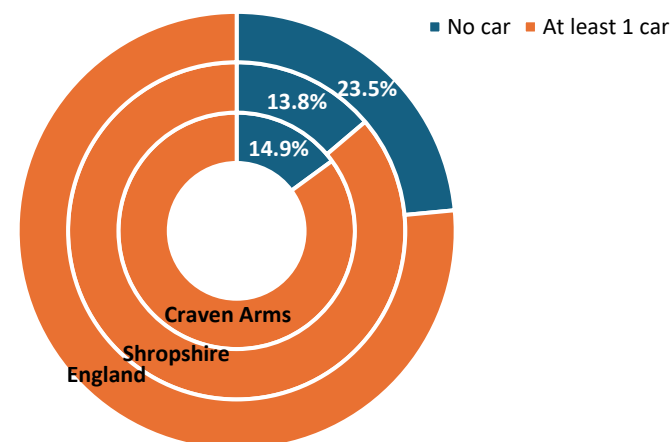
■ Craven Arms ■ Shropshire ■ England

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Craven Arms is slightly higher than the Shropshire average at 14.9%.

Unemployment rate



Craven Arms: Percentage of Households with No Car



Ellesmere Library Profile

Background

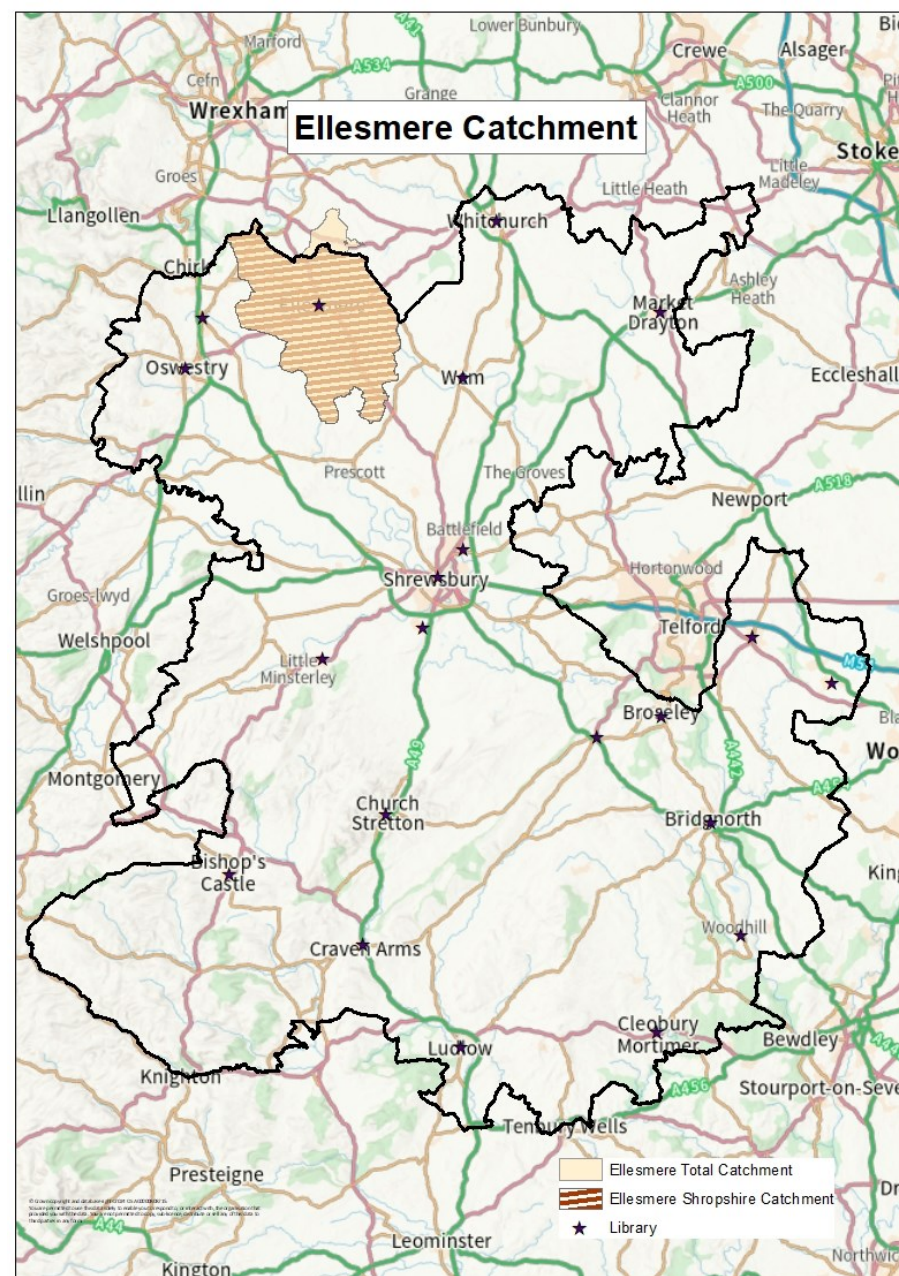
- Ellesmere is a small town in the north of Shropshire, located on the A495 between Oswestry to the west and Whitchurch to the east.
- The library is located in the centre of Ellesmere in the Our Space building on Trimpey Street.
- The library is run by Bethphage on behalf of Shropshire Council. Bethphage is a charity providing specialist support to adults with learning difficulties.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 12,841 hectares which is about 4% of the county's land mass. The catchment also extends north of the border into Wrexham. 6% of Ellesmere's catchment is outside Shropshire.
- The total population within the Ellesmere library catchment area is 9,823 comprising 4,255 households. The Shropshire population is 8,911.

Opening Hours

The library is open 20.5 hours a week according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Saturday	9.00am-13.50pm	4.5
Sunday	Closed	0

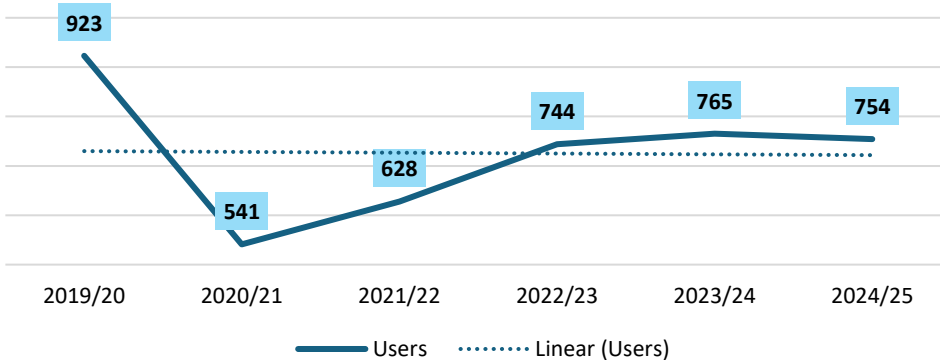
- The library benefitted from 35 volunteers in 2024/25, amounting to 791 volunteer hours.



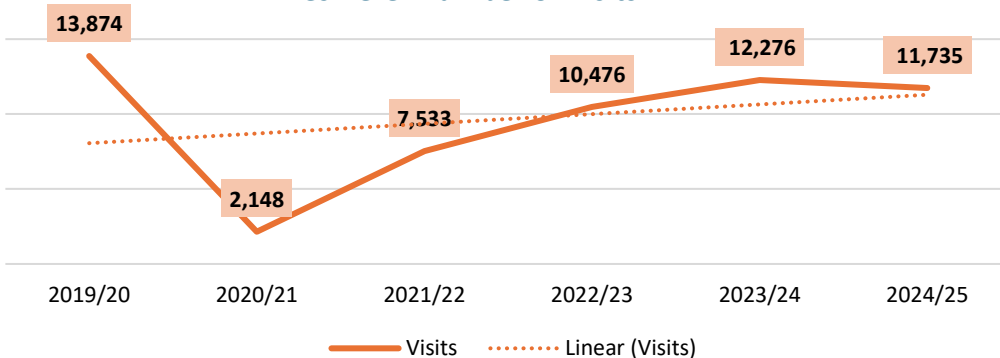
Library Users

- Ellesmere library had 754 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.8% of the Ellesmere catchment population are active library users, which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more people aged 0-19, slightly more aged 65+ and lower numbers of people aged 20-64.

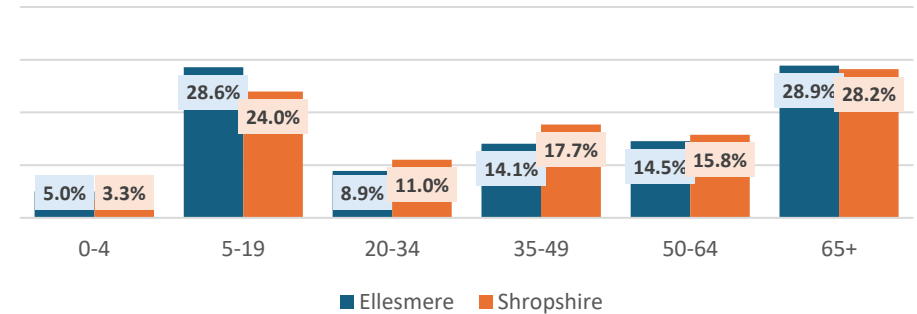
Ellesmere: Number of Active Users



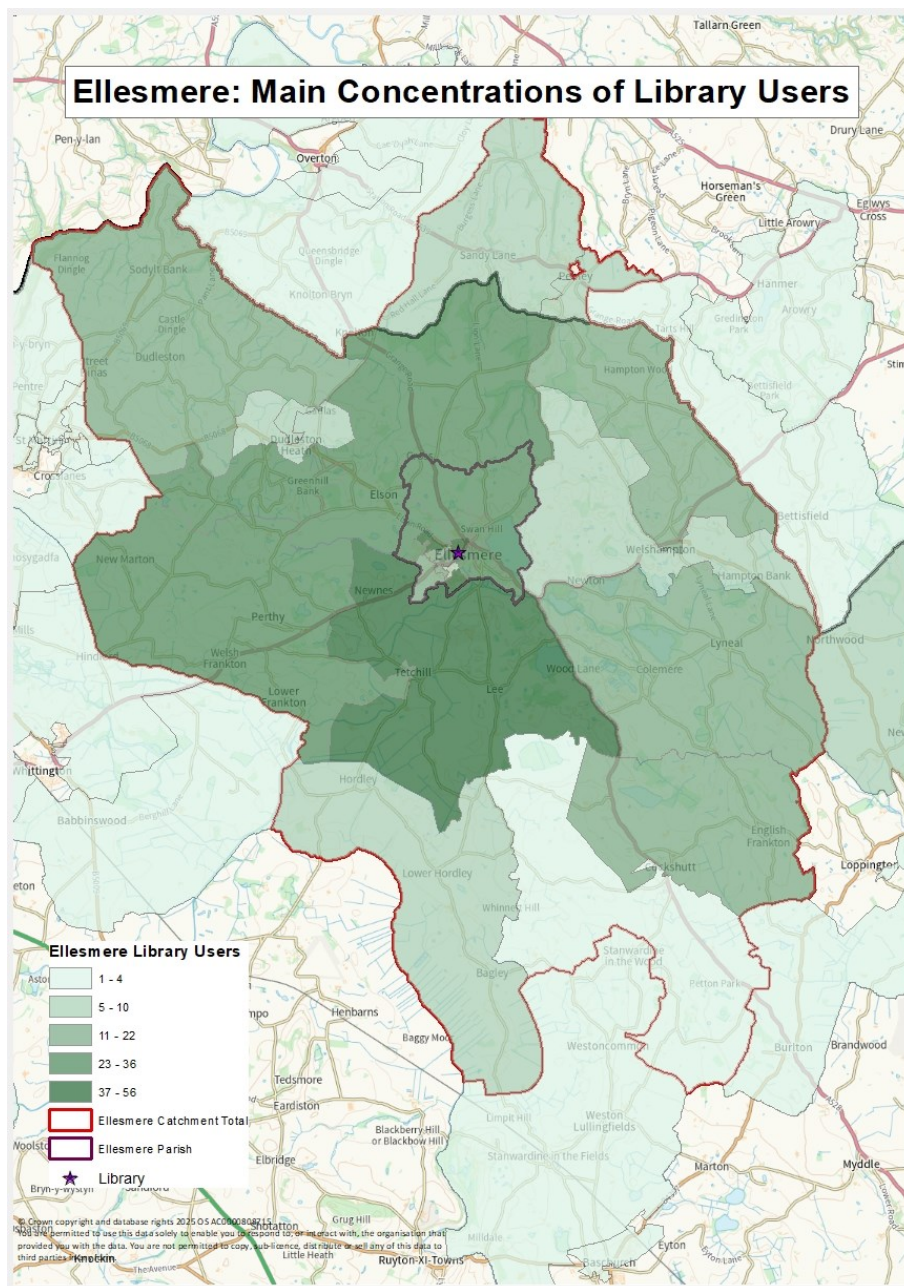
Ellesmere: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Ellesmere Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although user numbers have been stable since 2022/23.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 169 users (-18.3%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 11,735, which is the equivalent of about 16 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at about once every three weeks on average, is now slightly higher than it was pre-pandemic (15 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 15.4% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 14,342 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 19 per active user and 1.2 per visit.
- The number of loans was stable between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 12%.
- Computer usage was down by 20%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.2% of all Ellesmere library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the highest in Shropshire.
- 54.4% live within Ellesmere Urban Parish.
- 6.5% of the population in the catchment area are Ellesmere active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1.0% to 17.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 12.8% of Ellesmere library users that do not live in the catchment, most live the Wem, Oswestry and Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Ellesmere catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Oswestry library, although a significant number also use services in Wem, Whitchurch and Shrewsbury as well as the Owen mobile library service.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 82.6% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Ellesmere library were to Ellesmere, and these accounted for 81.2% of all issues.
- Oswestry was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Ellesmere library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

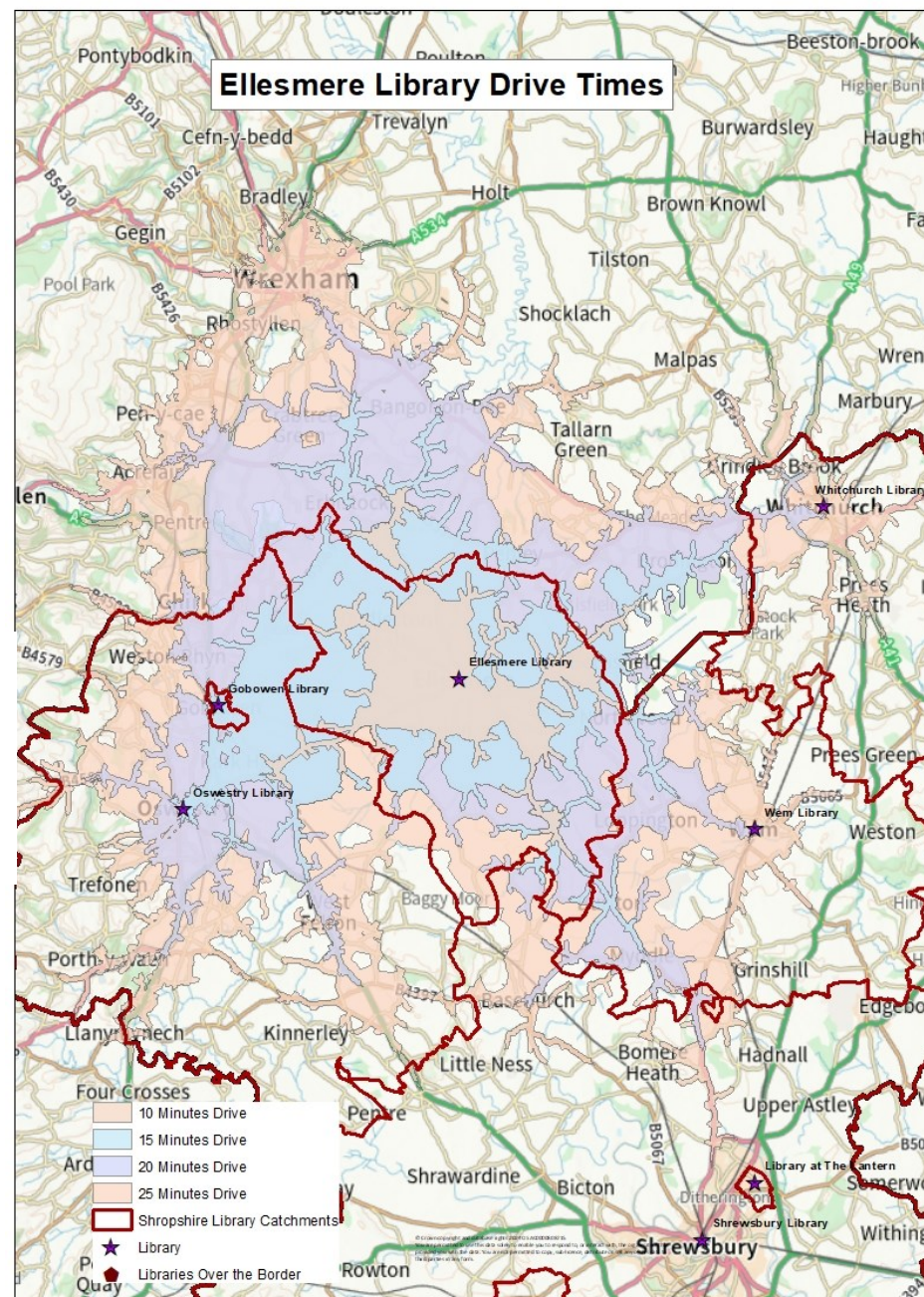
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	53.9%
30 Minute Walk	60.1%
10 Minute Drive	82.2%
15 Minute Drive	92.3%
20 Minute Drive	95.4%
25 Minute Drive	97.5%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Ellesmere is in the north of Shropshire between Oswestry and Whitchurch, and the town is within relatively easy access of both via the A495.
- The closest library to Ellesmere library is Gobowen, which is located 7.5 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes.
- It can also be reached via the 53 bus which runs about every three hours and which takes 22 minutes.
- Oswestry is the nearest main library to Ellesmere at a distance of 8.2 miles, which equates with a drive time of about 17 minutes. It can also be accessed using the 53 bus, with a journey time of about 39 minutes.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Ellesmere	Gobowen	7.5 miles	13 mins	53 Bus	22 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Ellesmere	Oswestry	8.2 miles	17 mins	53 Bus	39 mins



Costs

- Ellesmere is the 13th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual costs to the Council are £35,530 (2024/25).
- Ellesmere ranks as the 11th cheapest library per visit, the 10th cheapest per book loan and is in 7th position per active user and in 9th place per hour open.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£33.33	£66.37	9th
Per Active User	£47.12	£71.50	7th
Per Visit	£3.03	£5.71	11th
Per Book Loan	£2.48	£4.50	10th

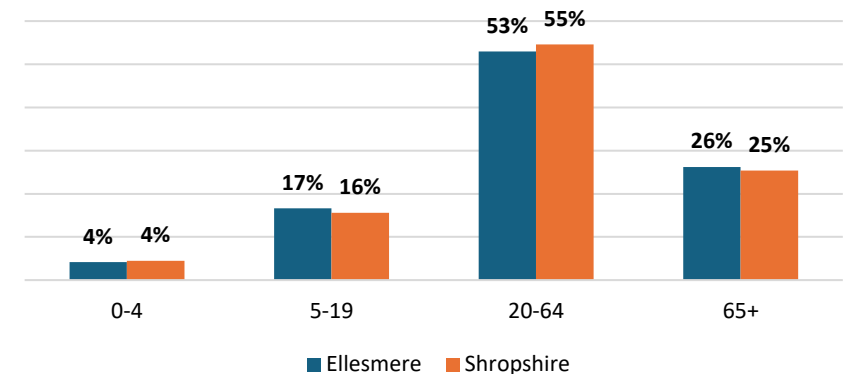
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1 = least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ellesmere Catchment Area

Population

- Ellesmere library catchment is the 9th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 9,823 (8,911 in Shropshire).
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion aged 65+ but also a slightly higher proportion of 5-19-year-olds.
- There are 4,255 households in the catchment, with 208 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Ellesmere Catchment

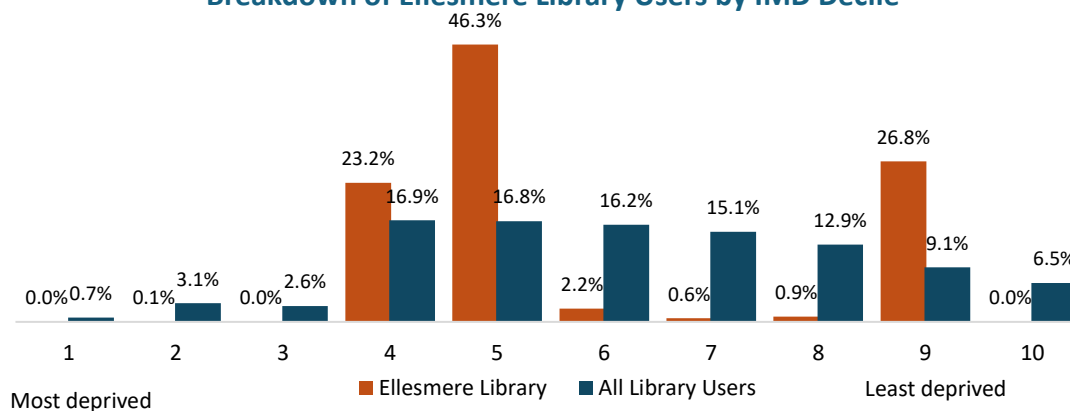


Ellesmere catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

- Ellesmere library is in the ninth decile according to the IMD (2019), which means it is one of the three libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that over a quarter of users are drawn from this decile compared with 9.1% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further two-thirds of users live in the fourth and fifth decile.

Deprivation

Breakdown of Ellesmere Library Users by IMD Decile

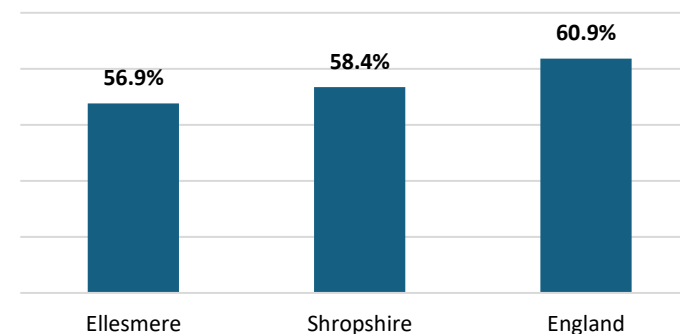


Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Ellesmere library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 56.9% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Ellesmere area is very slightly skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Ellesmere library catchment area is the 12th highest in Shropshire.

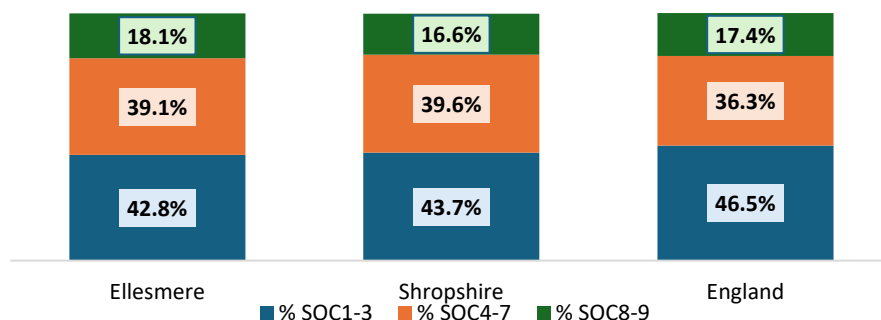
Ellesmere: Economic Activity Rate



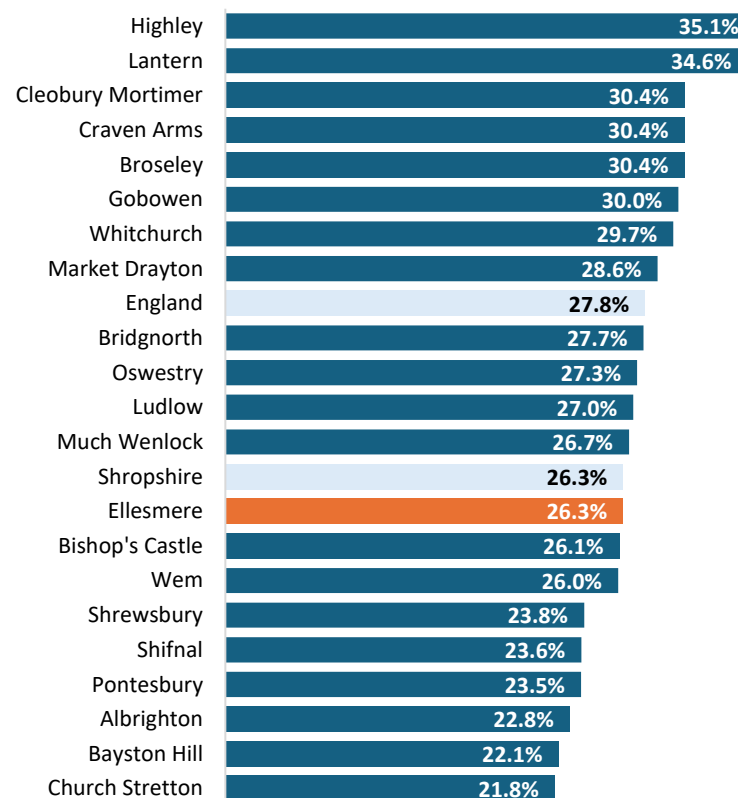
Employment

- 4,517 people in Ellesmere were in employment in 2021, which equates with 55.0% of the 16+ population.
- A slightly lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 42.8%. More are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and a similar proportion in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Ellesmere: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

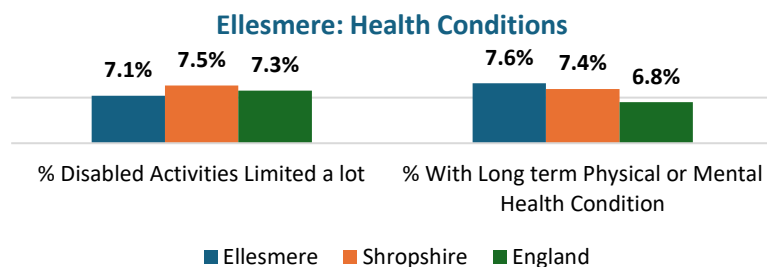
- The proportion of the Ellesmere population with no or low qualifications is comparable to the Shropshire average at 26.3% of the 16+ population. This is slightly lower than the national average.

Unemployment

- 188 people living in the Ellesmere catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is mid-range compared with all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

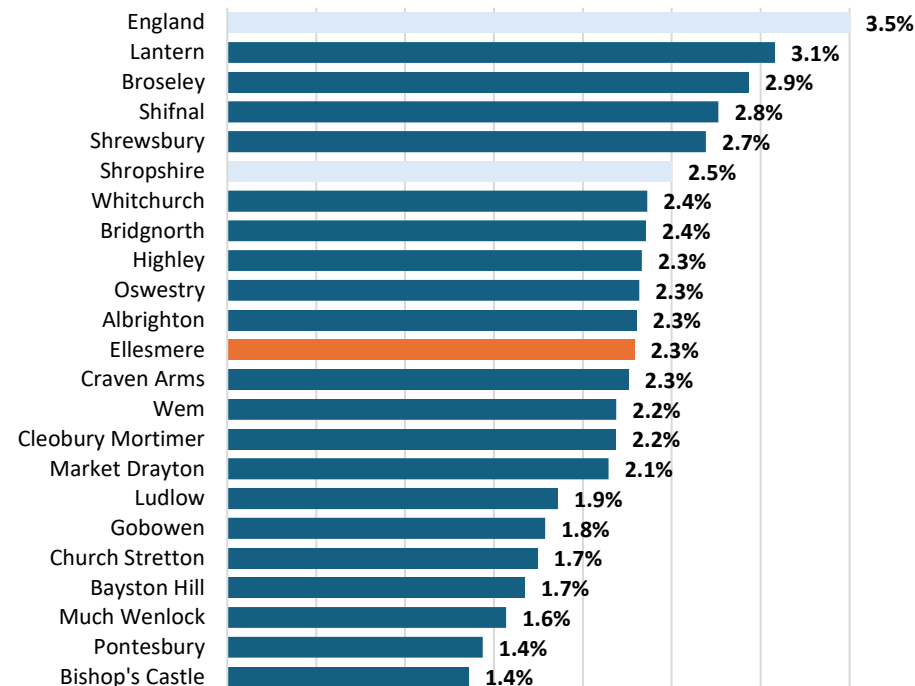
- 7.1% of residents in the Ellesmere library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is lower than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



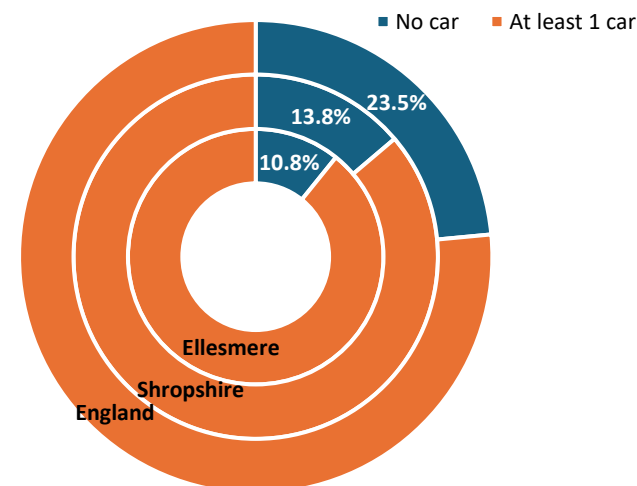
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Ellesmere is lower than the Shropshire average at 10.8%.

Unemployment rate



Ellesmere: Percentage of Households with No Car



Gobowen Library Profile

Background

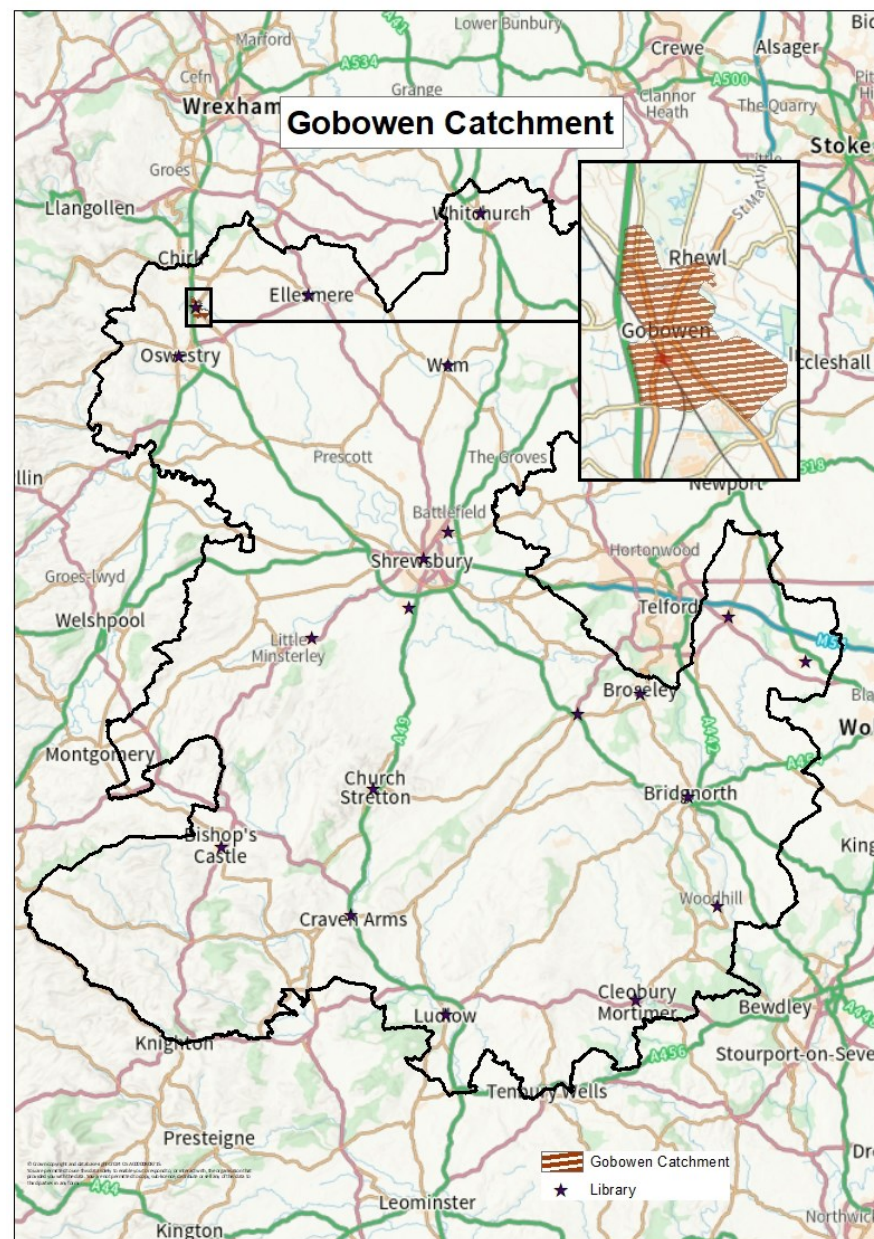
- Gobowen is a small town in the north-west of Shropshire, close to the Wrexham border, just north of Oswestry.
- The library is located in central Gobowen and offers on-site parking.
- The library is a small demountable modular construction built in 2011 and is owned and run by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 151 hectares which is less than 0.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely in Shropshire and is also completely contained within the Oswestry catchment.
- The total population within the Gobowen library catchment area is 2,710 comprising 1,182 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 15 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Friday	Closed	0
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

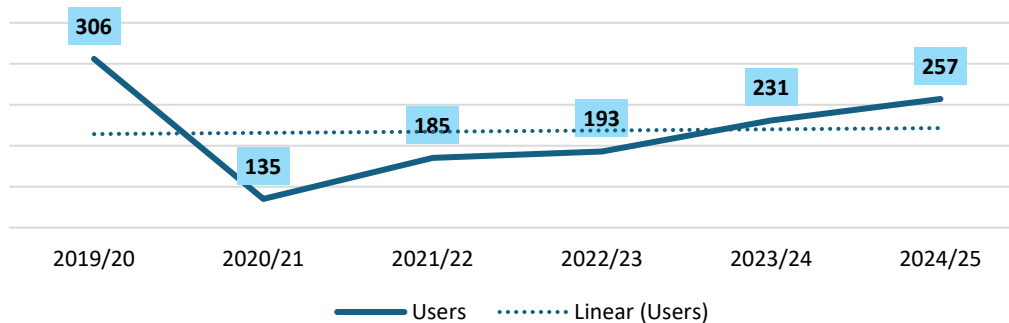
- The library has 0.41 FTE employees and benefitted from 43 volunteers in 2024/25, amounting to 133 volunteer hours.



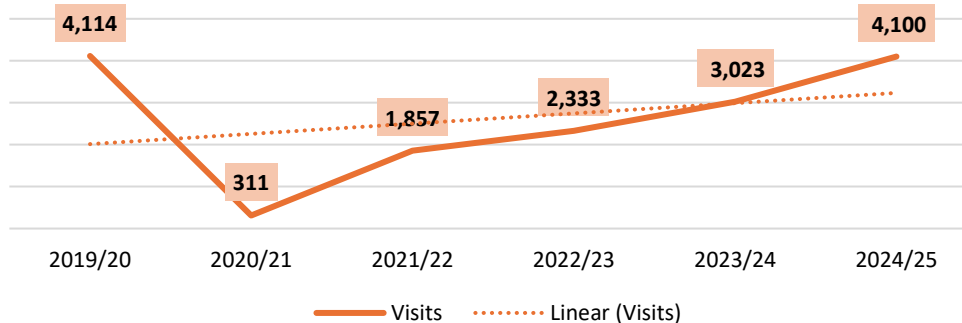
Library Users

- Gobowen library had 257 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 0.8% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 11.0% of the Gobowen catchment population are active library users, which is comparable with the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries, not just Gobowen.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more children and young people and fewer adults over the age of 50.

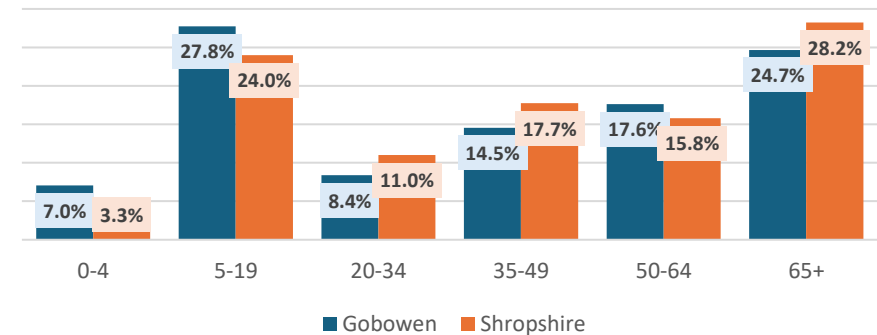
Gobowen: Number of Active Users



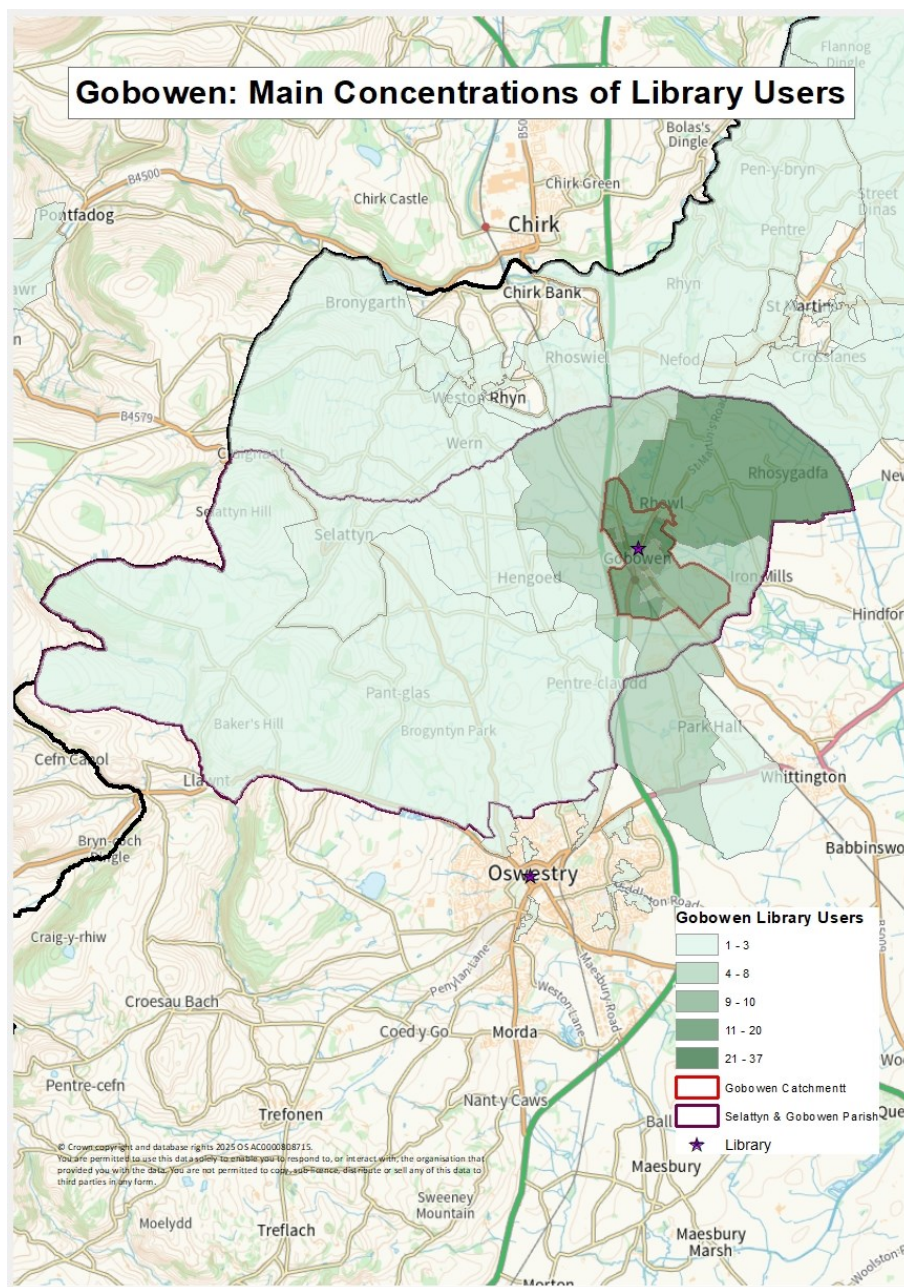
Gobowen: Number of Active Users



Breakdown of Gobowen Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery each year, with user numbers rising by 26 in 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 49 users (-16.0%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 4,100, which is the equivalent of about 16 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at about once every three to four weeks on average, is now higher than it was in 2019/20 (13 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was down only very slightly in 2024/25 in comparison with 2019/20.
- 5,849 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 23 per active user and 1.4 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 1% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 17%.
- Computer usage was up by a substantial 99%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 67.5% of all Gobowen library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- 77.1% live within Selattyn and Gobowen Parish, which covers a much larger geographic area than the library catchment.
- 6.1% of the population in the catchment area are Gobowen active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 4% to 13%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 32.5% of Gobowen library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Oswestry catchment.
- People that live in the Gobowen catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Oswestry library- almost as many users in the Gobowen catchment use Oswestry library as they do Gobowen.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 80.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Gobowen library were to Gobowen, and these accounted for 79.5% of all issues.
- Oswestry was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

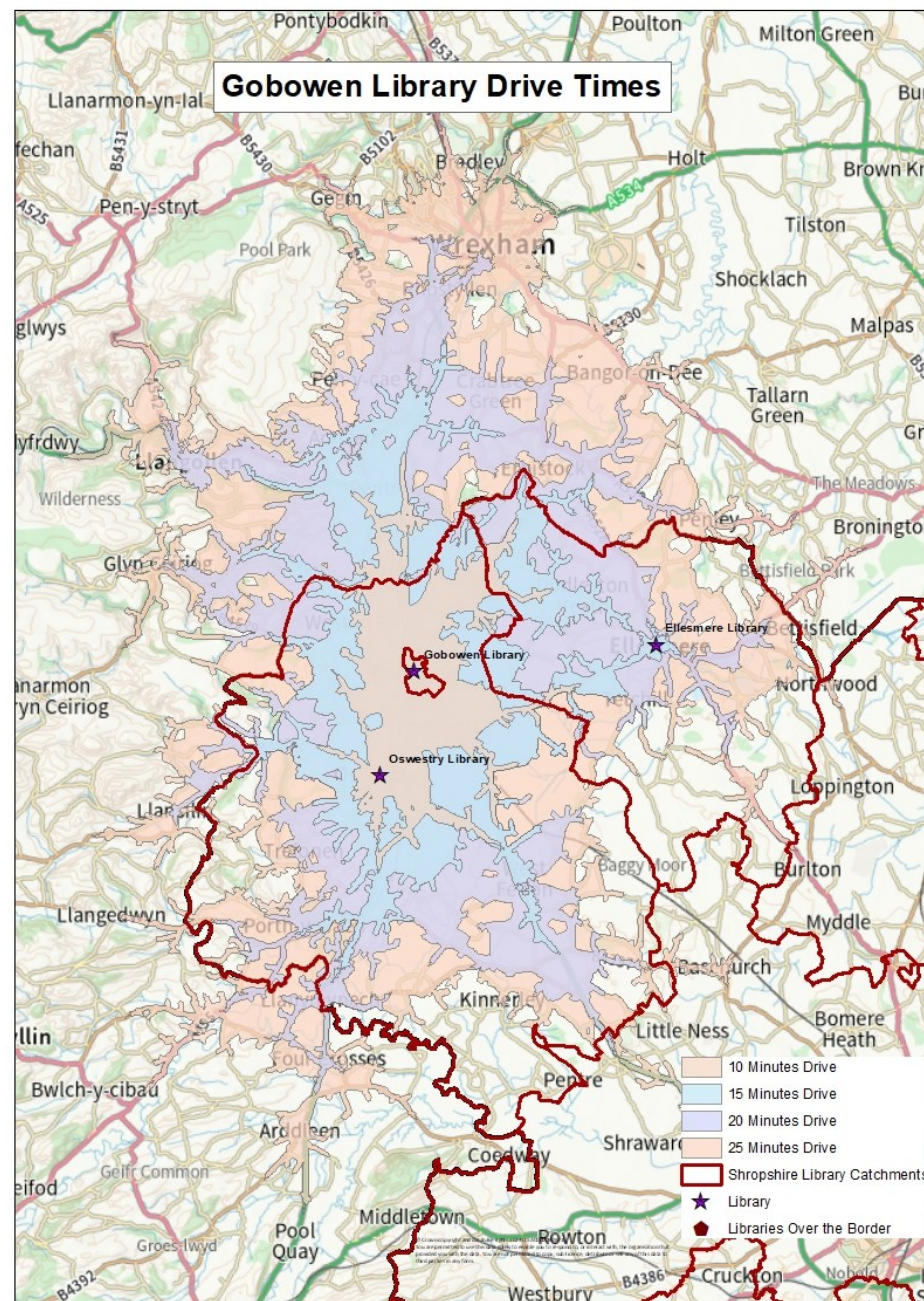
- The following table shows the proportion of active Gobowen library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	73.2%
30 Minute Walk	78.0%
10 Minute Drive	91.5%
15 Minute Drive	94.7%
20 Minute Drive	95.5%
25 Minute Drive	96.7%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Gobowen is in the north of Shropshire between Oswestry and Wrexham.
- The closest library to Gobowen is Oswestry, which is located 3 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 8 minutes.
- It can also be reached via a frequent bus service between Gobowen and Oswestry which takes about 20 minutes.
- Although Gobowen is on the rail network, Oswestry is not.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Gobowen	Oswestry	3 miles	8 mins	Bus (Several)	20 mins



Costs

- Gobowen is the 8th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £34,740 (2024/25)
- However, the library ranks as the third most expensive per active user behind Ludlow and Whitchurch and per visit behind Highley and Whitchurch and as the 6th most expensive per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£44.54	£66.37	13th
Per Active User	£135.18	£71.50	20th
Per Visit	£8.47	£5.71	20th
Per Book Loan	£5.94	£4.50	17th

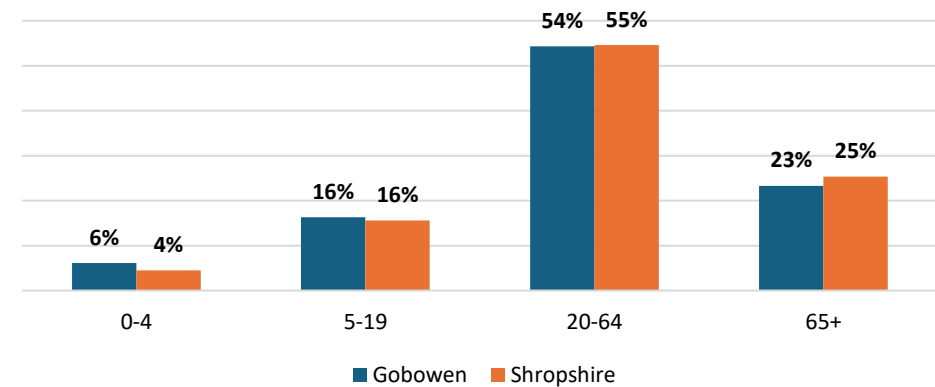
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Gobowen Catchment Area

Population

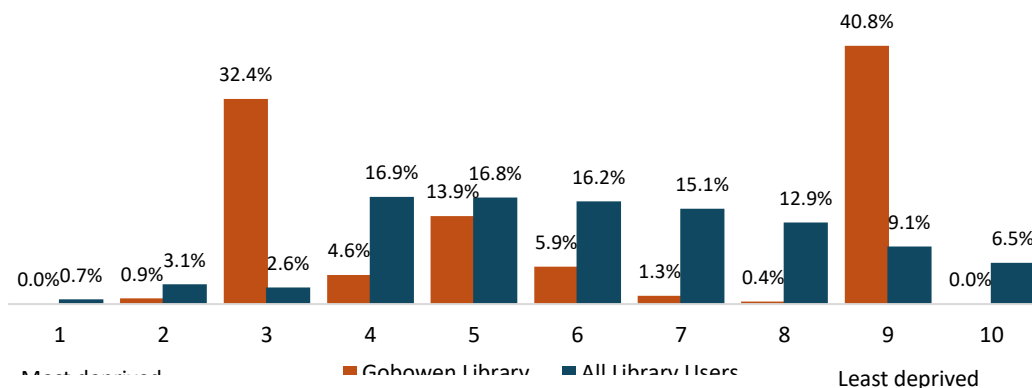
- Gobowen library catchment is the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 2,710.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of 0–19-year-olds and a slightly lower proportion of 65+.
- There are 1,182 households in the catchment, with 27 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.27 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Gobowen Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Gobowen Library Users by IMD Decile



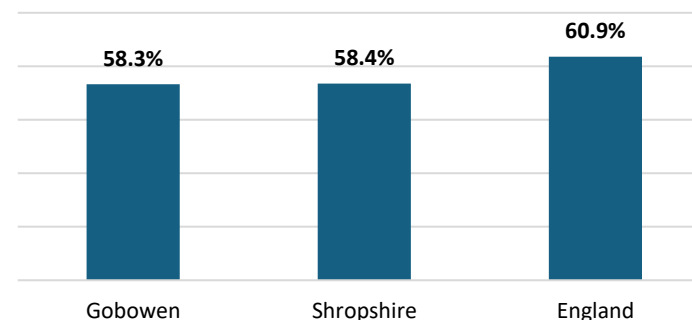
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Gobowen library is in the third decile according to the IMD 2019, which means it is one of the seven libraries in Shropshire located in the 30% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a third of users are drawn from this decile compared with 2.6% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further 40.8% of users live within the least deprived 20% of the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Gobowen library catchment is comparable to the Shropshire average at 58.3% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Gobowen area is slightly younger than the county profile.
- The economic activity rate in the Gobowen library catchment area is the 7th highest in Shropshire.

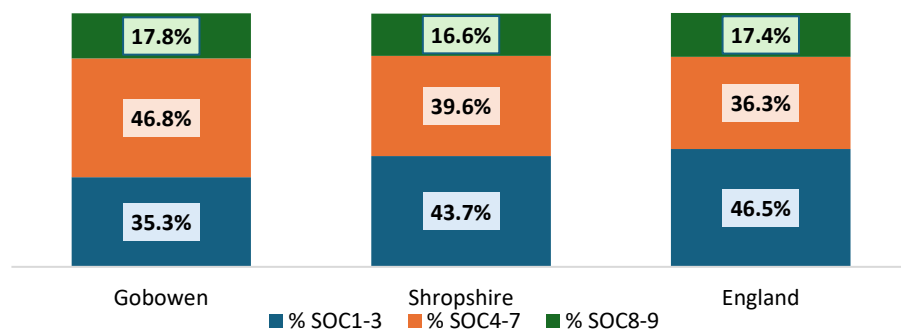
Gobowen: Economic Activity Rate



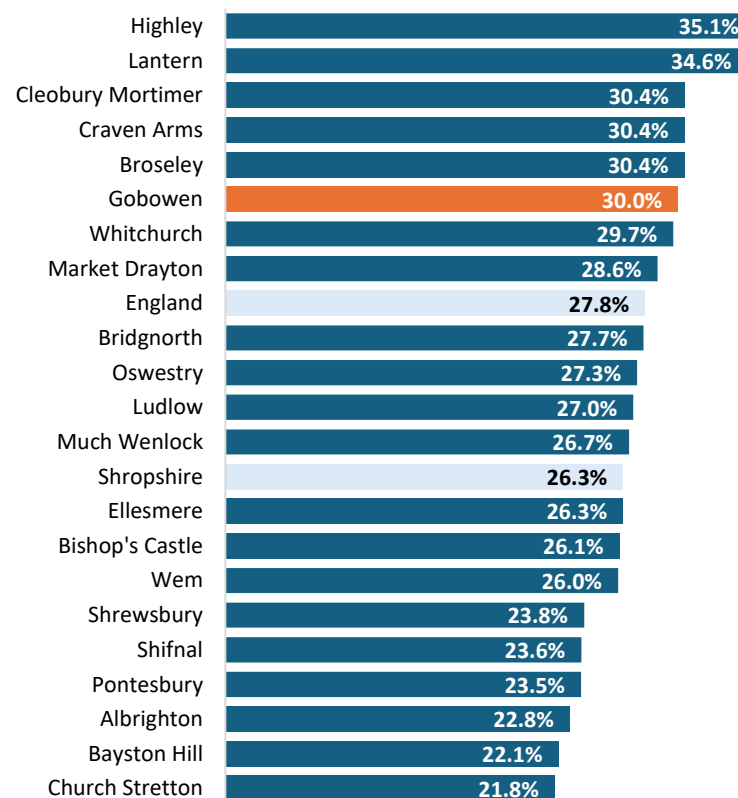
Employment

- 1,245 people in Gobowen were in employment in 2021, which equates with 57.1% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 35.3%. Slightly more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and a notably more in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Gobowen: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Gobowen population with no or low qualifications is higher than the Shropshire average at 30.0% of the 16+ population. This is also higher than the national average.

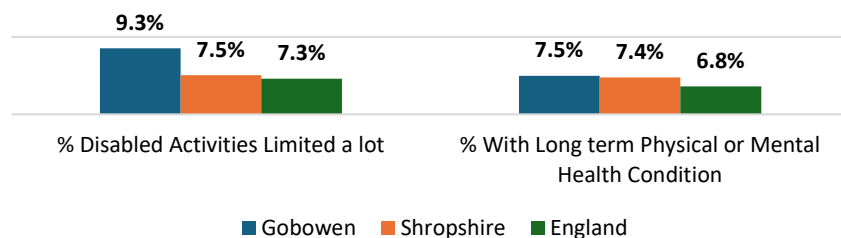
Unemployment

- 39 people living in the Gobowen catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.8%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is low compared with most library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 9.3% of residents in the Gobowen library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.5% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

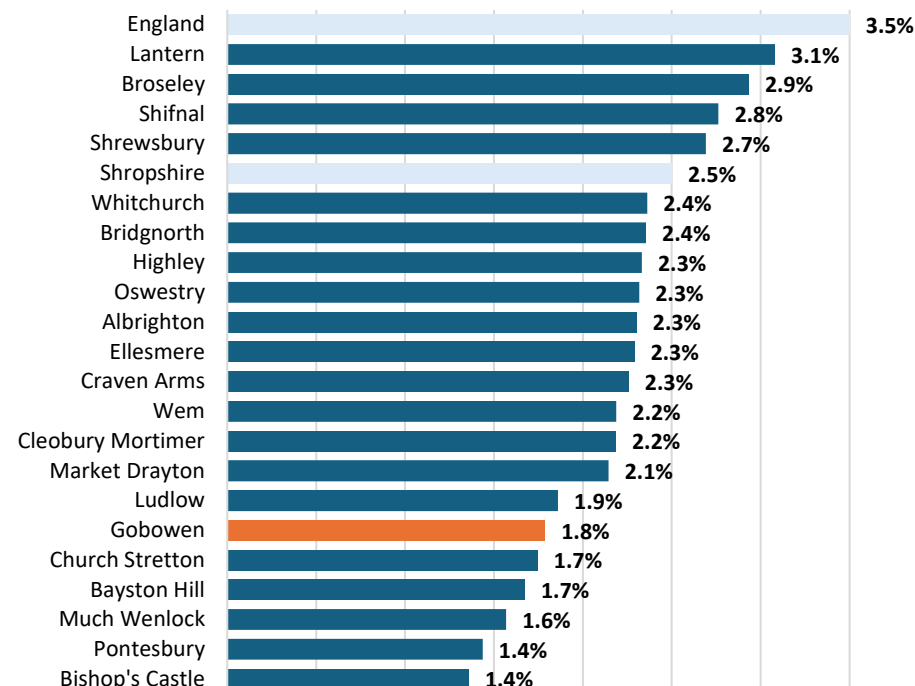
Gobowen: Health Conditions



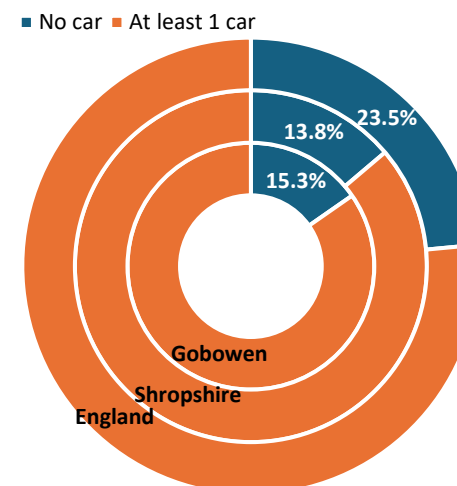
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Gobowen is higher than the Shropshire average at 15.3%.

Unemployment rate



Gobowen: Percentage of Households with No Car



Highley Library Profile

Background

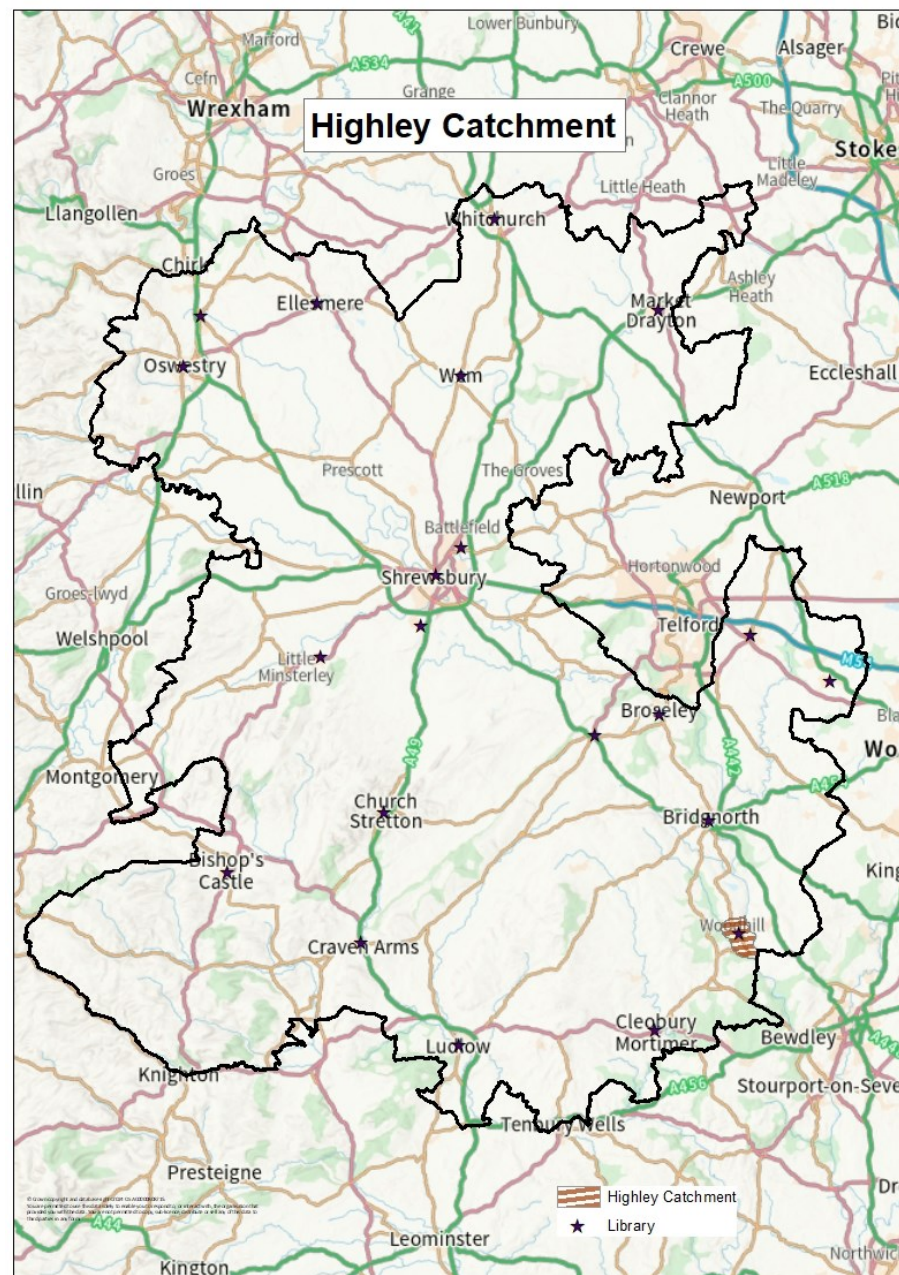
- Highley is a large village in the south east of Shropshire, close to the Worcestershire border.
- The library is located within the Severn Centre in the middle of the village and offers on-site parking.
- The Severn Centre is a multi-purpose facility with an outdoor pool, gym, sports hall and cafe as well as the library.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 638 hectares which is about 0.2% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely in Shropshire and is adjacent to the Bridgnorth and Cleobury Mortimer catchments.
- The total population within the Highley library catchment area is 3,733 comprising 1,668 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 57.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Tuesday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Wednesday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Thursday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Friday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Saturday	9.00am-14.00pm	5
Sunday	Closed	0

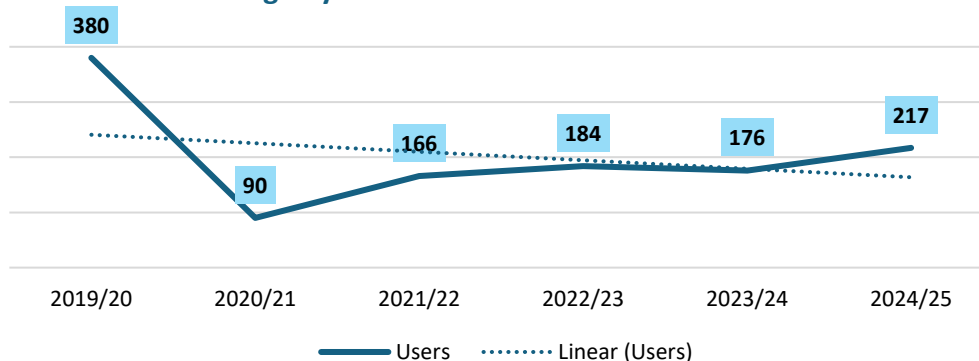
- The library has 2 FTE employees.



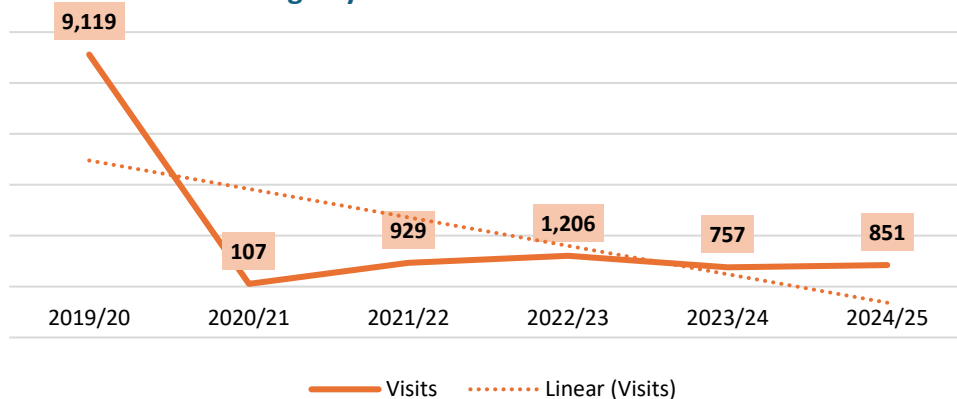
Library Users

- Highley library had 217 active users in the 2023/24 financial year. This is the equivalent of 0.7% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 6.3% of the Highley catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all libraries not just Highley.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly fewer people aged 65 and above but more children and young people.

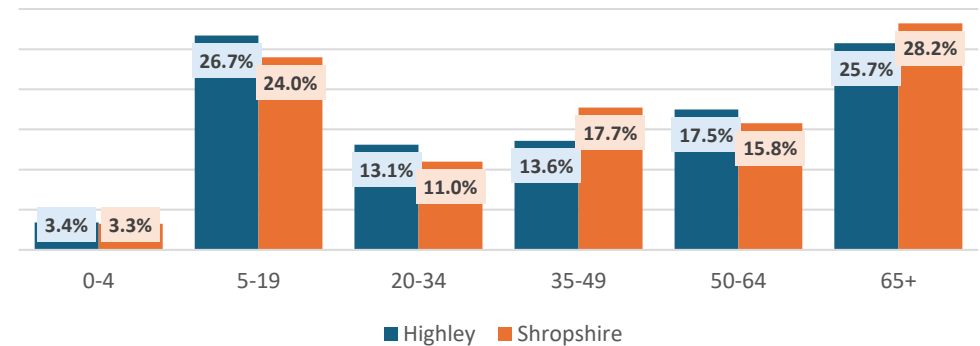
Highley: Number of Active Users



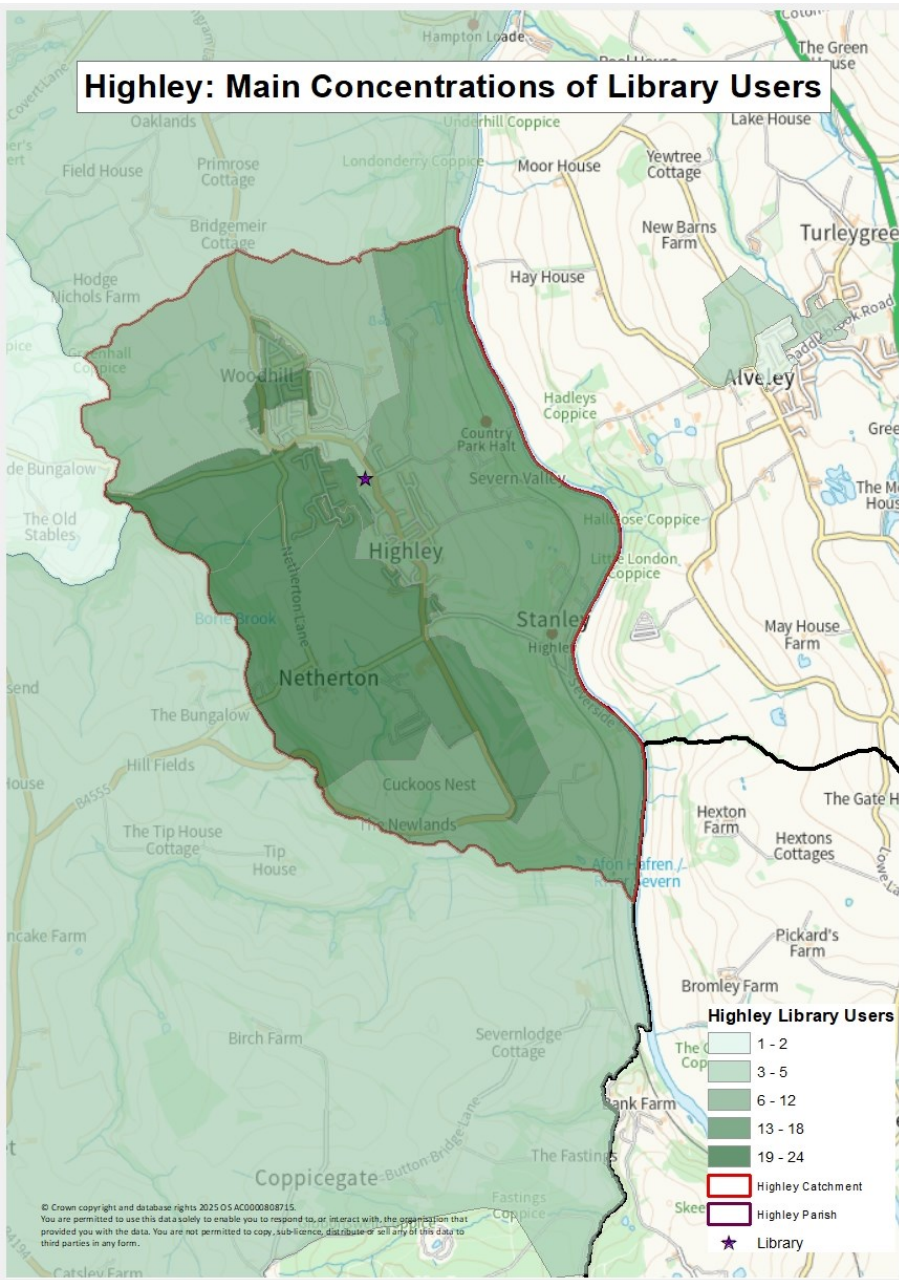
Highley: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Highley Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery, with user numbers rising by 41 in 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 163 users (-42.9%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 851, which is the equivalent of about 4 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at about once every three months on average, is notably lower than it was in 2019/24 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 90.7% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 2,170 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 10 per active user and 2.5 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 16% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 18%.
- Computer usage was down by 56%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 84.5% of all Highley library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is slightly higher than the average for Shropshire.
- The library catchment is identical to the parish boundary.
- 4.7% of the population in the catchment area are Highley active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 3% to 6.8%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 15.5% of Highley library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Bridgnorth catchment.
- People that live in the Highley catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Bridgnorth library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 73.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Highley library were to Highley, and these accounted for 66.7% of all issues.
- Bridgnorth was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

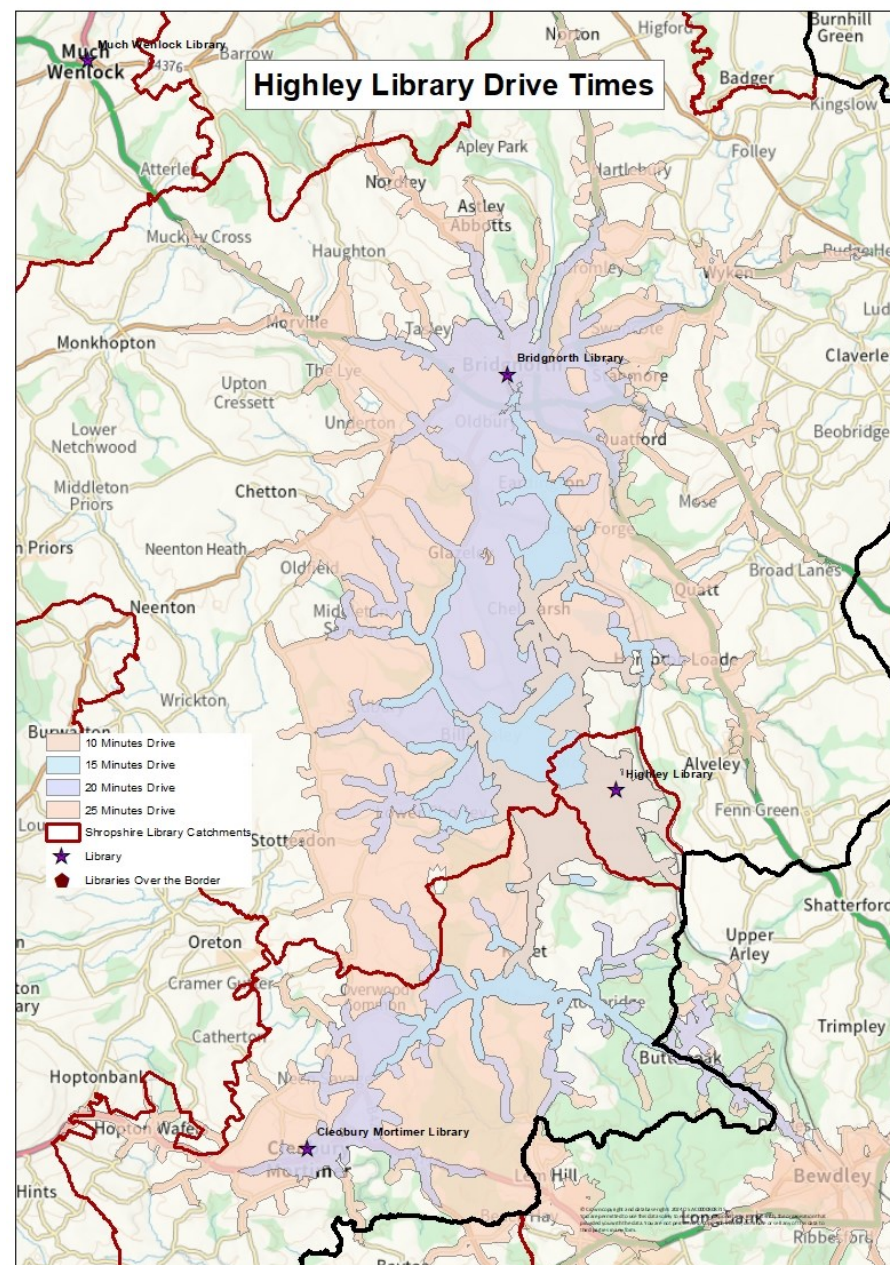
- The following table shows the proportion of active Highley library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	77.8%
30 Minute Walk	86.0%
10 Minute Drive	89.9%
15 Minute Drive	92.3%
20 Minute Drive	94.2%
25 Minute Drive	95.2%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Highley is in the south east of Shropshire between Bridgnorth to the north and Bewdley in Worcestershire to the south.
- The closest library to Highley is Bridgnorth, which is located 7.4 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 14 minutes.
- It can also be reached via a regular bus service between Bridgnorth and Highley which takes about 40 minutes.
- Neither Bridgnorth nor Highley is on the mainline rail network, although both are located on the Severn Valley Railway.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Highley	Bridgnorth	7.4 miles	14 mins	125 Bus	25 mins



Costs

- Highley is the 7th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual Shropshire Council costs are £27,430 (2024/25).
- However, the library ranks as the second most expensive per visit and per book loan (after Whitchurch). Long opening hours mean that Highley ranks as the sixth cheapest per hour open.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£6.94	£66.37	6th
Per Active User	£126.41	£71.50	19th
Per Visit	£32.23	£5.71	21st
Per Book Loan	£12.64	£4.50	21st

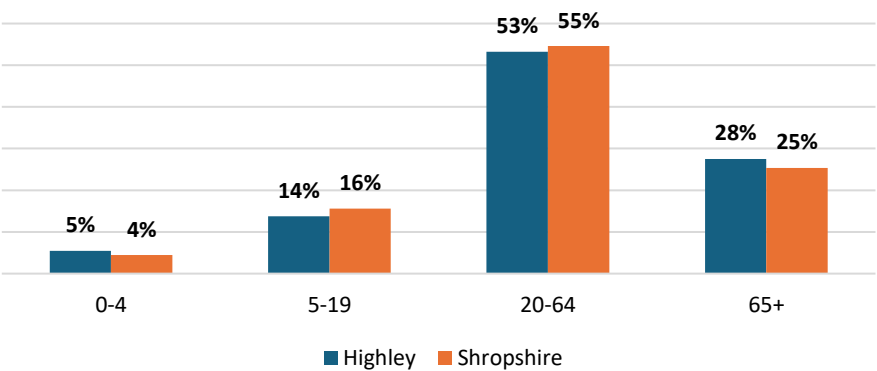
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Highley Catchment Area

Population

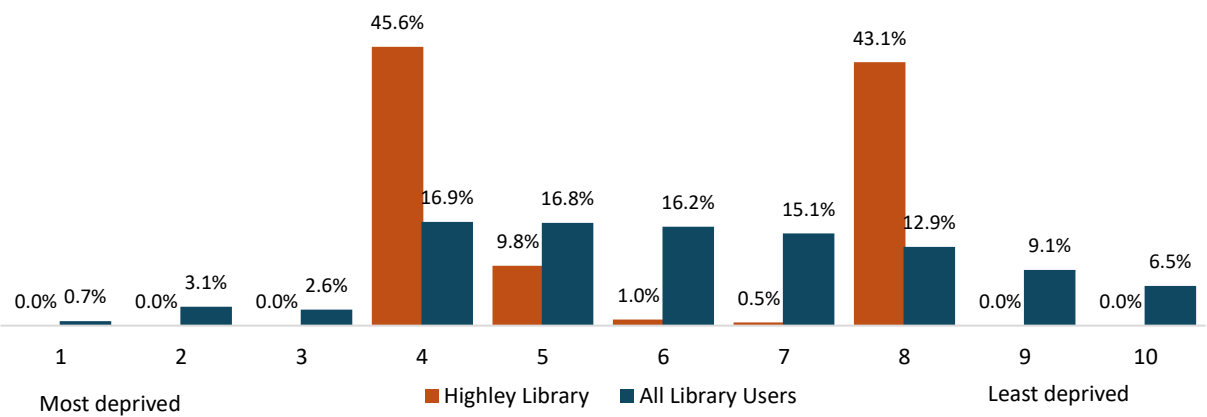
- Highley library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 3,733.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of 65+ but is broadly similar to the Shropshire breakdown.
- There are 1,668 households in the catchment, with no people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.24 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Highley Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Highley Library Users by IMD Decile



- Highley library is in the fourth decile according to the IMD 2019, which means it is one the 10 libraries in Shropshire located in the 40% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost half of users are drawn from this decile compared with 16.9% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further 43.1% of users live within the least deprived 30% of the country (all in decile 8).

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

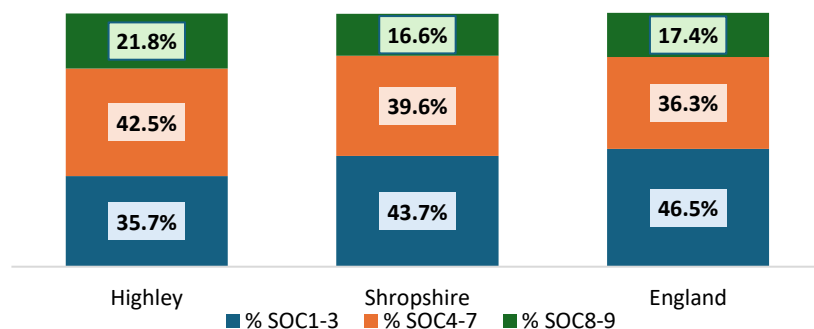
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Highley library catchment is much lower than the Shropshire average at 52.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Highley library catchment area is the 3rd lowest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 1,575 people in Highley were in employment in 2021, which equates with 50.3% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 35.7%. Notably more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and slightly more in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

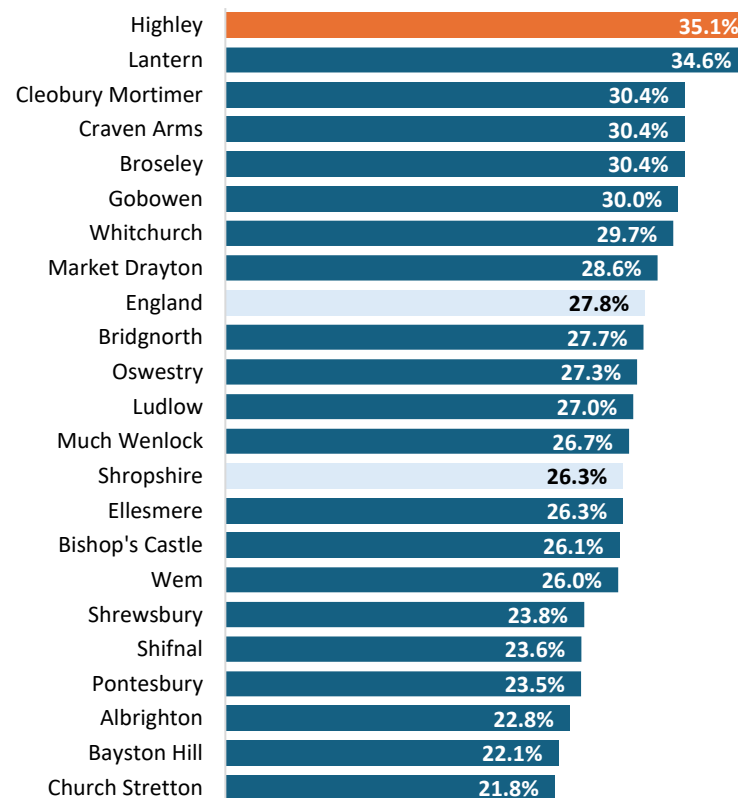
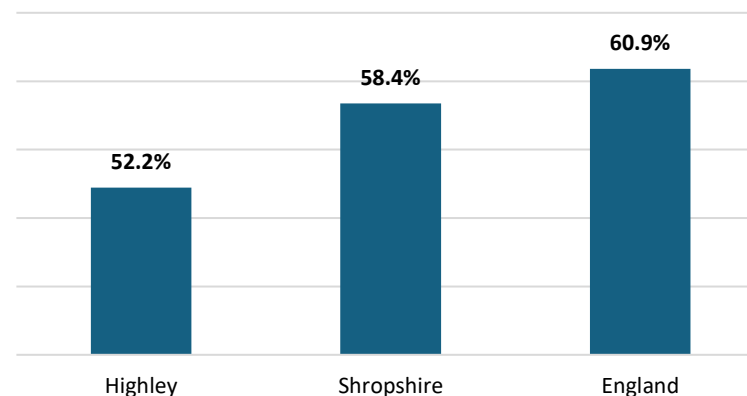
Highley: Occupation Types



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Highley population with no or low qualifications is the highest in Shropshire at 35.1% of the 16+ population.

Highley: Economic Activity Rate

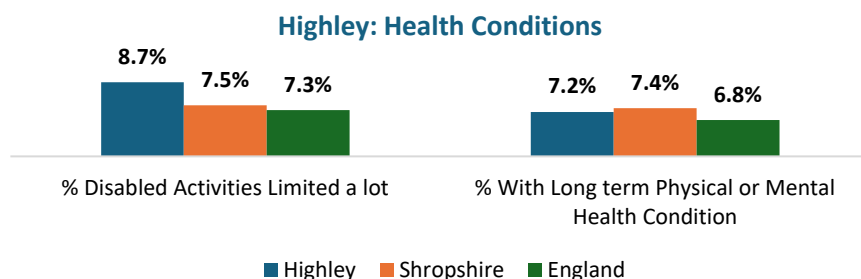


Unemployment

- 73 people living in the Highley catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England but is higher than for most library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

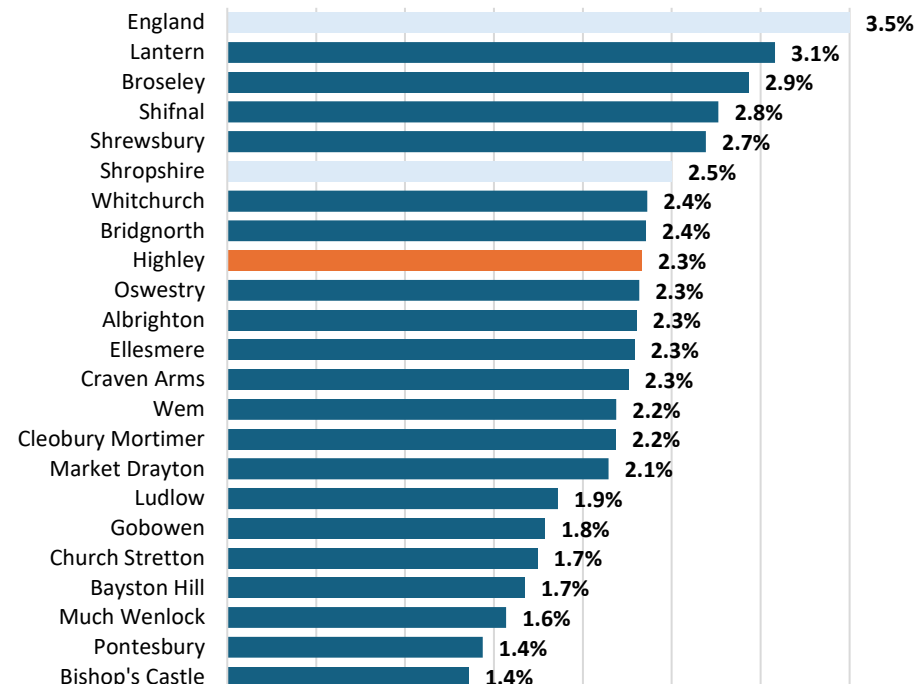
- 8.7% of residents in the Highley library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.2% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



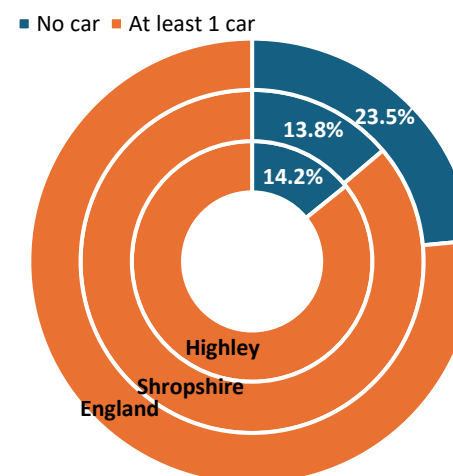
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Highley is slightly higher than the Shropshire average at 14.2%.

Unemployment rate



Highley: Percentage of Households with No Car



Library at the Lantern Profile

Background

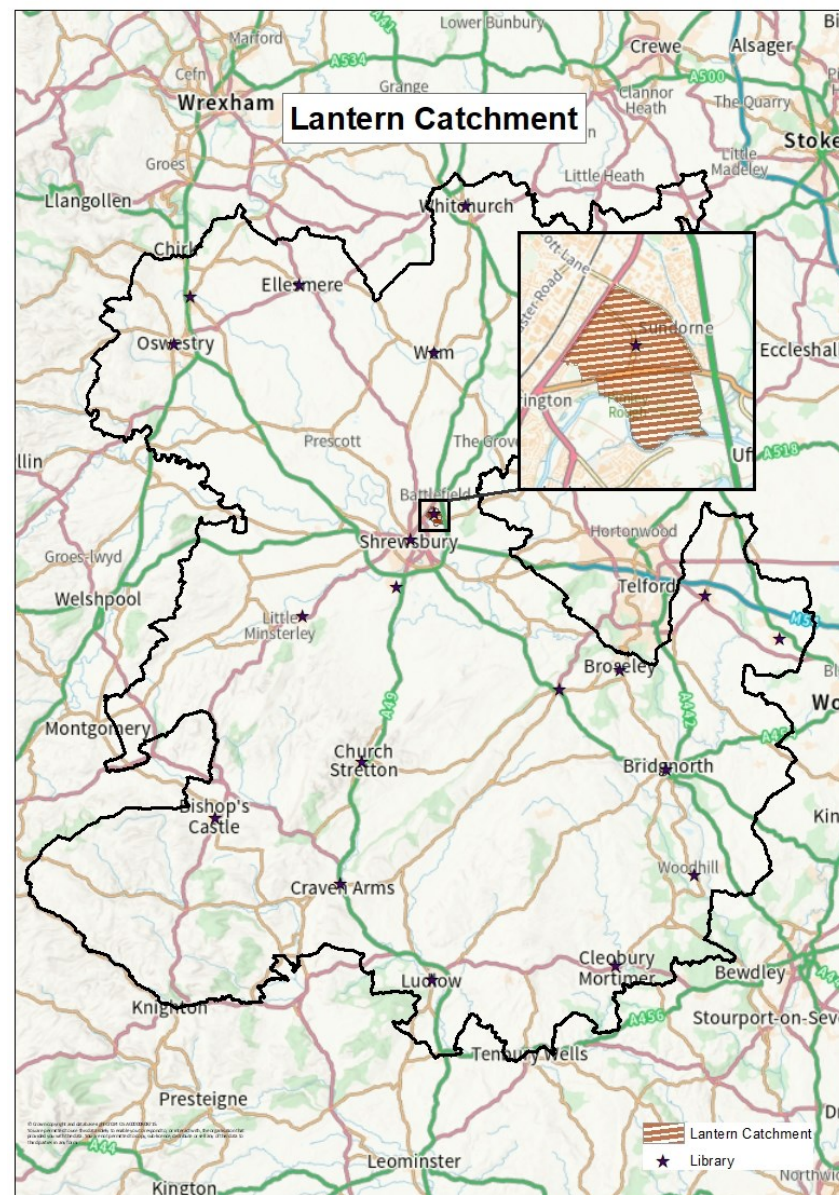
- The library at the Lantern is located in north east Shrewsbury, approximately two miles from the centre of town.
- The library is located within the Lantern Community building which has bookable rooms and a cafe. On-site parking is available.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 143 hectares which is less than 0.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely in Shropshire and is also entirely within the catchment for Shrewsbury's main library.
- The total population within the Lantern library catchment area is 4,618 comprising 1,845 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 24.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Friday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

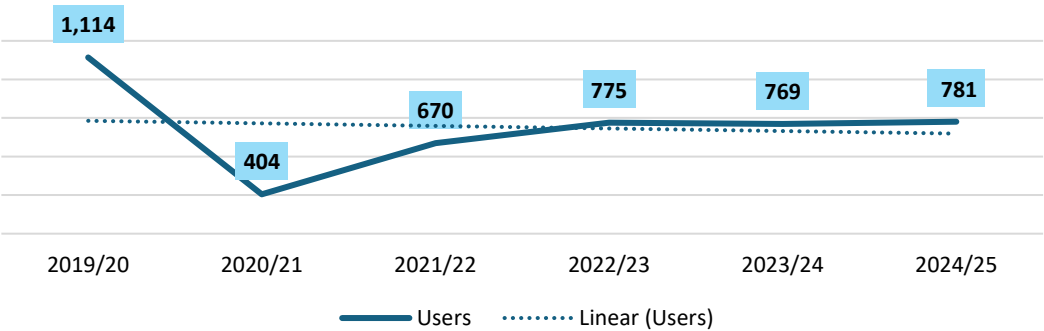
- The library has 1.21 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from 6 volunteers providing a total of 50 volunteer hours.



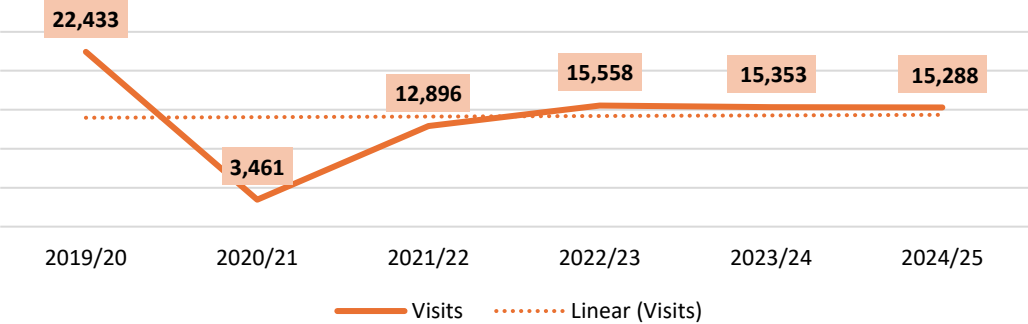
Library Users

- The Lantern library had 781 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 5.7% of the Lantern catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes other Shropshire libraries as well as the Lantern.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young adults and fewer users over the age of 50.

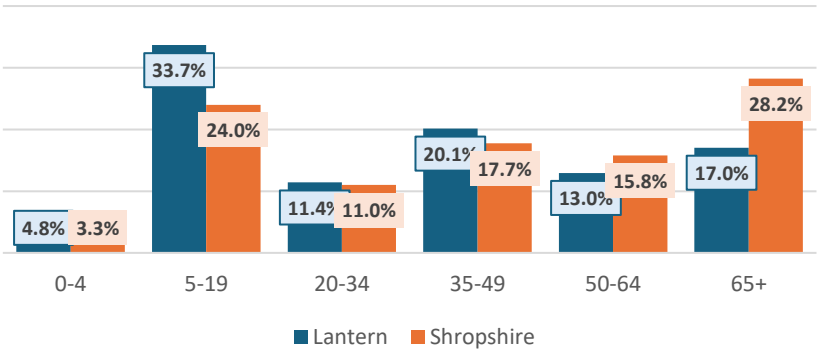
Lantern: Number of Active Users



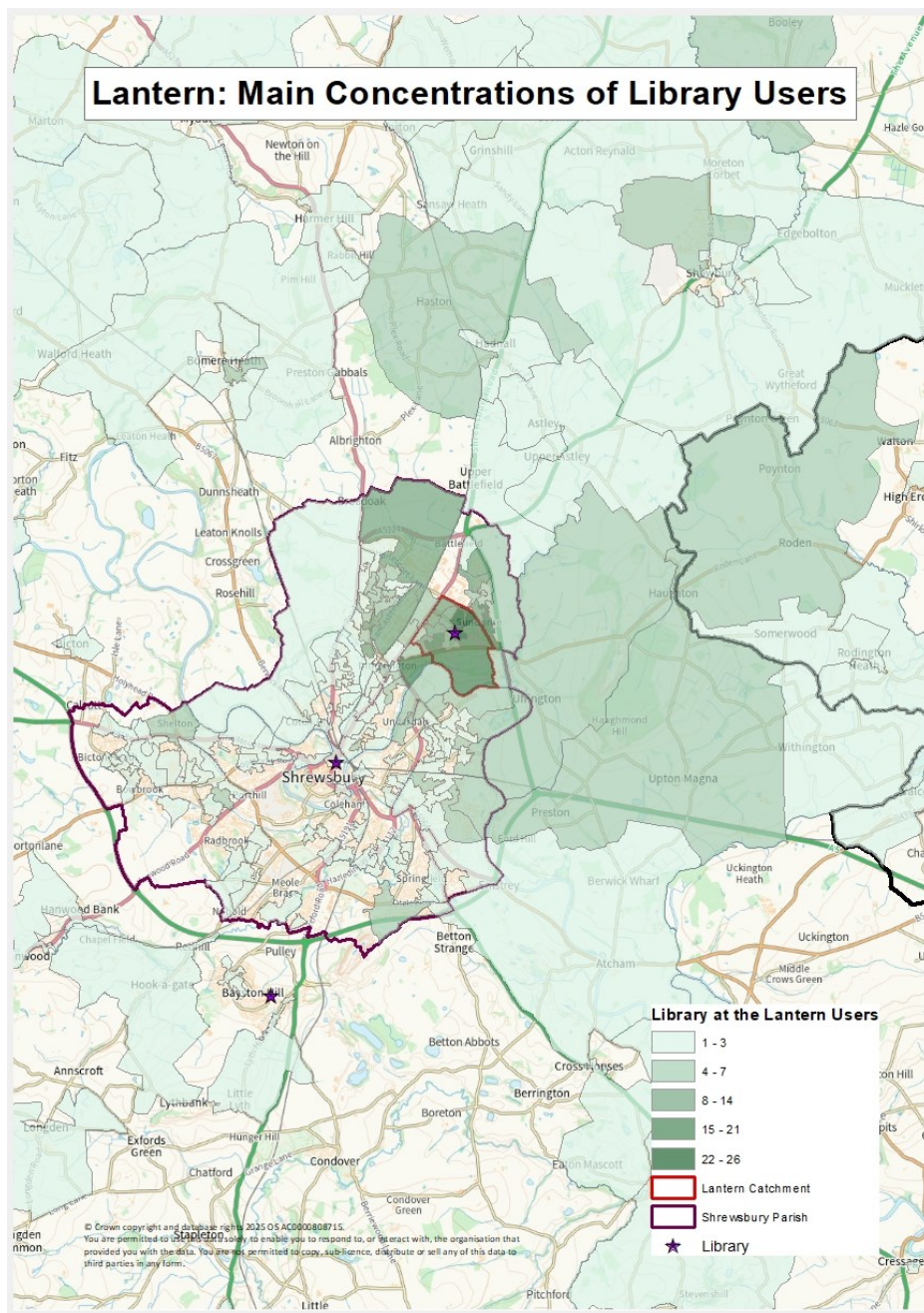
Lantern: Number of Visits



Breakdown of the Lantern Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery year-on-year. However, numbers are still down compared with the pre-pandemic period.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 333 users (-29.9%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 15,288, which is the equivalent of about 20 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has now recovered to the level seen pre-pandemic (20 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 31.9% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 24,980 loans were made in 2023/24, which equates with 32 per active user and 1.6 per visit.
- The number of loans rose by 4% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 11%.
- Computer usage was down by 35%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 28.5% of all Lantern library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is the lowest in Shropshire.
- The library catchment forms part of the Shrewsbury town council area – 80.4% of all Lantern library users live within this geography.
- 4.7% of the population in the catchment area are Lantern active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to 7.4%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 71.5% of Lantern library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury catchment.
- People that live in the Lantern catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library. Almost a third of library users living in the Lantern catchment use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 85.6% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with the Lantern library were to the Lantern, and these accounted for 88.1% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

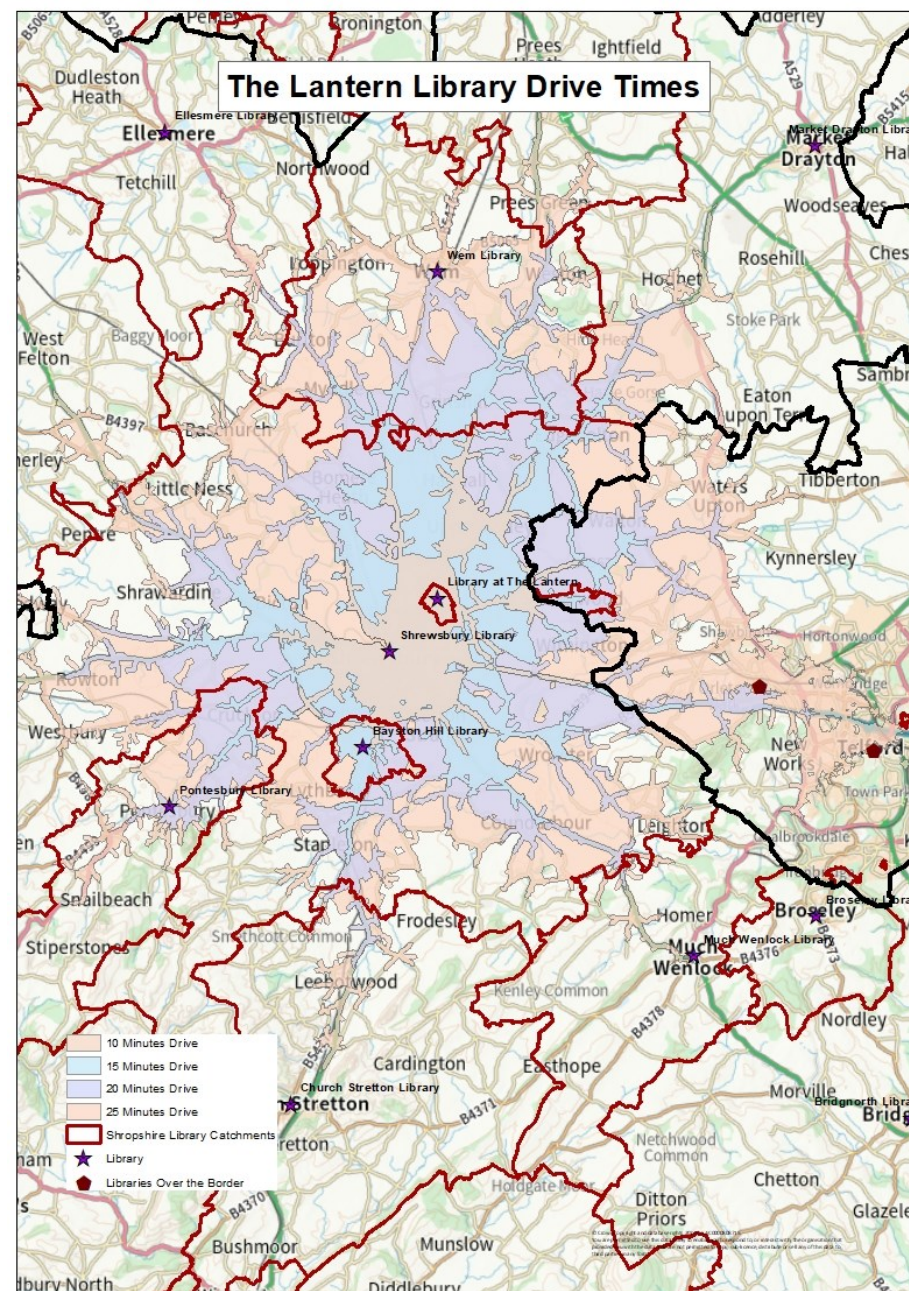
- The following table shows the proportion of active Lantern library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	37.6%
30 Minute Walk	57.1%
10 Minute Drive	83.6%
15 Minute Drive	91.7%
20 Minute Drive	94.2%
25 Minute Drive	96.8%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- The Lantern is in the north east of Shrewsbury in the centre of Shropshire.
- The closest library to the Lantern is Shrewsbury, which is located 2.1 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is eight minutes.
- It can also be reached via a regular bus service between which takes about 20-25 minutes.
- As shown on the adjacent map, Pontesbury, Bayston Hill, Much Wenlock and Wem libraries are all within a 25 minute drive of the Lantern.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
The Lantern	Shrewsbury	2.1 miles	8 mins	24 or 511 Bus	20-25 mins



Costs

- The Lantern is the 9th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the third most expensive after the main six.
- Annual running costs are £50,340 (2024/25).
- However, the library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£39.51	£66.37	12th
Per Active User	£64.46	£71.50	12th
Per Visit	£3.29	£5.71	13th
Per Book Loan	£2.02	£4.50	8th

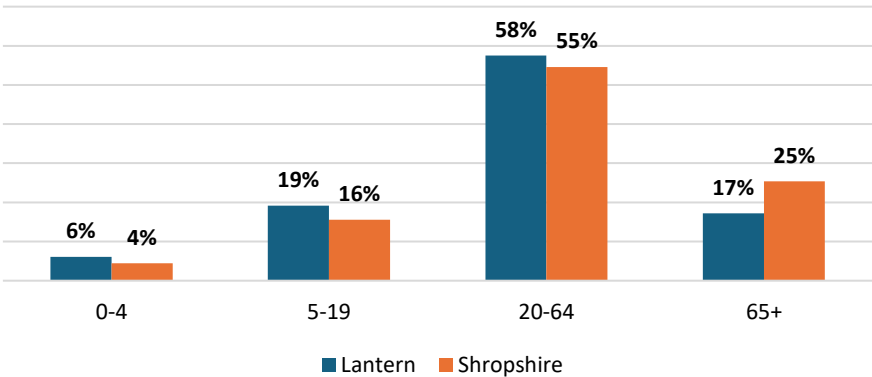
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Lantern Catchment Area

Population

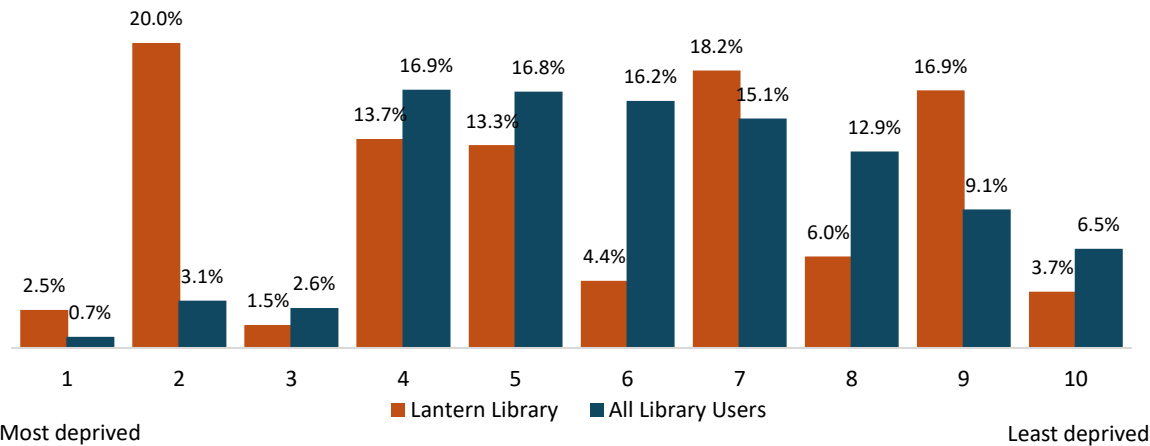
- The Lantern library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 4,618.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a higher proportion of children and young people and fewer adults over the age of 65.
- There are 1,845 households in the catchment, with 61 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.47 which is the largest of all catchments and compares with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of the Lantern Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Library at the Lantern Users by IMD Decile



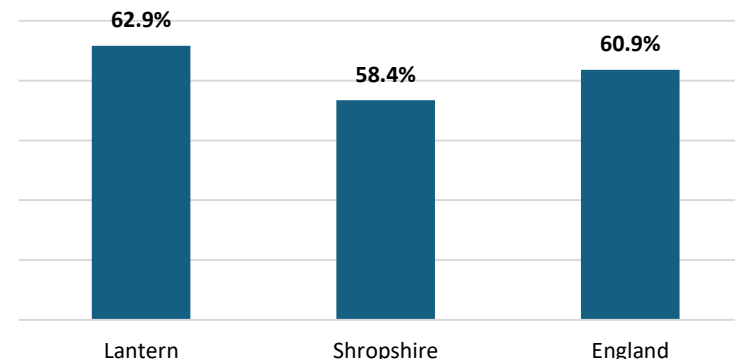
- The Lantern library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2019, which means it is one of only three Shropshire libraries located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that over a fifth live within the 20% most deprived areas nationally compared with 3.8% of all Shropshire library users.
- The library also attracts users from less deprived areas, with over a fifth living in the least deprived 20% of the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Lantern library catchment is much higher than the Shropshire average at 62.9% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also higher than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. However, the demographic profile of the Lantern catchment is much younger than the County average.
- The economic activity rate in the Lantern library catchment area is the 2nd highest in Shropshire.

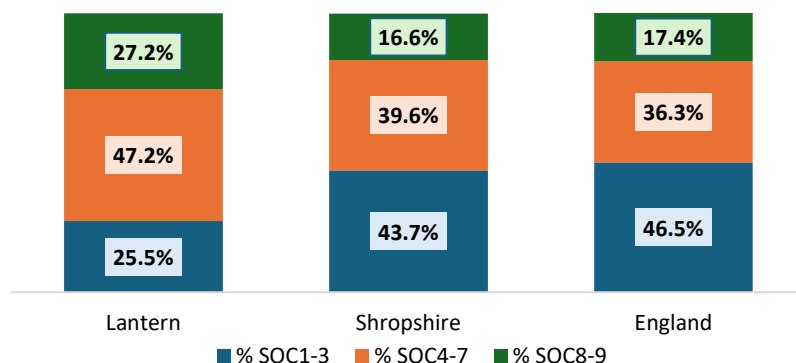
Lantern: Economic Activity Rate



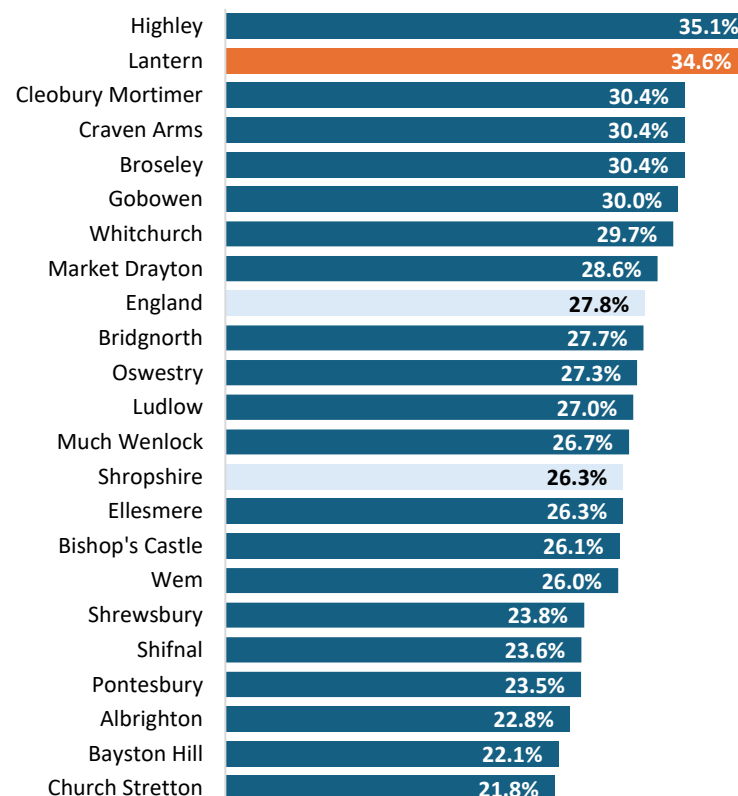
Employment

- 2,212 people in the Lantern catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 60.3% of the 16+ population.
- A much lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 25.5%. Notably more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Lantern: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Lantern population with no or low qualifications is the second highest in Shropshire at 34.6% of the 16+ population.

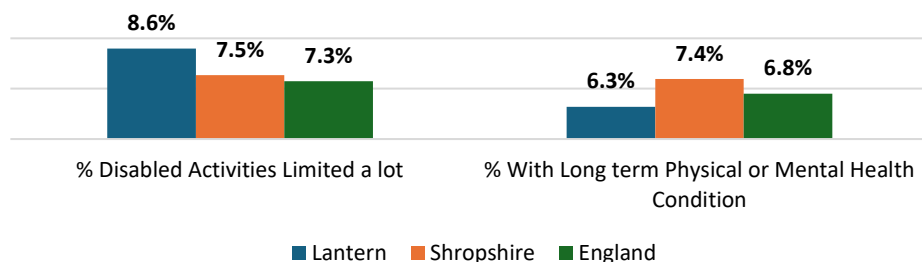
Unemployment

- 113 people living in the Lantern catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 3.1%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average but it is only marginally lower for the Lantern.

Health Conditions

- 8.6% of residents in the Lantern library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.3% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

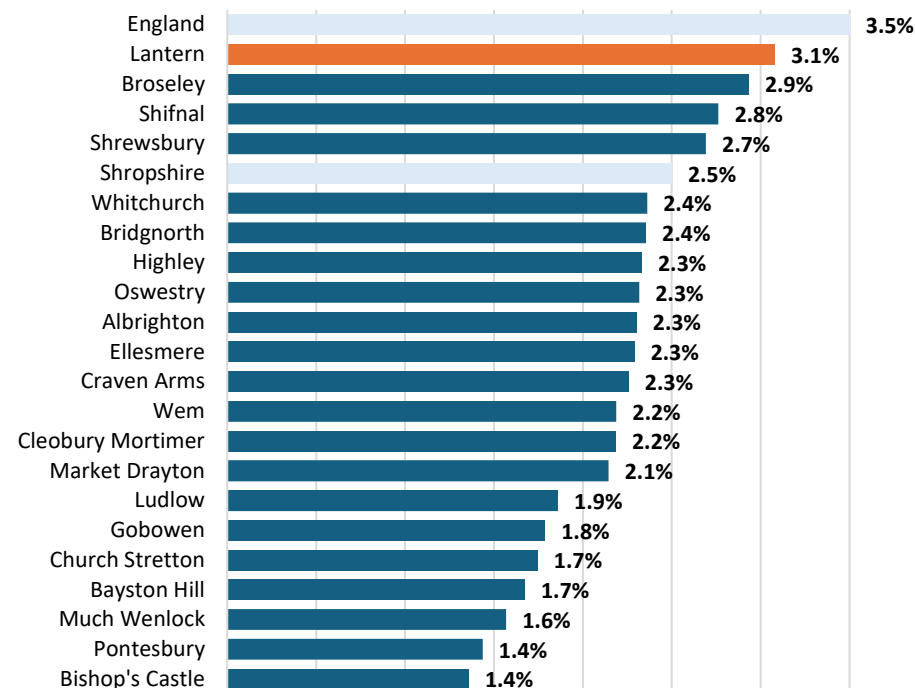
Lantern: Health Conditions



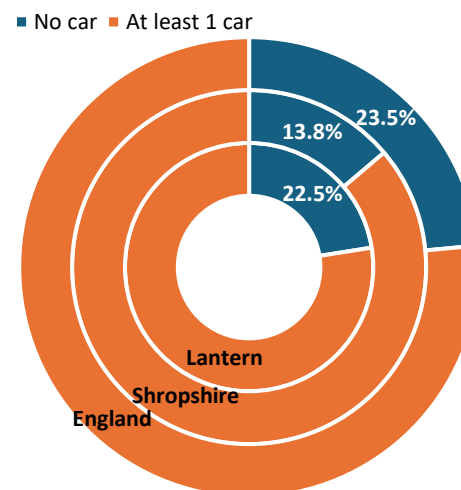
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in the Lantern catchment is much higher than the Shropshire average at 22.5%, which is close to the national average.

Unemployment rate



Lantern: Percentage of Households with No Car



Ludlow Library Profile

Background

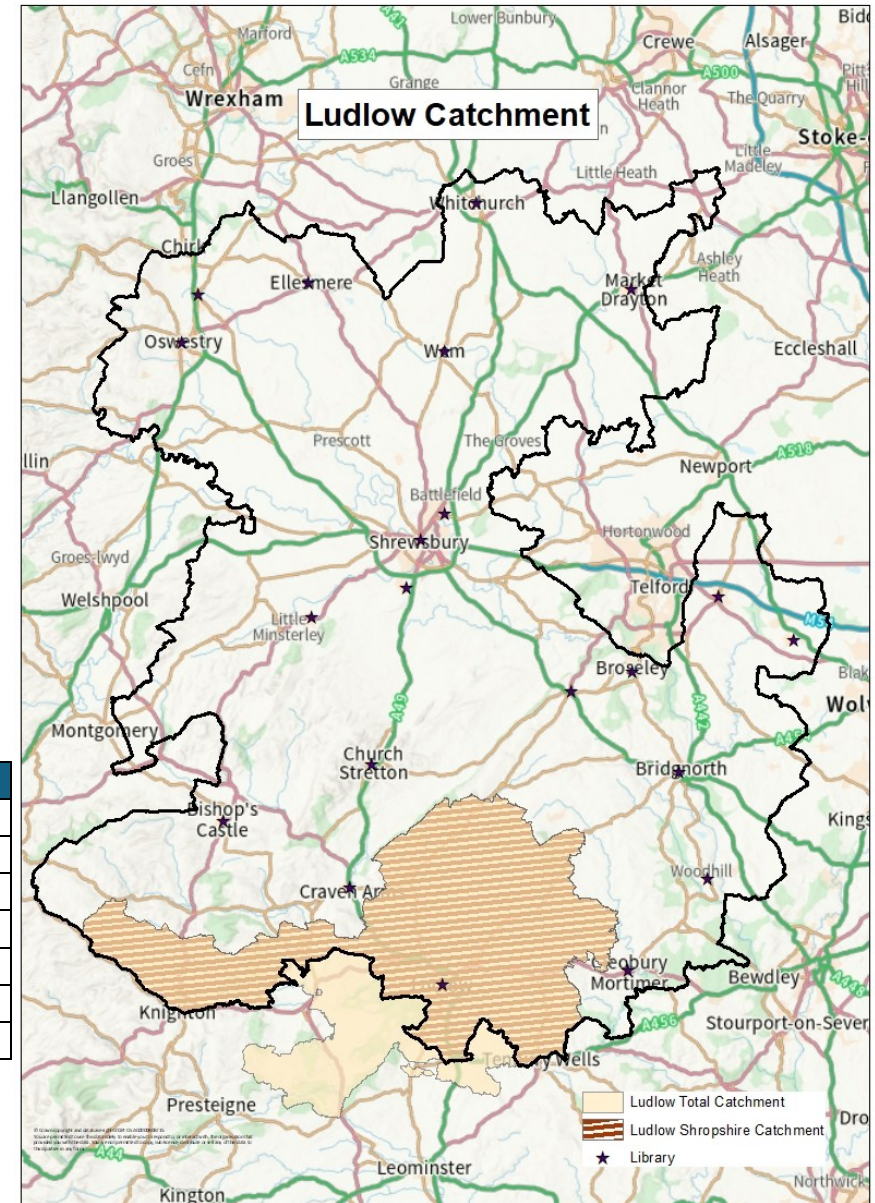
- Ludlow is a town in the south of Shropshire close to the Herefordshire border.
- The library is in purpose-built accommodation in the town centre which is owned and operated by Shropshire Council. It is adjacent to a public car park.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 44,684 hectares within Shropshire which is about 14% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends outside of the Shropshire border into Herefordshire – in fact 23% of the total catchment is not in Shropshire as shown on the adjacent map.
- The total population within the Ludlow library catchment area is 26,640 comprising 12,041 households. 84% of the catchment population – 22,334 people- are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Ludlow is the fifth largest catchment in Shropshire.

Opening Hours

The library is open 34.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

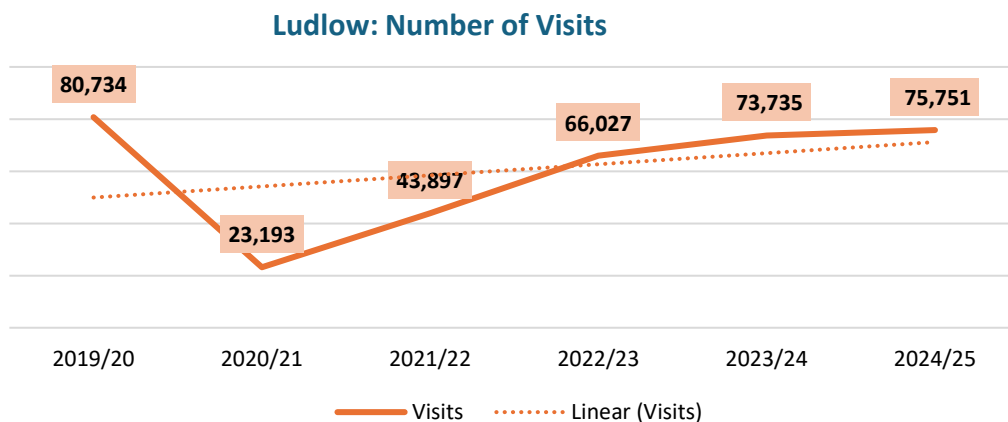
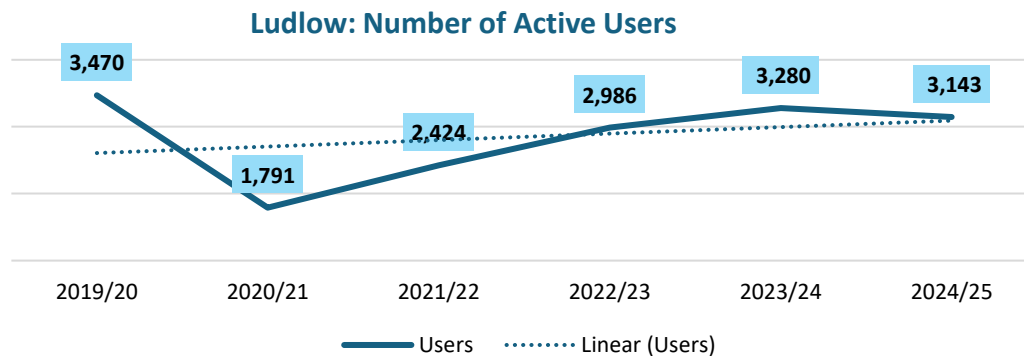
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 5.29 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 32 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 1,360 volunteer hours.

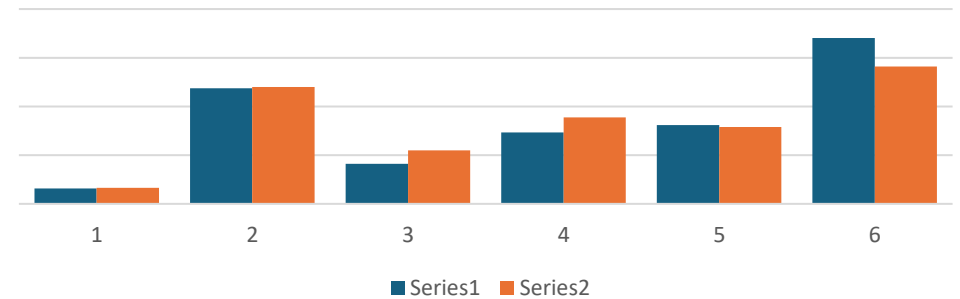


Library Users

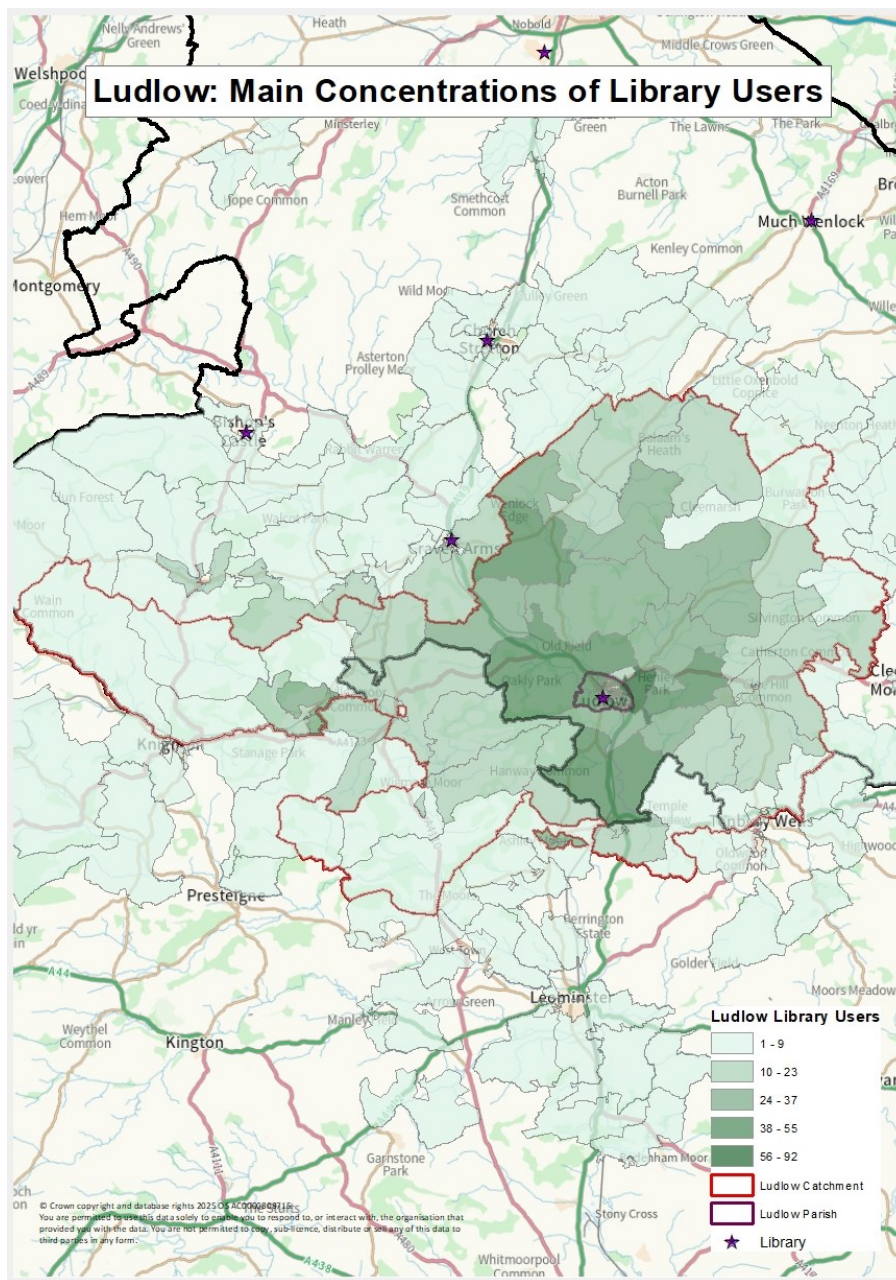
- Ludlow library had 3,143 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 9.7% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.4% of the Ludlow catchment population are active library users, which is comparable with the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries as well as Ludlow.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and young people and more users aged 50 and above.



Breakdown of Ludlow Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year to 2023/24, albeit with numbers still falling short of pre-pandemic levels. In 2024/25, user numbers fell by 137.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 327 users (-9.4%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 75,751, which is the equivalent of about 24 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels (23 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 6.2% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 56,550 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 18 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 1% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 13% over the last year.
- Computer time was down by 16%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 81.9% of all Ludlow library users live within the main catchment area.
- 51.6% live within the Ludlow town council area.
- 10.1% of the population in the catchment area are Ludlow active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 36.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 17.1% of Ludlow library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in Craven Arms. Significant numbers also live in Church Stretton, Bishop's Castle, Cleobury Mortimer and Bridgnorth. There are also relatively high numbers that live outside of Shropshire.
- People that live in the Ludlow catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Craven Arms library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 92.8% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Ludlow library were to Ludlow, and these accounted for 93.2% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Ludlow include Church Stretton, Craven Arms and Shrewsbury as well as the Brooks mobile service.

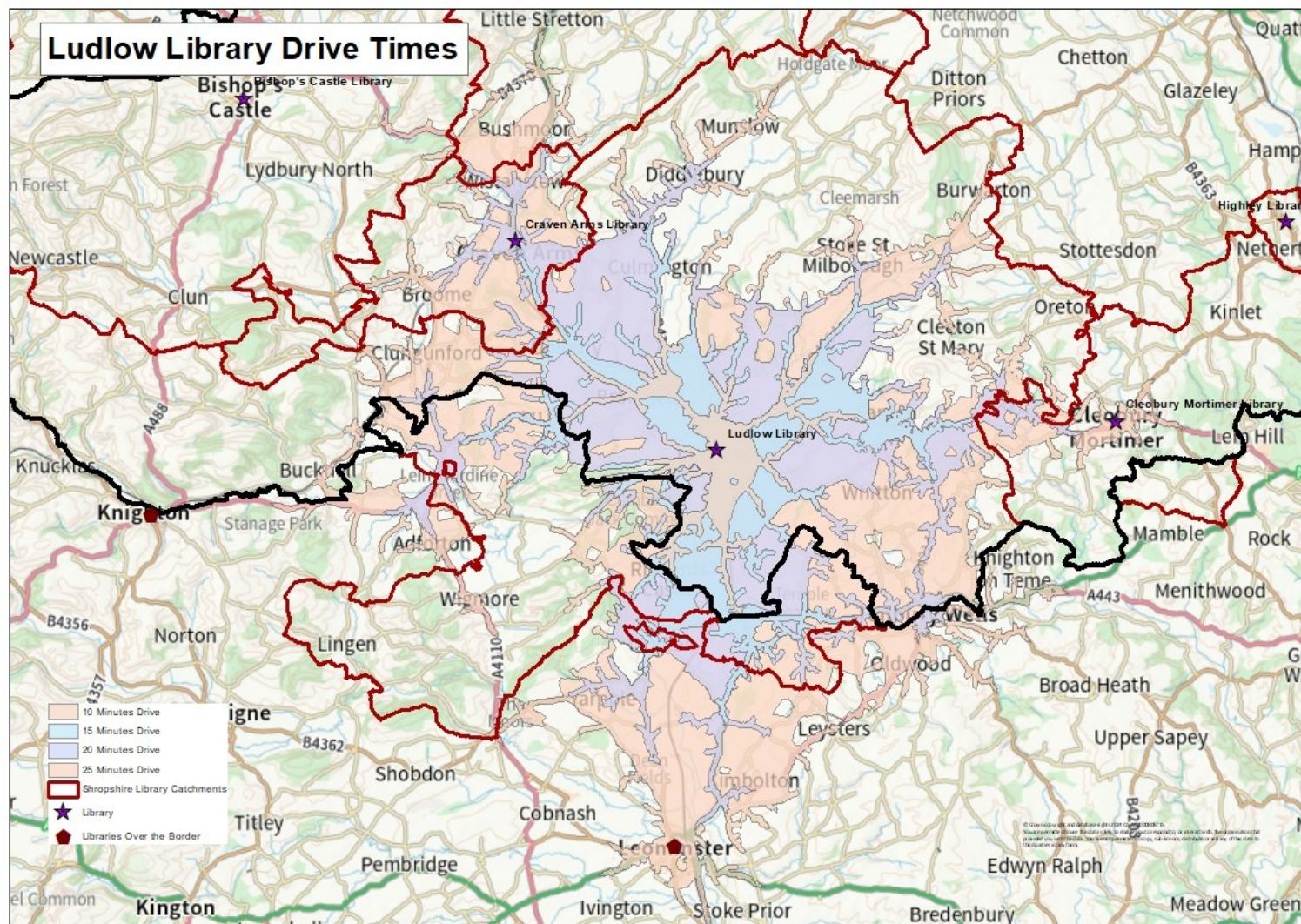
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Ludlow library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	34.1%
30 Minute Walk	57.4%
10 Minute Drive	59.9%
15 Minute Drive	73.3%
20 Minute Drive	82.6%
25 Minute Drive	89.1%

Access

- Ludlow is in the south of Shropshire close to the border with Herefordshire.
- Craven Arms is the closest alternative library, located approximately 7.9 miles north of Ludlow on the A49. Cleobury Mortimer library is also accessible within a 25-minute drive as is Leominster, over the border in Herefordshire.
- The nearest of other main six libraries is Bridgnorth, which is approximately 19.5 miles away with a drive time of 35 minutes. Shrewsbury is slightly further afield at 22.9 miles, or a 39-minute drive.



Costs

- Ludlow is the second most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury.
- Annual running costs are £441,850 (2024/25)
- Ludlow library costs more than average per active user, per visit and per book loan and is the most expensive of all per hour open.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£246.29	£66.37	22nd
Per Active User	£140.58	£71.50	21st
Per Visit	£5.83	£5.71	19th
Per Book Loan	£7.81	£4.50	20th

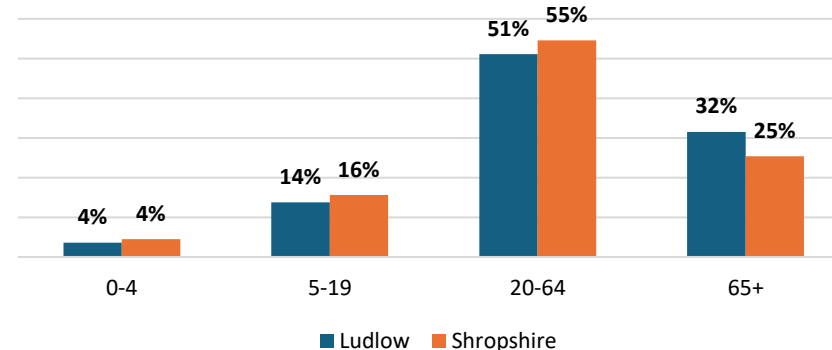
Includes HMP Stoke Heath 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ludlow Catchment Area

Population

- Ludlow library catchment is the fifth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 22,334 and a total population of 26,640.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There are 12,041 households in the catchment, with 304 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.19 which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

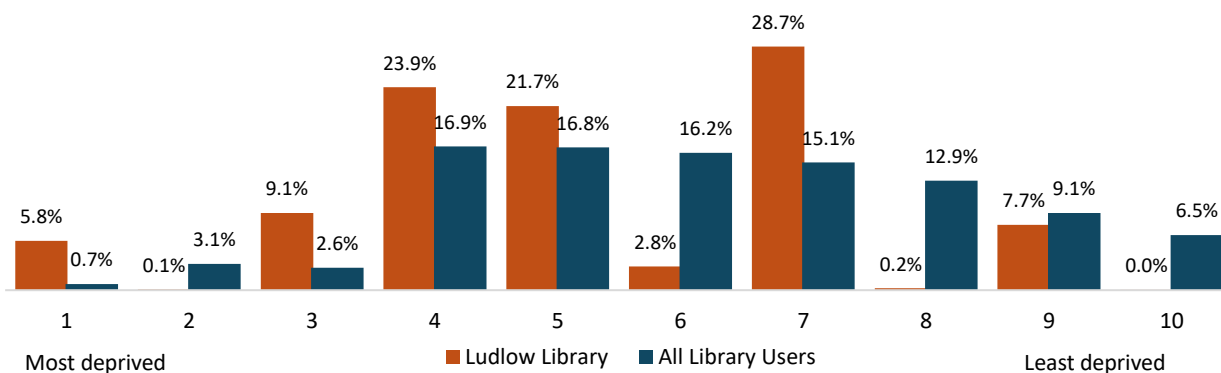
Age Breakdown of Ludlow Catchment



Includes Non-Shropshire Population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Ludlow Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Ludlow library is in decile three according to the 2019 IMD, which means that it is one of seven Shropshire libraries within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 15.0% of Ludlow library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (6.5% for all Shropshire library users).
- More than three-quarters of users are drawn from deciles four, five, six and seven, with 7.9% living in the least deprived 30% of England.

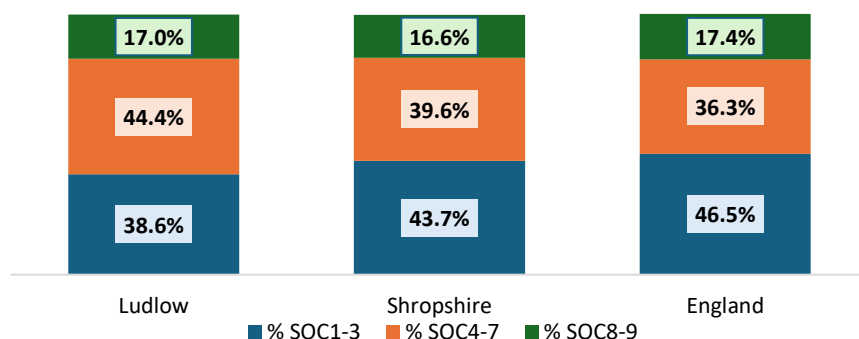
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Ludlow library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 54.1% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Ludlow catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Ludlow library catchment area is the third lowest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 12,049 people in Ludlow were in employment in 2021, which equates with 52.5% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 38.6%. More are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) while a similar proportion work in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Ludlow: Occupation Types



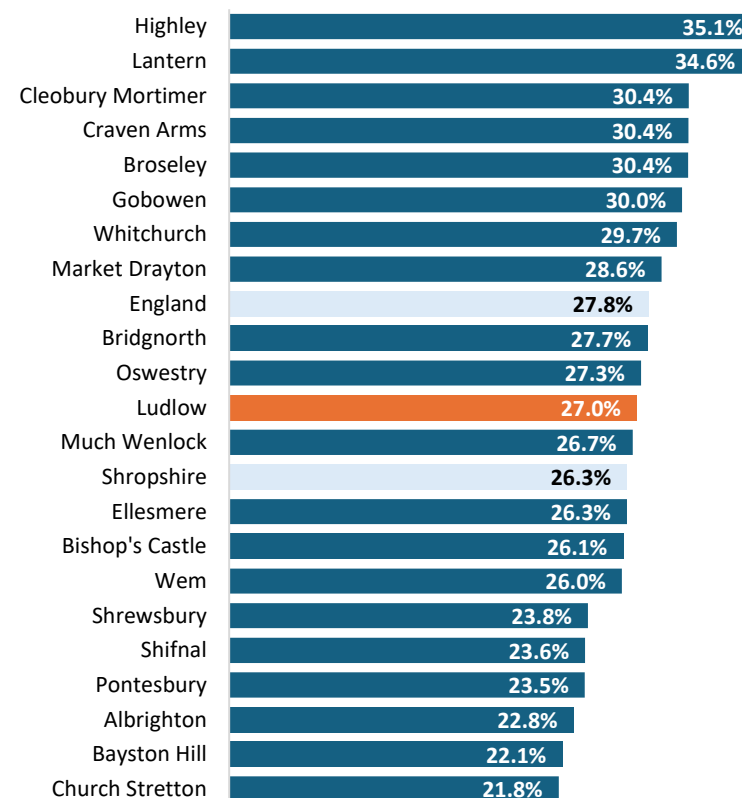
Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Ludlow population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.0%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

Ludlow: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

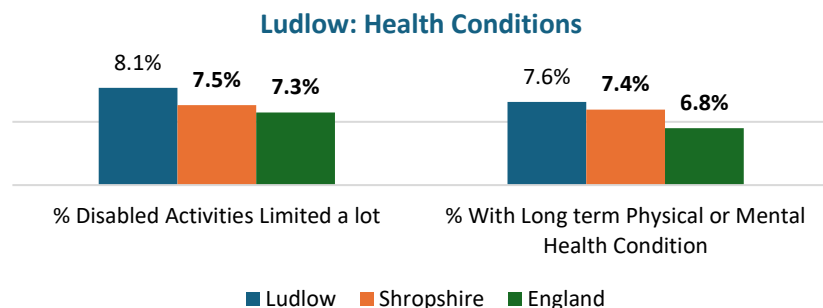


Unemployment

- 427 people living in the Ludlow catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.9%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

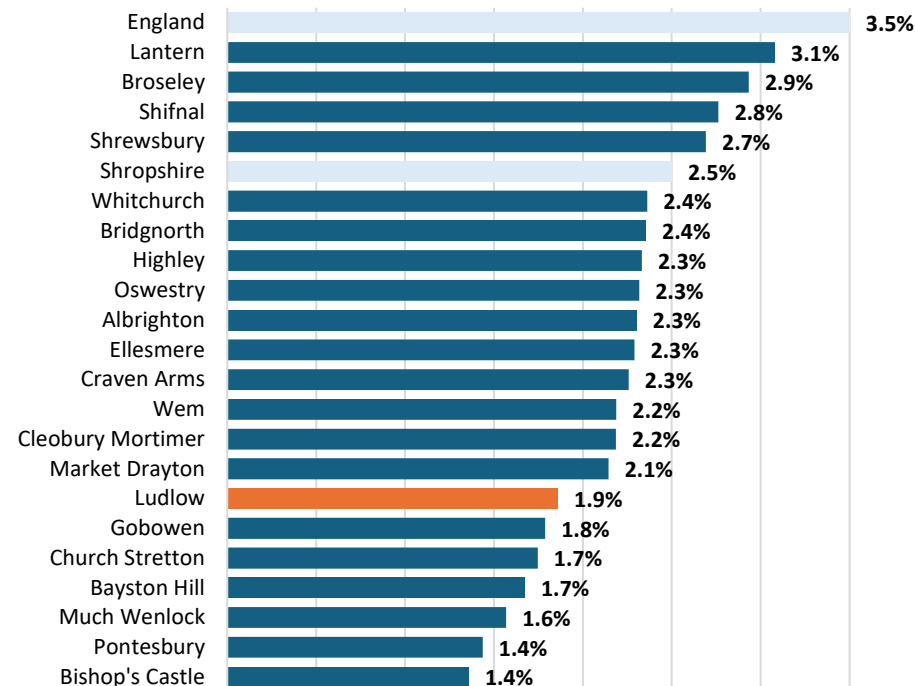
- 8.1% of residents in the Ludlow library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



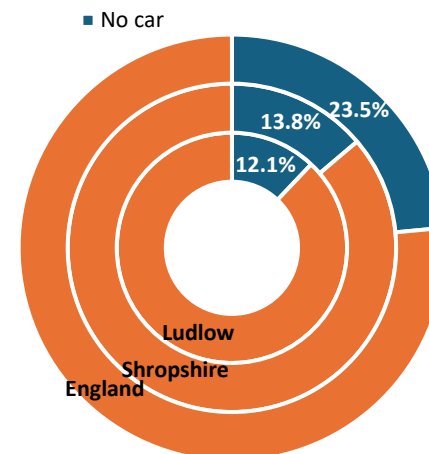
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Ludlow households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 12.1%.

Unemployment rate



Ludlow: Percentage of Households with No Car



Market Drayton Library Profile

Background

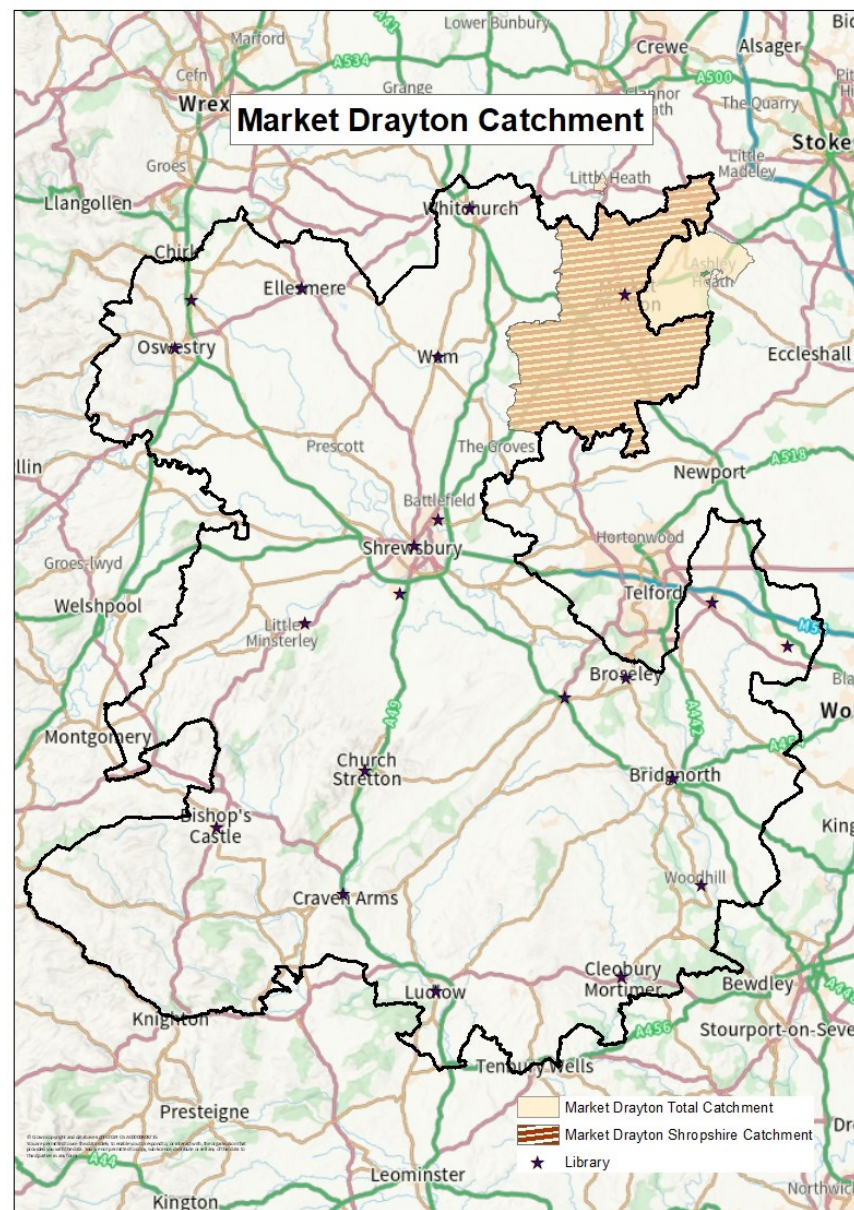
- Market Drayton is a town in the north east of Shropshire close to the Staffordshire border.
- The library is in the centre of town in a flat-roofed building dating back to 1974. The library is owned and operated by Shropshire Council, but there are parts of the building that are owned by third parties.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 22,702 hectares within Shropshire which is about 7.1% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends outside of the Shropshire border into Staffordshire – in fact 17% of the total catchment is not in Shropshire as shown on the adjacent map.
- The total population within the Market Drayton library catchment area is 27,826 comprising 11,294 households. 87% of the catchment population – 24,209 people- are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Market Drayton is the fourth largest catchment in Shropshire.

Opening Hours

The library is open 34.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

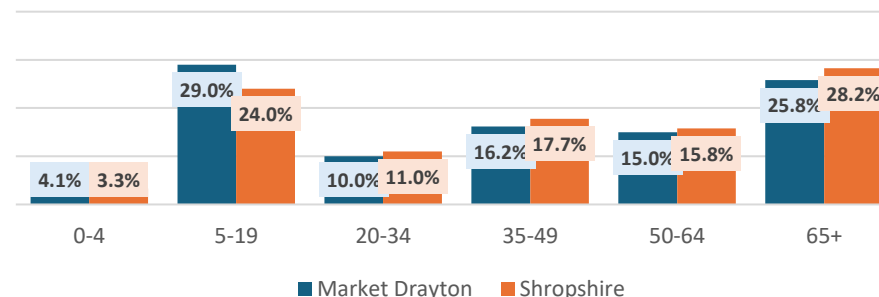
- The library employs 3.67 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 37 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 824 volunteer hours.



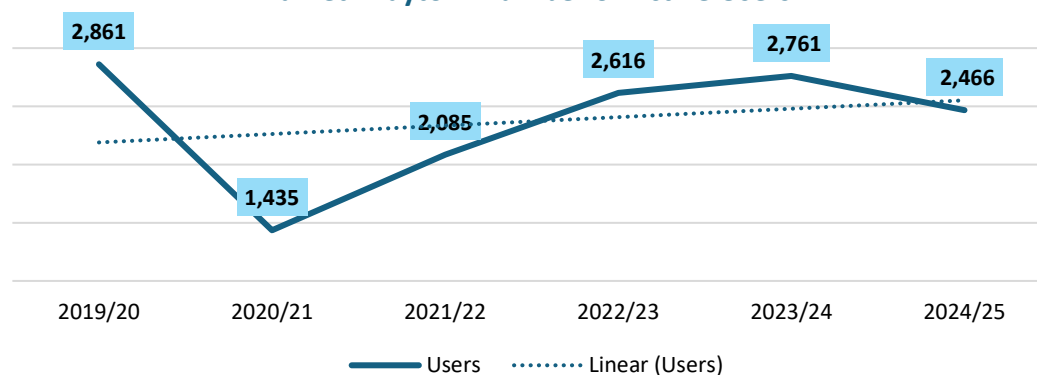
Library Users

- Market Drayton library had 2,466 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 7.6% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.8% of the Market Drayton catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes usage of all Shropshire libraries, not just Market Drayton.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and fewer users aged 50 and above.

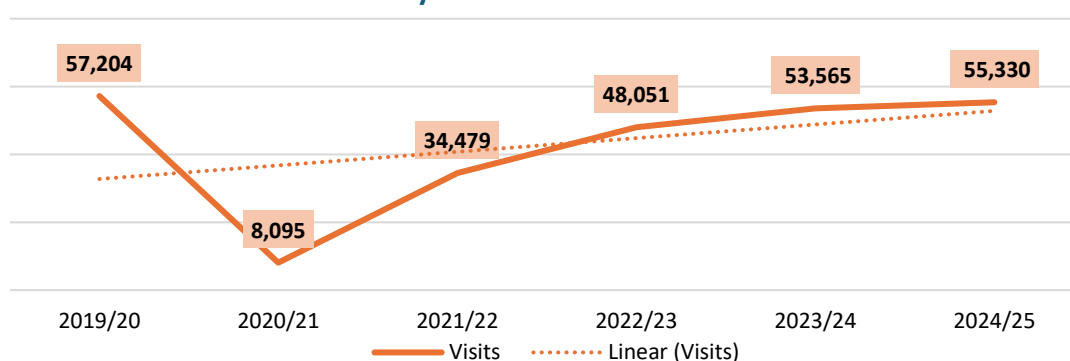
Breakdown of Market Drayton Library Users by Age



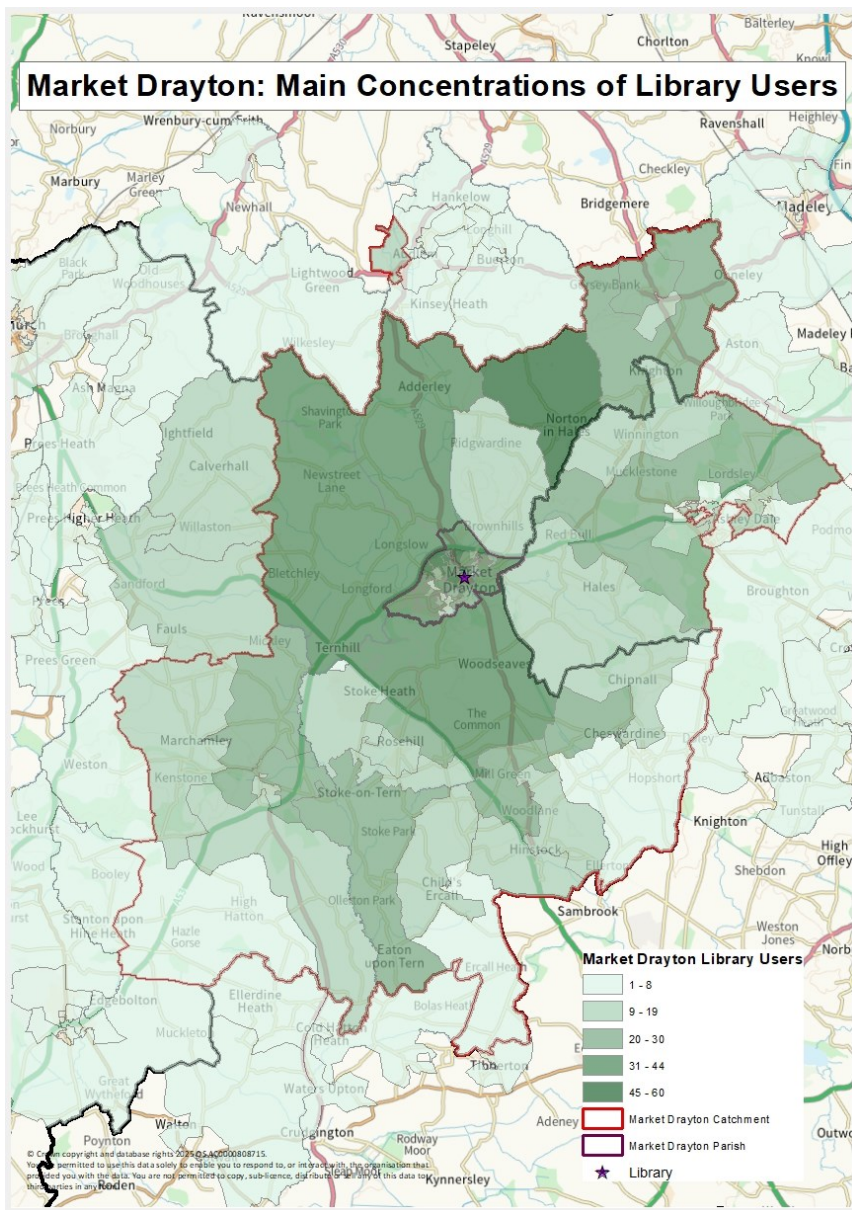
Market Drayton: Number of Active Users



Market Drayton: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year until 2024.25, when the number of users reduced by 295. User numbers have yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 395 users (-13.8%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 55,330, which is the equivalent of about 22 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels (20 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 3.3% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 38,519 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 9% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 1% over the last year.
- Computer time was up by 8%.



Geographic Location of Library Users

- 83.6% of all Market Drayton library users live within the main catchment area.
- 54.9% live within the Market Drayton town council area.
- 7.7% of the population in the catchment area are Market Drayton active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to over 20%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 16.4% of Market Drayton library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in Whitchurch or Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Market Drayton catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library or the library at Stoke's Heath YO1.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 95.1% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Market Drayton library were to Market Drayton, and these accounted for 94.9% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Market Drayton include Shrewsbury, the Lantern, Oswestry and Wem as well as the Owen mobile service.

Walk/Drive Times

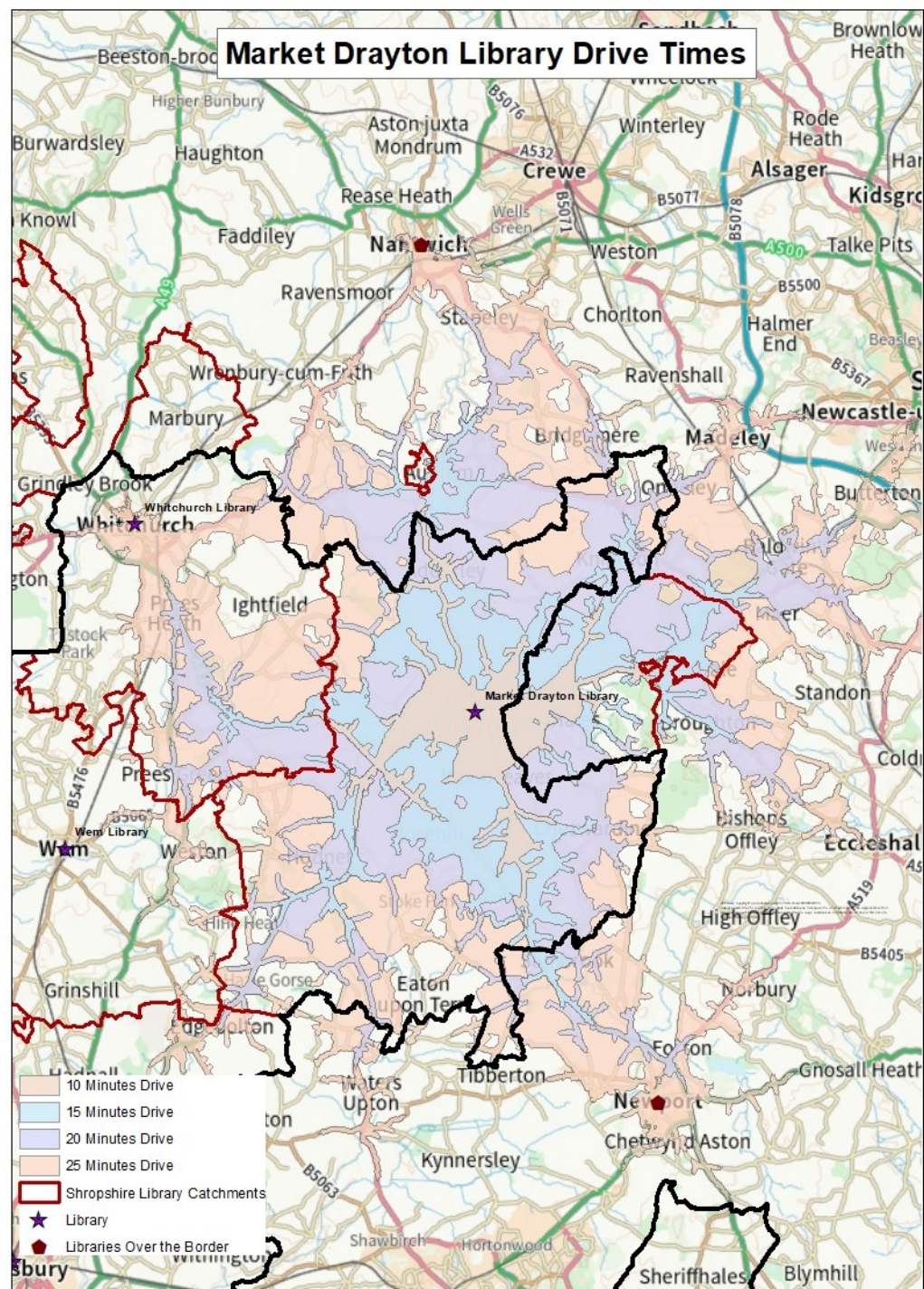
- The following table shows the proportion of active Market Drayton library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	32.0%
30 Minute Walk	57.9%
10 Minute Drive	67.6%
15 Minute Drive	84.0%
20 Minute Drive	92.5%
25 Minute Drive	96.6%

Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Access

- Market Drayton is in the northeast of Shropshire close to the border with Staffordshire.
- Whitchurch is the closest alternative library, located approximately 12.7 miles west of Market Drayton via the A53 and A41. According to the AA route planner, the journey time between the two libraries is 24 minutes.
- Two out-of-county libraries are also within a 25 minute drive time – Nantwich to the north in Cheshire and Newport in Telford & Wrekin.



Costs

- Market Drayton is the fifth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Oswestry and Bridgnorth.
- Annual running costs are £195,410 (2024/25).
- Market Drayton library costs more than average per active user, per book loan and per hour open but is less expensive than average per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£108.92	£66.37	18th
Per Active User	£79.24	£71.50	14th
Per Visit	£3.53	£5.71	14th
Per Book Loan	£5.07	£4.50	15th

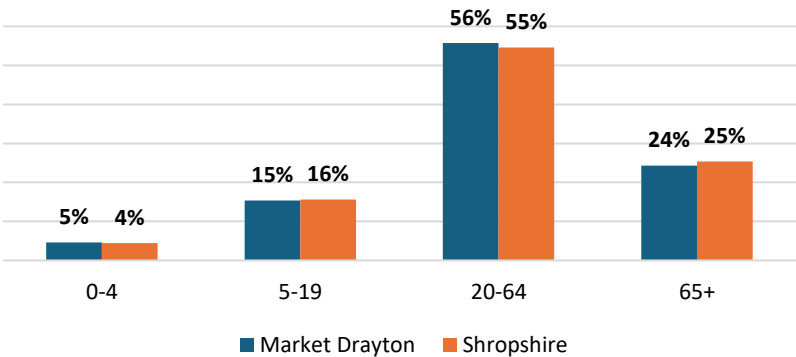
Includes HMP Stoke Heath 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Market Drayton Catchment Area

Population

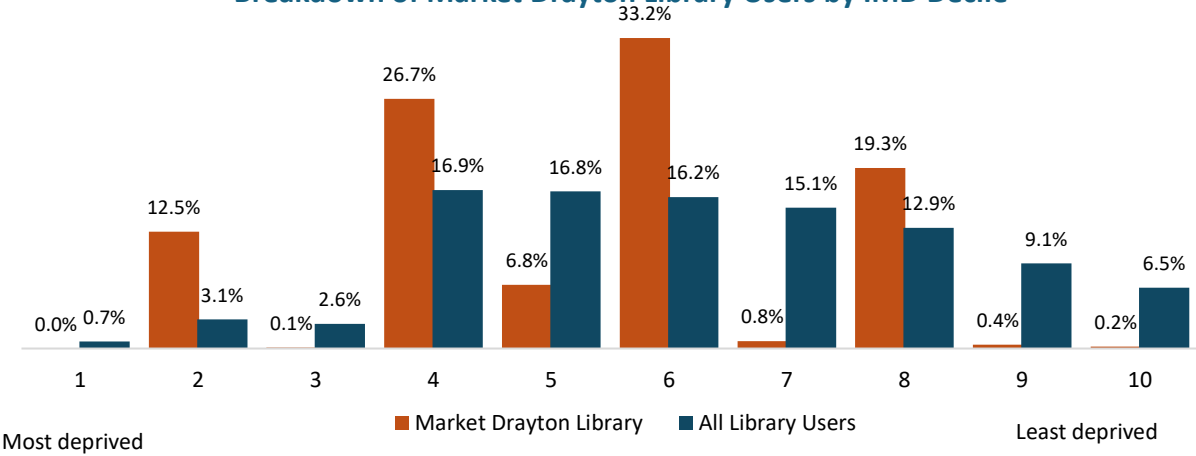
- Market Drayton library catchment is the fourth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 24,209 and a total population of 27,826.
- The age breakdown of the population is broadly similar to the Shropshire breakdown.
- There are 11,294 households in the catchment, with 1,266 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.35 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Market Drayton Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Market Drayton Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

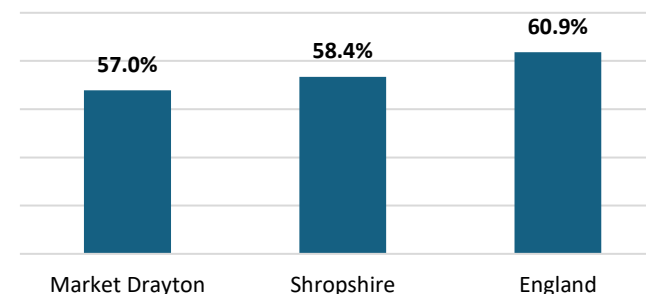
Market Drayton includes Non-Shropshire Population

- Market Drayton library is in decile two according to the 2019 IMD, which means that it is one of three Shropshire libraries within the 20% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 12.6% of Market Drayton library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (6.5% for all Shropshire library users)
- Around two-thirds of users are drawn from deciles four, five and six, with almost a fifth living in the least deprived 30% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Market Drayton library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 57.0% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Market Drayton library catchment area is the tenth highest in Shropshire.

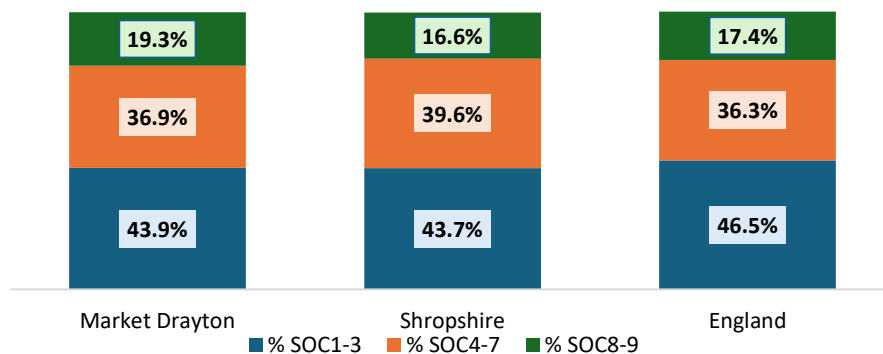
Market Drayton: Economic Activity Rate



Employment

- 12,857 people in Market Drayton were in employment in 2021, which equates with 55.0% of the 16+ population.
- A similar proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 43.9%. Fewer are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) while a slightly higher proportion work in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

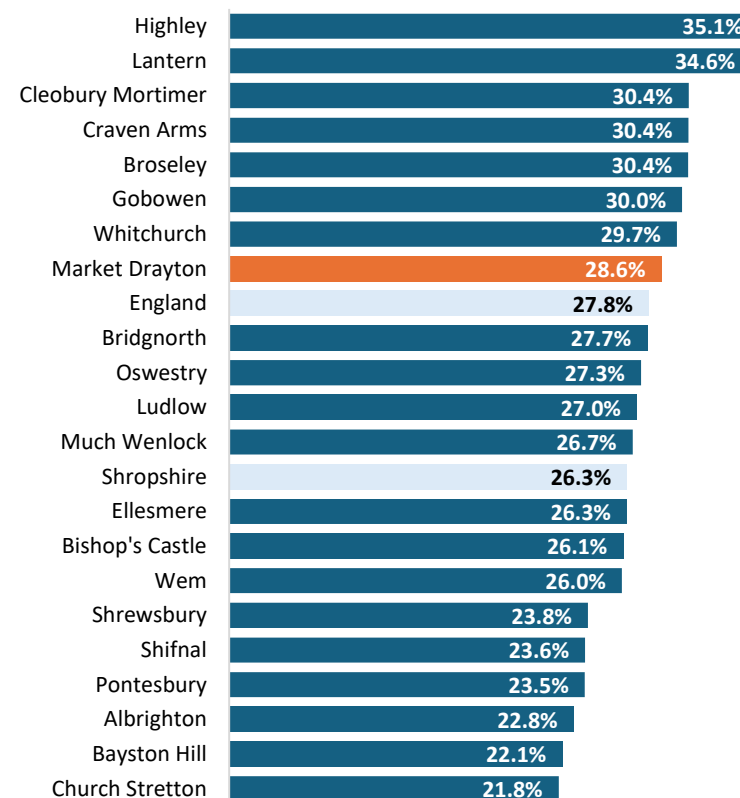
Market Drayton: Occupation Types



Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Market Drayton population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 28.6%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



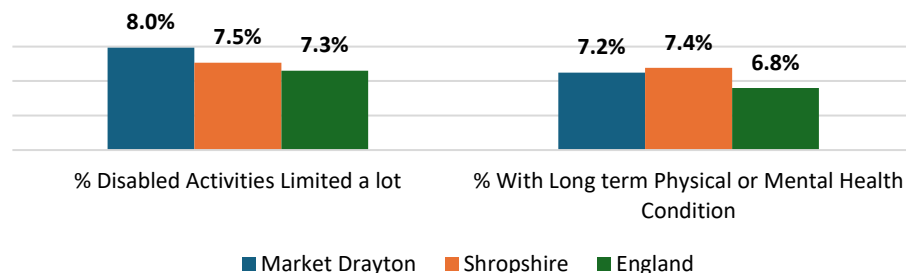
Unemployment

- 501 people living in the Market Drayton catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.1%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 8.0% of residents in the Market Drayton library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.2% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).

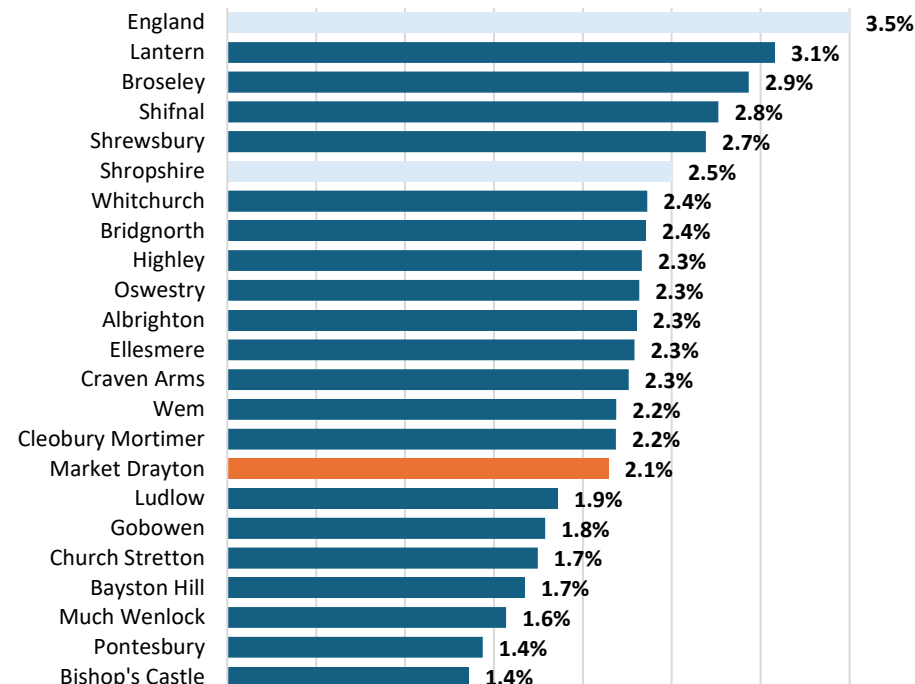
Market Drayton: Health Conditions



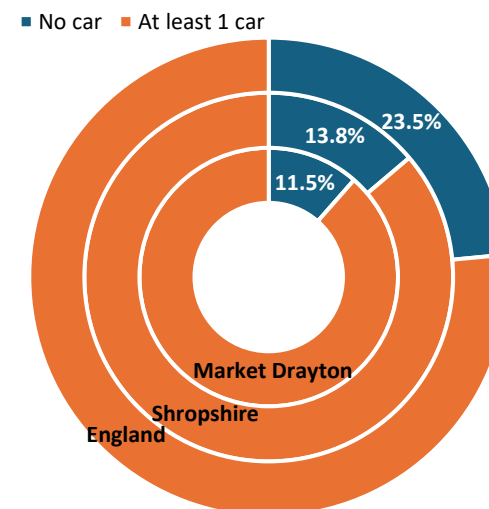
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Market Drayton households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.5%.

Unemployment rate



Market Drayton: Percentage of Households with No Car



Much Wenlock Library Profile

Background

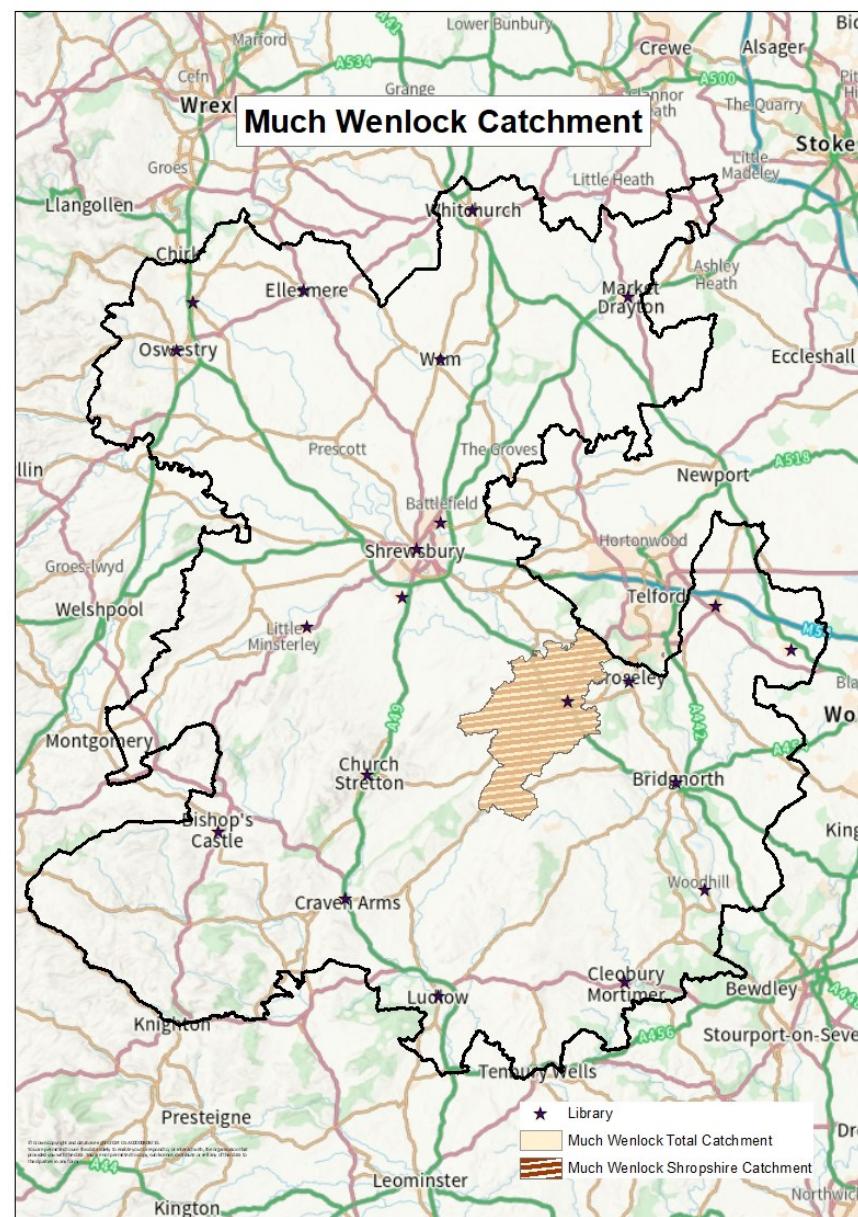
- Much Wenlock is located south east of Shrewsbury, between the county town and Bridgnorth.
- The library is located on the ground floor of the imposing Grade II listed Corn Exchange in the centre of the town. The building is owned by Much Wenlock Town Council. Parking is available to the rear.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 10,051 hectares which is approximately 3.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends very slightly out of Shropshire into Telford & Wrekin.
- The total population within the Much Wenlock library catchment area is 5,345 comprising 2,294 households. 92.4% of the population live in Shropshire – the equivalent of 4,938 people.

Opening Hours

The library is open 16.5 hours a week according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	9.30am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	9.50am-13.00pm 14.00pm -17.00pm	6.5
Friday	Closed	0
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

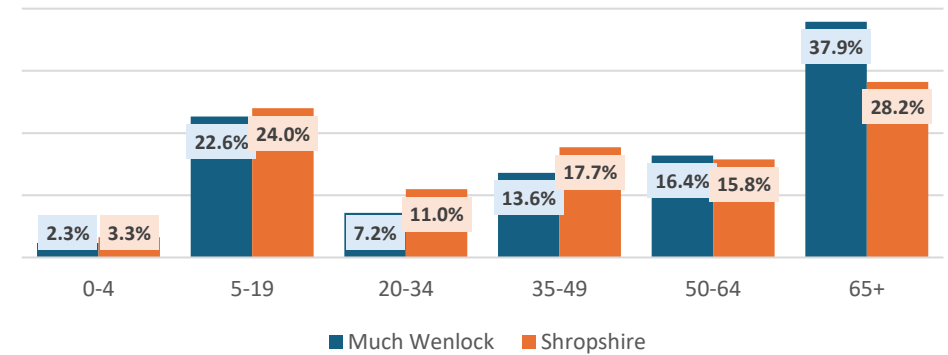
- The library has 0.5 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from 3 volunteers providing a total of 250 volunteer hours.



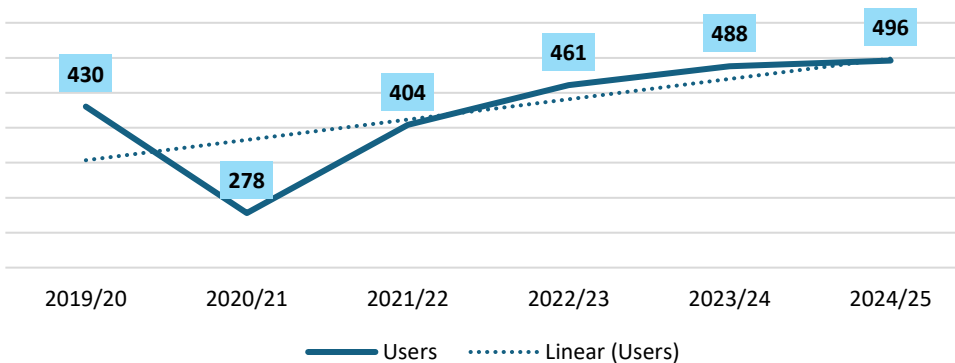
Library Users

- Much Wenlock library had 496 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.5% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.6% of the Much Wenlock catchment population are active library users, which is about the same as the Shropshire average. This includes usage at other Shropshire libraries as well as Much Wenlock.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there fewer children and young adults and more users over the age of 65.

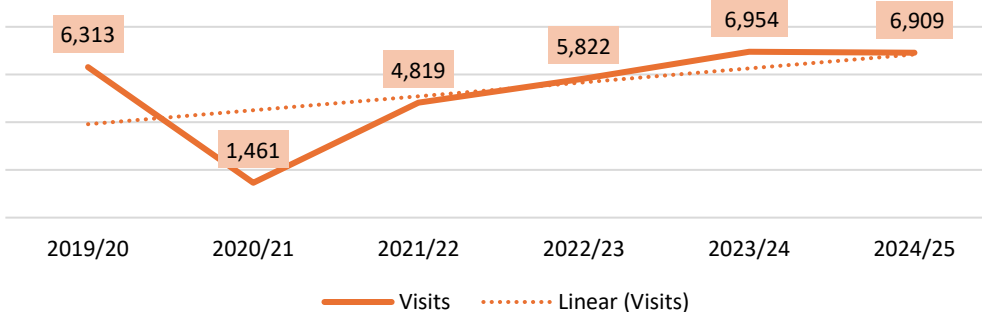
Breakdown of Much Wenlock Library Users by Age



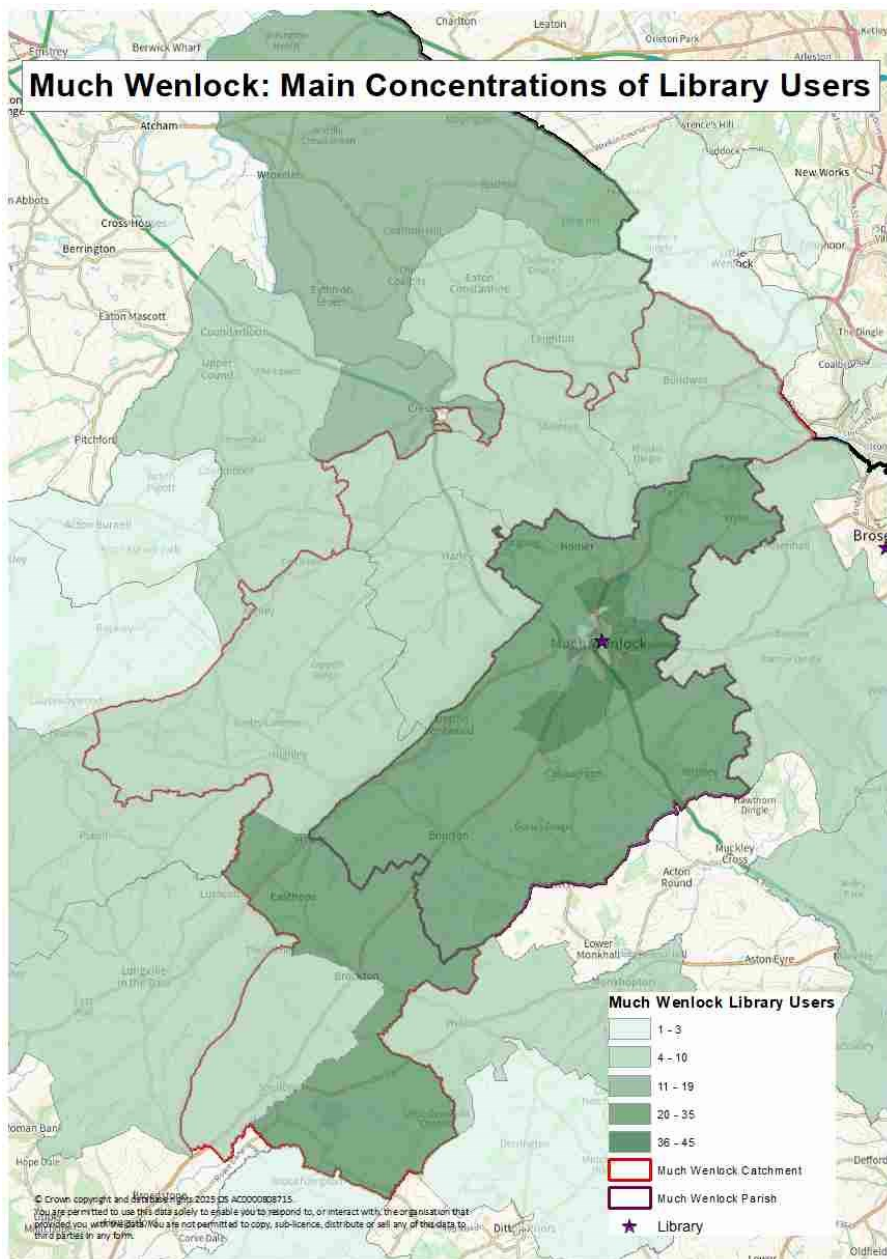
Much Wenlock: Number of Active Users



Much Wenlock: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year and numbers are now higher than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 66 users (+15.3%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 6,909, which is the equivalent of about 14 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has now almost recovered to the level seen pre-pandemic (15 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 9.4% higher in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 9,911 loans were made in 2023/24, which equates with 20 per active user and 1.4 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 1% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 12%.
- Computer usage was down by 9%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 80.2% of all Much Wenlock library users live within the main catchment area.
- 74.3% of all Much Wenlock library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is about average for Shropshire.
- 59.0% of users live within Much Wenlock parish boundary.
- 6.6% of the population in the catchment area are Much Wenlock active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to 15%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 19.8% of Much Wenlock library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth or Church Stretton catchments.
- People that live in the Much Wenlock catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury or Bridgnorth libraries.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 84.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Much Wenlock library were to the Much Wenlock, and these accounted for 79.2% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth were the most frequently visited alternative libraries.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Much Wenlock library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

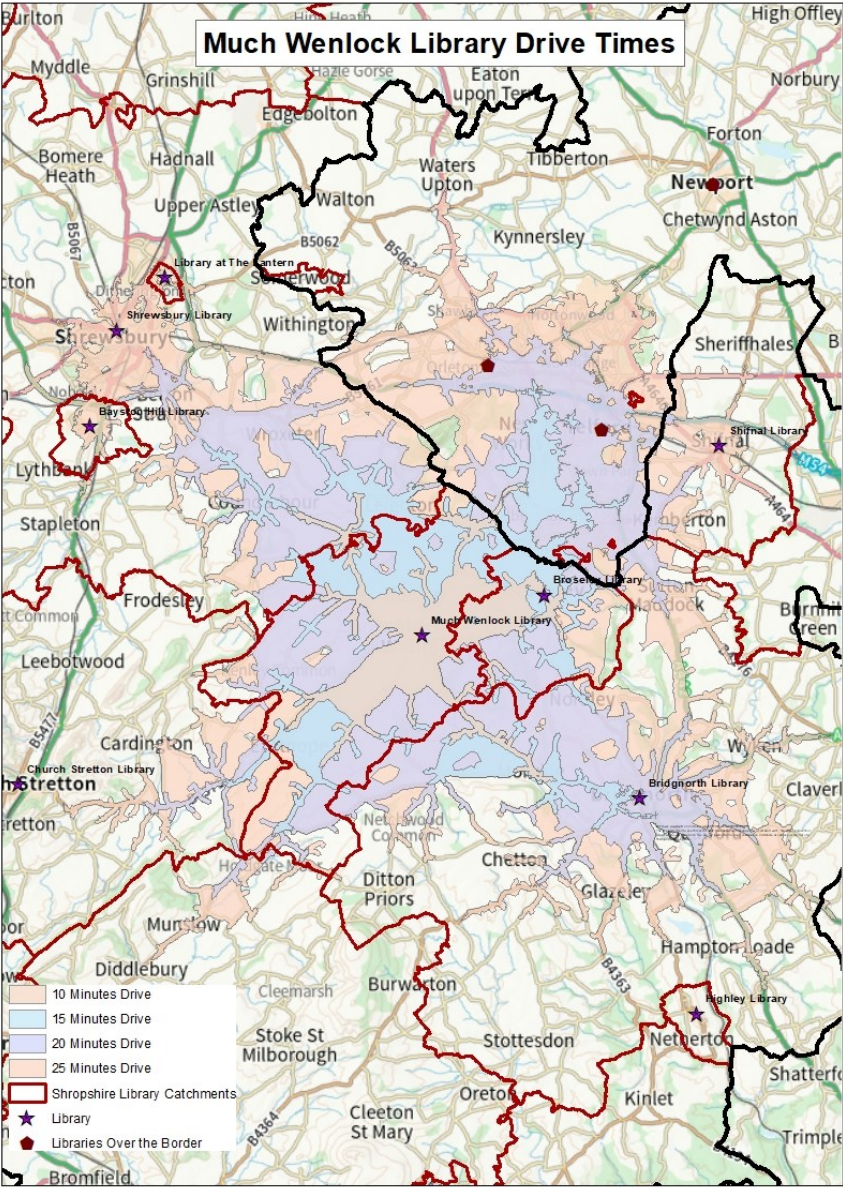
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	47.5%
30 Minute Walk	54.0%
10 Minute Drive	70.9%
15 Minute Drive	82.6%
20 Minute Drive	92.7%
25 Minute Drive	96.7%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Much Wenlock is in the centre of Shropshire between Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth.
- The closest library to Much Wenlock is Broseley, which is located 4.5 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 10 minutes.
- It can also be reached via a regular bus service between which takes about 20 minutes.
- The nearest main library is Bridgnorth, which is 8.1 miles or a 14-minute drive away. The 436 bus service takes approximately 35 minutes between the destinations.
- Shrewsbury, Bayston Hill and Shifnal libraries are all within an approximate 25-minute drive.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Much Wenlock	Broseley	4.5 miles	10 mins	8A Bus	20 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Much Wenlock	Bridgnorth	8.1 miles	14 mins	436 Bus	35 mins



Costs

- Much Wenlock is the 5th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £18,010 (2024/25).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£20.99	£66.37	8th
Per Active User	£36.31	£71.50	6th
Per Visit	£2.61	£5.71	8th
Per Book Loan	£1.82	£4.50	7th

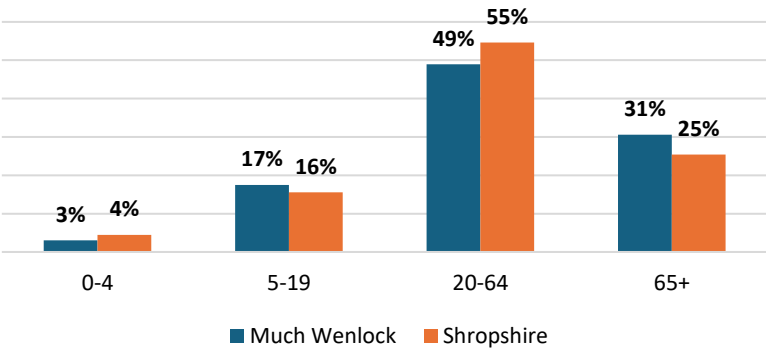
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Much Wenlock Catchment Area

Population

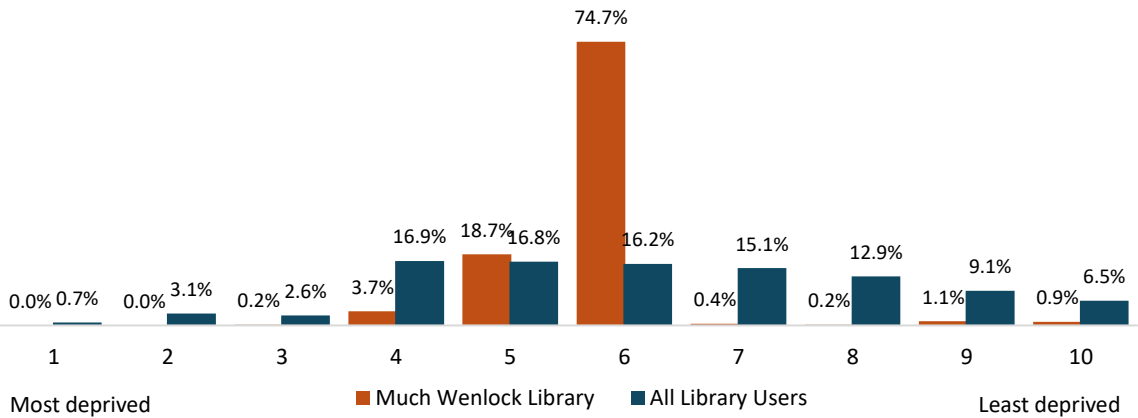
- The Much Wenlock library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 5,345 (4,938 in Shropshire).
- The age breakdown of the population shows a lower proportion of children and young people and more adults over the age of 65.
- There are 2,294 households in the catchment, with 46 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.31 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Much Wenlock Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Much Wenlock Library Users by IMD Decile



Much Wenlock catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

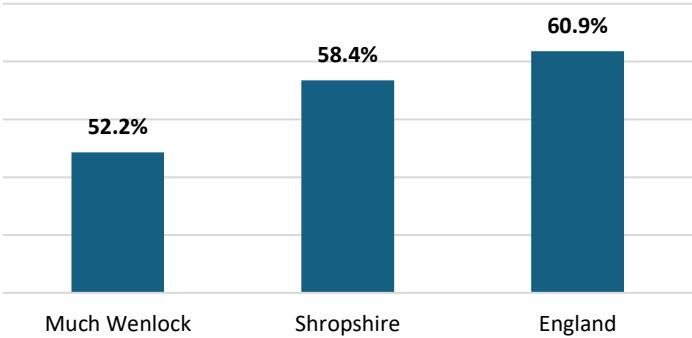
- The Much Wenlock library is in the sixth decile according to the IMD 2019.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost three-quarters of all Much Wenlock library users are drawn from this decile compared with 16.2% of all Shropshire library users.
- Just 2.2% of users live within the least deprived 30% of areas in the country, and an even smaller proportion (0.2%) from the most deprived 30%.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Much Wenlock library catchment is much lower than the Shropshire average at 52.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also significantly lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire’s older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic profile of Much Wenlock is particularly skewed to older age groups.
- The economic activity rate in the Much Wenlock library catchment area is the 2nd lowest in Shropshire.

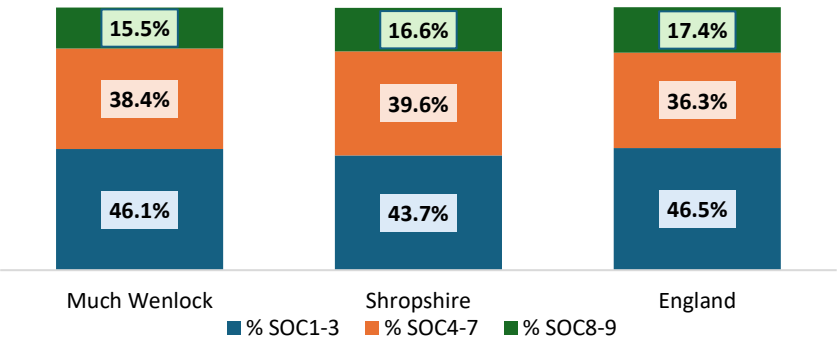
Much Wenlock: Economic Activity Rate



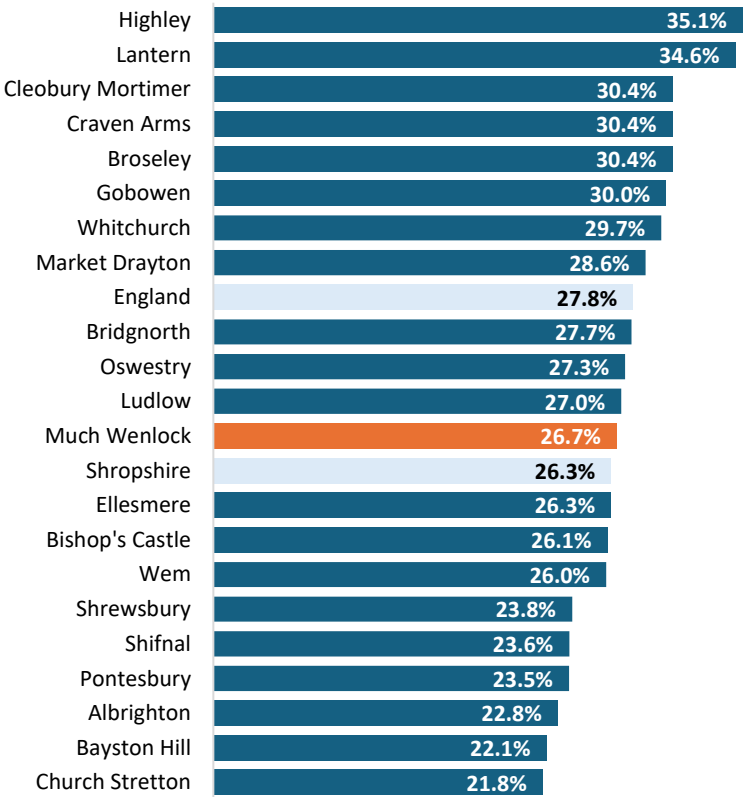
Employment

- 2,288 people in the Much Wenlock catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 51.3% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 46.1%. Notably fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and slightly fewer in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Much Wenlock: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Much Wenlock population with no or low qualifications is close to the Shropshire average at 26.7% of the 16+ population. This is lower than the national average.

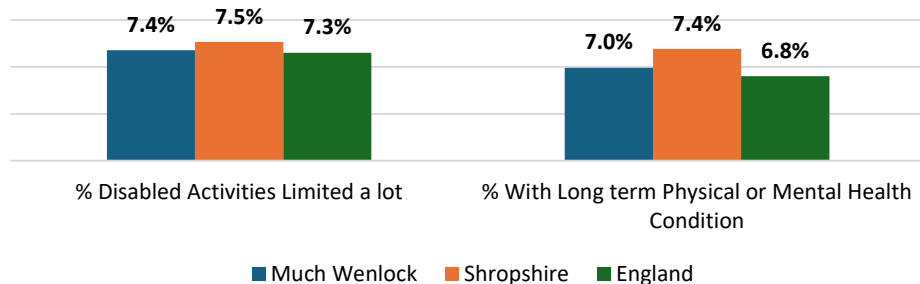
Unemployment

- 70 people living in the Much Wenlock catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.6% which is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average but it is only marginally lower for the Lantern.

Health Conditions

- 7.4% of residents in Much Wenlock library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable to Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.0% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

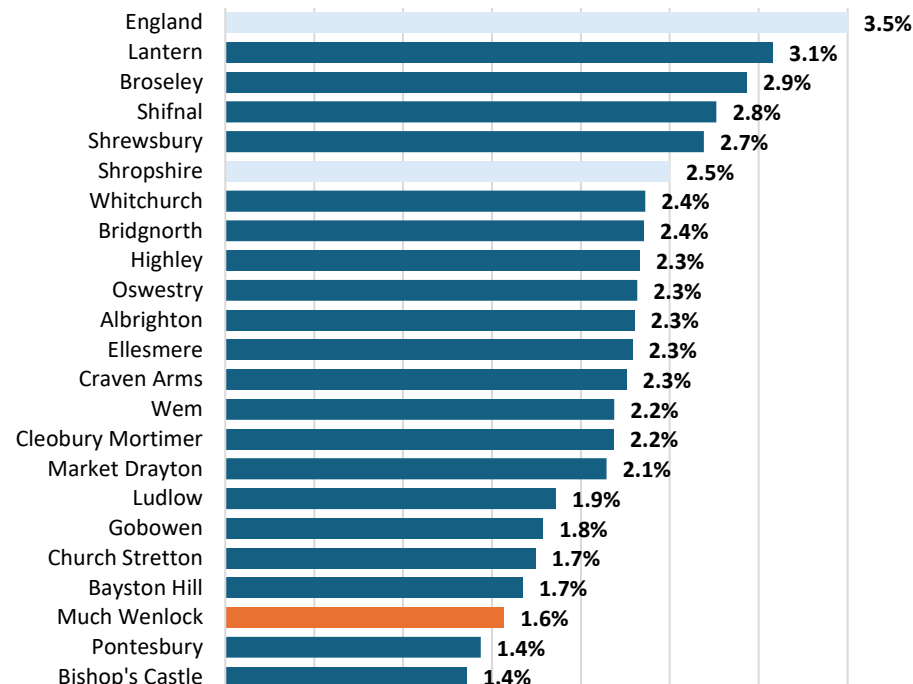
Much Wenlock: Health Conditions



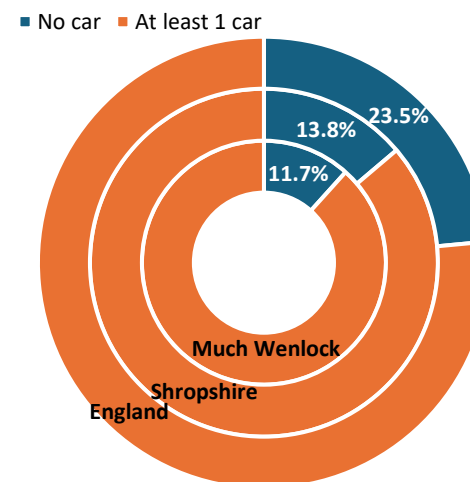
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Much Wenlock catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.7%.

Unemployment rate



Much Wenlock: Percentage of Households with No Car



Oswestry Library Profile

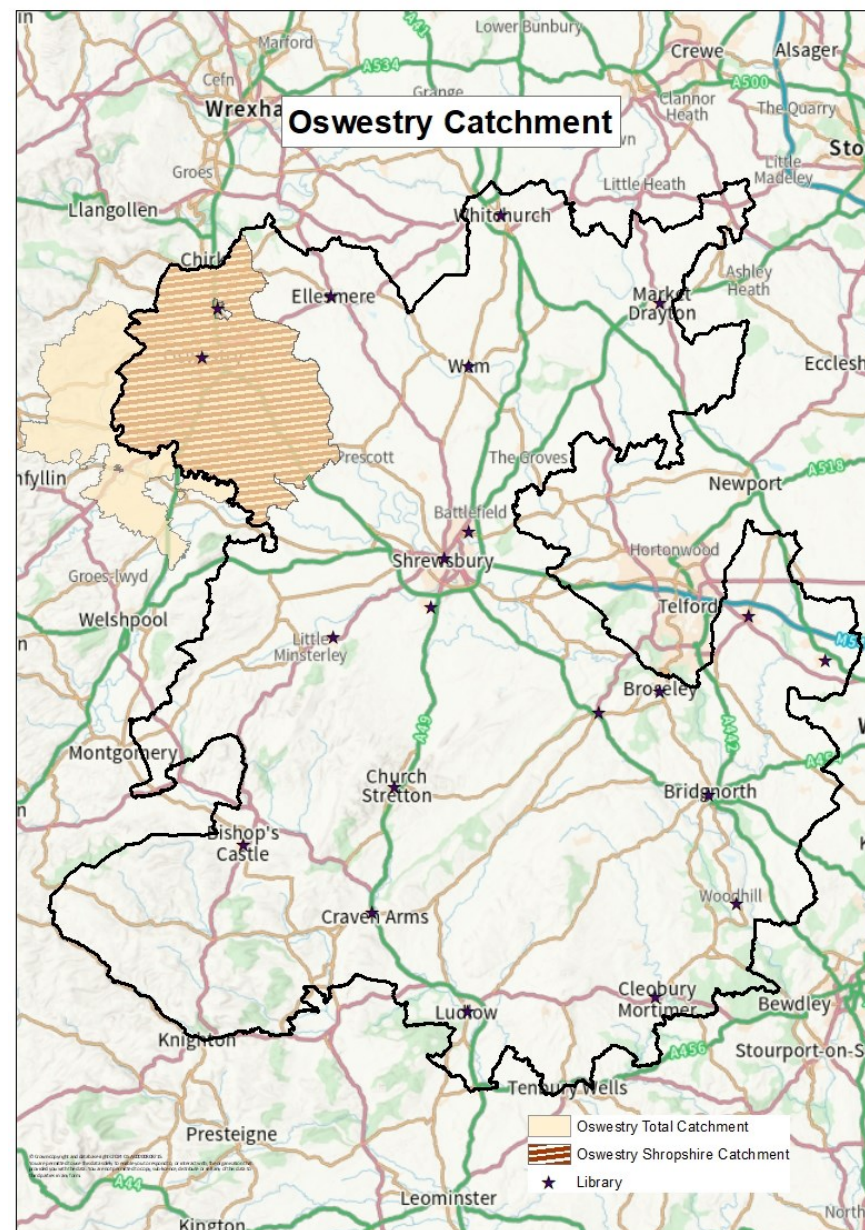
Background

- Oswestry is a town in the north west of Shropshire close to the Welsh border. It is the second largest settlement in the county behind Shrewsbury.
- Oswestry is a large public library situated within a four storey multi-occupancy complex with council offices, Wilkinson's, and several independent organisations. The original building dates from early 1900s but the library was refurbished in 2007 and now occupies two accessible open plan floors with lift access.
- The library is in the centre of town with public parking nearby. The library is owned and operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 26,072 hectares within Shropshire which is about 8.2% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends outside of the Shropshire border into Wales – in fact 36% of the total catchment is not in Shropshire as shown on the adjacent map, reflecting Oswestry's importance as a service centre for much of rural mid-Wales.
- The total population within the Oswestry library catchment area is 45,063 comprising 19,446 households. 89% of the catchment population – 39,935 people – are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Oswestry is the second largest catchment in Shropshire.

Opening Hours

The library is open 45 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Thursday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-16.00pm	6.5
Sunday	Closed	0

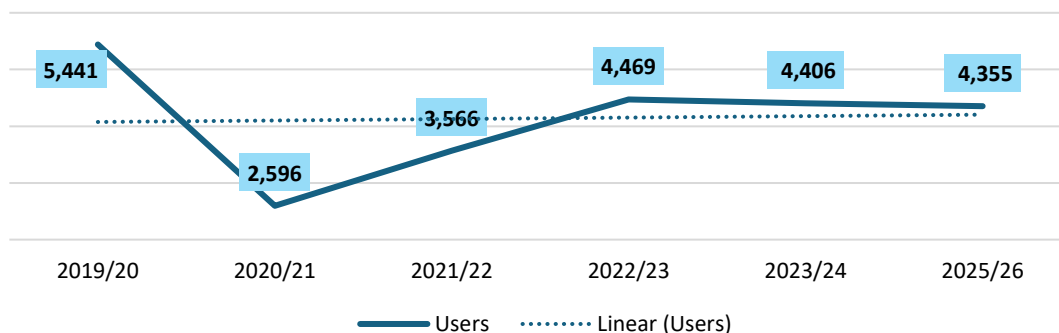


- The library employs 6.42 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 133 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 1,759 volunteer hours.

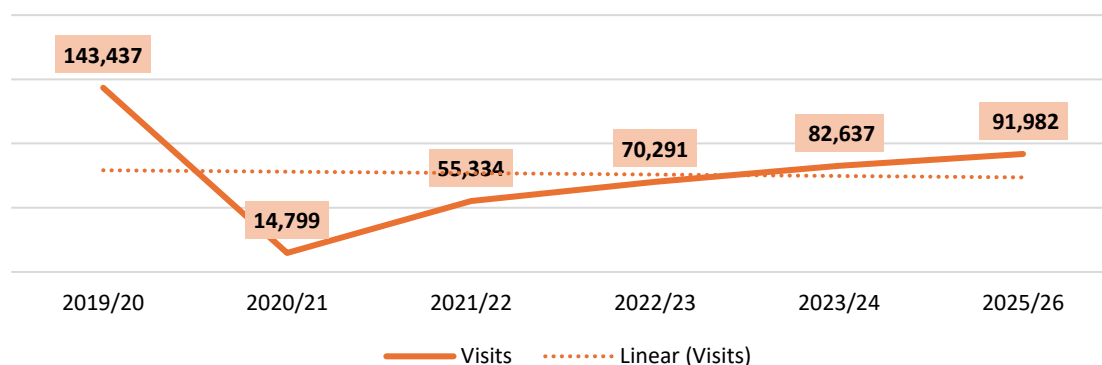
Library Users

- Oswestry library had 4,355 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 13.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.5% of the Oswestry catchment population are active library users, which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average. This includes use of all Shropshire libraries.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and fewer users aged 65 and above but more adults aged 20 to 64.

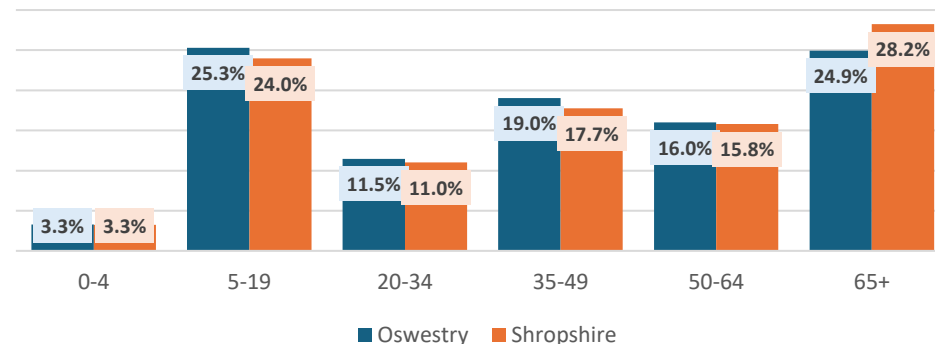
Oswestry: Number of Active Users



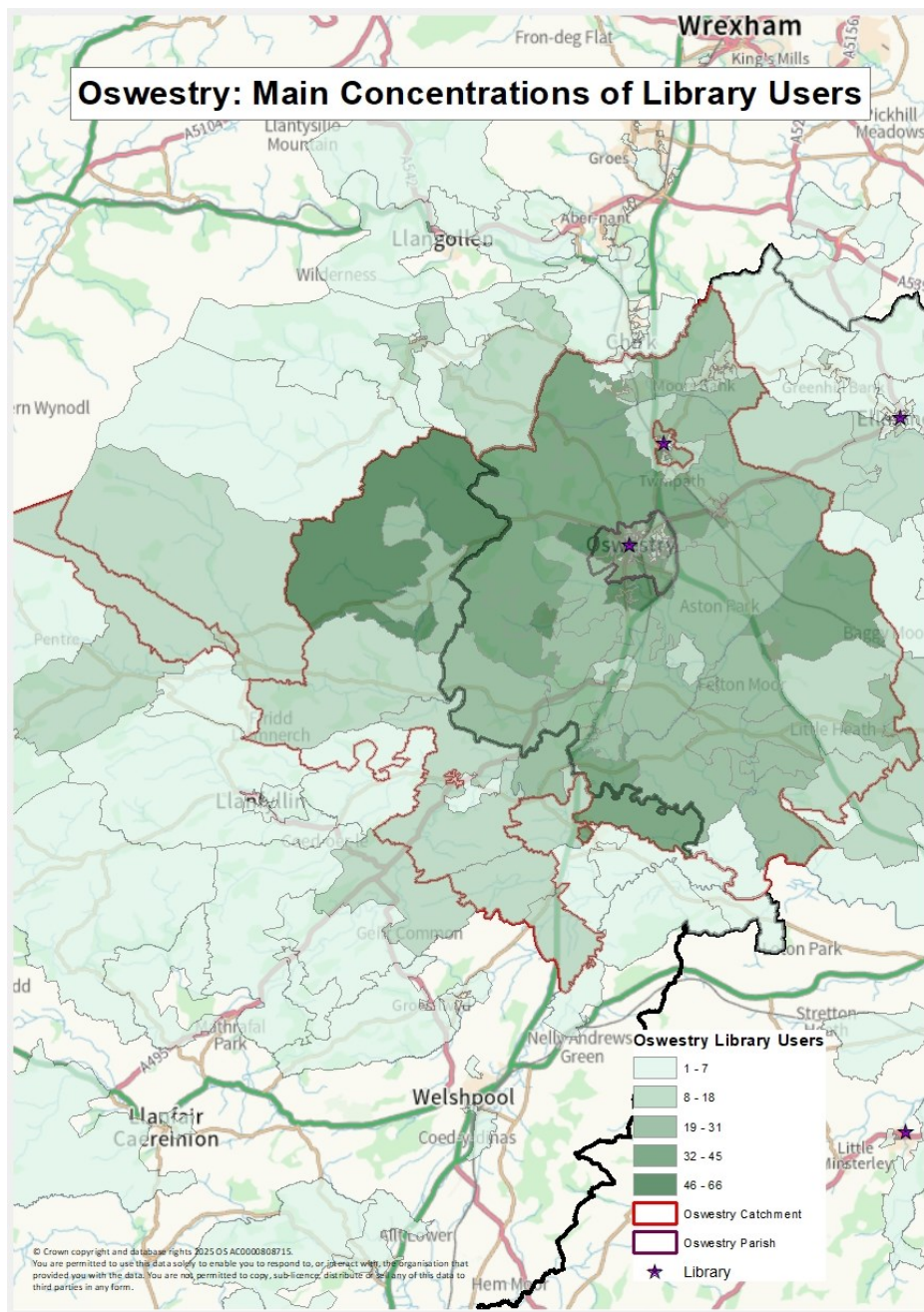
Oswestry: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Oswestry Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although this had flattened by 2024/25 when numbers stood at 4,355, still below pre-pandemic levels.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 1,086 users (-20.0%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 91,982, which is the equivalent of about 21 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and the frequency with which users visit the library has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels (26 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 35.9% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 70,121 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.8 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 5% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library was stable in 2024/25 compared with 2023/24 (-1%).
- Computer time was down by 20%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

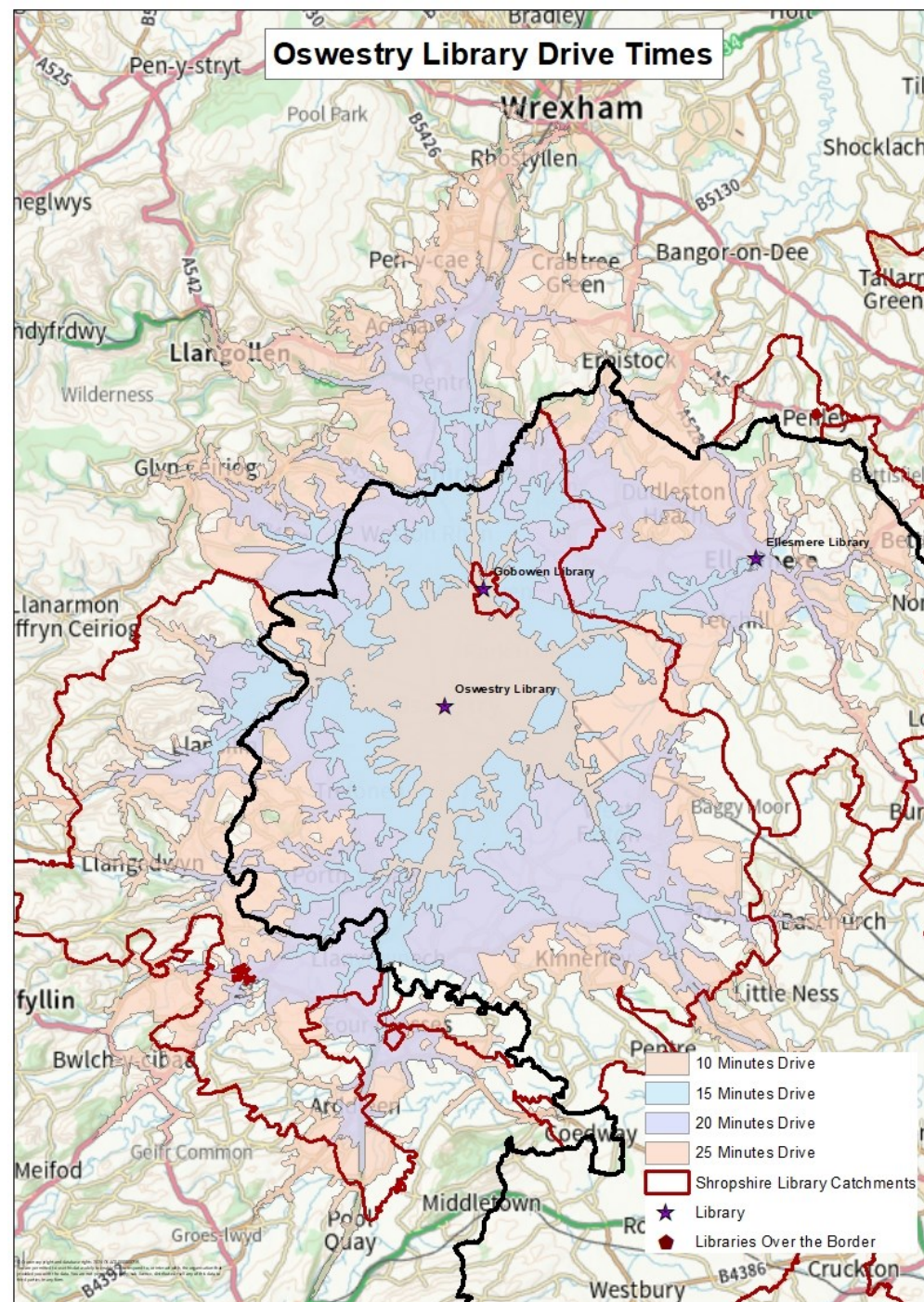
Geographic Location of Library Users

- 79.7% of all Oswestry library users live within the main catchment area.
 - 39.5% live within the Oswestry town council area.
 - 8.1% of the population in the catchment area are Oswestry active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1.4% to 19.9%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
 - Of the 20.3% of Oswestry library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in the Gobowen, Ellesmere or Shrewsbury catchments.
 - People that live in the Oswestry catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
 - Over the six months to March 2025, 91.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Oswestry library were to Oswestry, and these accounted for 91.9% of all issues.
 - Other libraries visited by users registered to Oswestry include Shrewsbury, Ellesmere and Gobowen as well as the Owen mobile service.
- The following table shows the proportion of active Oswestry library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	23.9%
30 Minute Walk	42.5%
10 Minute Drive	58.4%
15 Minute Drive	78.3%
20 Minute Drive	88.6%
25 Minute Drive	93.3%

Access

- Oswestry is in the north west of Shropshire close to the border with Wales.
- Gobowen is the closest alternative library, located approximately three miles north of Oswestry via the A5. According to the AA route planner, the journey time between the two libraries is 8 minutes.
- The Gobown library catchment is entirely contained within the Oswestry catchment.
- Ellesmere library is also within a 20-minute drive.



Costs

- Oswestry is the third most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury and Ludlow.
- Annual running costs are £428,650 (2024/25)
- Oswestry library costs more than average per active user, per book loan and per hour open but less than average per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£183.18	£66.37	20th
Per Active User	£98.43	£71.50	17th
Per Visit	£4.66	£5.71	18th
Per Book Loan	£6.11	£4.50	19th

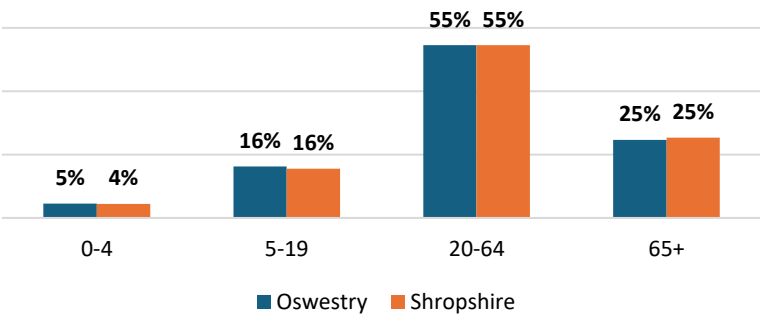
Includes HMP Stoke Heath 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Oswestry Catchment Area

Population

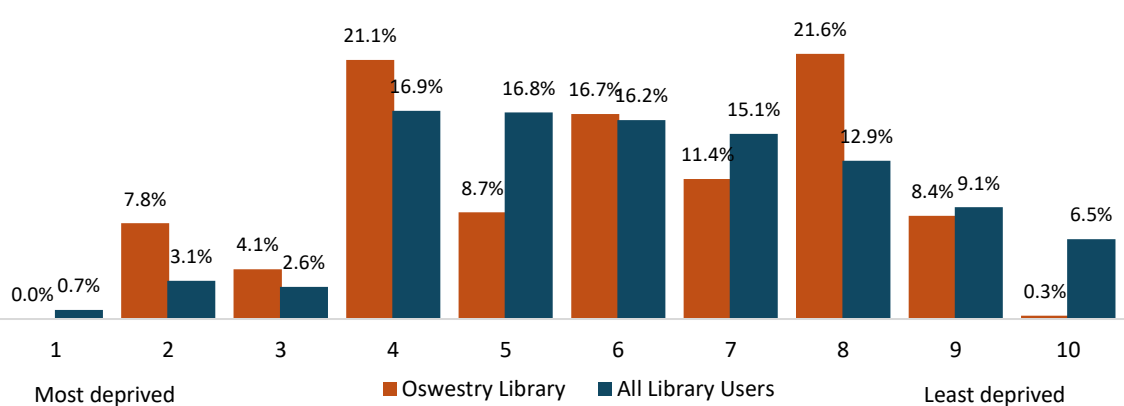
- Oswestry library catchment is the second largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 39,935 and a total population of 45,063.
- The age breakdown of the population is comparable with the overall Shropshire population.
- There are 19,446 households in the catchment, with 738 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.28 which is similar to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Oswestry Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Oswestry Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Oswestry catchment includes non-Shropshire population

- Oswestry library is in decile two according to the 2019 IMD, which means that it is one of three Shropshire libraries within the 20% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 11.9% of Oswestry library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (6.5% for all Shropshire library users)
- Over half of users are drawn from deciles four, five, six and seven, with 30.3% living in the least deprived 30% of England.

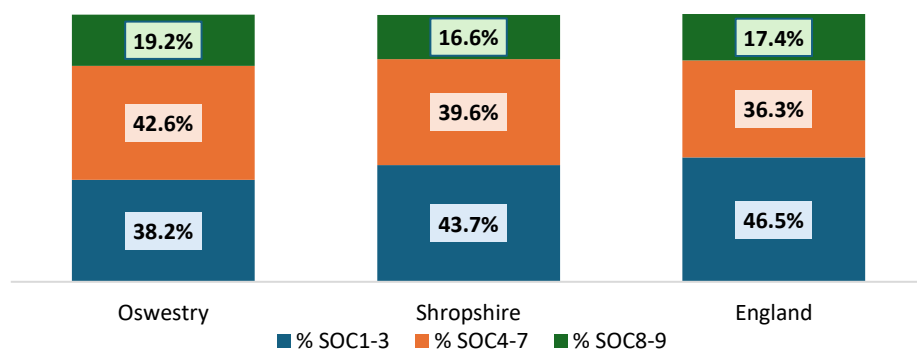
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Oswestry library catchment is slightly higher than the Shropshire average at 58.6% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- However, it is lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Oswestry library catchment area is the fifth highest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 21,304 people in Oswestry were in employment in 2021, which equates with 56.3% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 38.2%. More are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) while a slightly higher proportion also work in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

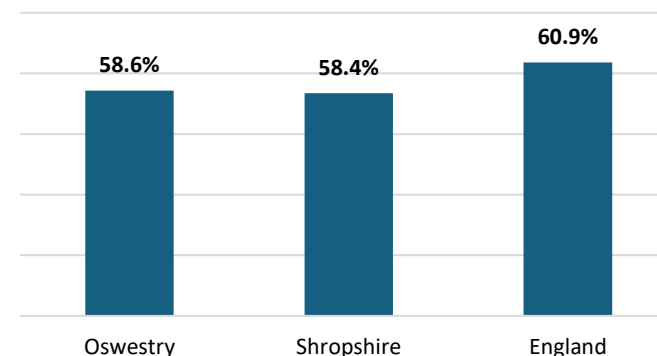
Oswestry: Occupation Types



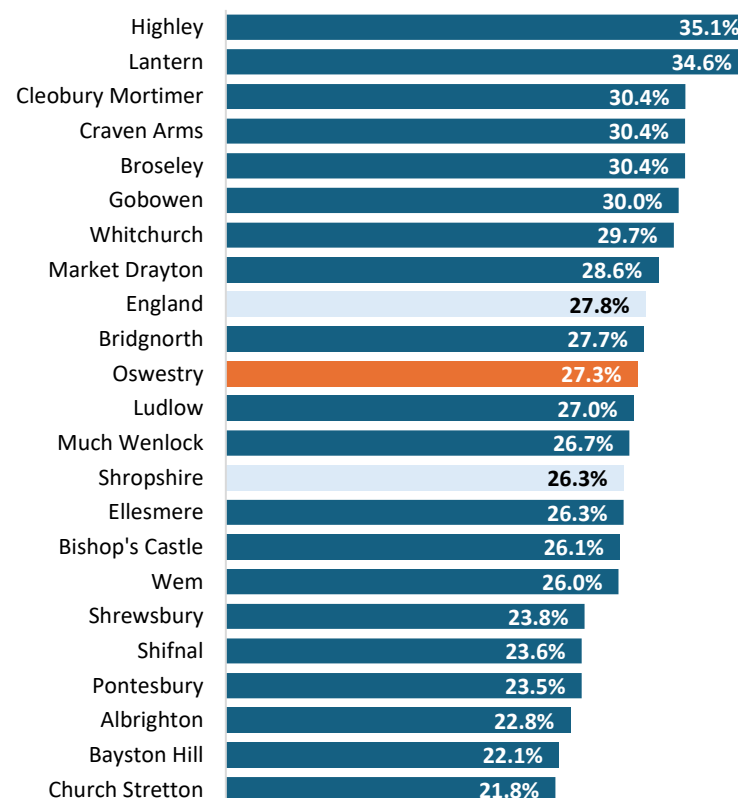
Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Oswestry population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.3%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

Oswestry: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

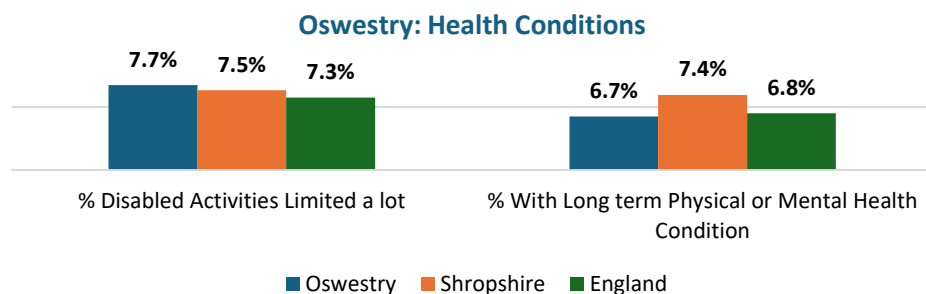


Unemployment

- 876 people living in the Oswestry catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

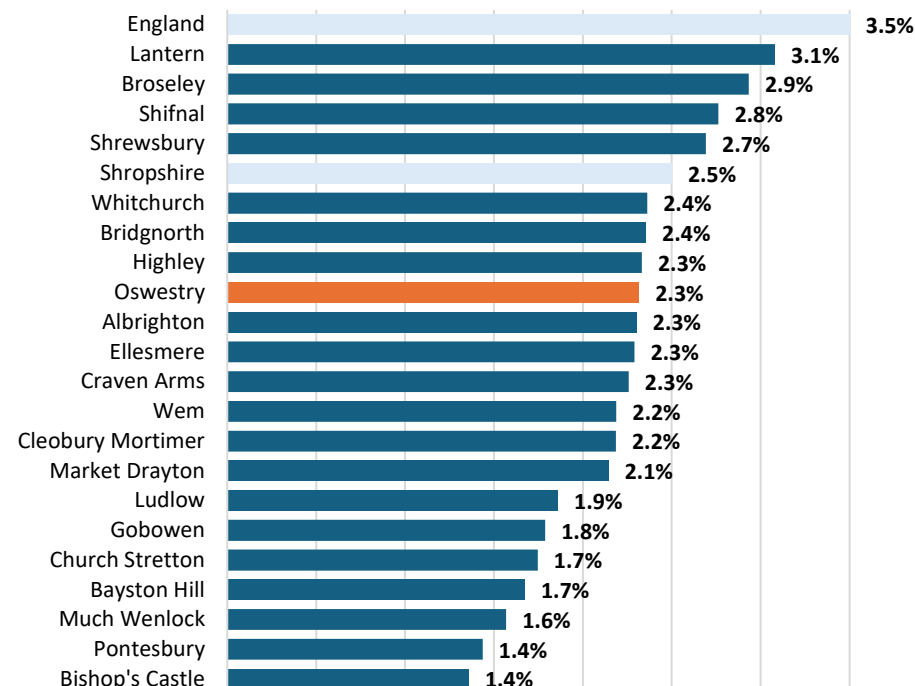
- 7.7% of residents in the Oswestry library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.7% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



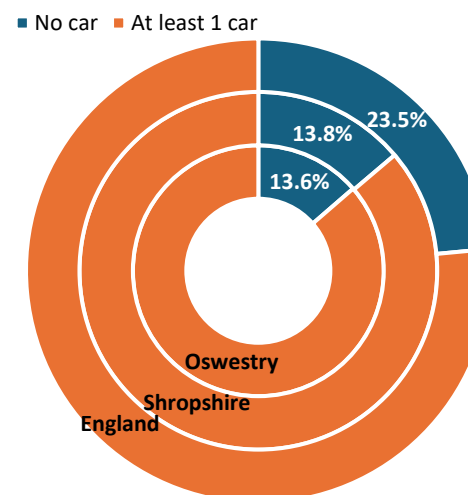
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Oswestry households that do not have access to a car or van comparable to the Shropshire average at 13.6%.

Unemployment rate



Oswestry: Percentage of Households with No Car



Pontesbury Library Profile

Background

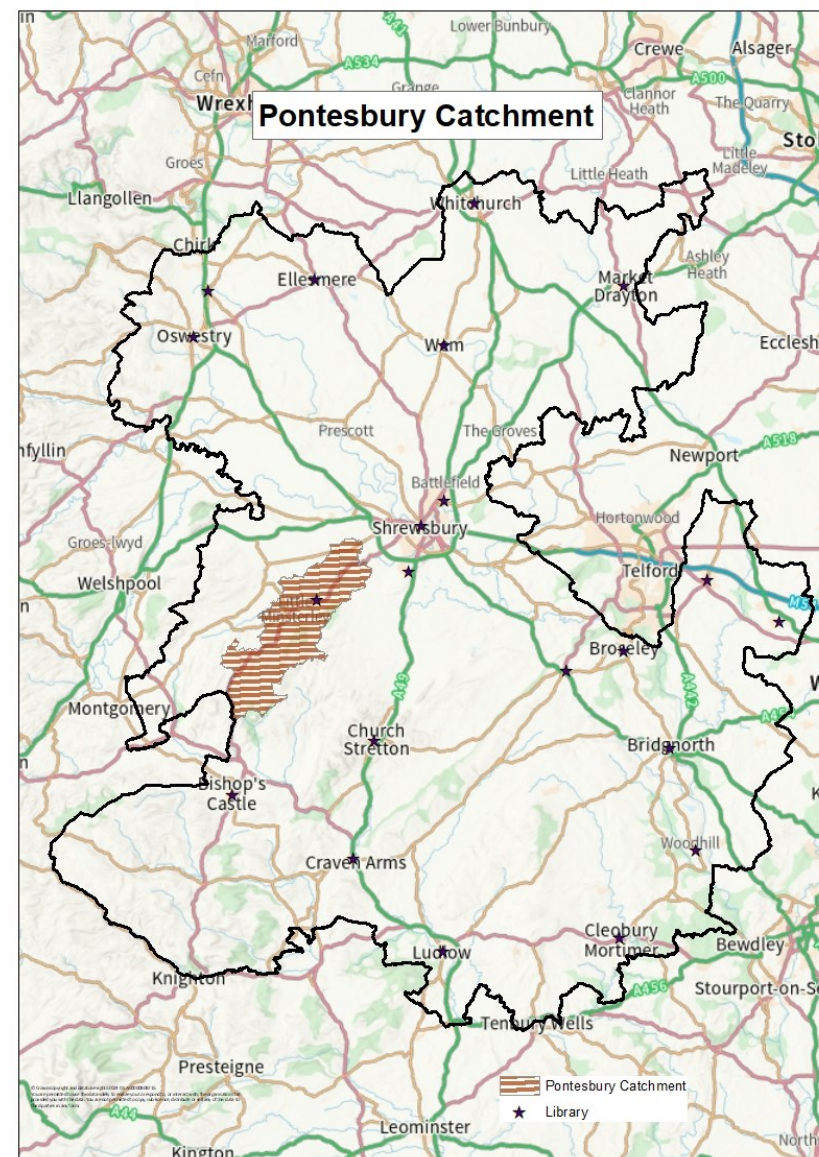
- Pontesbury is located south west of Shrewsbury, between the county town and Bishop's Castle.
- The library is located in a purpose-built modern one storey building which was constructed in 2019. The building is shared with the local police. Library services are operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 8,253 hectares which is approximately 2.6% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely contained within Shropshire although it does extend to the border with Wales.
- The total population within the Pontesbury library catchment area is 6,460 comprising 2,819 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 15 hours a week according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Tuesday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	14.00pm -17.00pm	3
Friday	Closed	0
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

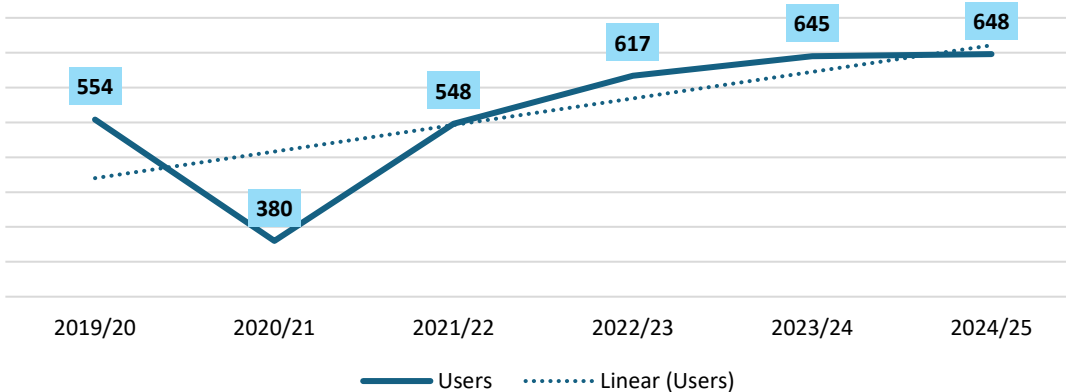
- The library has 0.46 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from 114 volunteers providing a total of 225 volunteer hours.



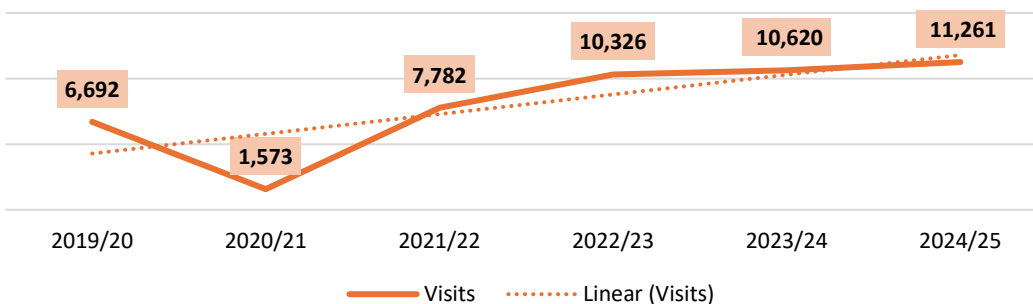
Library Users

- Pontesbury library had 648 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.0% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 11.2% of the Pontesbury catchment population are active library users, which is about the same as the Shropshire average. This includes usage of other Shropshire libraries as well as Pontesbury.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and young adults and more users over the age of 50.

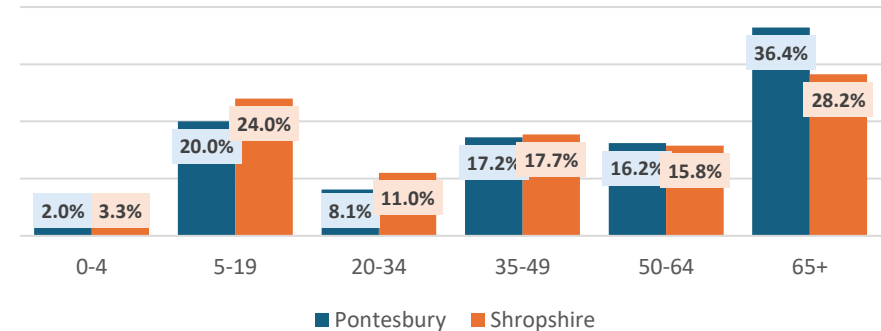
Pontesbury: Number of Active Users



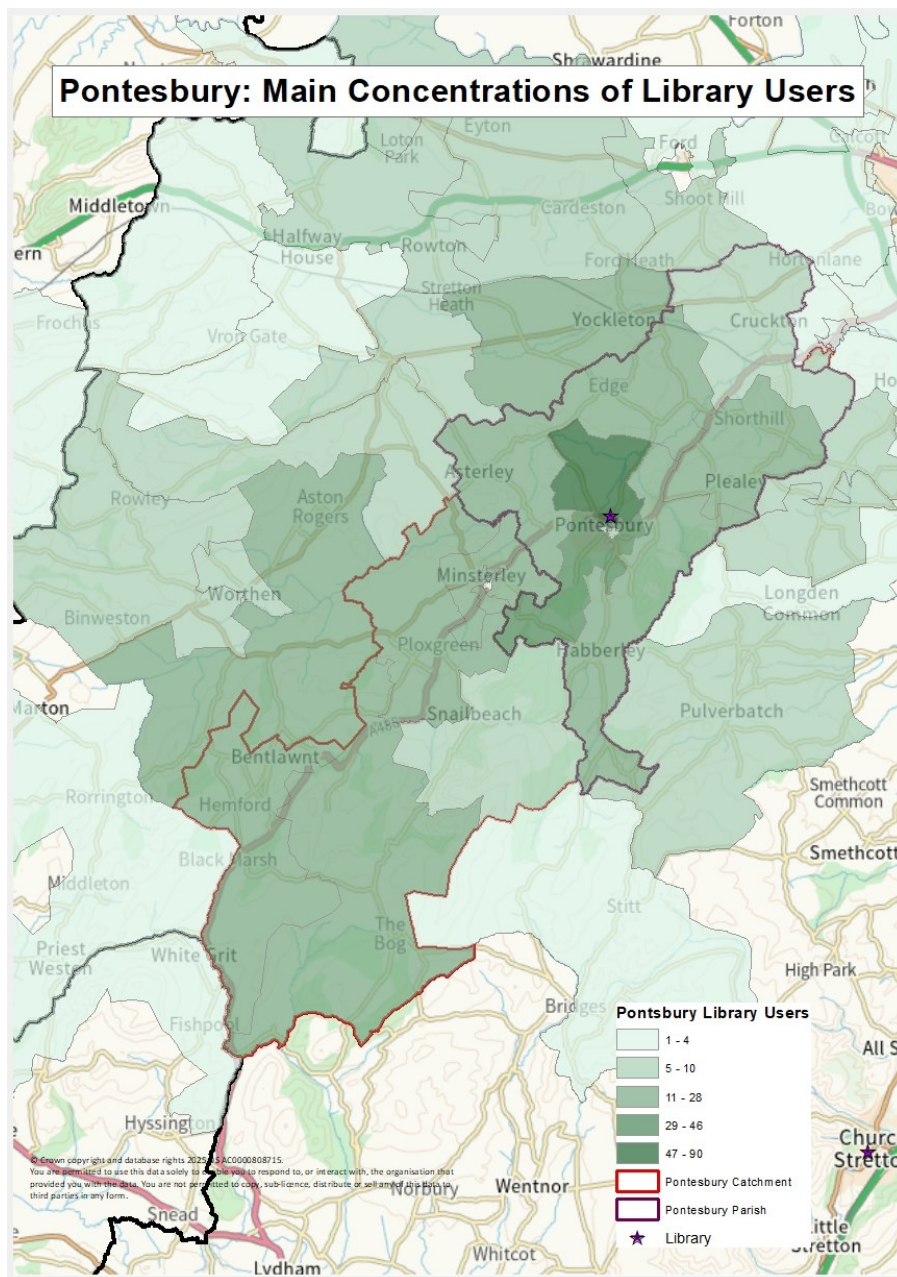
Pontesbury: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Pontesbury Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year and numbers are now higher than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 94 users (+17.0%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 11,261, which is the equivalent of about 17 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library surpasses the level seen pre-pandemic (12 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 68.3% higher in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 13,571 loans were made in 2023/24, which equates with 21 per active user and 1.2 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 3% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 17%.
- Computer usage was down by 9%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 75.8% of all Pontesbury library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is around average for Shropshire.
- 52.4% of users live within Pontesbury parish boundary.
- 7.5% of the population in the catchment area are Pontesbury active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to over 18%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 24.2% of Pontesbury library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury catchment (about a fifth of all Pontesbury library users).
- People that live in the Pontesbury catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 83.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Pontesbury library were to Pontesbury, and these accounted for 82.1% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Pontesbury library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

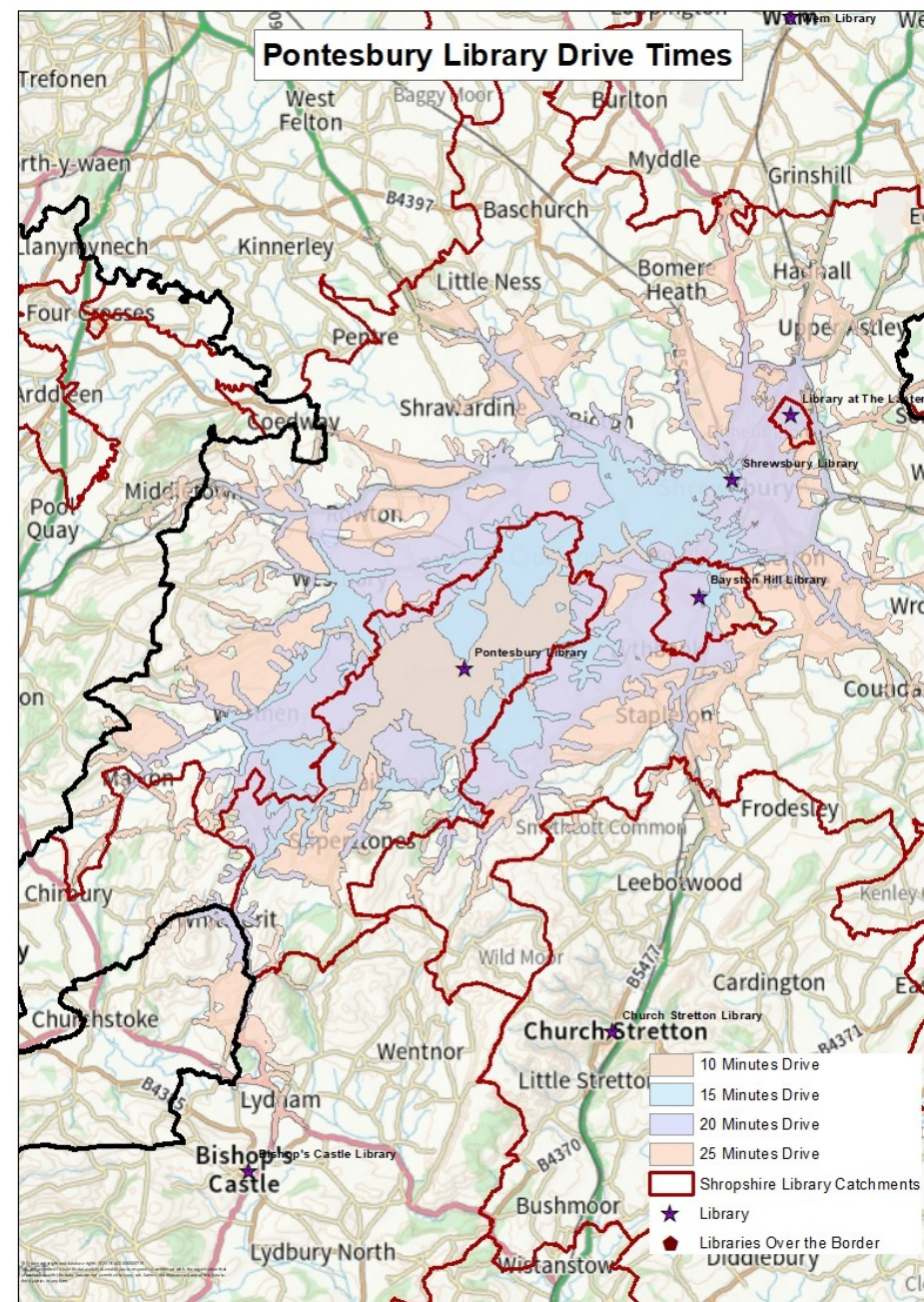
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	36.3%
30 Minute Walk	43.8%
10 Minute Drive	70.3%
15 Minute Drive	83.9%
20 Minute Drive	94.4%
25 Minute Drive	96.7%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Pontesbury is in the centre of Shropshire slightly south west of Shrewsbury.
- The closest library to Pontesbury is Bayston Hill, which is located 8.1 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 14 minutes.
- Shrewsbury is the closest main library – it is the same distance away, but a longer drive time at 19 minutes.
- While Shrewsbury library is easily accessible via public transport with a regular bus service that takes less than an hour, Bayston Hill is more challenging to reach without a car and would involve changing buses in Shrewsbury.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Pontesbury	Bayston Hill	8.1 miles	14 mins	Via Shrewsbury	1 hour plus

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Pontesbury	Shrewsbury	8.1 miles	19 mins	552 or 553 Bus	27 mins



Costs

- Pontesbury ranks as the 10th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £26,070 (2024/25).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£46.24	£66.37	14th
Per Active User	£55.66	£71.50	11th
Per Visit	£3.20	£5.71	12th
Per Book Loan	£2.66	£4.50	11th

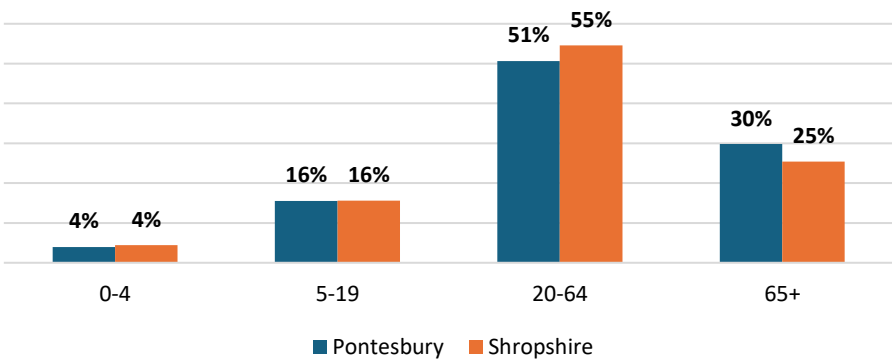
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Pontesbury Catchment Area

Population

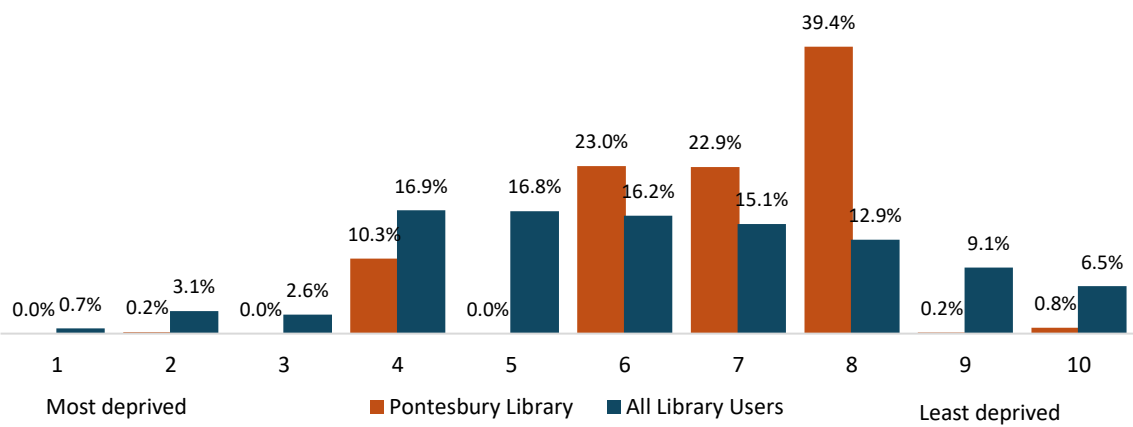
- The Pontesbury library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 6,490.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of people age 65+ and slightly fewer aged 20-65.
- There are 2,819 households in the catchment, with 86 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.27 which is identical to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Pontesbury Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Pontesbury Library Users by IMD Decile



- The Pontesbury library is in the eighth decile according to the IMD 2019 which means the library’s location is within the 30% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that a high proportion of Pontesbury library users are drawn from this decile (39.4% compared with 12.9% for Shropshire).
- Less than 1% of users live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

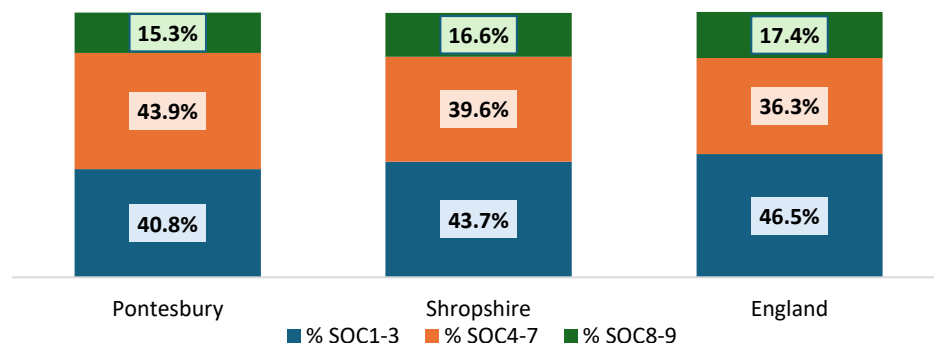
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Pontesbury library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 55.5% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also significantly lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic profile of Pontesbury is skewed to older age groups.
- The economic activity rate in the Pontesbury library catchment area is the 8th lowest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 2,996 people in the Pontesbury catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 54.5% of the 16+ population.
- A slightly lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 40.8%. Slightly fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) with above average employment in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

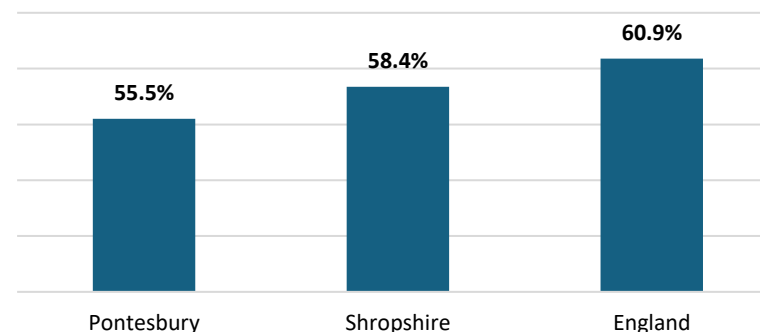
Pontesbury: Occupation Types



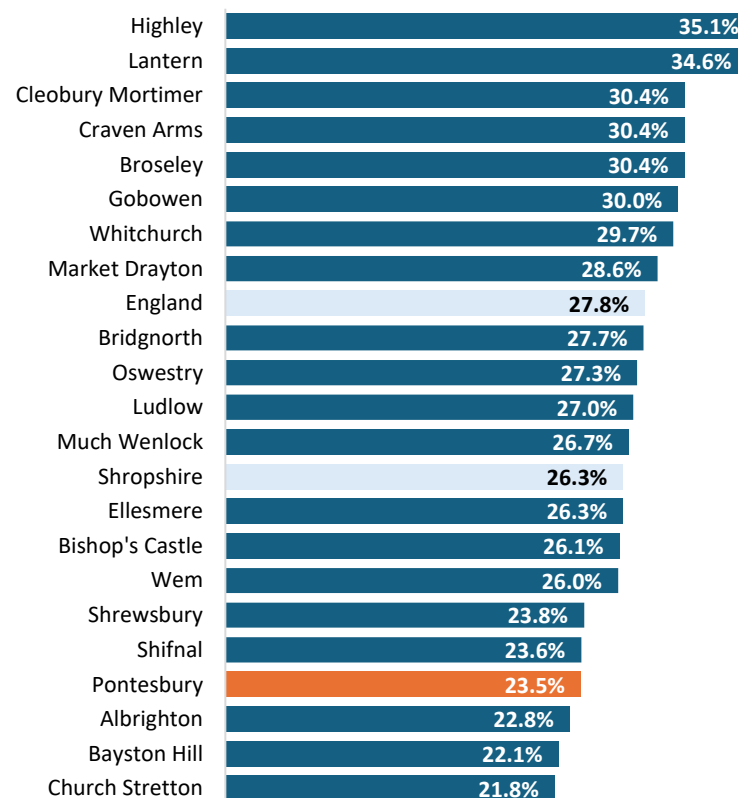
Qualifications

- The proportion of the Pontesbury population with no or low qualifications is below the Shropshire average at 23.5% of the 16+ population.

Pontesbury: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

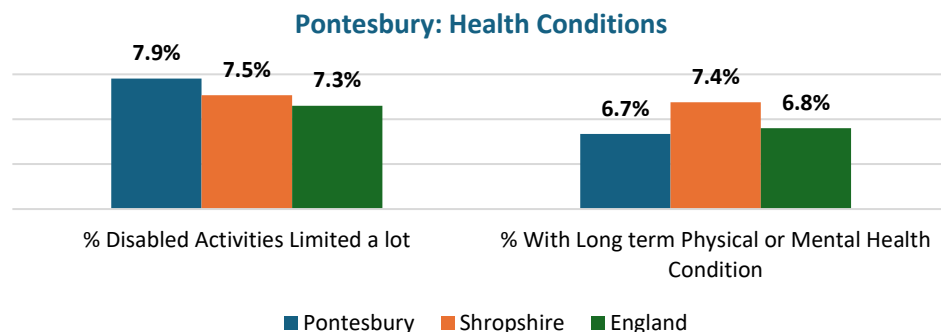


Unemployment

- 79 people living in the Pontesbury catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.4% which is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

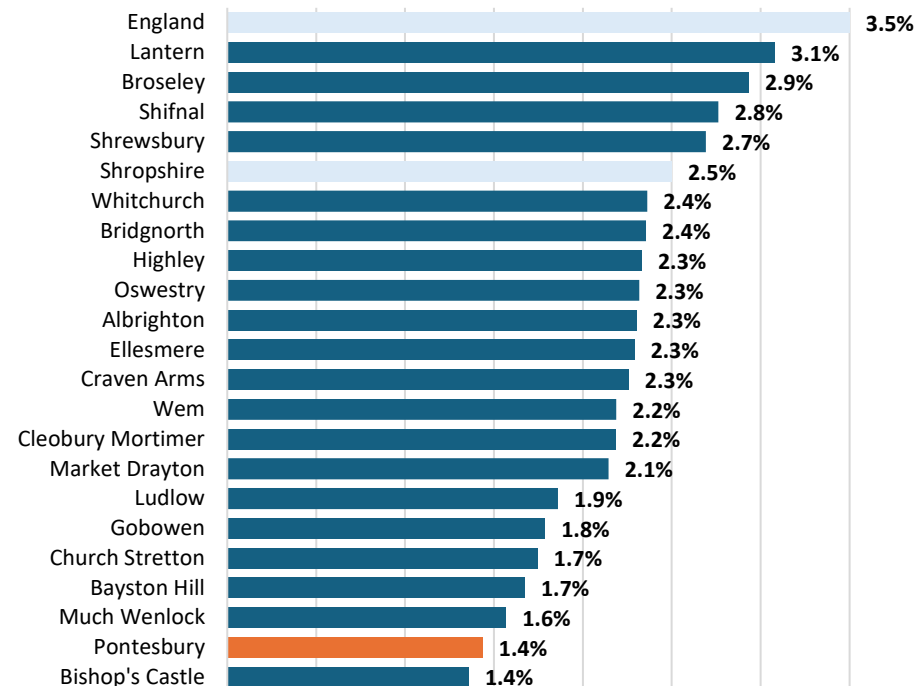
- 7.9% of residents in the Pontesbury library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable to Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.7% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



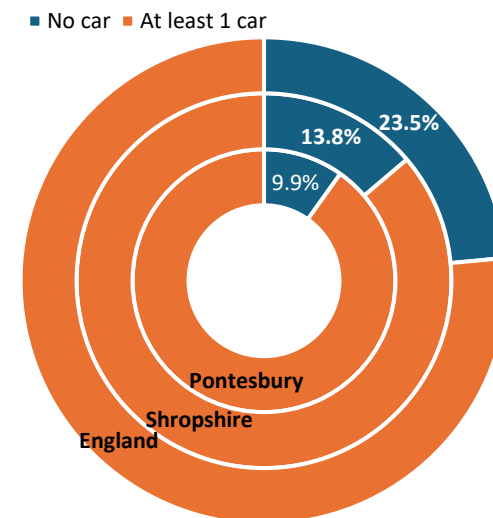
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Pontesbury catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 9.9%.

Unemployment rate



Pontesbury: Percentage of Households with No Car



Shifnal Library Profile

Background

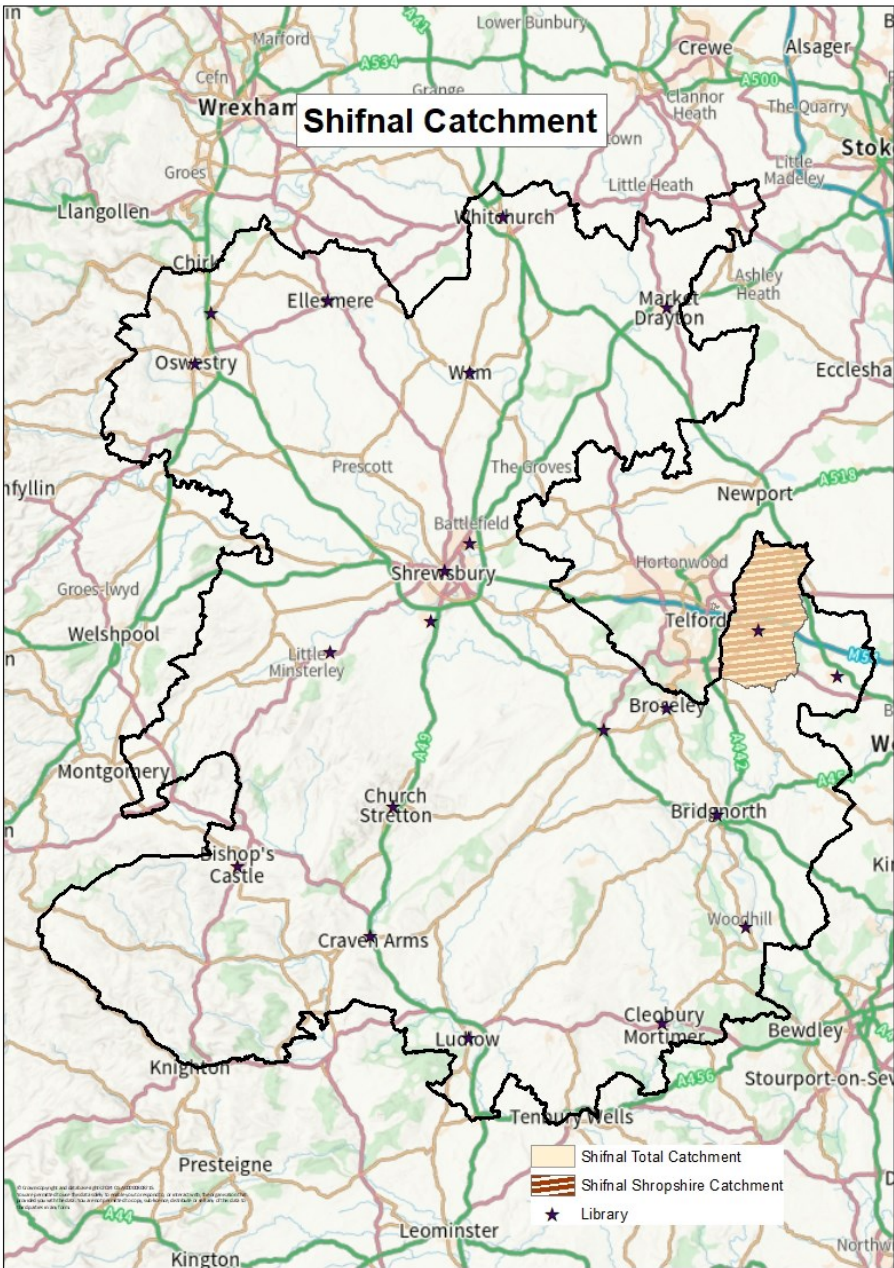
- Shifnal is located in the east of Shropshire close to the border with Telford & Wrekin.
- The library is located in the centre of the town close to shops and other local amenities.
- The building is leased to the town council which operates the library services on behalf of Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 6,398 hectares which is approximately 2.0% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends very slightly into Telford & Wrekin.
- The total population within the Shifnal library catchment area is 10,937 comprising 4,742 households. 97.6% of the catchment population (10,673 people) are Shropshire residents.

Opening Hours

The library is open 19.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	13.00pm-17.00pm	4
Tuesday	Closed	0
Wednesday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

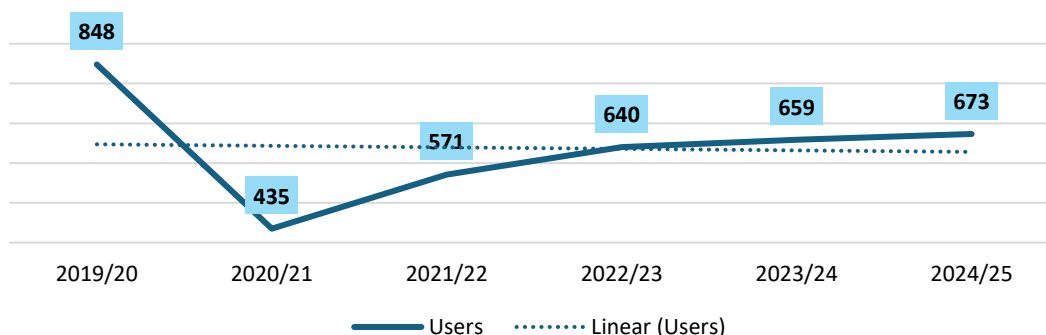
- The library has 0.74 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from two volunteers providing a total of 5 volunteer hours.



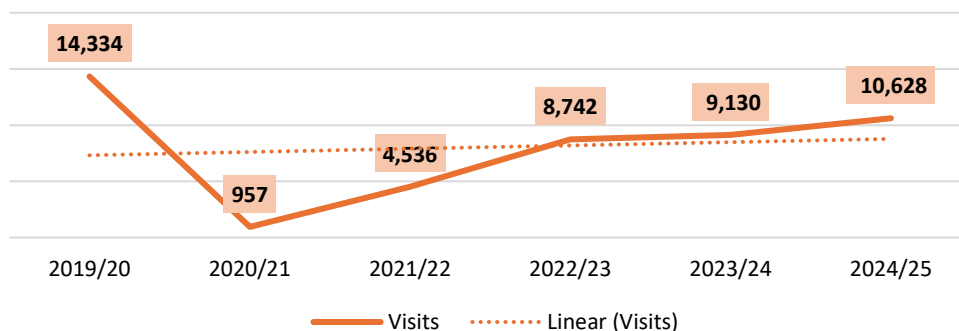
Library Users

- Shifnal library had 673 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 5.8% of the Shifnal catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries as well as Shifnal.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young adults and fewer users over the age of 50.

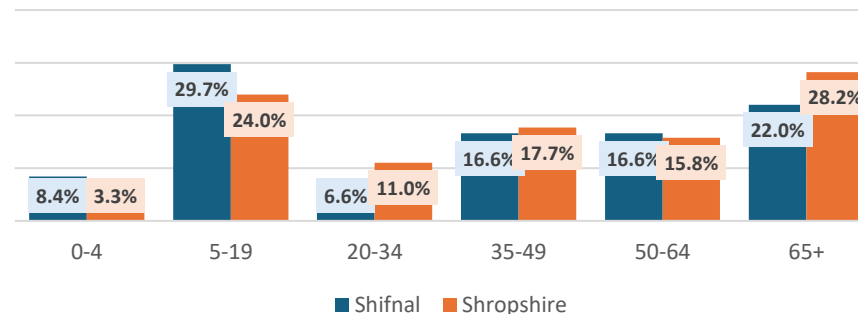
Shifnal: Number of Active Users



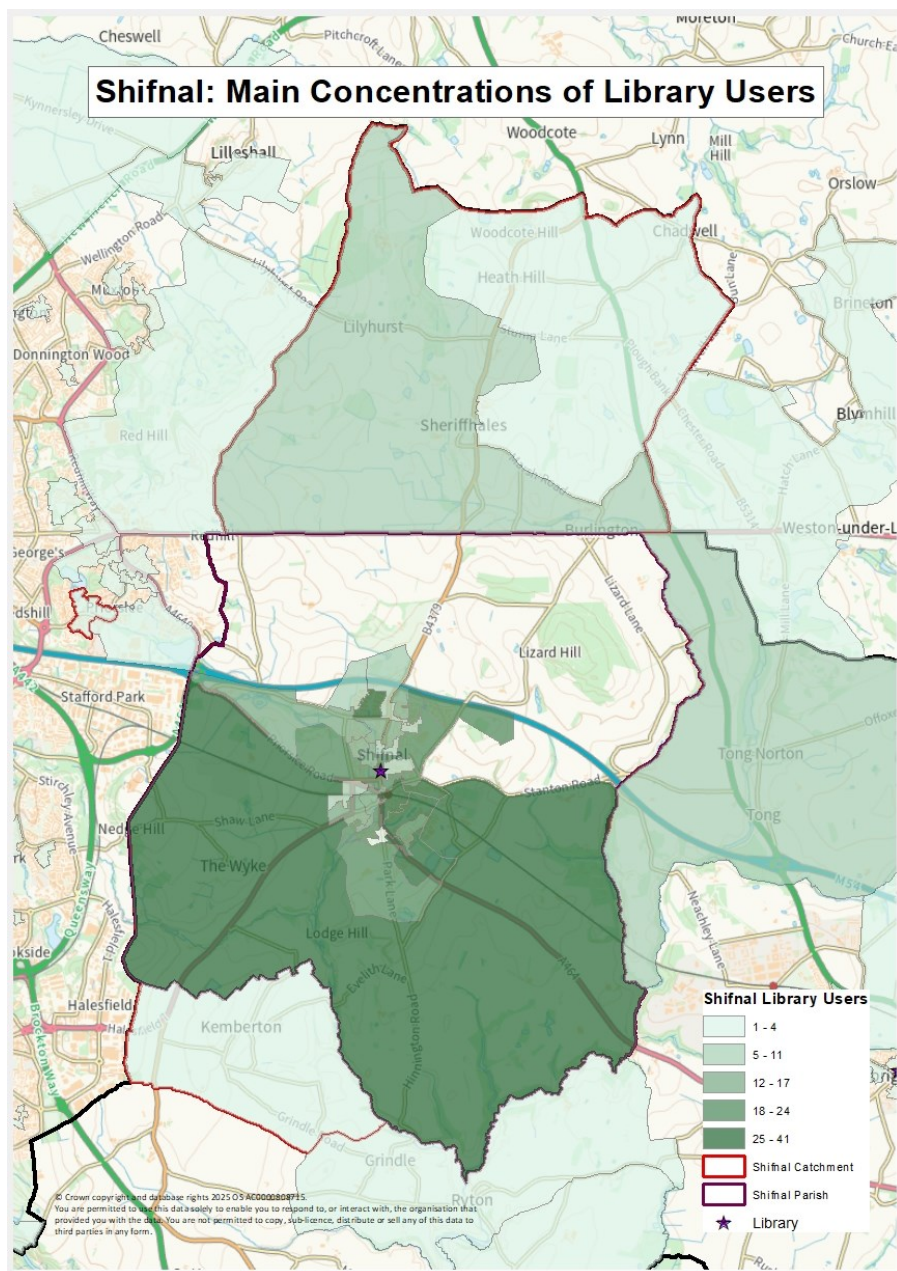
Shifnal: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Shifnal Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year although numbers remain lower than they were pre-pandemic.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 175 users (-20.6%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 10,628, which is the equivalent of about 16 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit has almost recovered to the level seen pre-pandemic (17 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 25.9% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 13,882 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 21 per active user and 1.3 per visit.
- The number of loans rose by 3% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library declined by 3%.
- Computer usage was down by 12%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 86.1% of all Shifnal library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is slightly above average for Shropshire.
- 83.2% of users live within Shifnal parish boundary.
- 5.0% of the population in the catchment area are Shifnal active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 0% to 14.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 15.9% of Shifnal library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Albrighton catchment or outside of the Shropshire boundary (in Telford & Wrekin).
- People that live in the Shifnal catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Albrighton or Shrewsbury libraries or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 94.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Shifnal library were to the Shifnal library, and these accounted for 95.1% of all issues.
- Albrighton was the most frequently visited alternative library.

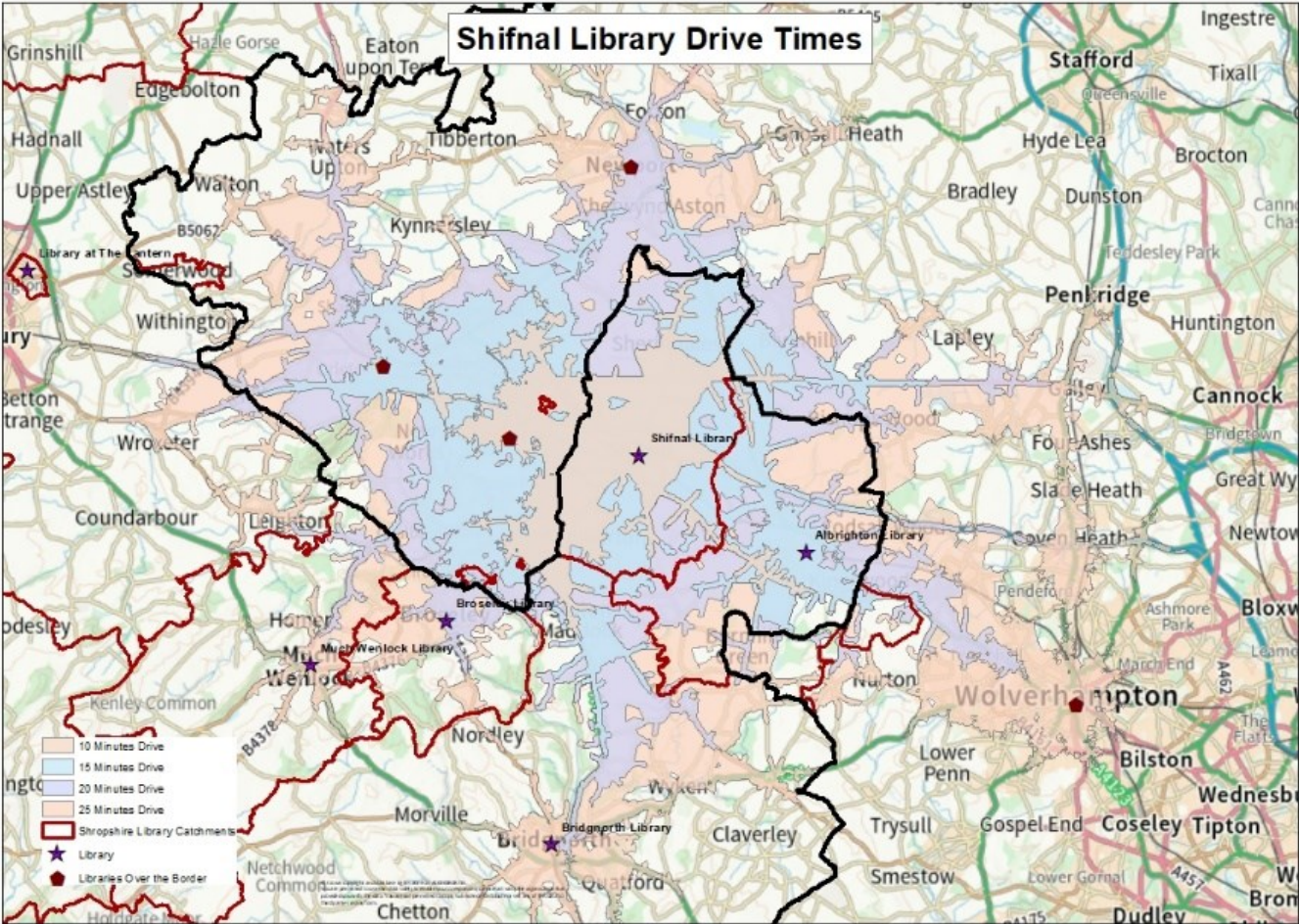
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Shifnal library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	68.4%
30 Minute Walk	82.8%
10 Minute Drive	88.6%
15 Minute Drive	94.7%
20 Minute Drive	97.6%
25 Minute Drive	98.6%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Shifnal is in the east of Shropshire close to the border with Telford & Wrekin. Proximity to the M54 motorway means that Shrewsbury and Telford are both easily accessible by car.
- The closest library to the Shifnal is Albrighton, which is located 5.6 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 10 minutes. Both towns are on the mainline railway.
- Bridgnorth is the closest main library – it is 11.7 miles away with a drive time of about 20 minutes.
- It is more challenging to travel to Bridgnorth from Shifnal by bus, with the service taking about an hour.



Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Shifnal	Albrighton	5.6 miles	10 mins	Train	8 mins	Bridgnorth	11.7 miles	20 mins	114 Bus	1 hour

Costs

- Shifnal ranks as the 2nd least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual costs to the Council are £4,600 (2024/25).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan ranking as the second or third cheapest in each case.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£4.54	£66.37	2nd
Per Active User	£6.84	£71.50	2nd
Per Visit	£0.43	£5.71	3rd
Per Book Loan	£0.33	£4.50	2nd

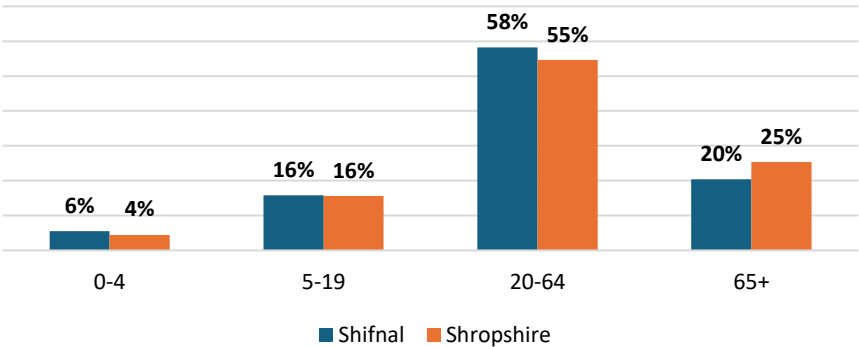
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Shifnal Catchment Area

Population

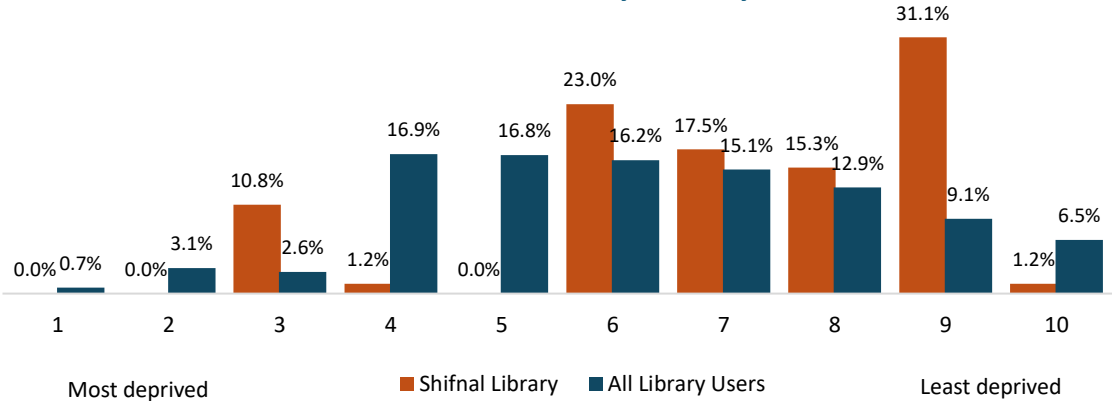
- The Shifnal library catchment is the eighth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 10,937 (Shropshire population 10,673).
- The age breakdown of the population shows a lower proportion of people age 65+ and more aged 20-64.
- There are 4,742 households in the catchment, with 43 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.30 which is comparable to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Shifnal Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Shifnal Library Users by IMD Decile



Shifnal catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

- Shifnal library is in the eighth decile according to the IMD 2019 which means the library’s location is within the 30% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that a high proportion of Shifnal library users are drawn from the 30% least deprived areas of the country (47.6% compared with 28.5% of all Shropshire library users).
- Around a tenth of users live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

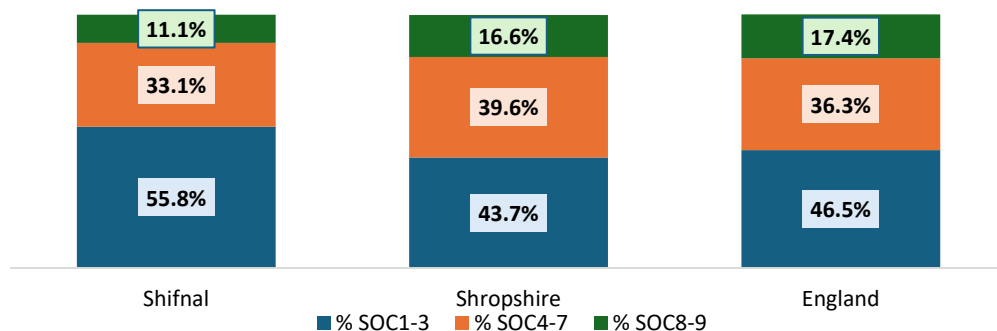
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Shifnal library catchment is much higher than the Shropshire average at 64.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- This is also higher than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. However, the demographic profile of Shifnal is much younger.
- The economic activity rate in the Shifnal library catchment area is the highest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 5,567 people in the Shifnal catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 61.8% of the 16+ population.
- A much higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 55.8%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) or SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

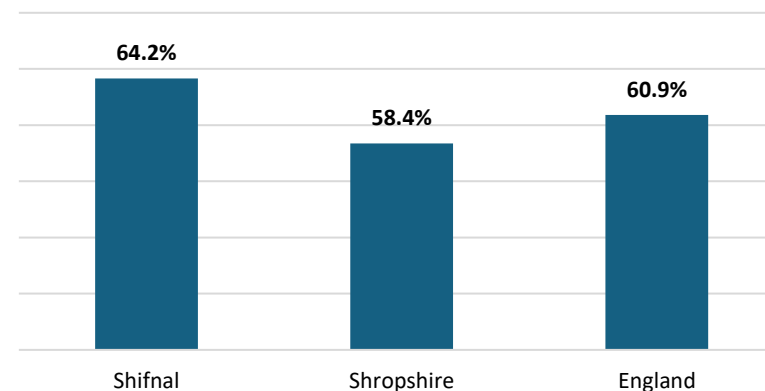
Shifnal: Occupation Types



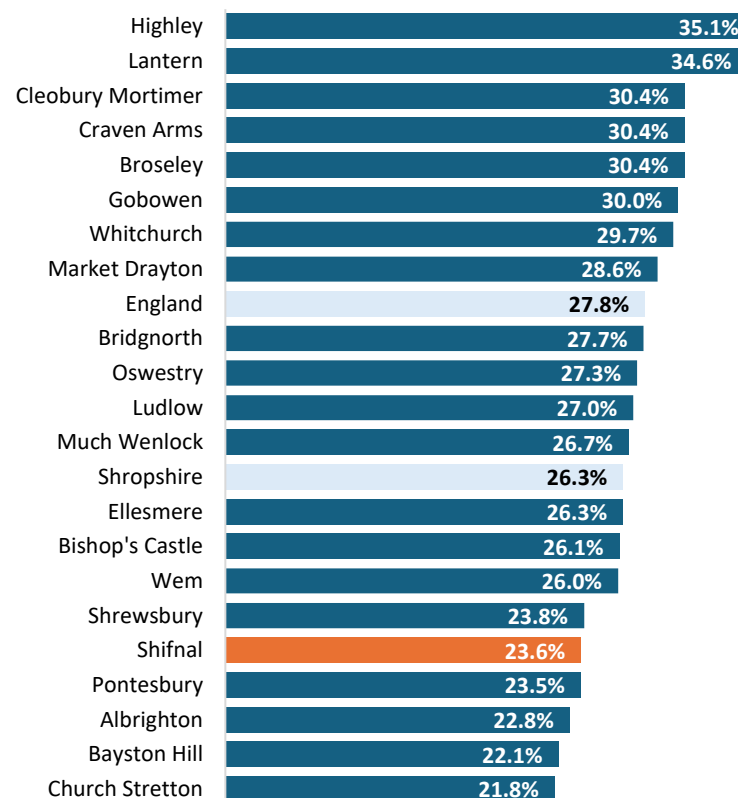
Qualifications

- The proportion of the Shifnal population with no or low qualifications is below the Shropshire average at 23.6% of the 16+ population. This is also below the national average.

Shifnal: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

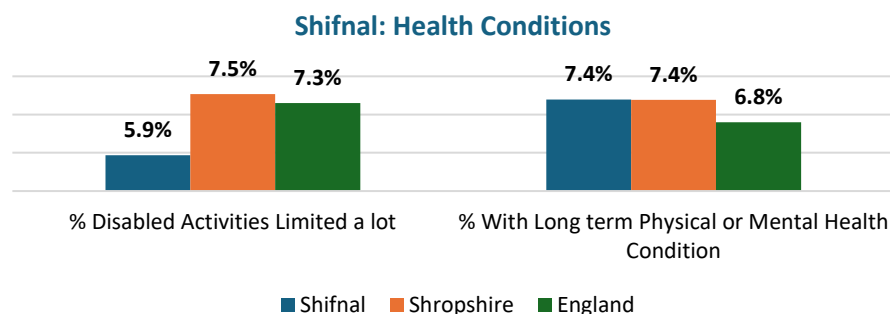


Unemployment

- 249 people living in the Shifnal catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.8% which is amongst the highest in Shropshire.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Other catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

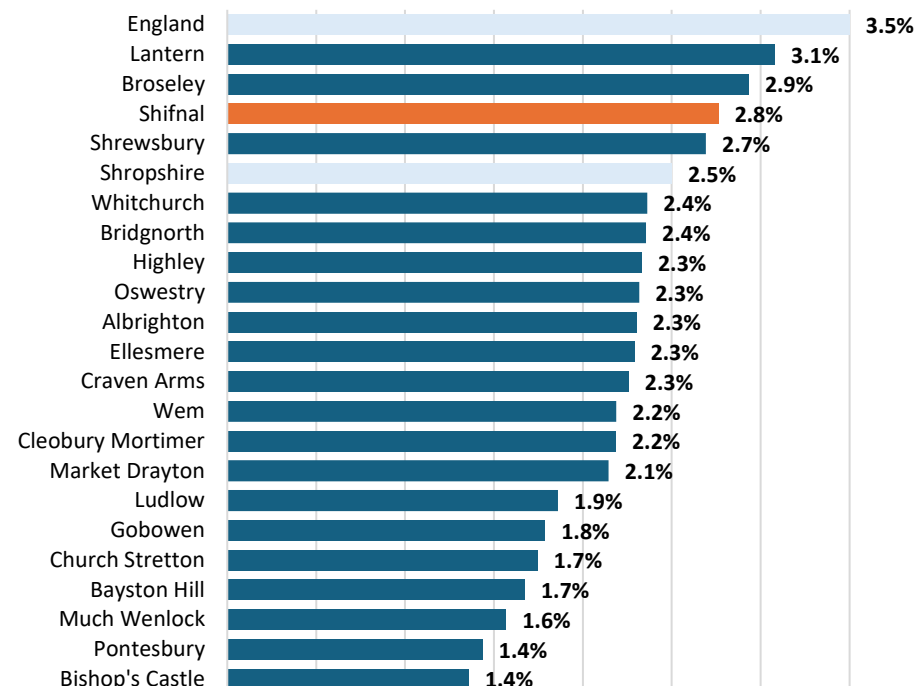
- 5.9% of residents in the Shifnal library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is low compared with Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.4% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



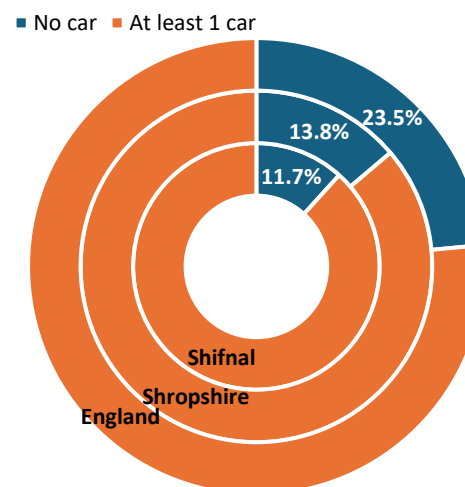
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Shifnal catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.7%.

Unemployment rate



Shifnal: Percentage of Households with No Car



Shrewsbury Library Profile

Background

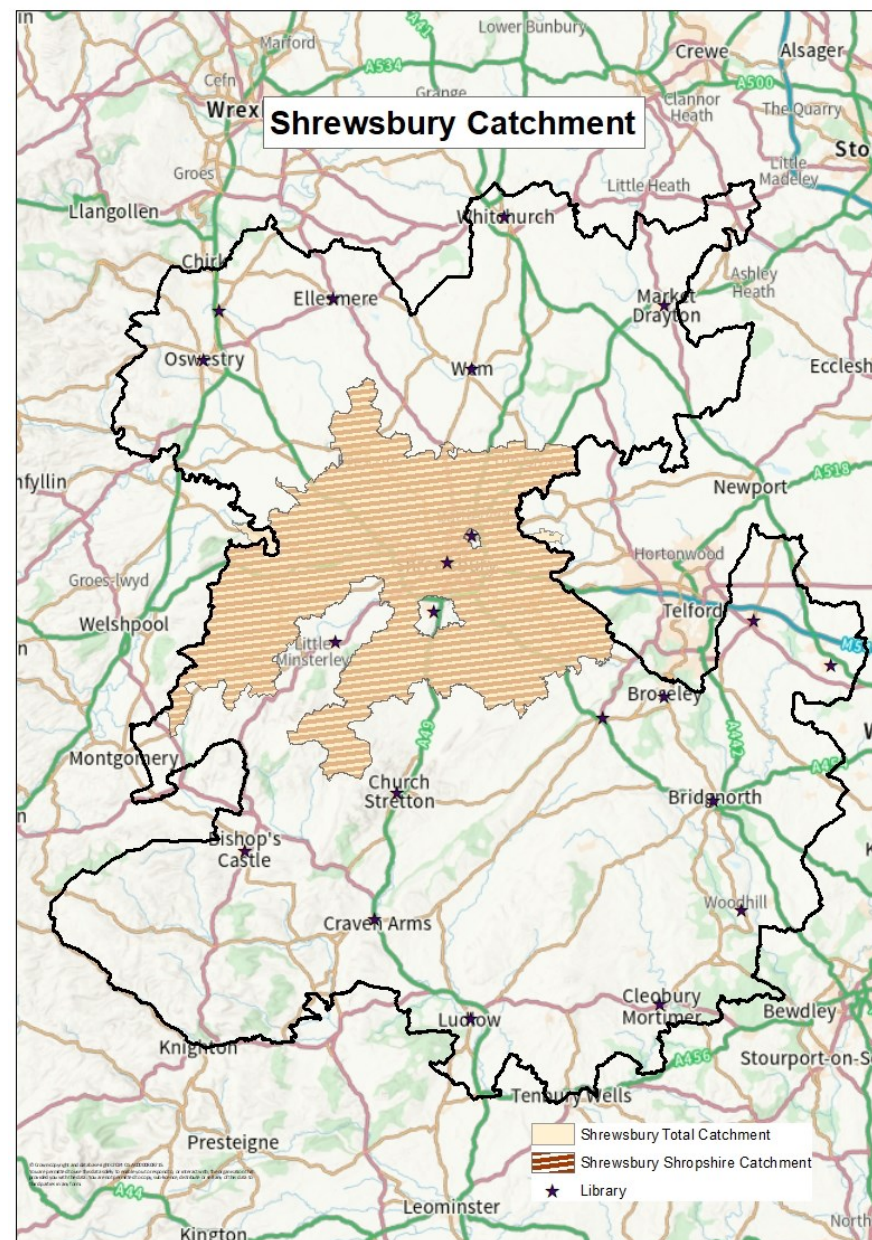
- Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire, located in the centre of the county.
- Shrewsbury is more than four times larger than the next largest Shropshire town, and the library is the largest in the county.
- The library is in the centre of town and is within close walking distance of the train station and the bus station. The library occupies a Grade I and II listed building across multiple floors. It has several meeting rooms, a staff room, public toilets and is owned and operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 54,507 hectares within Shropshire which is about 17% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends slightly outside Shropshire, although 99% is within the county boundary.
- The total population within the Shrewsbury library catchment area is 99,794 comprising 43,329 households. 99% of the catchment population – 99,120 people - are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Shrewsbury is twice the size of the second largest catchment (Oswestry).

Opening Hours

The library is open 46 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Tuesday	9.30am-19.00pm	9.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-16.00pm	6.5
Sunday	Closed	0

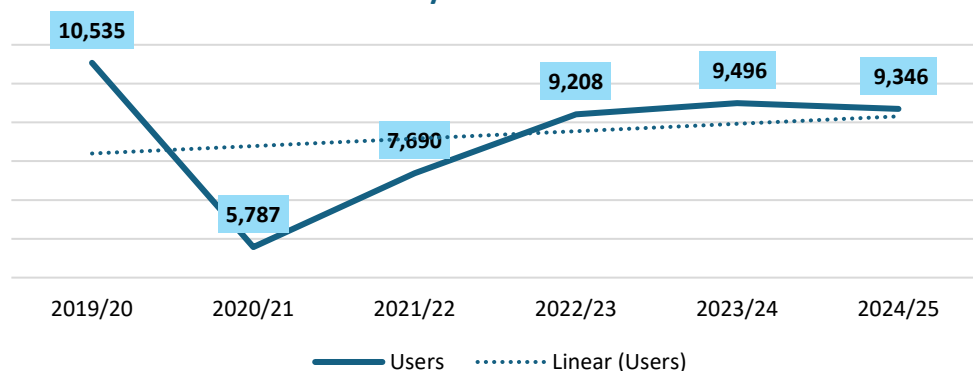
- The library employs 9 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 34 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 893 volunteer hours.



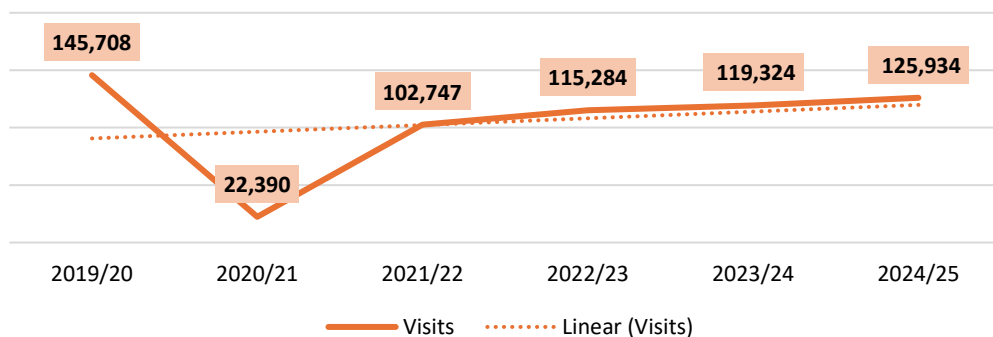
Library Users

- Shrewsbury library had 9,346 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 28.7% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.3% of the Shrewsbury catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes residents who use other Shropshire libraries as well as Shrewsbury.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and young people, fewer users aged 65 and above but more adults aged 20 to 64.

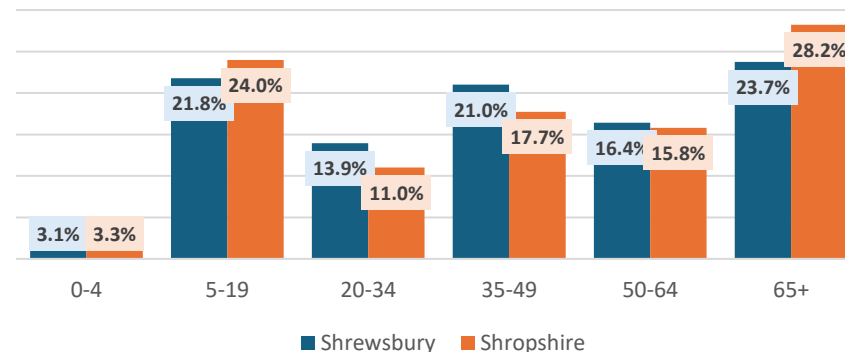
Shrewsbury: Number of Active Users



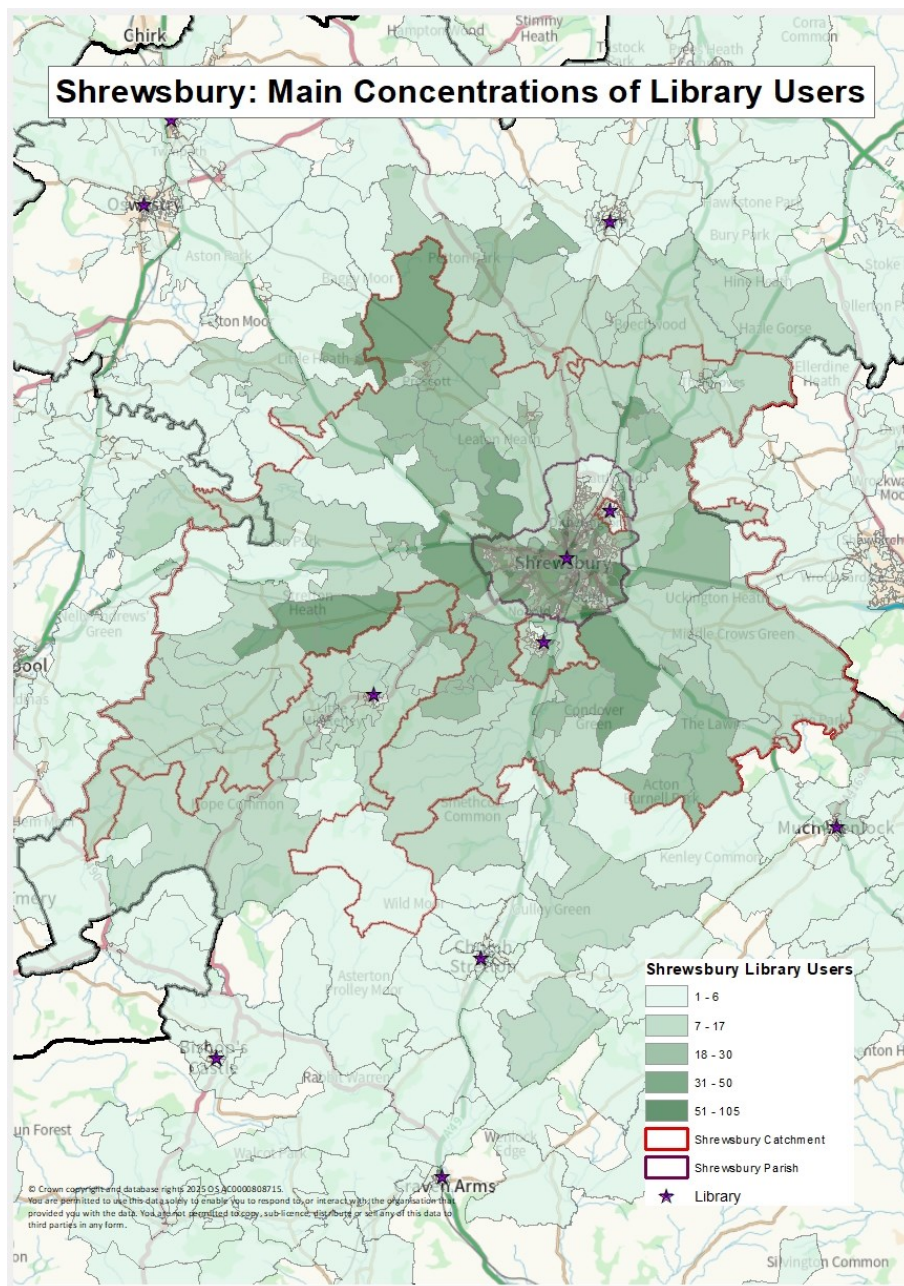
Shrewsbury: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Shrewsbury Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although this had flattened by 2024/25 when numbers stood at 9,346, still below pre-pandemic levels.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 1,189 users (-11.3%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 125,934, which is the equivalent of about 13 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels (14 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 13.6% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 117,724 loans were made in 2024/25 which equates with 13 per active user and just under 1 per visit.
- The number of loans was stable between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 3% in 2024/25 compared with 2023/24.
- Computer time was down by 20%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 83.3% of all Shrewsbury library users live within the main catchment area.
- 69.0% live within the Shrewsbury town council area.
- 7.6% of the population in the catchment area are Shrewsbury active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to over a quarter. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 16.7% of Shrewsbury library users that do not live in the catchment, significant numbers live in the Bayston Hill, Pontesbury, Oswestry, Lantern and Wem catchments.
- People that live in the Shrewsbury catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Lantern and Bayston Hill libraries. Both these libraries are within the Shrewsbury catchment.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 81.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Shrewsbury library were to Shrewsbury, and these accounted for 78.8% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Shrewsbury include the Lantern, Bayston Hill, Church Stretton, Oswestry and Pontesbury as well as the Sabrina mobile service.

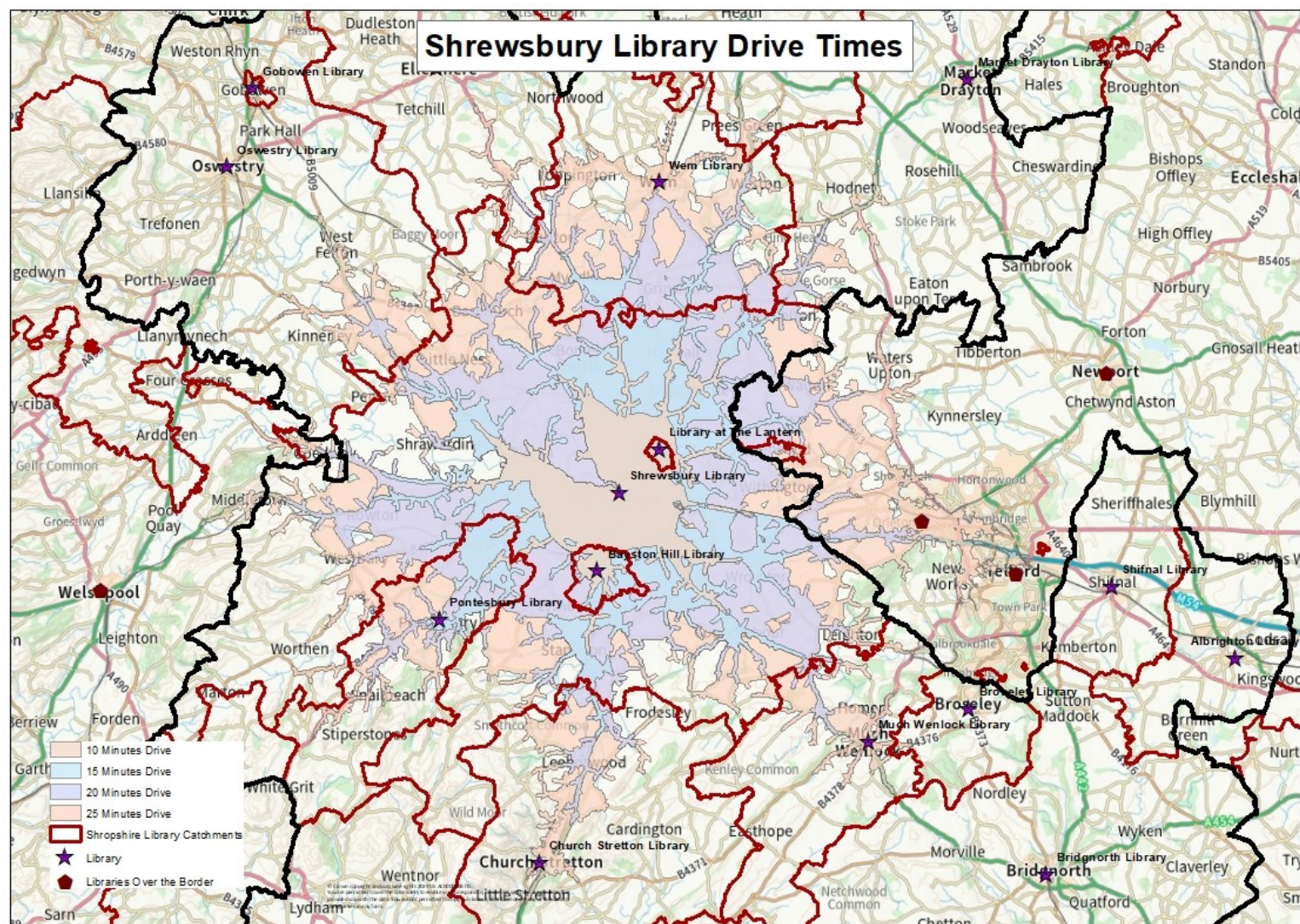
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Shrewsbury library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	10.7%
30 Minute Walk	38.5%
10 Minute Drive	76.3%
15 Minute Drive	81.5%
20 Minute Drive	87.6%
25 Minute Drive	92.3%

Access

- Shrewsbury is in central Shropshire.
- There are two libraries that are contained within the Shrewsbury catchment in addition to Shrewsbury library – the Lantern to the north of the town and Bayston Hill to the south. Both are within a 10-minute drive of Shrewsbury’s main library.



Costs

- Shrewsbury is the most expensive library in Shropshire that Shropshire Council operates ahead of Ludlow and Oswestry.
- Annual running costs are £500,530 (2024/25).
- Shrewsbury library is the second most expensive per hour open. However, it costs less than average per active user, per book loan and per visit.

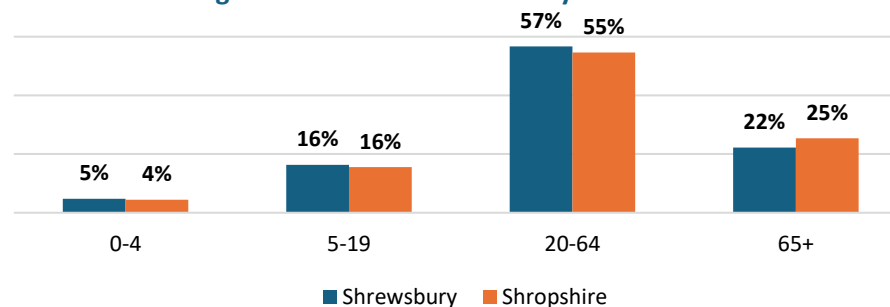
	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£209.25	£66.37	21st
Per Active User	£52.71	£71.50	10th
Per Visit	£4.19	£5.71	16th
Per Book Loan	£4.23	£4.50	12th

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Shrewsbury Catchment Area

Population

- Shrewsbury library catchment is the largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 99,120 and a total population of 99,797.
- The age breakdown of the population is comparable with the overall Shropshire population, albeit with slightly fewer aged 65+.
- There are 43,329 households in the catchment, with 1,959 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is similar to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

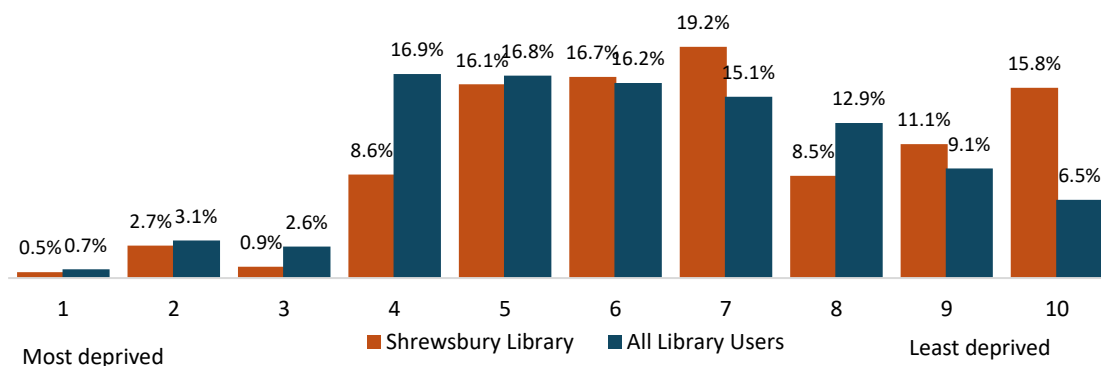
Age Breakdown of Shrewsbury Catchment



Shrewsbury catchment includes non-Shropshire population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Shrewsbury Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Shrewsbury library is in decile six according to the 2019 IMD, which means that it is within the 40% least deprived areas of the country.
- There is a stronger bias towards users living in less deprived areas, with 26.9% living in the least deprived 20% of the country (15.6% for all library users).
- Less than 5% of users are drawn from the most deprived 30% of England.

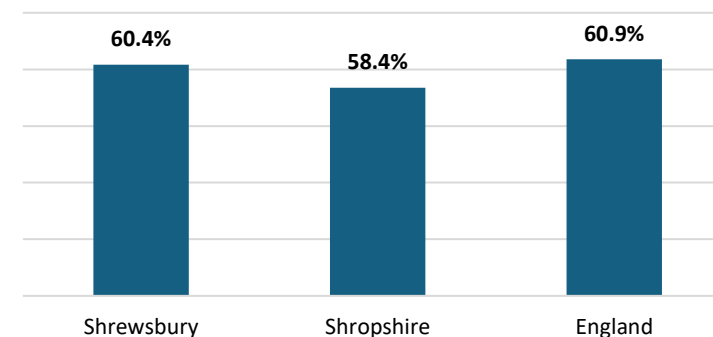
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Shrewsbury library catchment is higher than the Shropshire average at 60.4% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- However, it is marginally lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Shrewsbury library catchment area is the fourth highest in Shropshire after Shifnal, the Lantern and Albrighton.

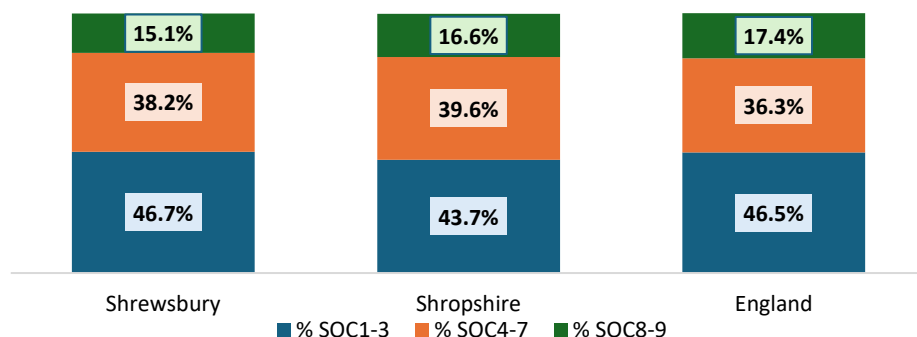
Employment

- 48,185 people in Shrewsbury were in employment in 2021, which equates with 58.0% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 46.7%. Fewer are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) and in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Shrewsbury: Economic Activity Rate



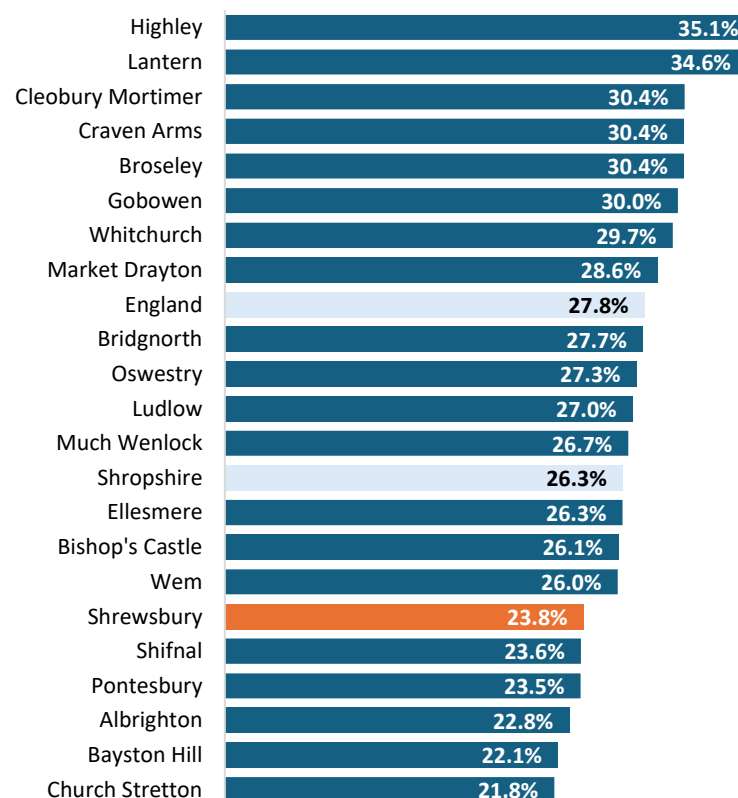
Shrewsbury: Occupation Types



Qualifications

- A lower proportion of the Shrewsbury population have no or low qualifications compared to the England average at 23.8%. This is also lower than the Shropshire average.

% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

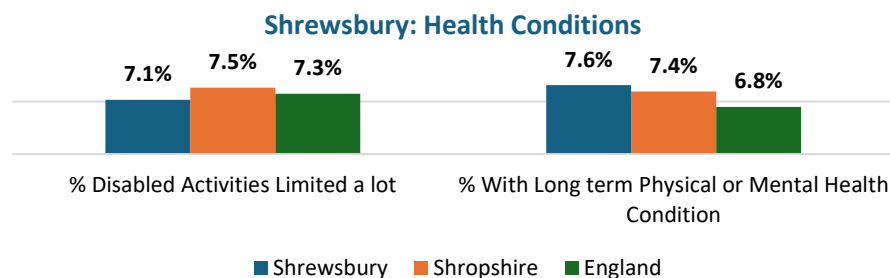


Unemployment

- 2,235 people living in the Shrewsbury catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.7%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal as well as Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

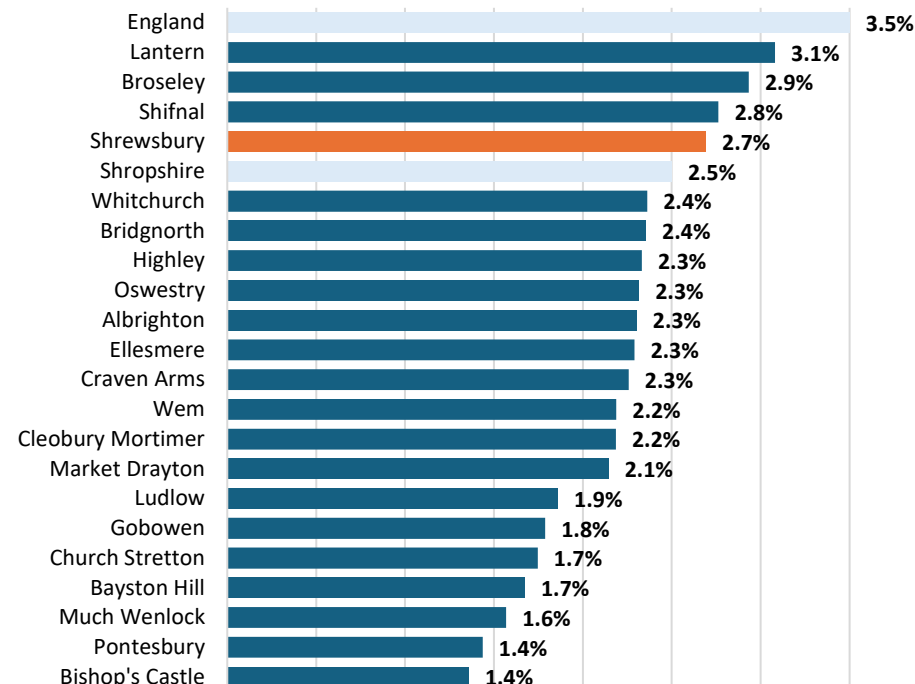
- 7.1% of residents in the Shrewsbury library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



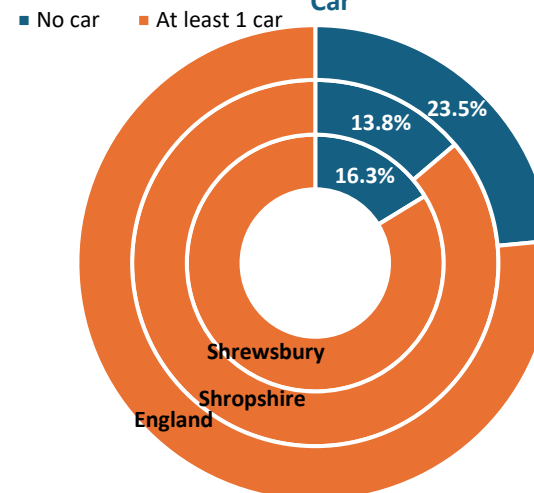
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Shrewsbury households that do not have access to a car or van is higher than the Shropshire average at 16.3%.

Unemployment rate



Shrewsbury: Percentage of Households with No Car



Wem Library Profile

Background

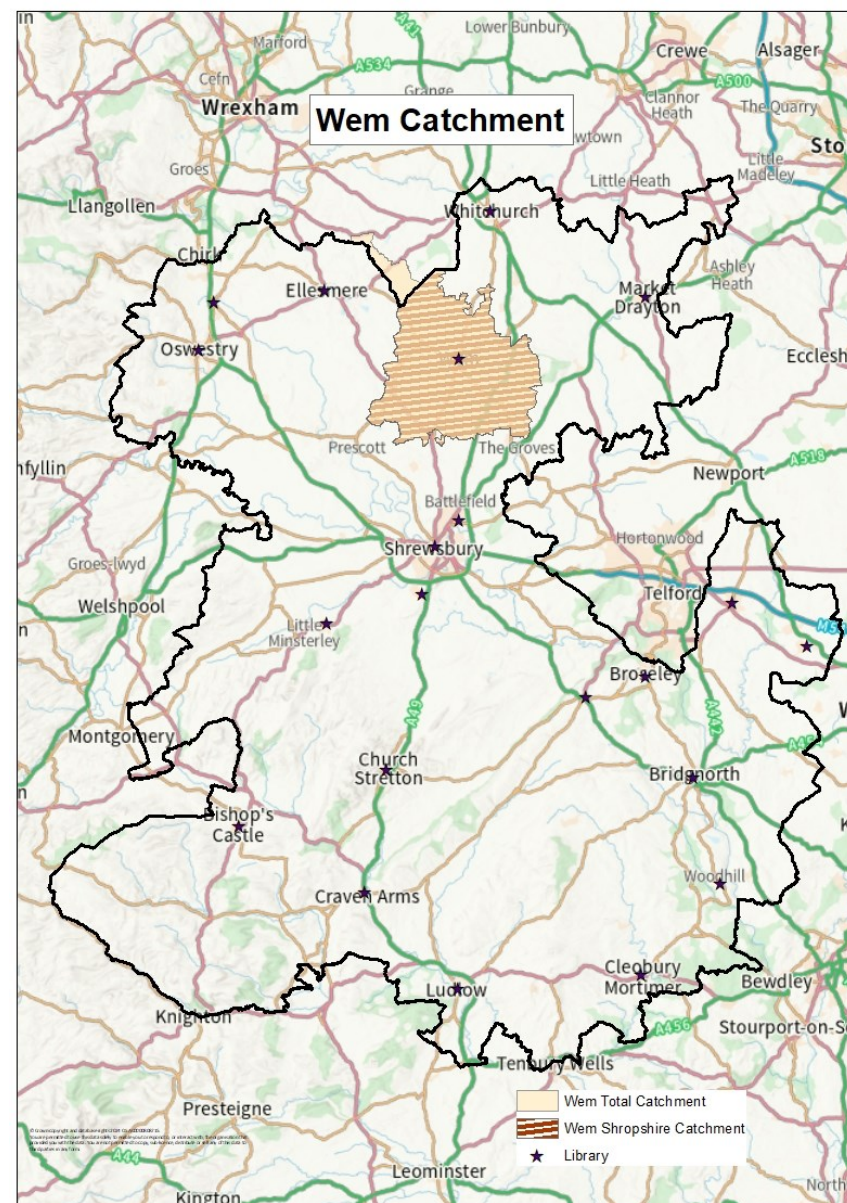
- Wem is located in the north of Shropshire between Shrewsbury and Whitchurch.
- The library occupies the ground floor of a building on Wem High Street close to the town car park.
- The building is leased to Shropshire Council which manages the library.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 13,958 hectares which is approximately 4.4% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends into Wrexham to the north.
- The total population within the Wem library catchment area is 11,948 comprising 5,117 households. 96.8% of the catchment population (11,564 people) are Shropshire residents.

Opening Hours

The library is open 20.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

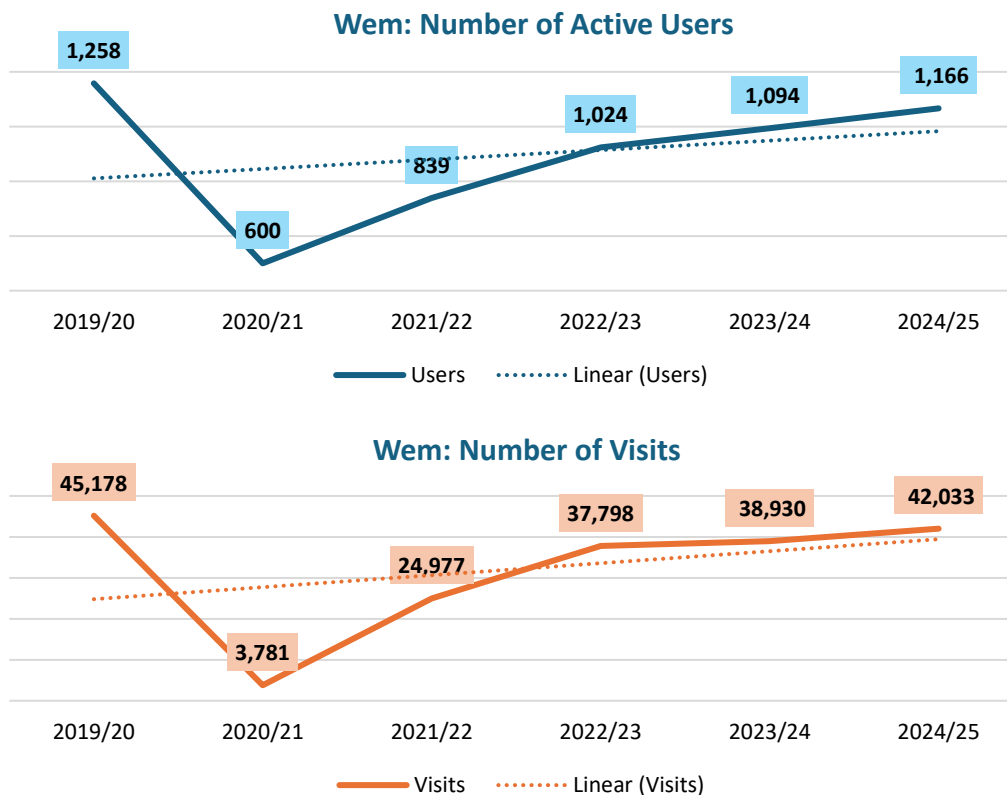
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Friday	14.00pm-17.00pm	3
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library has 1.116 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from 17 volunteers providing a total of 778 volunteer hours.

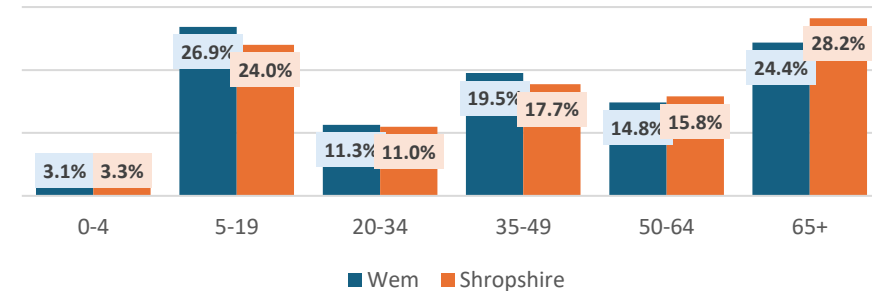


Library Users

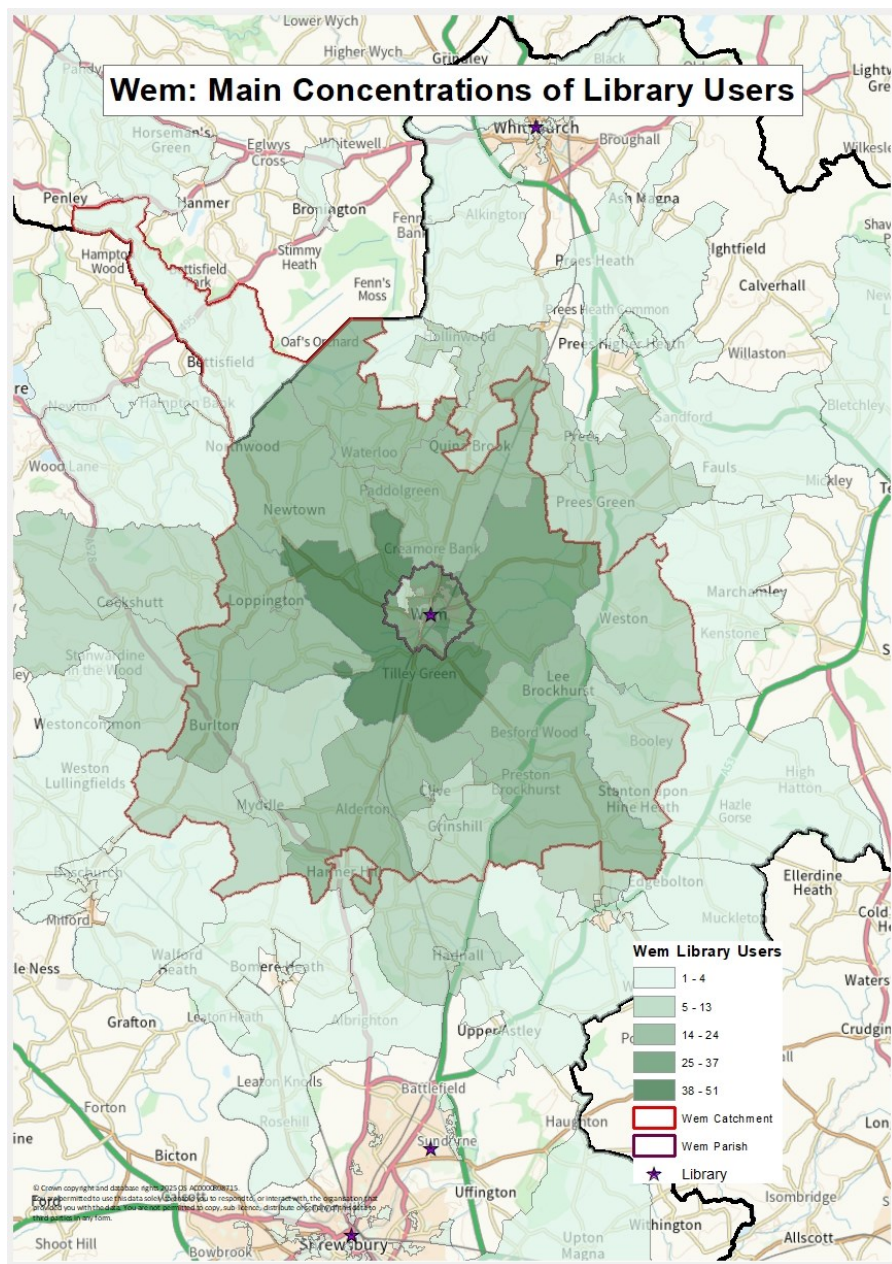
- Wem library had 1,166 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 3.6% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.9% of the Wem catchment population are active library users, which is about the same as the Shropshire average. This includes users of all Shropshire libraries, not just Wem.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young adults and fewer users over the age of 50.



Breakdown of Wem Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year although numbers remain lower than they were pre-pandemic.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 92 users (-7.3%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 42,033, which is the equivalent of about 36 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit has gone back up to the level seen pre-pandemic (36 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 7.0% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 24,361 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 21 per active user and 0.6 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 1% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 10%.
- There was no change in the level of computer usage.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 79.4% of all Wem library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is similar to the average for Shropshire.
- 52.8% of users live within Wem urban parish boundary with an additional 10.4% in Wem Rural.
- 7.5% of the population in the catchment area are Wem active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1% to 15.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 20.6% of Wem library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Whitchurch or Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Wem catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 85.6% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Wem library were to Wem library, and these accounted for 86.0% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

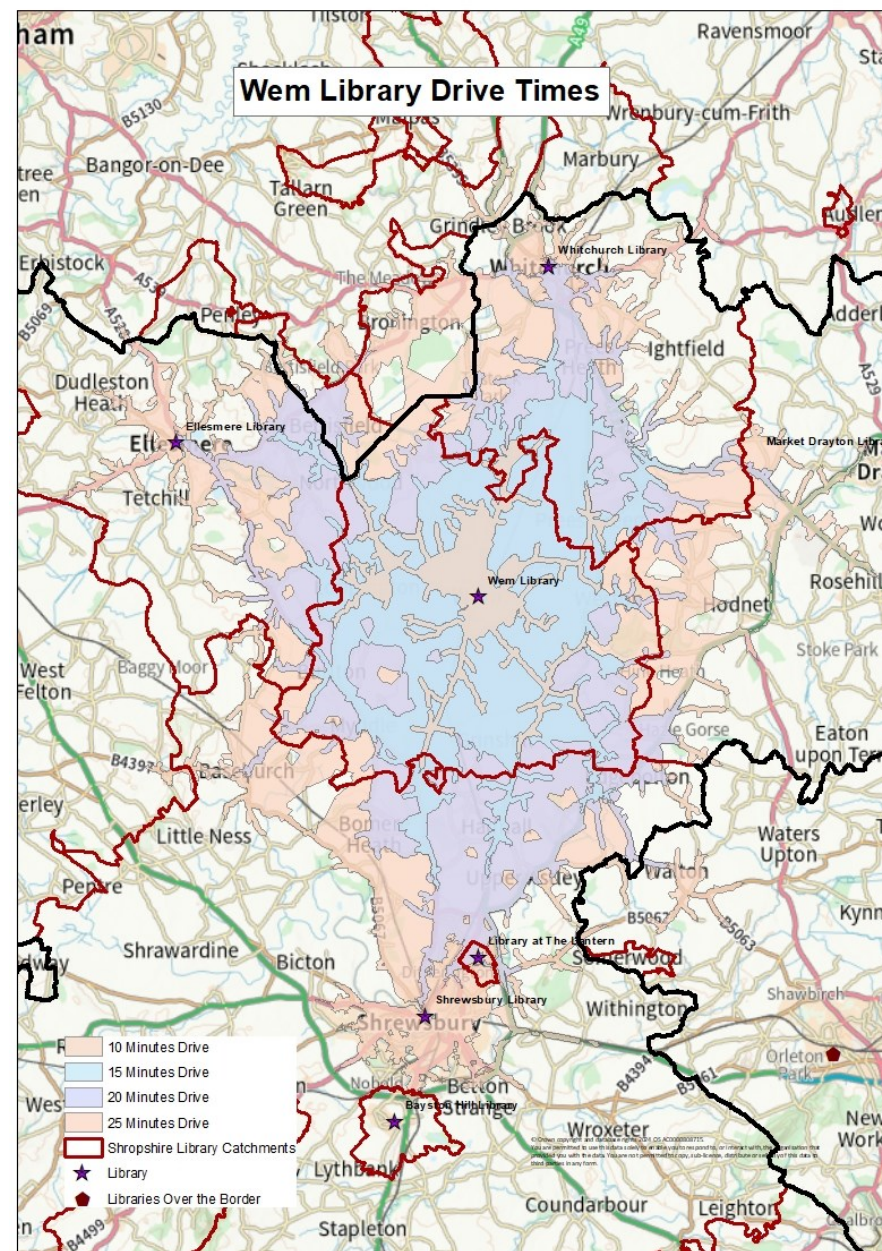
- The following table shows the proportion of active Wem library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	53.7%
30 Minute Walk	58.0%
10 Minute Drive	68.9%
15 Minute Drive	83.9%
20 Minute Drive	90.8%
25 Minute Drive	96.0%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Wem is in the north of Shropshire between Shrewsbury and Whitchurch. Proximity to the A49 means that both Shrewsbury and Whitchurch are easily accessible by car.
- Wem is on the mainline rail network on the Shrewsbury to Manchester route, so Shrewsbury and Whitchurch can also be accessed using public transport.
- The closest library to the Wem is Whitchurch, which is located 9 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 18 minutes.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Wem	Whitchurch	9 miles	18 mins	Train or Bus	12 mins (Train)



Costs

- Wem ranks as the 8th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the second most expensive excluding the main six.
- Annual running costs are £110,670 (2024/25).
- The library has below average costs per visit, but above average costs per hour open, per user and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£103.82	£66.37	16th
Per Active User	£94.91	£71.50	16th
Per Visit	£2.63	£5.71	9th
Per Book Loan	£4.54	£4.50	14th

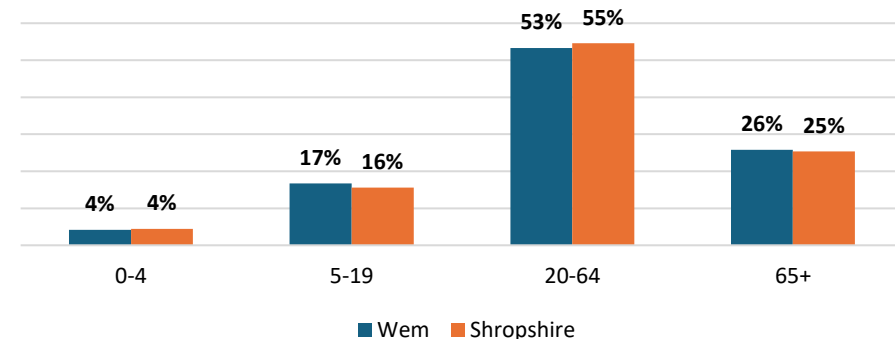
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Wem Catchment Area

Population

- The Wem library catchment is the seventh largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 11,948.
- The age breakdown of the population is broadly similar to the Shropshire breakdown.
- There are 5,117 households in the catchment, with 119 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.31 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

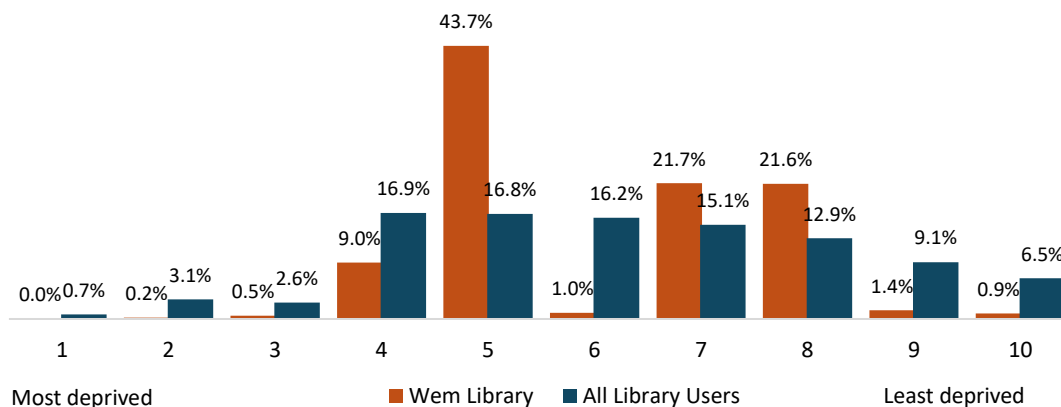
Age Breakdown of Wem Catchment



Wem catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Wem Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Wem library is in the fifth decile according to the IMD 2019 which means the library's location is in an area with average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that a low proportion of Wem library users are drawn from the 20% least deprived areas of the country (2.3% compared with 15.6% of all Shropshire library users).
- A low proportion of users also live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

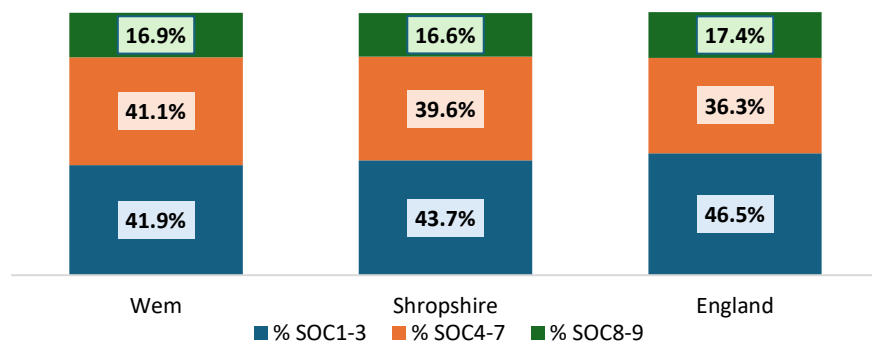
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Wem library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 58.1% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- This is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Wem library catchment area is the eighth highest in Shropshire.

Employment

- 5,660 people in the Wem catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 56.0% of the 16+ population.
- A slightly lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 41.9%. The proportion employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) is comparable with the Shropshire average, while slightly more are employed in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

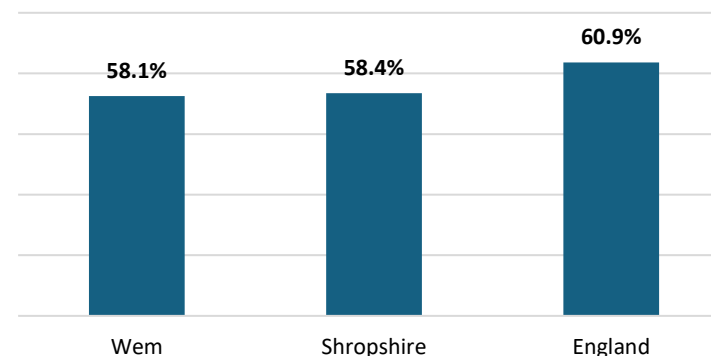
Wem: Occupation Types



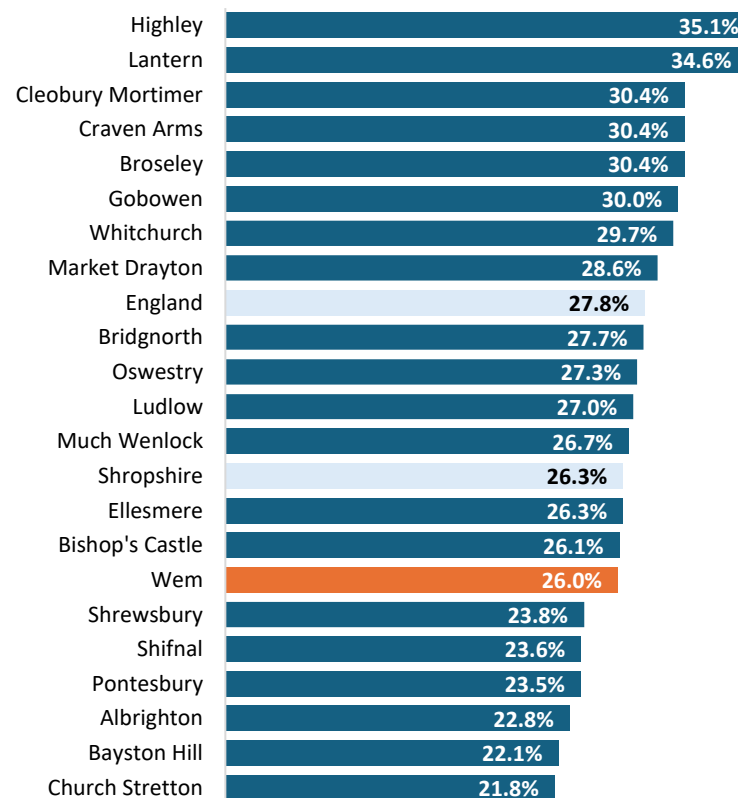
Qualifications

- The proportion of the Wem population with no or low qualifications is comparable with the Shropshire average at 26.0% of the 16+ population. This is lower than the national average.

Wem: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



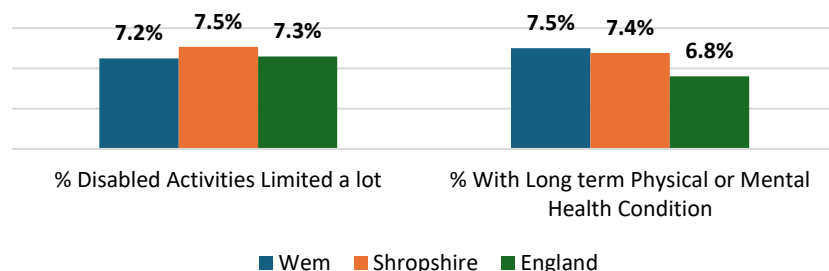
Unemployment

- 221 people living in the Wem catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.2% which is around average amongst Shropshire catchments.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 7.2% of residents in the Wem library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar compared with Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.5% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

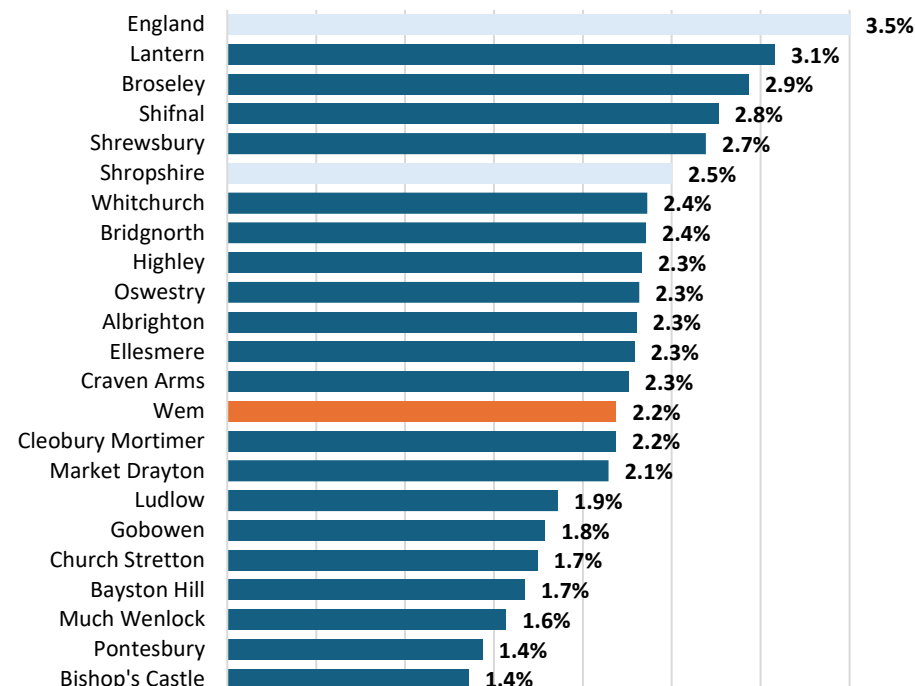
Wem: Health Conditions



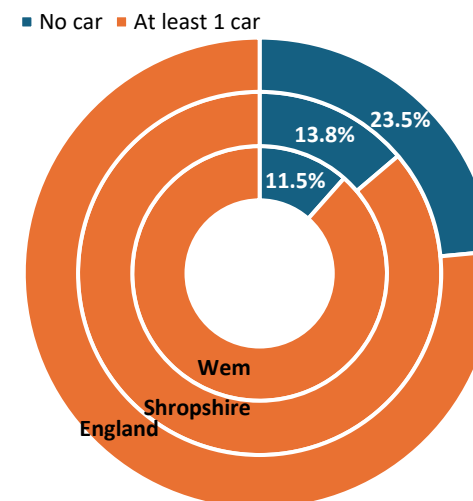
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Wem catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.5%.

Unemployment rate



Wem: Percentage of Households with No Car



Whitchurch Library Profile

Background

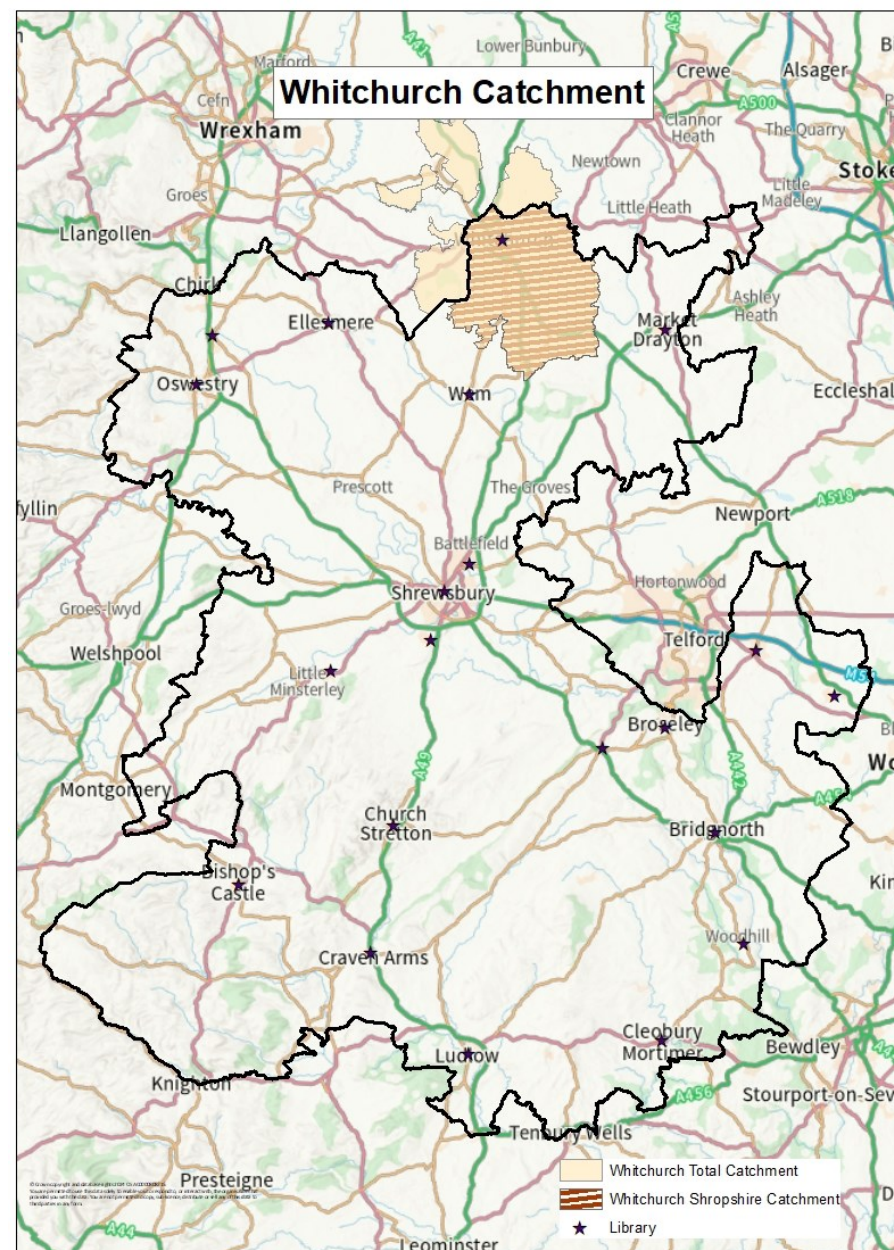
- Whitchurch is in the north of Shropshire, close to the Cheshire border. It is the sixth largest town in the county.
- Until recently, the library has been located in the Civic Centre building in the town centre. However, the presence of RAAC throughout the building has forced its closure; the library is now being accommodated in St Mary's Arcade.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 11,892 hectares within Shropshire which is about 3.7% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends outside Shropshire, into Cheshire and also Wrexham, with 38% of the catchment outside Shropshire.
- The total population within the Whitchurch library catchment area is 19,692 comprising 8,560 households. 82.1% of the catchment population – 16,171 people - are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Whitchurch is the sixth largest catchment.

Opening Hours

The library is open 30.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-17.00pm	6.5
Tuesday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-18.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-17.00pm	6.5
Friday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-17.00pm	6.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 3.82 FTE persons and in 2024/25 benefited from 2 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 17 volunteer hours.

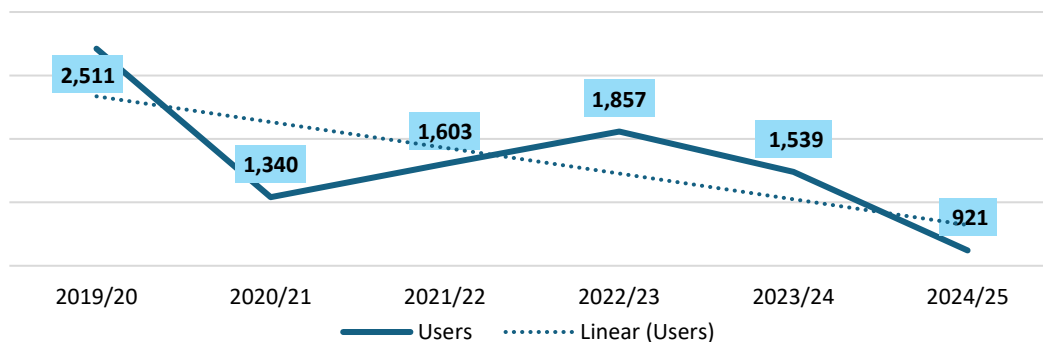


ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023

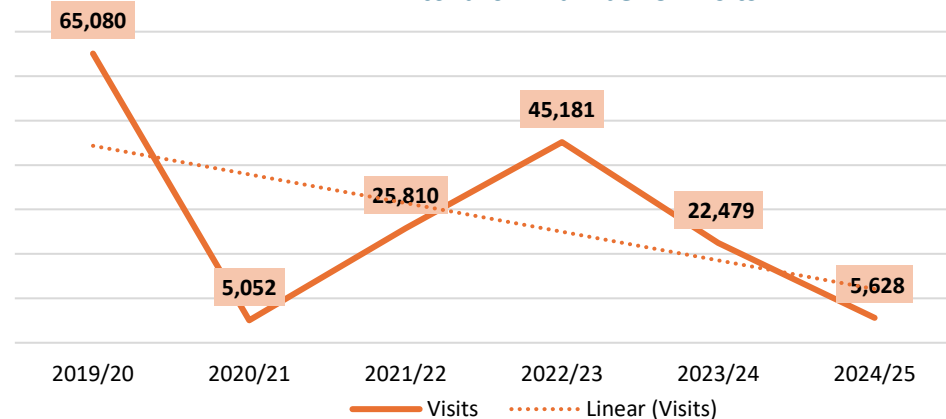
Library Users

- Whitchurch library had 921 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.8% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 4.6% of the Whitchurch catchment population are active library users, which is much lower than the Shropshire average. It includes usage at all libraries, not just Whitchurch.
- Just over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2024/25) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more children and young people as well as more users aged 65 and above.

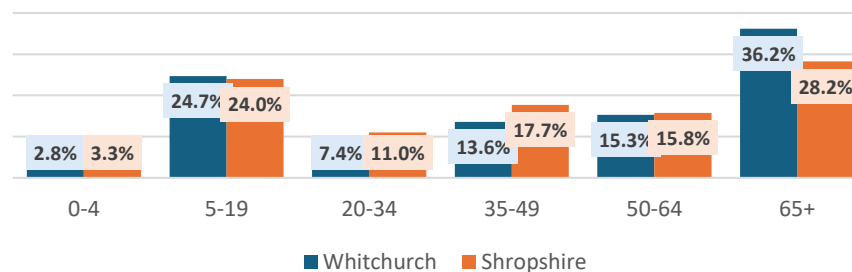
Whitchurch: Number of Active Users



Whitchurch: Number of Visits

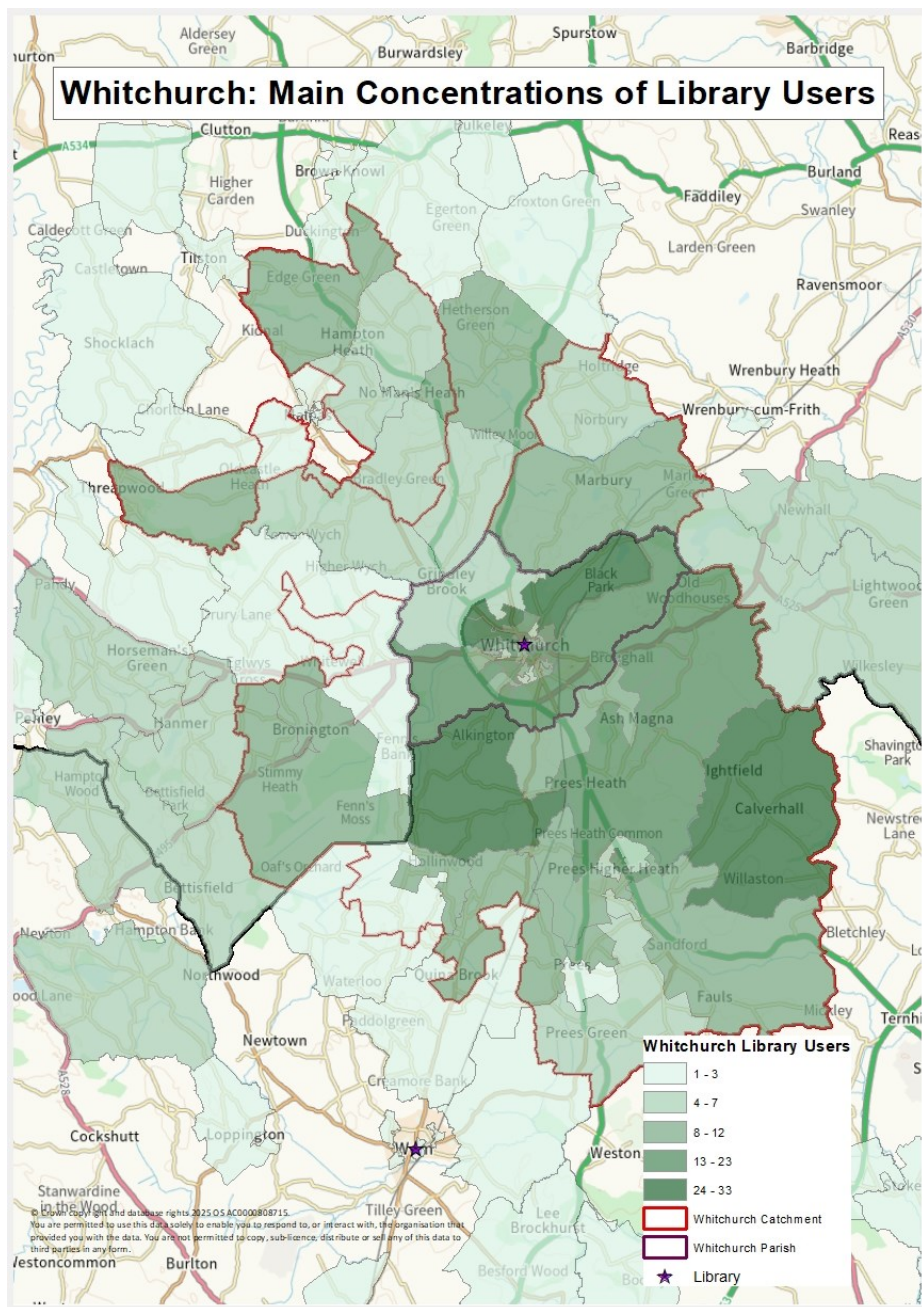


Breakdown of Whitchurch Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although the library closure has clearly impacted on user numbers in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 1,590 users (-63.3%). This compares with an average decline in users of 16.9% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 5,628, which is the equivalent of about 6 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and the frequency with which users visit the library has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels (26 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 91.4% lower in 2024/25 than in 2019/20.
- 9,184 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 10 per active user and 1.6 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 47% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 35% in 2024/25 compared with 2023/24.

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 73.8% of all Whitchurch library users live within the main catchment area.
- 49.9% live within the Whitchurch town council area.
- 3.8% of the population in the catchment area are Whitchurch active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 8.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 26.2% of Whitchurch library users that do not live in the catchment, small numbers live in Wem, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Ellesmere and Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Whitchurch catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Market Drayton, Shrewsbury or Wem libraries.
- Over the six months to March 2025, 71.6% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Whitchurch library were to Whitchurch, and these accounted for 64.8% of all issues. These proportions will have been impacted by the library being closed for some of this period.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Whitchurch include Market Drayton, Wem, Oswestry and Shrewsbury as well as the Owen mobile service.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Whitchurch library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

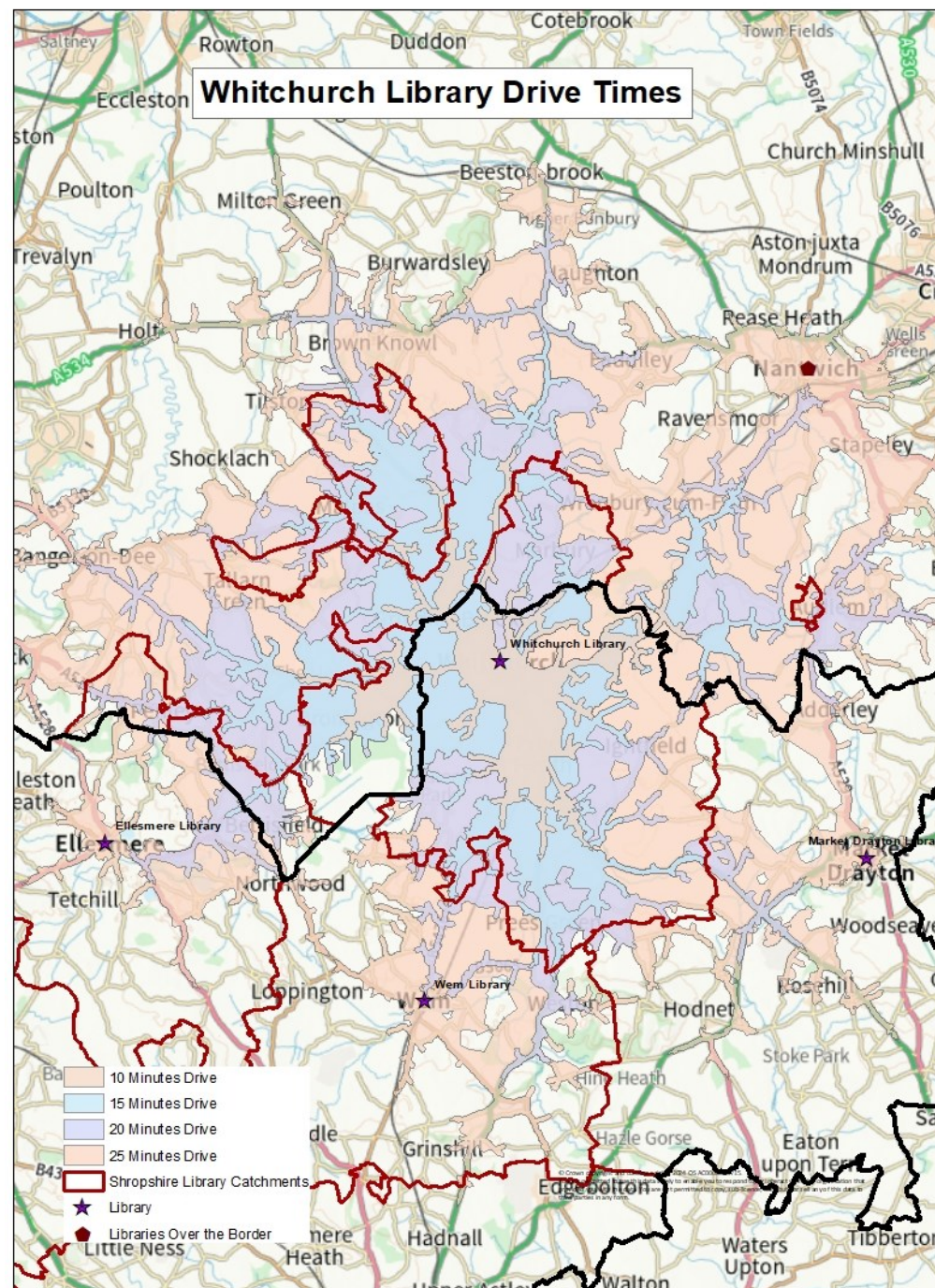
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	44.6%
30 Minute Walk	55.6%
10 Minute Drive	68.4%
15 Minute Drive	83.3%
20 Minute Drive	91.2%
25 Minute Drive	96.0%

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023

Access

- Whitchurch is in north Shropshire with strong road links via the A41 and A49 and it is also on the rail network on the Manchester to Shrewsbury line.
- The closest library is Wem, which is located 9 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 18 minutes.
- Wem can also be accessed by train, with a journey time of approximately 12 minutes.
- Other libraries within a 25-minute drive include Ellesmere and Nantwich, which is in Cheshire.

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023



Costs

- Whitchurch is the sixth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) but is the least expensive of the main six libraries.
- Annual running costs are £189,510 (2024/25).
- Whitchurch library is more expensive than average per book loan, per visit, per user and per hour open. These figures have been impacted by the library's enforced closure for part of 2024/25.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£105.64	£66.37	17th
Per Active User	£205.77	£71.50	22nd
Per Visit	£33.67	£5.71	22nd
Per Book Loan	£20.63	£4.54	22nd

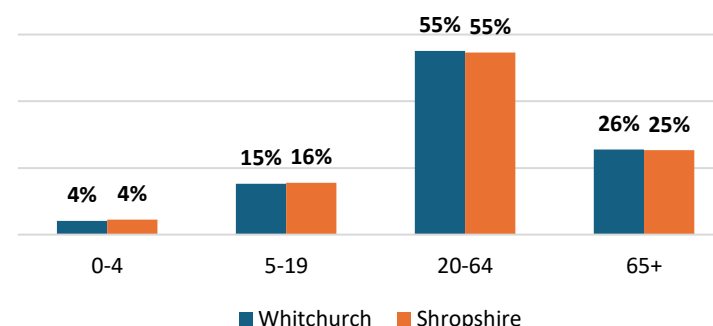
Includes HMP Stoke Heath 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Whitchurch Catchment Area

Population

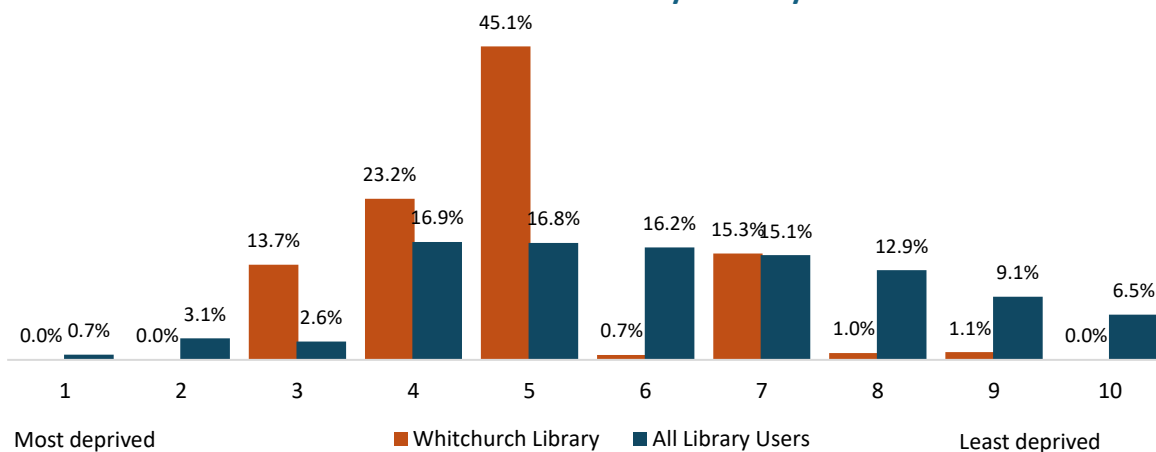
- Whitchurch library catchment is the sixth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 16,171 and a total population of 19,692.
- The age breakdown of the population is comparable with the overall Shropshire population, albeit with slightly more aged 65+.
- There are 8,560 households in the catchment, with 188 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.28 which is similar to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Whitchurch Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Whitchurch Library Users by IMD Decile



Whitchurch catchment includes non-Shropshire population

- Whitchurch library is in decile three according to the 2019 IMD, which means that it is one of seven libraries located within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- 13.7% of users are drawn from the most deprived 30% of England, while just 2.1% are from the least deprived 30%. The highest proportion of users are from decile five (45.1%).

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

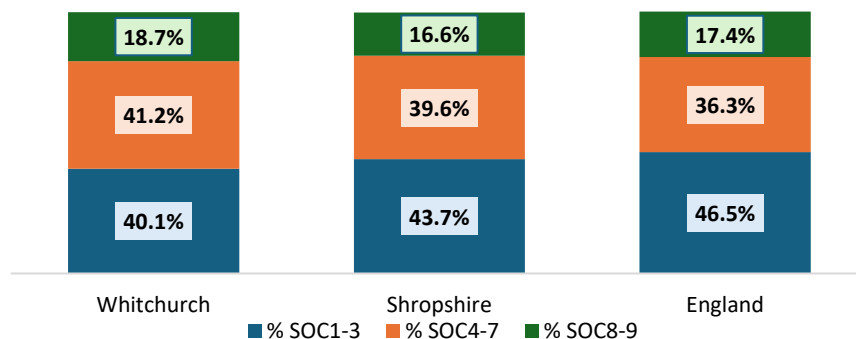
Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Whitchurch library catchment is identical to the Shropshire average at 58.4% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is marginally lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Whitchurch library catchment area is the sixth highest in Shropshire after Shifnal, the Lantern, Albrighton, Shrewsbury and Oswestry.

Employment

- 9,346 people in Whitchurch were in employment in 2021, which equates with 56.2% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 40.1%. More are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) and in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

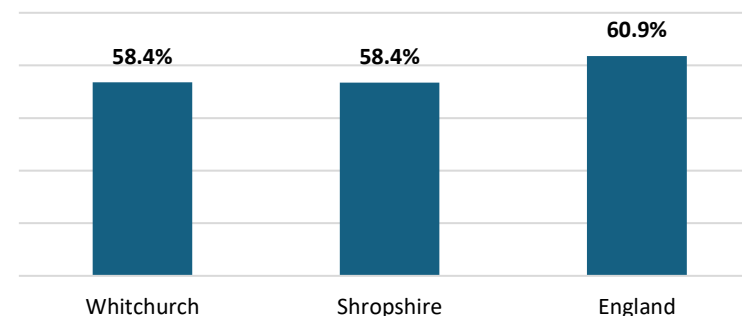
Whitchurch: Occupation Types



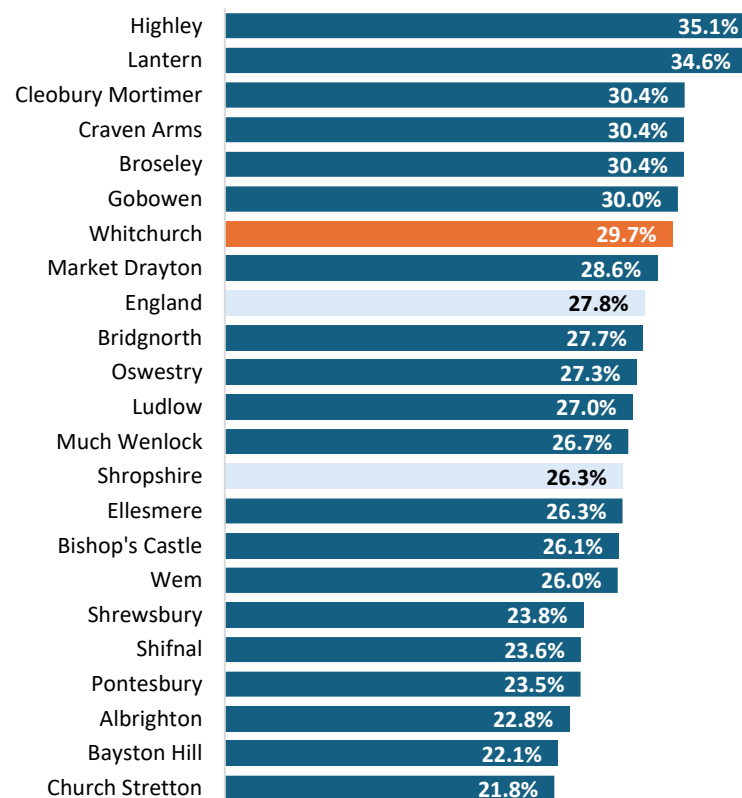
Qualifications

- A higher proportion of the Whitchurch population have no or low qualifications compared to the England average at 29.7%. This is also higher than the Shropshire average (26.3%).

Whitchurch: Economic Activity Rate



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



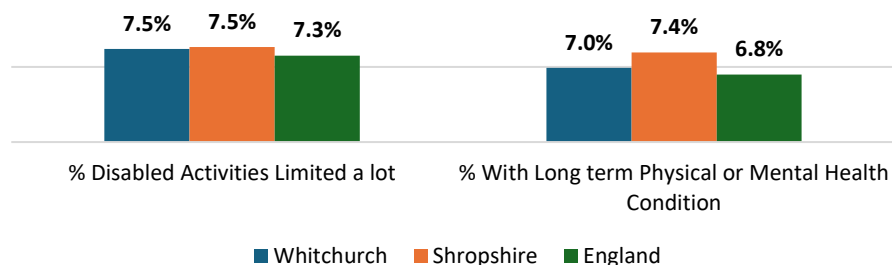
Unemployment

- 393 people living in the Whitchurch catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.4%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 7.5% of residents in the Whitchurch library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.0% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is slightly lower than Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).

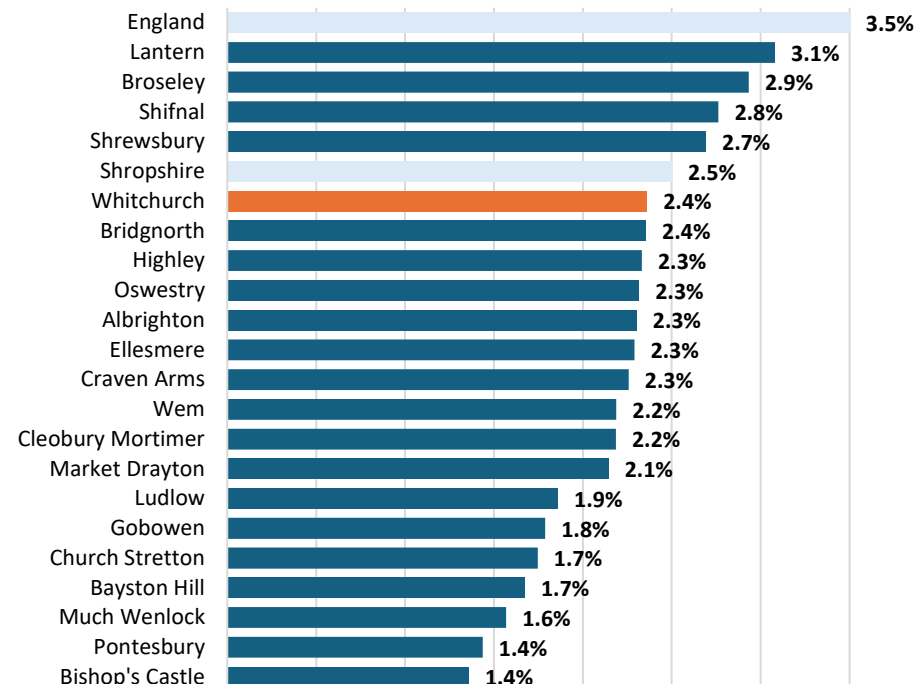
Whitchurch: Health Conditions



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Whitchurch households that do not have access to a car or van is lower than the Shropshire average at 12.0%.

Unemployment rate



Whitchurch: Percentage of Households with No Car

