



Report to: Library Committee

Date: 29th August 2006

Report of: Chief Librarian

Contact Officer: Mrs K Ryan

TITLE OF REPORT:

‘Your Library Service’ Survey – Overview Results

SUMMARY

This report summarises the main findings of the ‘Your Library Service’ survey which was carried out in March 2006. 5057 forms were returned; these show a major change in demand relating to the format of audio-visual material and in demand for evening opening.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Library Committee is asked to accept this report and to recommend:-

- i The production of a plan to move to DVD provision,
- ii The standardisation of the opening hours of Flagship libraries,
- iii New patterns of opening hours for Flagship Libraries which reflect the demand for greater evening opening, and,
- iv The production of a report to the next Library Committee from the Library Working Group with proposals for changes in service provision in Band 2 and Band 3 libraries.
- v Display/publication of the main findings of the survey in branch libraries.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Minutes of the Library Committee 28th February 2006, 24th January 2006 and 12th January 2006.

‘YOUR LIBRARY SERVICE’ SURVEY – OVERVIEW RESULTS

1 INTRODUCTION

A review of Library Services in the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) area began in September 2004. Since then a variety of changes have been made to move resources from ‘back room’ tasks and create a greater focus on front-line service delivery. This has involved both redeployment of staff out of Library Headquarters into branch libraries, with a subsequent loss of posts in Library Headquarters, and re-direction of resources into the stock fund. To date some changes have been made in service delivery to housebound readers and hospitals and further changes are likely as all services continue to be reviewed. The major review of services provided via branch and mobile libraries has continued; the Library Committee wished to collect public views on services before this progressed any further.

A Working Group of the Library Committee considered the content of a questionnaire and this was subsequently agreed by the Library Committee in February 2006. The survey was carried out during March 2006 and completed forms were sent to the 5-Board Central Management Support Unit for input to an appropriate database package and analysis. Depending on the completion of all questions, there are between 15-25 items of information to be input from each form. Some 5057 forms were returned.

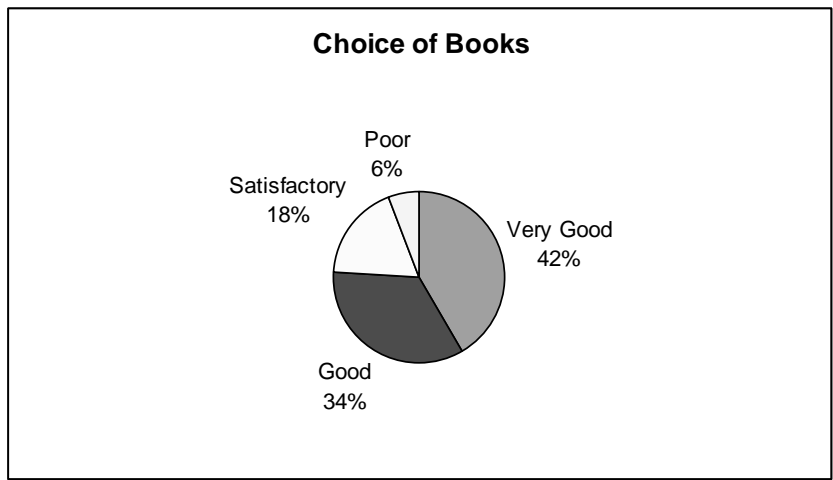
2 NUMBER OF RESPONSES

Appendix 1 provides a table which shows the wide variation in the number of responses received from different branch libraries. In general, smaller libraries had a larger percentage of users respond to the survey than larger libraries. In simple numeric terms Coalisland had the largest number of responses with 1061 completed forms, and Warrenpoint had the smallest number with 84 completed forms. It seems likely that users of smaller libraries are more concerned at the possible outcome of service changes than the users of larger libraries, hence the greater percentage completion rate in smaller libraries. Only 94 respondees said they were not a member of a library although 150 people omitted to answer this question.

3 RESULTS SUMMARY

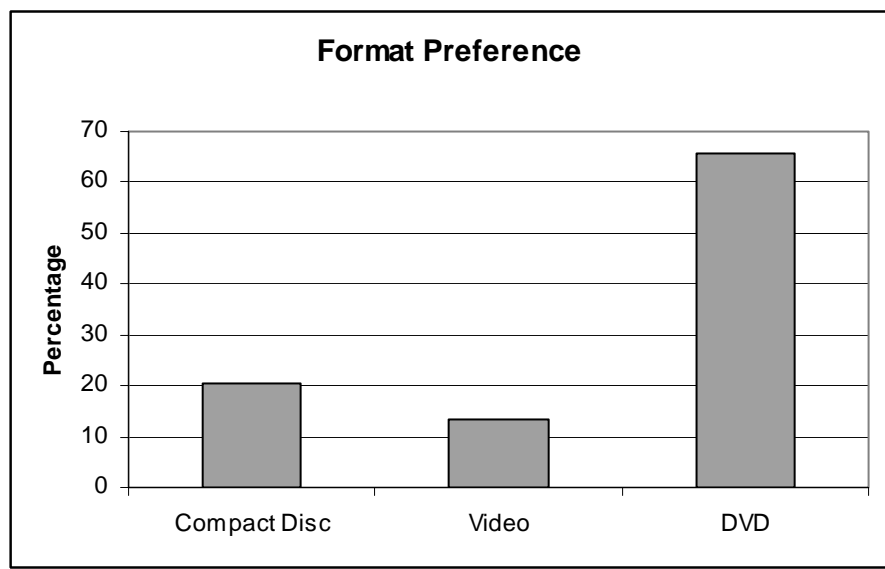
The results which follow show the summary results from all the responses received. They present the overall picture of customers’ views but hide variations between different service points. (The statistics on which this report is based are contained in Appendix 2.) Detail of responses from individual service points show variations of roughly between 3% - 5% on different questions. Clearly the overview findings hide these variations; in many instances this is not significant in showing clear trends and opinions. All future decisions will need to take into account both overview and local findings. Comments were made about the service on 44% of the forms and these often elucidate the statistical findings.

3.1 What do you think of the choice of books available in your library?



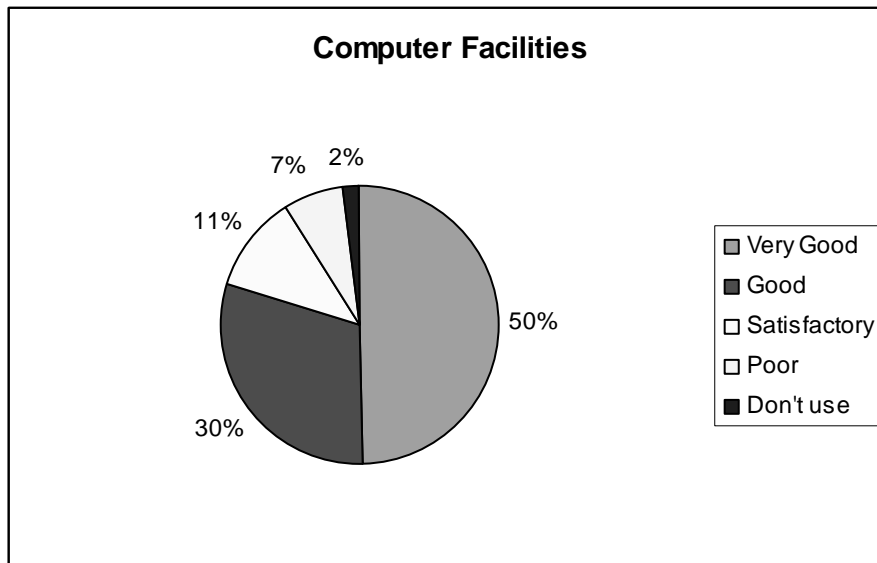
Overall the response was less positive in larger libraries, despite their larger stock holdings. Comments on stock were made on 596 forms; of these 494 were negative e.g. ‘more new books needed’; 86 were positive e.g. ‘good selection’; and there were 16 general comments about stock e.g. ‘more soft back large print books, hard backs difficult for the elderly to hold’.

3.2 What format would you prefer for music or film?



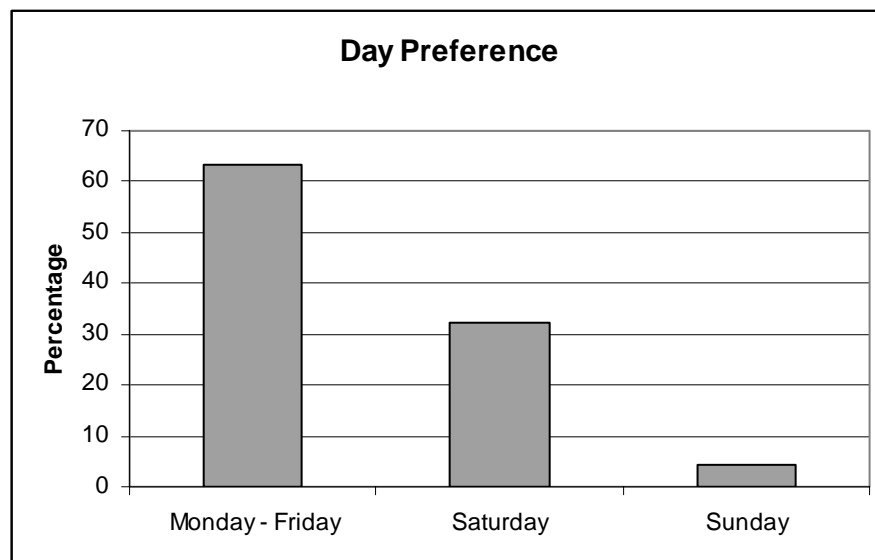
The change to new audio visual formats was clearly shown in these results which suggest that if the service is to continue to provide audio visual formats it should move to purchasing DVDs to satisfy its users.

3.3 What do you think of the computer facilities in your local library?



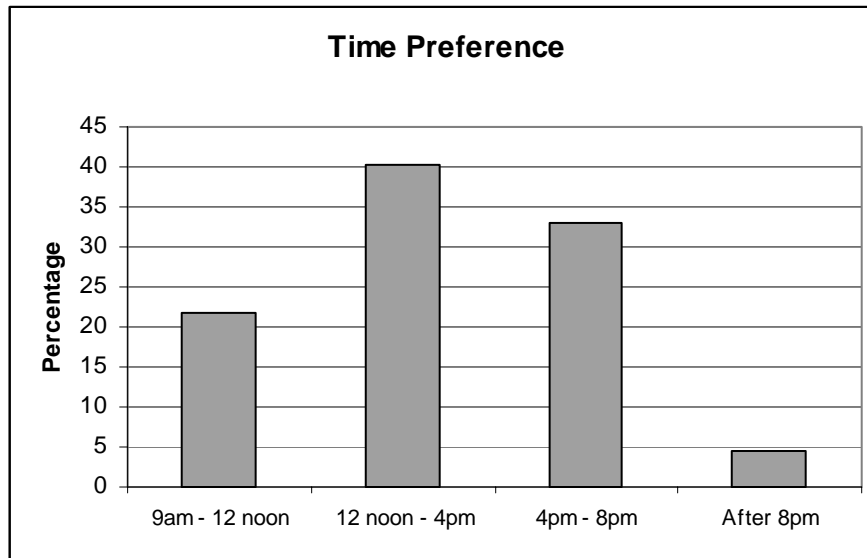
The large majority had very positive responses to this question, with over 90% of responses falling in the Very Good, Good and Satisfactory categories. Lower satisfaction levels were recorded, along with numerous comments about the need for more terminals at Coalisland (147), Gilford (9), Rathfriland (12), and Waringstown (1).

3.4 Which days would you prefer to use the library?



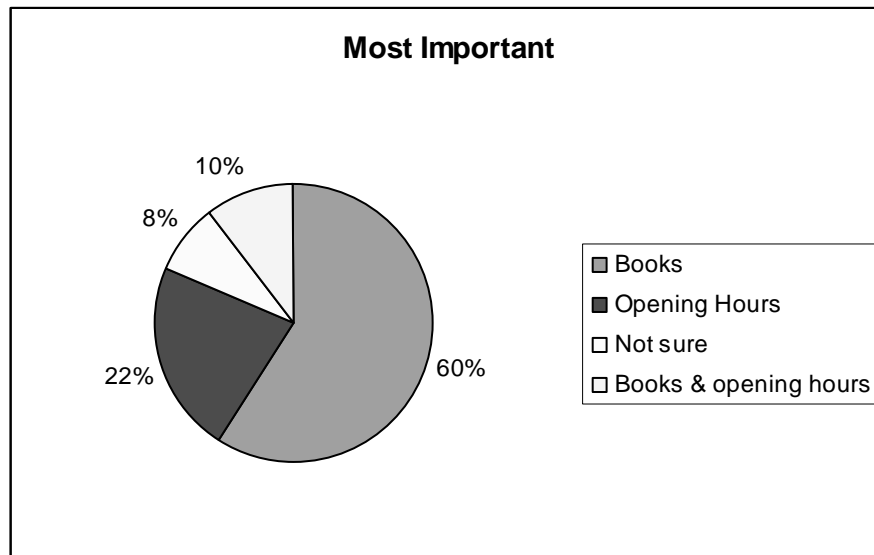
A large majority prefer weekdays for library use and few seemed to want Sunday opening. In some of the smaller libraries there was less interest in Saturday opening which may reflect shopping patterns and leisure activities.

3.5 Which times do you prefer to use the library?



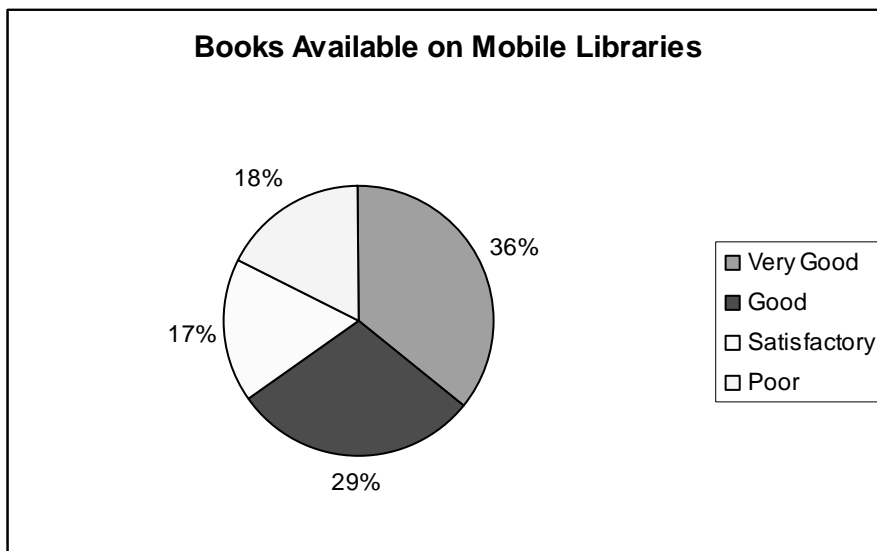
Overall there is a clear preference expressed for afternoon and evening opening rather than mornings. Whilst 22% of people still express a preference for morning opening, there is clearly a need to re-balance the pattern of existing opening hours to provide more evening opening.

3.6 What is more important?



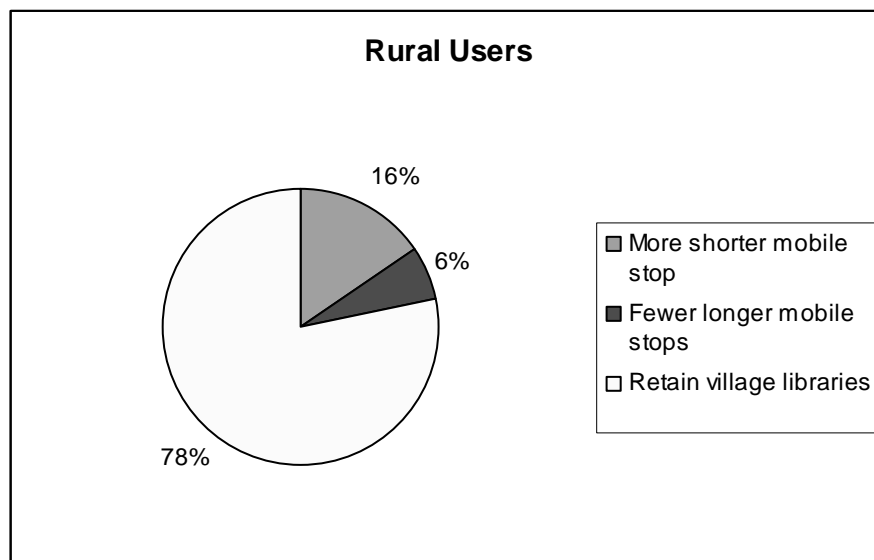
The responses to this question show that for many library users the provision of books is still of major importance. It reinforces the fact that the provision of buildings alone is not of interest to users unless the stock within those buildings is adequate and varied. The balance of spending must ensure that this expressed need is met if the library service is to prevent the continuing fall in use by its traditional book using members.

3.7 What do you think of the range of books available in the mobile library?



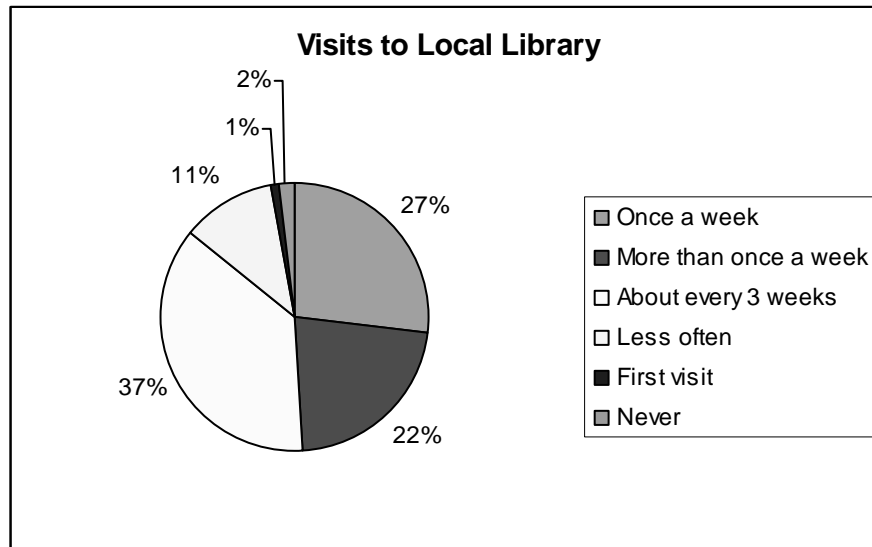
Mobile libraries can only carry a much more limited range of stock than static libraries and it is not unexpected that the satisfaction levels expressed here are less than those expressed in question 1. New and changing stock is vital if mobile library customers are to receive even a reasonable level of service.

3.8 How do you feel the library service can best meet the needs of its rural users?



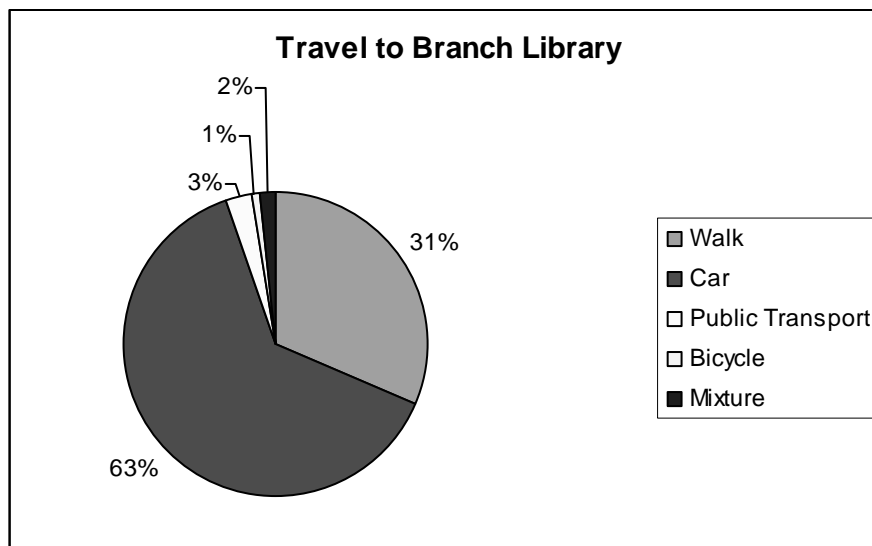
There were less responses to this question presumably because some respondents felt it was not relevant to them. The desire for the retention of village libraries is natural but may well prove to be in conflict with the desire for a good bookstock.

3.9 How often do you visit your local library?



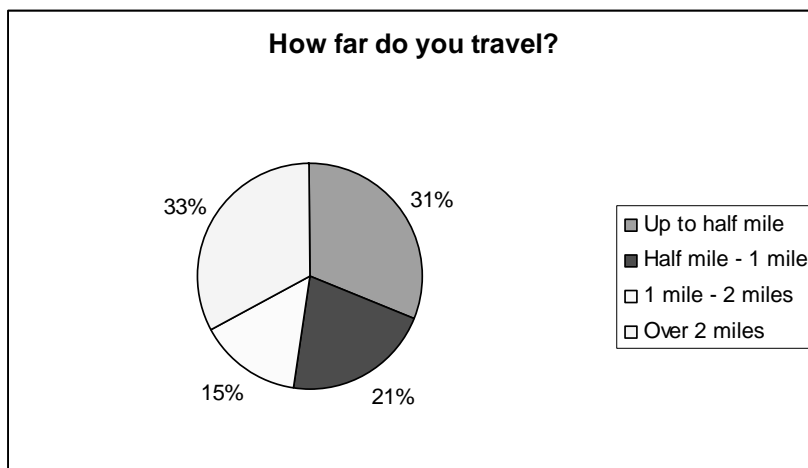
These findings are very similar to those of the annual ‘Public Library User Surveys’ (PLUS) showing that a large percentage of library users are very regular users with approximately 86% of them visiting the library at least every 3 weeks.

3.10 How do you normally travel to visit your local library?



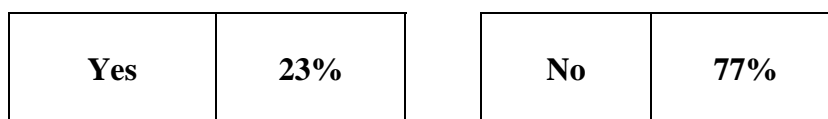
Travel to the library splits roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ between walking and travel by car. Very few people use any other form of transport. In general, users of smaller libraries are more likely to walk to the library, while users of flagship libraries, more usually, travel by car.

3.11 How far do you travel to your local library?



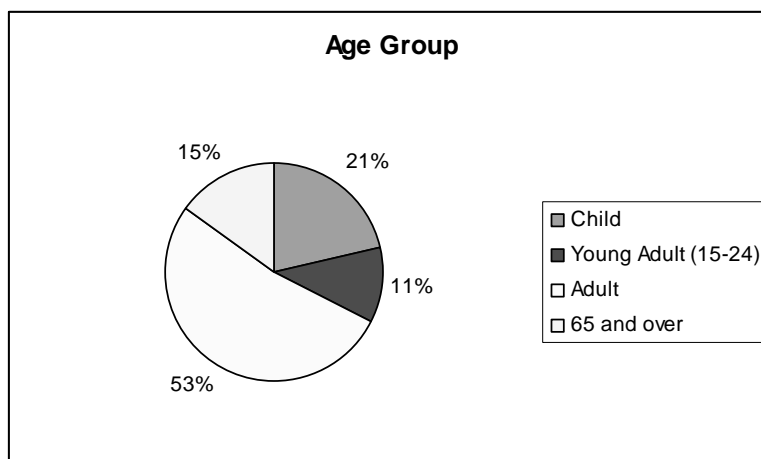
As may be expected, the percentage of people who say they travel up to half a mile to visit the library is the same as the number of people who say they walk to the library. Though some individuals did say that they walked further than half a mile to the library the numbers were so small that they do not show within the cumulated figures.

3.12 Would you be prepared to travel further to use library services?



The responses to this question are not unexpected. The previous question shows that 33% of users already travel more than 2 miles to the library, 48% more than one mile. It would seem that no matter how short or long the existing journey is to the library, quite naturally, almost three quarters of users say that they do not wish to travel further.

3.13 Which age group do you fit into?



The number of under 14s who responded across all libraries varied from 3.5% to 34.2%. The communities of several of the smaller libraries showed their concern by a very high response rate to the survey. In these libraries a large percentage of respondees were under 14. The table below indicates those libraries where more than 20% of respondees were under 14 years.

Library	No of Under 14s	% of Total Responses
Bessbrook	124	34.7
Fivemiletown	19	22.6
Gilford	85	31.5
Keady	34	20.9
Moneymore	22	22.2
Moy	28	22.2
Richhill	20	22.2

If the above figures were deducted from the total responses then the percentage of under 14 respondees would be significantly less than the 21% in the pie chart above. However, the responses of young people to the survey are of equal validity to those of adults and it is unlikely that these change the overall preferences expressed in the various answers.

4 OTHER FINDINGS

4.1 Libraries visited in the last year

There were 1819 visits listed to libraries other than people's home library. Many respondees identified several adjoining SELB libraries which they visit e.g. Kilkeel respondees identifying Warrenpoint and Newry; Moy respondees identifying Armagh and Dungannon. However 39 other libraries across Northern Ireland were also identified as visited, showing that advantage is being taken of the cross-board usage encouraged by the ELfNI project. The table below shows the non SELB libraries most identified as visited in the last year.

Library	No of Identifications
Belfast Central	74
Lisburn	42
Magherafelt	40
Newcastle	34
Omagh	26
Enniskillen	16
Coleraine	15

4.2 Which library do you belong to?

Respondees identified 18 Northern Ireland libraries other than those of the SELB of which they are members and one person gave Dublin in response. Magherafelt at 12 members and Belfast and Omagh with 7 members each were the main libraries identified here.

4.3 Comments

A total of 2,747 comments were made. As with the PLUS survey forms, these elucidate the statistical findings. A table summarising the type of comments received is provided in Appendix 3 together with samples of the comments. The comments relating to each branch will be looked at in detail and consideration given to any action which should be taken in relation to points raised.

5 CONCLUSION

The survey has produced a vast amount of raw data and this report contains just the initial analysis. However, even at this stage, the results clearly show areas where change is needed to align service provision more closely to users' preferences. The data in itself does not answer the difficult question of how resources should be prioritised to achieve the best value for money, balancing the purchase of new stock against the provision of libraries and opening hours. Change could be initiated in some areas at the same time as further work is undertaken to bring recommendations for service changes to the Library Committee.

6 RECOMMENDATION

The Library Committee is asked to accept this report and to recommend:-

- i The production of a plan to move to DVD provision,
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- v Display/publication of the main findings of the survey in branch libraries.

APPENDIX 1

Library	Number of Forms Completed	Number of Active Borrowers	% User Completion	Hourly Average User Visits
Armagh	101	4,751	2.1	18
Banbridge	203	3,931	5.2	17
Bessbrook	363	844	43	5
Brownlow	87	1,796	4.8	11
Coalisland	1,061	1,854	57.2	7
Cookstown	305	3,716	8.2	13
Crossmaglen	111	903	12.3	4
Dromore	99	952	10.4	5
Dungannon	194	4,802	4	22
Fivemiletown	85	769	11.1	6
Gilford	276	412	67	3
Keady	167	1,122	14.9	6
Kilkeel	92	2,514	3.7	8
Lurgan	96	4,954	1.9	26
Moneymore	99	372	26.6	3
Moy	129	565	22.8	4
Newry	243	6,510	3.7	29
Portadown	153	4,845	3.2	24
Rathfriland	107	1,310	8.2	6
Richhill	91	903	10.1	4
Tandragee	109	1,091	10	7
Waringstown	91	436	20.9	3
Warrenpoint	84	2,379	3.5	10

APPENDIX 2

FREQUENCY TABLE

Q1 What do you think of the choice of books available in your local library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very Good	2039	42
	Good	1661	34
	Satisfactory	901	18
	Poor	285	6
	Don't use	1	0.0
	Total	4887	100
Missing	Question not completed	170	
Total		5057	

Q2 What format would you prefer for music or film?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Compact Disc	1104	21
	Video	720	13
	DVD	3528	66
	Don't use this facility	25	0
	Total expressed preferences	5377	100.0
Missing	Question not completed	412	
Total forms		5057	

Q3 What do you think of the computer facilities in your local library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very Good	2240	50
	Good	1374	30
	Satisfactory	507	11
	Poor	320	7
	Don't use	87	2
	Total	4528	100
Missing	Question not completed	529	
Total		5057	

Q4 Which days would you prefer to use the Library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Monday - Friday	3841	63
	Saturday	1960	32
	Sunday	265	4
	Anytime	1	0
	Total expressed preferences	6067	100
Missing	Question not completed	130	
Total forms		5057	

Q5 Which times do you prefer to use the Library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	9am - 12 noon	1398	22
	12 noon - 4pm	2579	40
	4pm - 8pm	2117	33
	After 8pm	292	5
	Anytime	25	0
	Total expressed preferences	6411	100
Missing	Question not completed	154	
Total forms		5057	

Q6 What is more important?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Books	2893	59
	Opening Hours	1100	22
	Not sure	408	8
	Books & opening hours	508	10
	Total	4909	100
Missing	Question not completed	148	
Total		5057	

Q7 What do you think of the range of books available in the Mobile Library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very Good	480	36
	Good	393	29
	Satisfactory	234	17
	Poor	235	18
	Total	1342	100
	Question not completed	1241	
	Don't use this facility	2474	
Total		5057	

Q8 How do you feel the library service can best meet the needs of rural users?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	More shorter mobile stop	615	16
	Fewer longer mobile stops	244	6
	Retain village libraries	3087	78
	Happy with present service	12	0
	Total	3958	100
Missing	Question not completed	1099	
Total		5057	

Q9 How often do you visit your local library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Once a week	1331	27
	More than once a week	1094	22
	About every 3 weeks	1804	37
	Less often	557	11
	First visit	45	1
	Never	97	2
	Total	4928	100
Missing	Question not completed	129	
Total		5057	

Q10 How do you normally travel to visit your local library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Walk	1542	31
	Car	3112	63
	Public Transport	139	3
	Bicycle	39	1
	Mixture	79	2
	Total	4911	100
Missing	Question not completed	146	
Total		5057	

Q11 How far do you travel to your local library?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Up to half mile	1522	31
	Half mile - 1 mile	1022	21
	1 mile - 2 miles	724	15
	Over 2 miles	1616	33
	Total	4884	100
Missing	Question not completed	173	
Total		5057	

Q12 Would you be prepared to travel further to use library services?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	1097	23
	No	3743	77
	Total	4840	100
Missing	Question not completed	217	
Total		5057	

Q15 Which age group do you fit into?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Child	1041	21
	Young Adult (15-24)	554	11
	Adult	2575	53
	65 and over	728	15
	Total	4898	100
Missing	Question not completed	159	
Total		5057	

Q16 Have you any comments to make about the services provided by the SELB?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Comment	2214	100
Missing	Question not completed	2843	
Total		5057	

APPENDIX 3

Subject of Comment	Type of Comment			Grand Total
	Negative	Other	Positive	
Computers	192	26	48	266
Facility	35	2	58	95
Funding	23	3		26
Misc	71	241		312
Opening Hours		282	7	289
Service	8	10	600	618
Staff	8	3	534	545
Stock	494	16	86	596
Grand Total	831	583	1333	2747

Selection of Comments Received

- “Enjoy computer facility”
- “More computers needed”
- “Let under 16 year olds use MSN”
- “Bigger car park needed”
- “Peaceful place to study”
- “Why waste vital resources on mobile libraries”
- “More funding needed”
- “More funding needed to hold regular initiatives e.g. storytelling”
- “Very useful for school work”
- “Need more advertisement to remind people of this service”
- “Inter-library loan service is exceptionally useful”
- “Photocopy machines are poor quality”
- “Staff unpleasant”
- “Efficient and friendly staff”
- “Less money spent on obscure non-fiction topics”
- “More philosophy books needed”