# Shropshire Libraries: Needs Assessment

## October 2026

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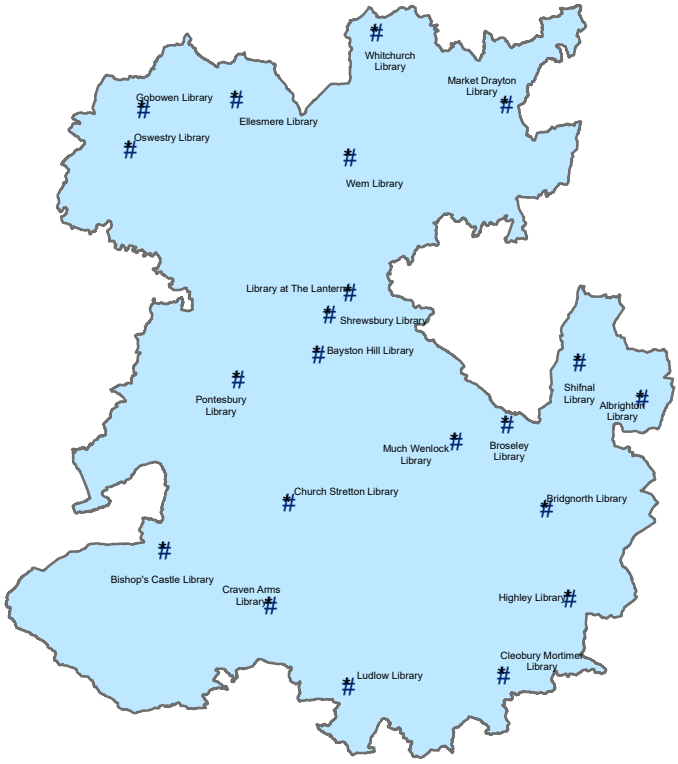
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## Shropshire Libraries Needs Assessment: Introduction

Shropshire Library Service serves a population of 333,200 (Mid-2025 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 Counci: 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 £2,624,370 in 2025/26, which is the equivalent of £7.88 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
- Analyse the cost of operating library services

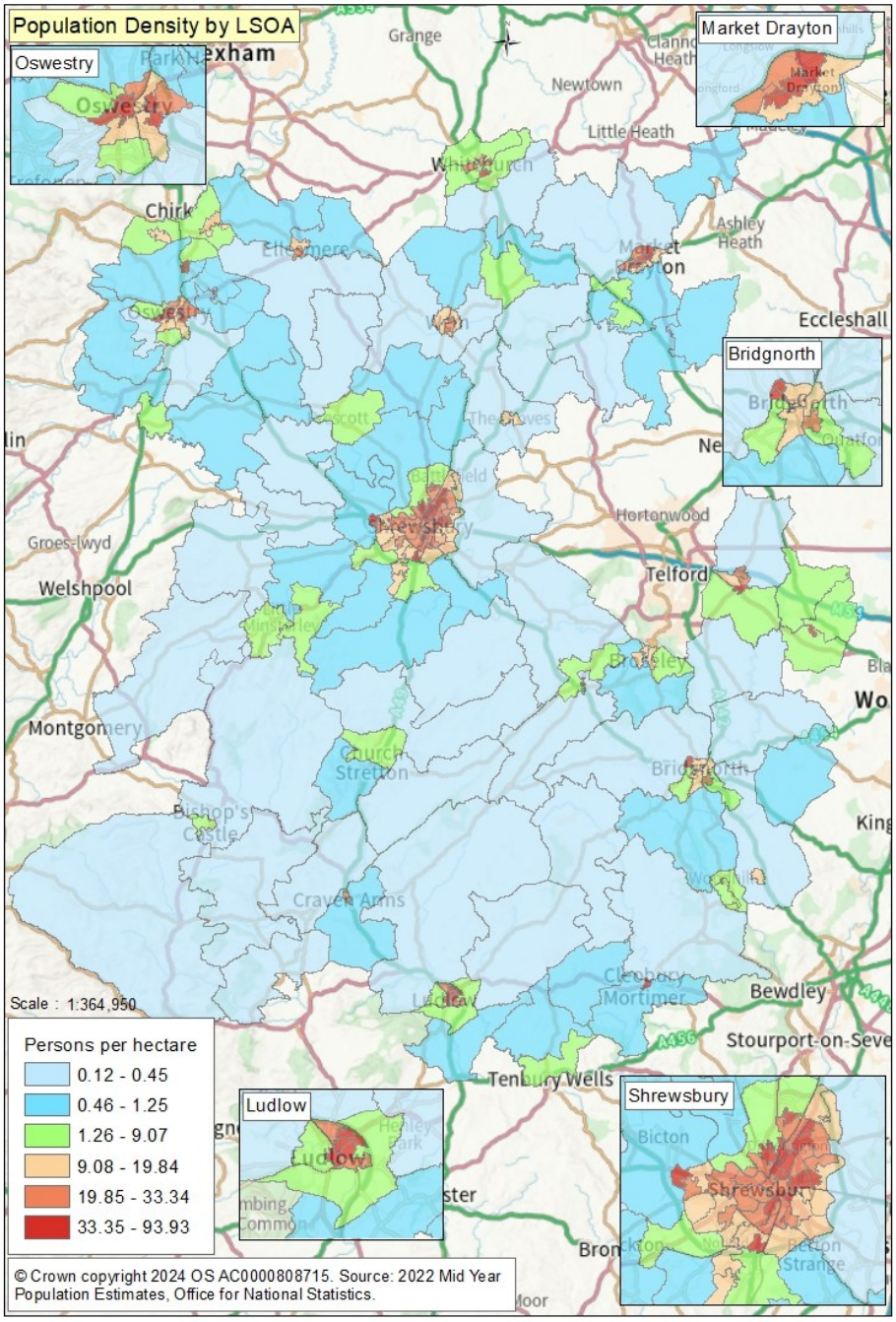
## Context

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 333,200 (2025 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

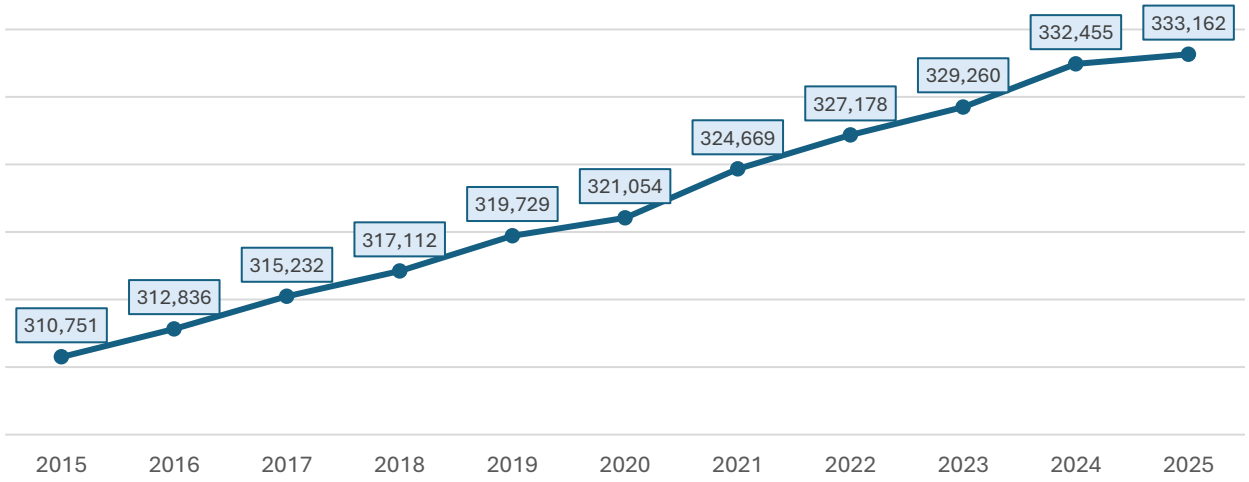



[1] According to the Rural Urban Classification 2021

## Population

Over the 10 years to 2025, Shropshire's population has grown by 22,400 people (+7.2%) to 333,200.

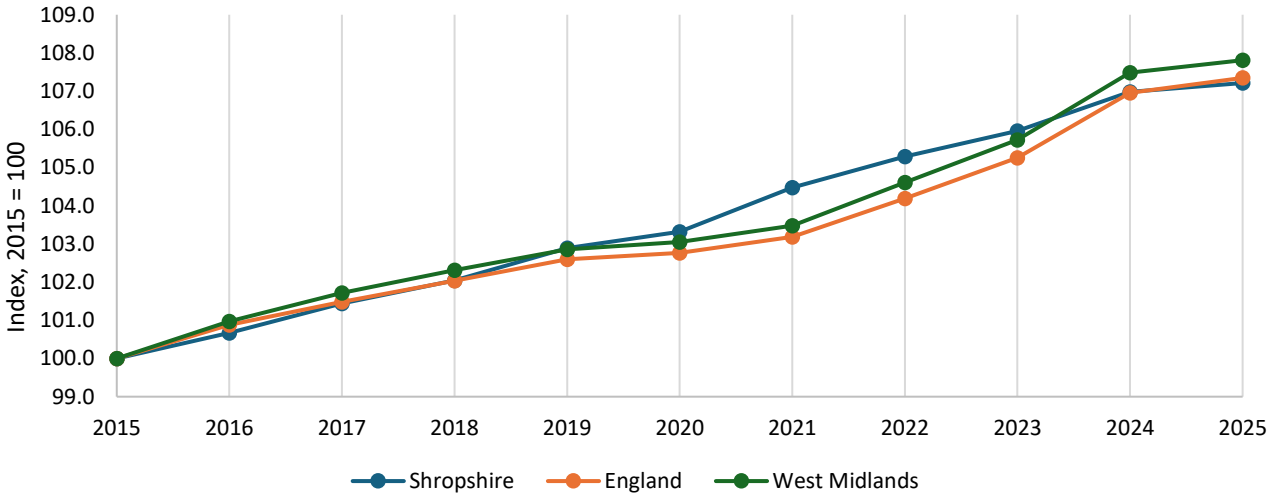
### Chart 1: Population Change in Shropshire, 2015-2025




*Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2025*

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

### Chart 2: Population Growth, 2015-2025




*Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2025*

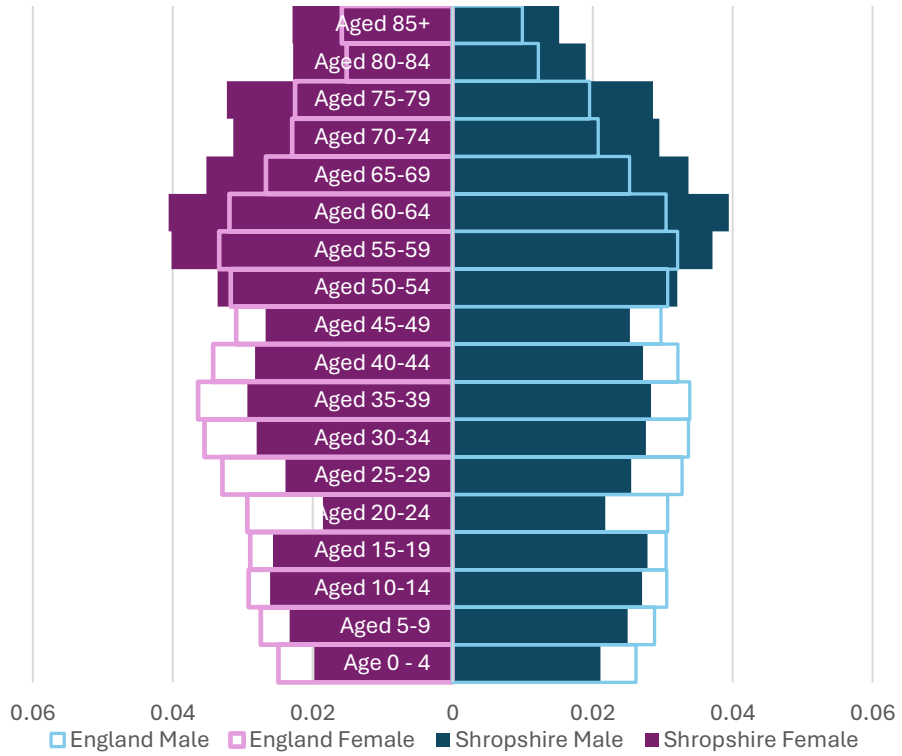
Shropshire has an ageing population, with 27.1% of the total population aged 65 and above in 2025 compared with 19.1% as an average across England. Shropshire has a lower proportion of people aged below the age of 50 than England or the West Midlands (50.6% compared to 61.9% nationally and 62.1% regionally). 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, 2025**

| | Shropshire | | England | | West Midlands | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| **0-4** | 13,600 | 4.1% | 3,003,900 | 5.1% | 335,000 | 5.4% |
| 5-19 | 51,600 | 15.5% | 10,332,200 | 17.5% | 1,145,900 | 18.5% |
| 20-34 | 48,400 | 14.5% | 11,466,400 | 19.5% | 1,181,400 | 19.0% |
| 35-49 | 55,000 | 16.5% | 11,610,400 | 19.7% | 1,190,300 | 19.2% |
| 50-64 | 74,300 | 22.3% | 11,197,500 | 19.0% | 1,165,800 | 18.8% |
| 65+ | 90,200 | 27.1% | 11,234,400 | 19.1% | 1,187,400 | 19.1% |
| Total | 333,200 | 100.0% | 58,834,800 | 100.0% | 6,205,900 | 100.0% |

*Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2025*

**Chart 3: Breakdown of the Shropshire and England Populations by Age, 2025**




*Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2025*

## Housing & Households

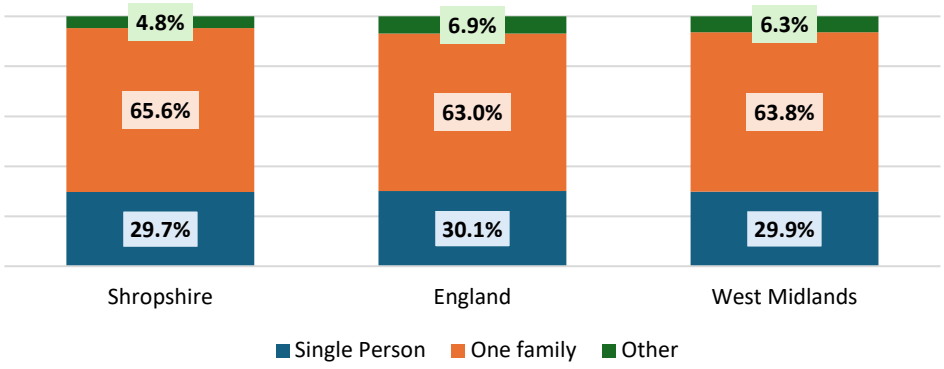
There were 139,579 households in Shropshire at the time of the 2021 Census. This represents an increase of 9,905 households since 2011, which is the equivalent of 7.6% growth. Growth in the number of households has exceeded regional and national growth (+5.9% and +6.2% respectively) and has also slightly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

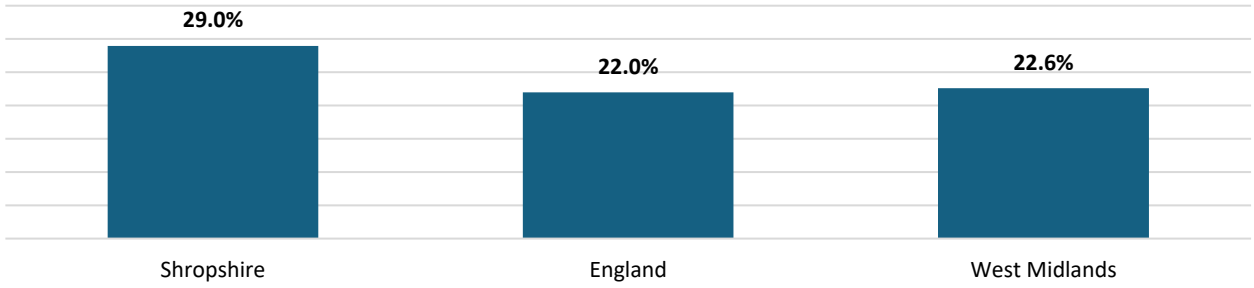
### Chart 4: Breakdown of Households by Household Composition, 2021




*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.

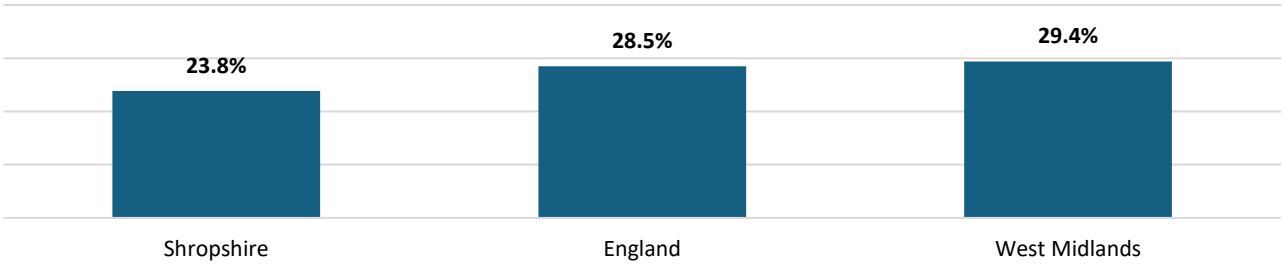
### Chart 5: Proportion of Households with all Residents 66+, 2021




*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

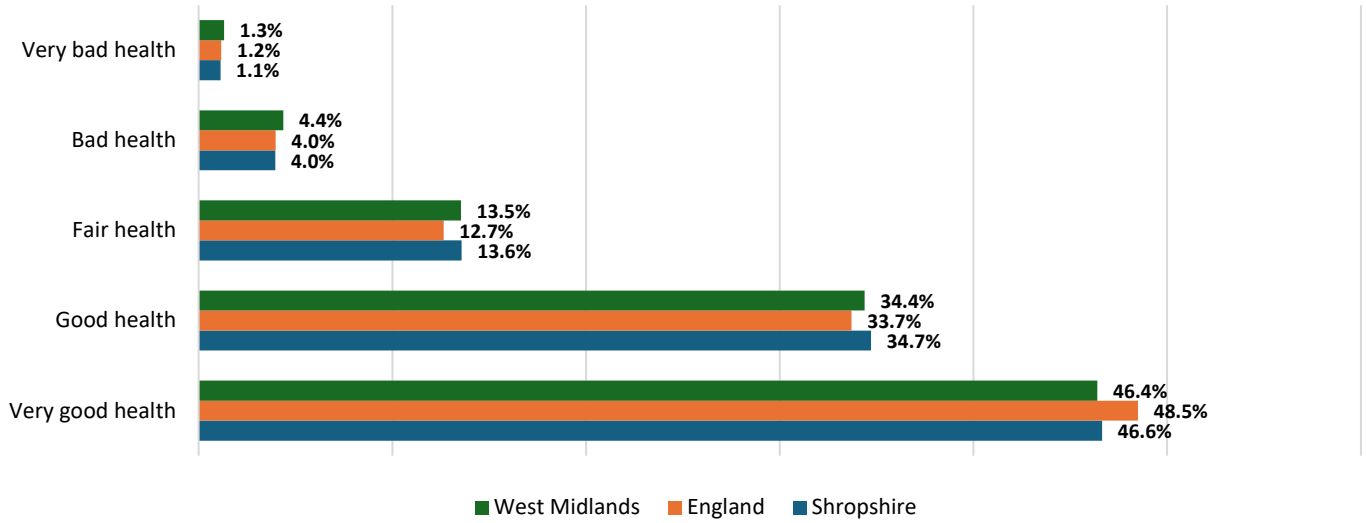



*Source: ONS Census 2021*

## 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.

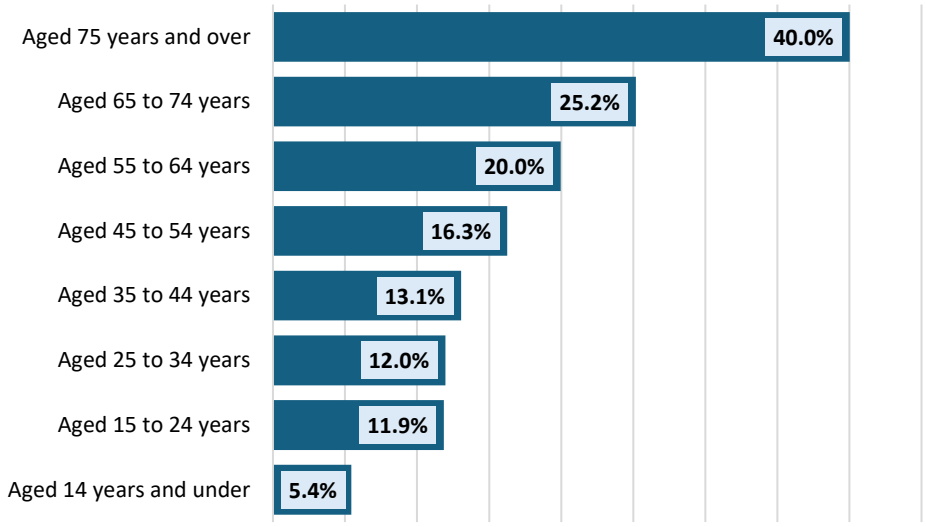
### Table 2: Disability and Long-Term Health Conditions, 2021

| | 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

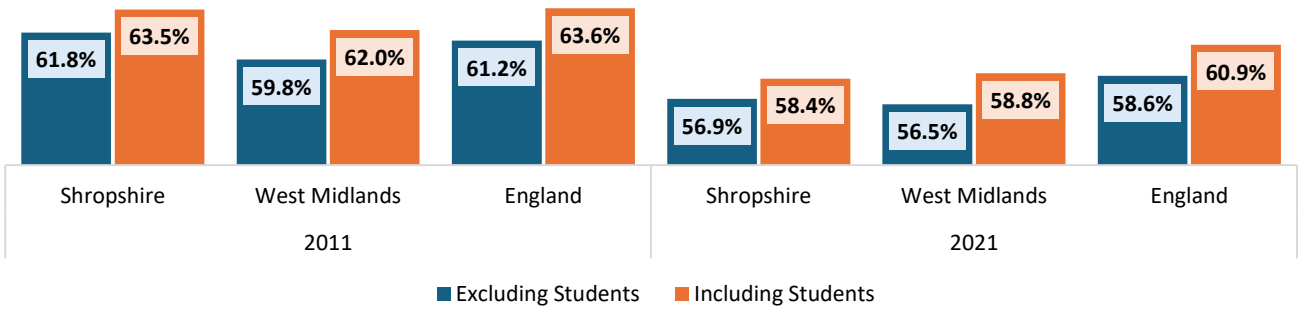



*Source: ONS Census 2021*

## 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.

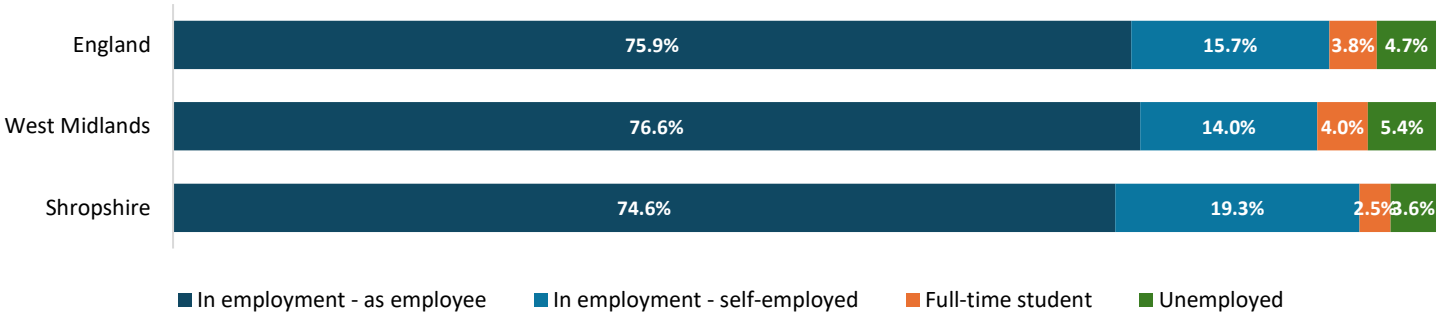
### Chart 9: Economic Activity Rates, 2011 and 2021




*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 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025, Shropshire is ranked as the 154$^{th}$ most deprived lower tier local authority in England out of 396. In comparison with 2015, Shropshire has become slightly more deprived in relation to other local authorities (185$^{th}$ 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 Harlescott electoral division and the other in Monkmoor, which are both in Shrewsbury. The former was also in the most deprived decile in 2015 and 2019. The latter was in decile 2 in 2019. Meanwhile, a neighbourhood in Ludlow East moved from decile 1 to decile 2 between 2019 and 2025. As well as the two LSOAs that fall within the 10% most deprived areas of the country, there are a further nine in the 20% most deprived areas of the country.

Approximately 5% of Shropshire's population live in the most deprived 20% of areas within England and 52% live within the least deprived 50% of areas.

The table below shows in which LSOA individual libraries are located and to which national decile they belonged in 2015, 2019 and 2025. Decile 1 represents the most deprived and decile 10 the least deprived. This shows that Oswestry, Market Drayton, Gobowen, Craven Arms, Highley and the Lantern libraries are in the most deprived areas and that Ellesmere, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill and Albrighton are in the least deprived. The libraries that are in areas that have become relatively more deprived are Gobowen, Craven Arms, Highley, Wem, Bishop's Castle, Shrewsbury, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury, Cleobury Mortimer, Shifnal, Ellesmere and Albrighton. Market Drayton, Bridgnorth and Church Stretton libraries are in areas that have become relatively less deprived.

**Table 5: Overall IMD 2015, 2019 & 2025: National Deciles**

| Library | LSOA Code | National Decile 2015 | National Decile 2019 | National Decile 2025 | Change in Decile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Oswestry | E01028906 | 2 | 2 | 2 | No Change |
| Lantern | E01028983 | 2 | 2 | 2 | No Change |
| Gobowen | E01028912 | 3 | 3 | 2 | More deprived |
| Craven Arms | E01029014 | 3 | 3 | 2 | More deprived |
| Highley | E01028849 | 4 | 4 | 2 | More deprived |
| Market Drayton | E01028873 | 2 | 2 | 3 | Less deprived |
| Whitchurch | E01028891 | 3 | 3 | 3 | No Change |
| Ludlow | E01033526 | 3 | 3 | 3 | No Change |
| Wem | E01028886 | 5 | 5 | 3 | More deprived |
| Bishop's Castle | E01028992 | 4 | 4 | 3 | More deprived |
| Broseley | E01028841 | 4 | 4 | 4 | No Change |
| Shrewsbury | E01028946 | 5 | 6 | 5 | More deprived* |
| Much Wenlock | E01028852 | 6 | 6 | 5 | More deprived |
| Pontesbury | E01028977 | 8 | 8 | 6 | More deprived |
| Bridgnorth | E01028832 | 6 | 5 | 6 | Less deprived* |
| Cleobury Mortimer | E01029001 | 8 | 9 | 6 | More Deprived |
| Shifnal | E01028854 | 9 | 8 | 7 | More Deprived |
| Church Stretton | E01028998 | 7 | 7 | 8 | Less deprived |
| Bayston Hill | E01028936 | 9 | 8 | 8 | Unchanged* |
| Ellesmere | E01028865 | 9 | 9 | 8 | More deprived |
| Albrighton | E01028845 | 10 | 10 | 9 | More deprived |

*Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015, 2019, 2025*

** since 2019*

### Barriers to Housing & Services

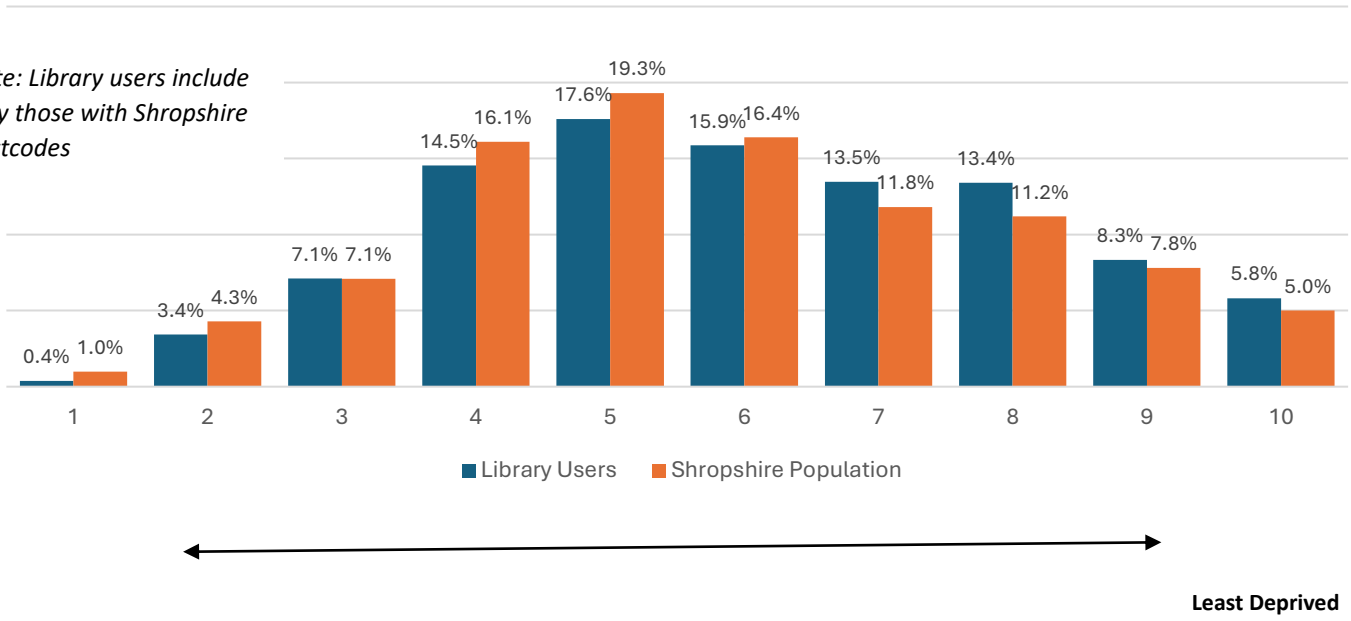
63 LSOAs in Shropshire fall within the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England according to the Barriers to Housing and Services domain of the IMD. 52 are within the most deprived 5% and 25 are within the 1% most deprived LSOAs nationally. Shropshire is more deprived than 77% of all lower tier Local Authorities in respect of the Barriers to Housing & Services domain. Approaching a third (31%) of the Shropshire population live in the 63 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

10.9% of active users of Shropshire's libraries live in the 30% most deprived areas nationally, as shown in the chart following. 14.2% 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, 2025**

*Note: Library users include only those with Shropshire postcodes*

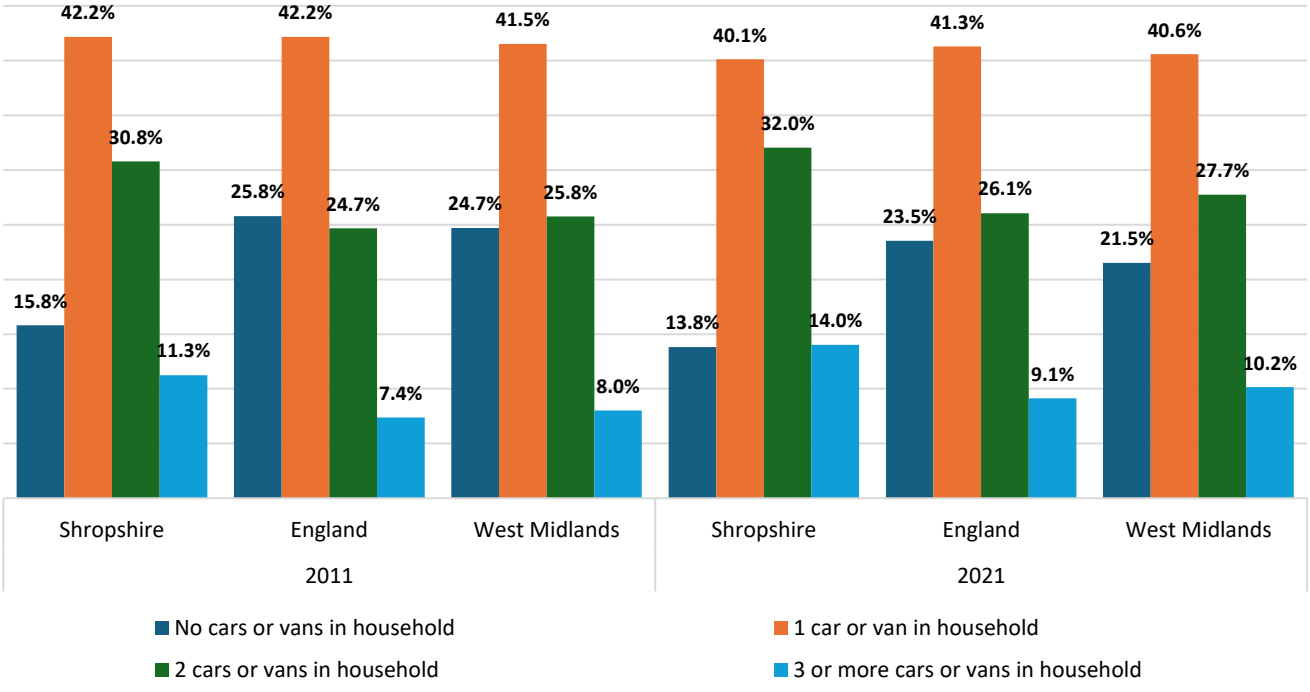



*Source: English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025*

### 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

92% of premises in Shropshire have access to superfast broadband (download speeds >30mbps), with the number edging upwards over the last two years. Coverage is worse in Shropshire than it is nationally (98% January 2026 according to Ofcom Connected Nations). 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 88% of England premises having access by January 2026. The roll-out in rural areas like Shropshire is much more difficult and consequently has been slower. However, 75% 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 area[2] 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.

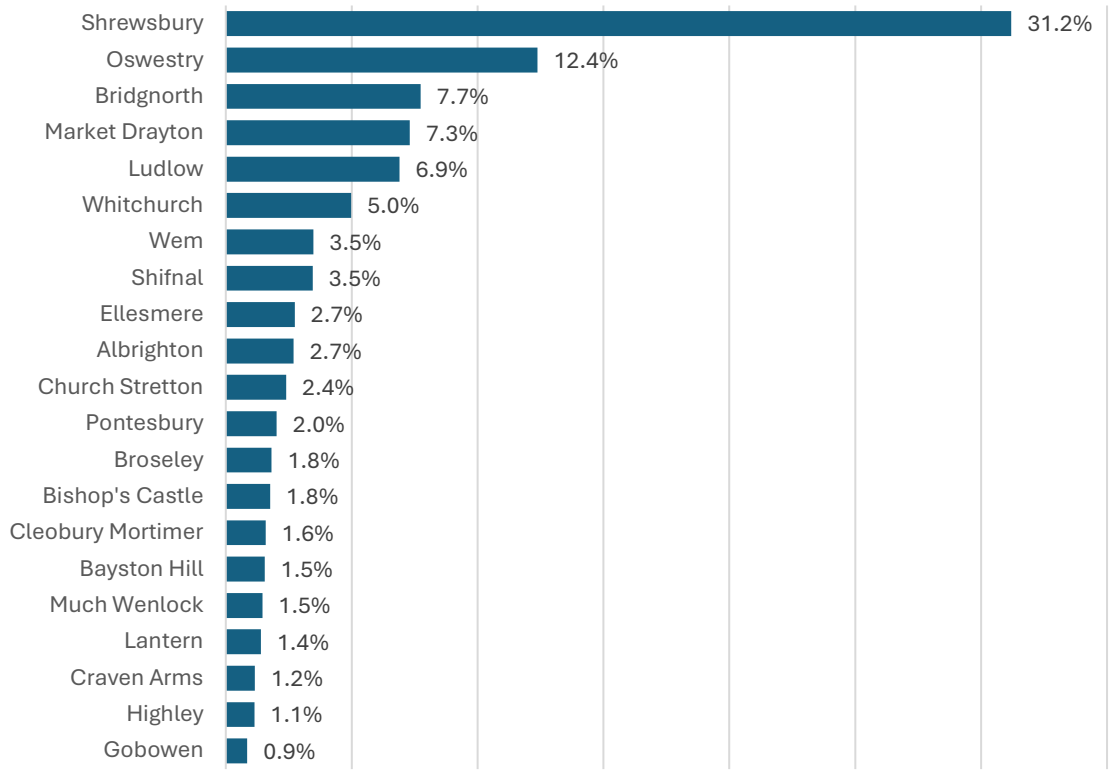
**Table 6: Catchments ranked by Size (Shropshire Land Mass)**

| 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

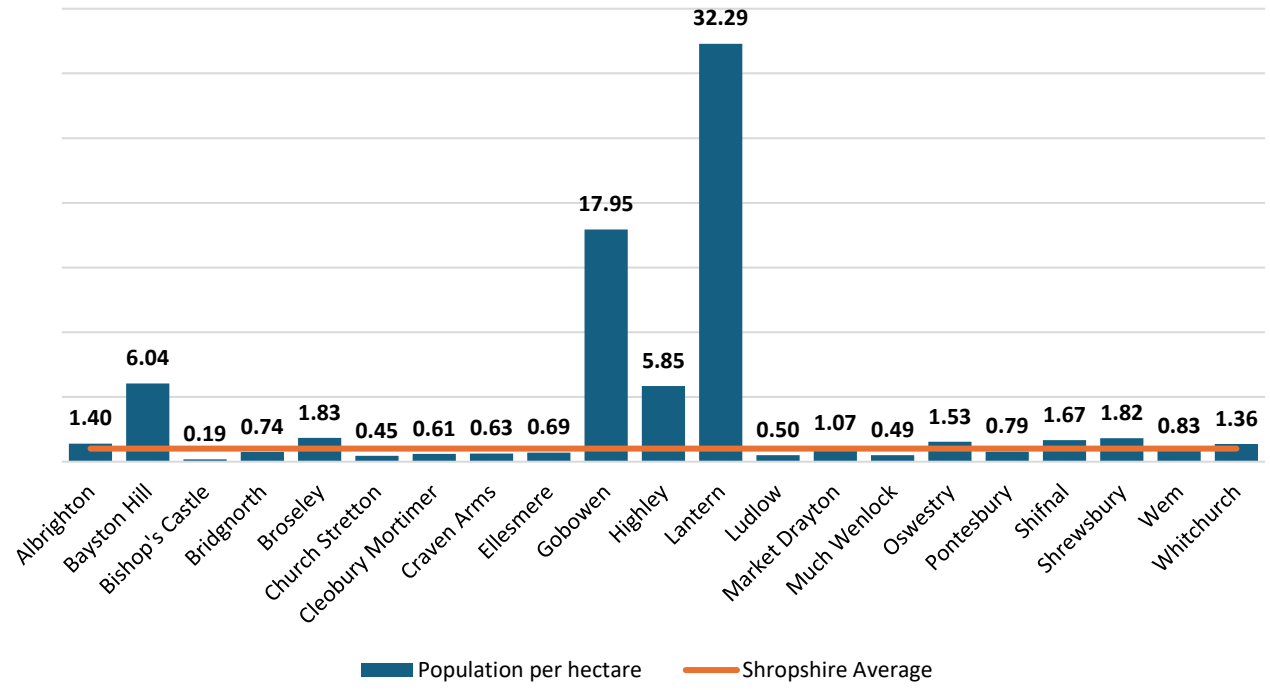
Shrewsbury is also the largest catchment in terms of population, accounting for just over 31% of the Shropshire population. Oswestry ranks second, taking a share of 12.4%. Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Ludlow and Whitchurch make up the top six.

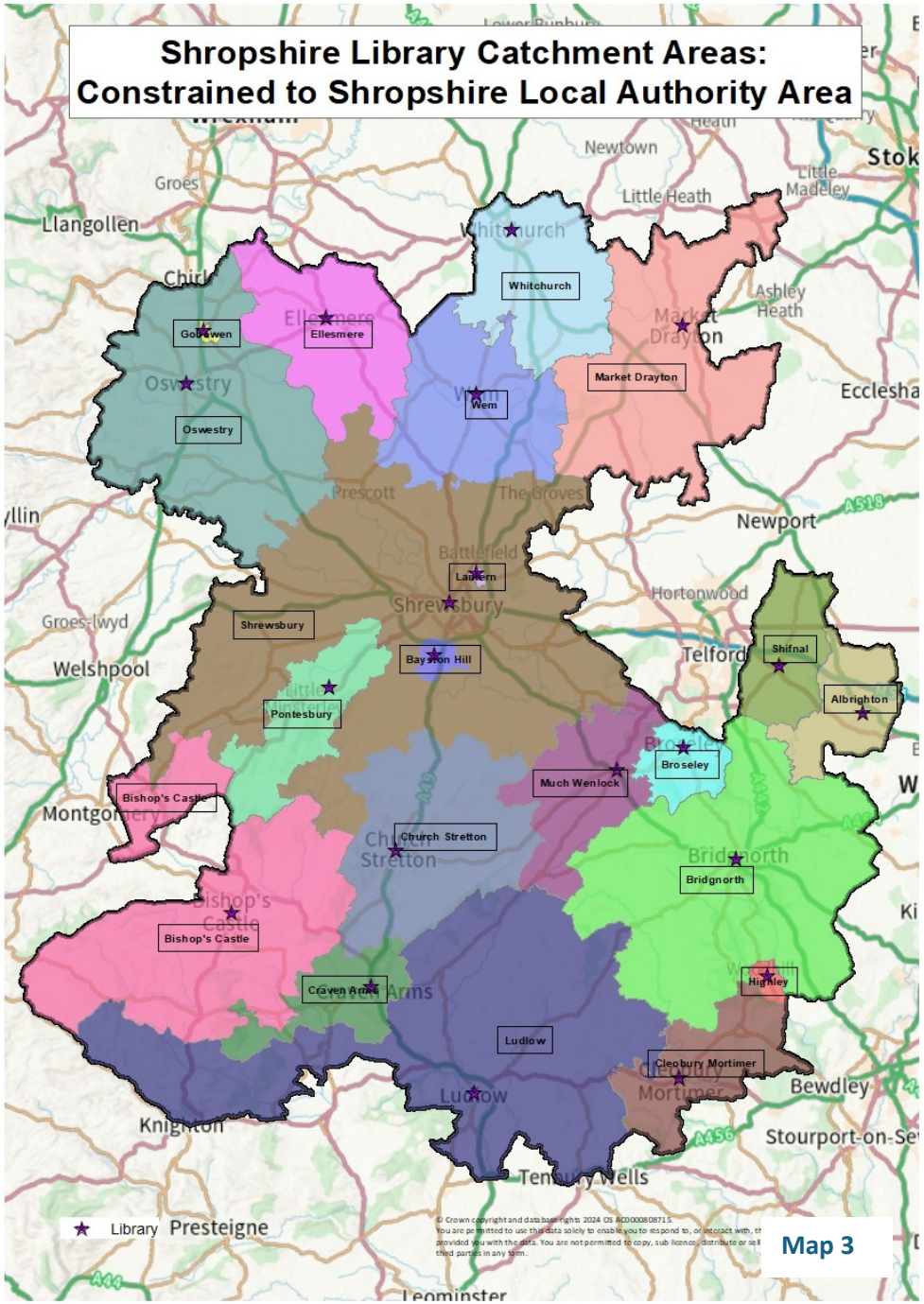
### Chart 13: Catchments ranked by Shropshire Population

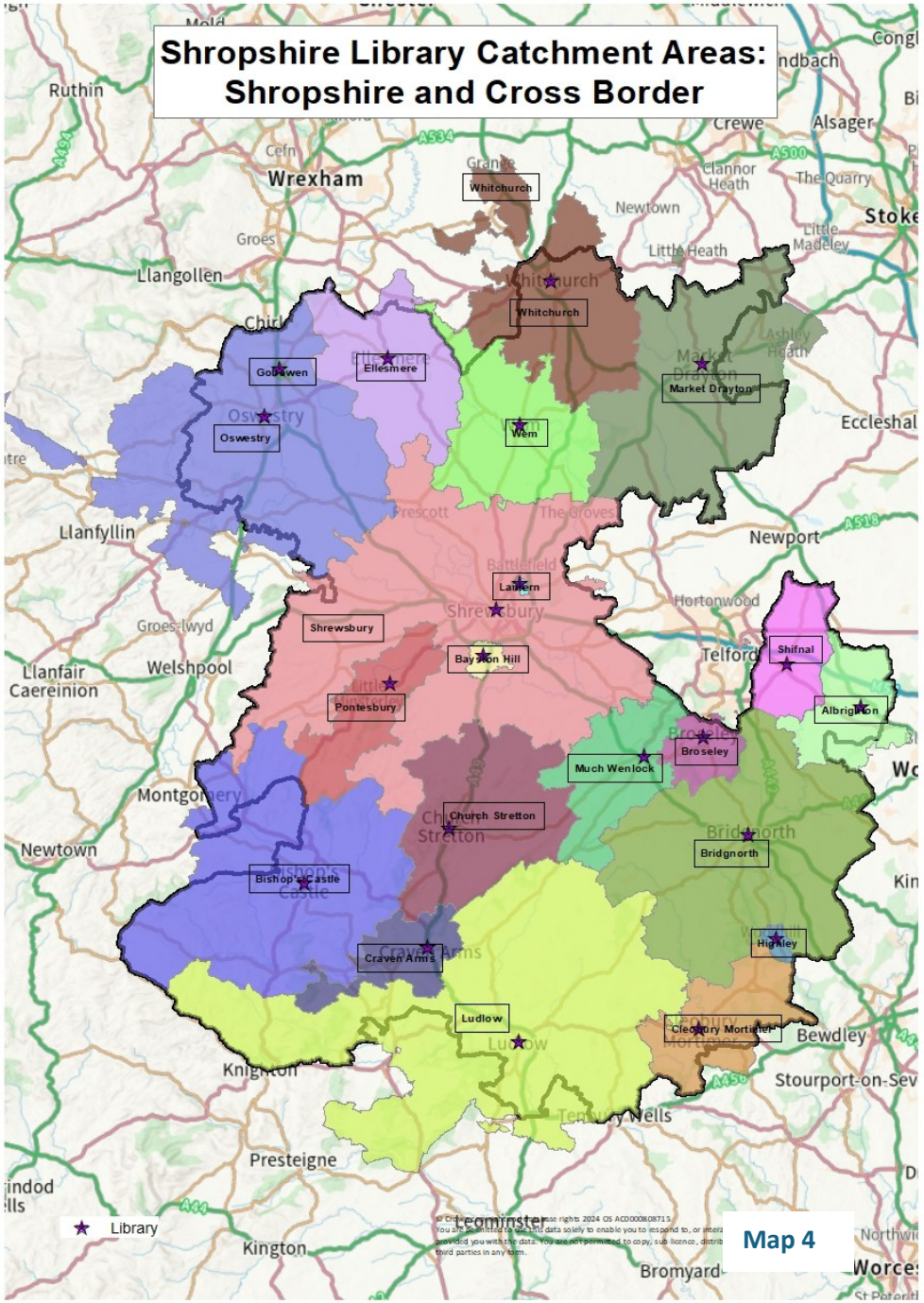



Average population per hectare across Shropshire is just over one person. The chart below illustrates how this varies by library catchment. The smallest catchments – the Lantern, Gobowen, Highley and Bayston Hill are much more densely populated that many of the larger catchments. Population density is 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

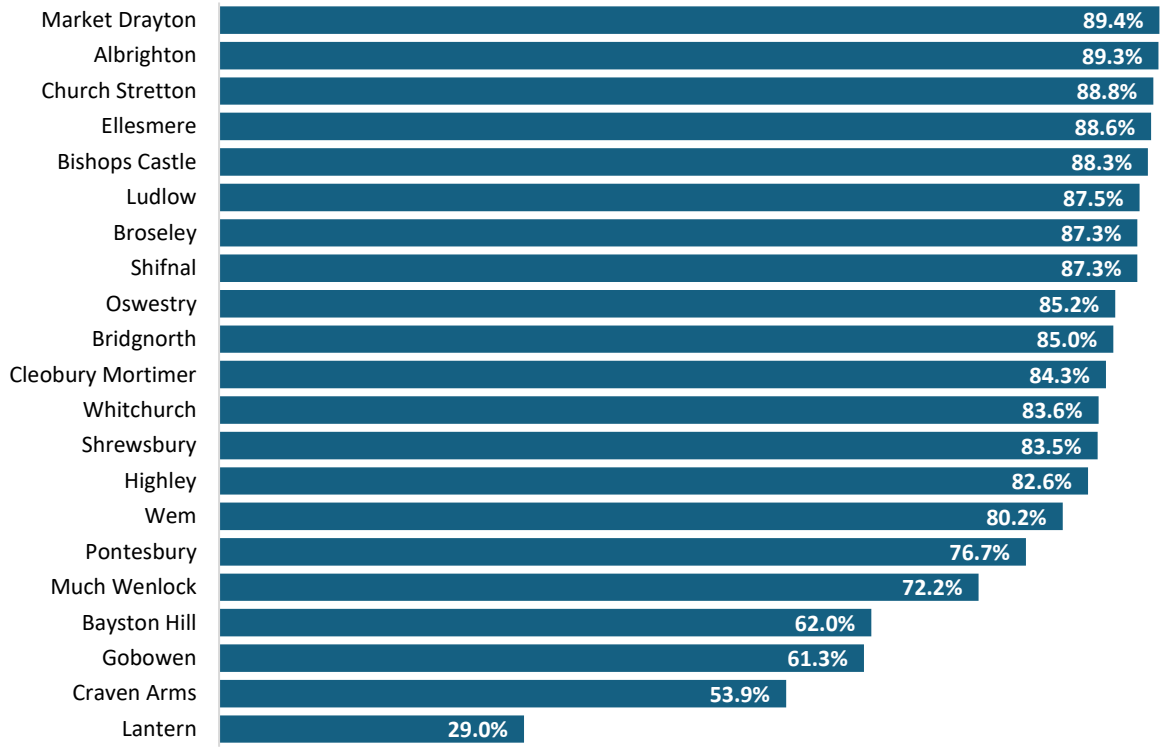



Shropshire Library Catchment Areas:
Constrained to Shropshire Local Authority Area
Whitchurch
Ellesmere
Market Drayton
Oswestry
Wem
Shrewsbury
Bayston Hill
Pontesbury
Shifnal
Albrighton
Broseley
Much Wenlock
Bishop's Castle
Church Stretton
Bridgnorth
Craven Arms
Highley
Ludlow
Cleobury Mortimer
Library
Map 3


Shropshire Library Catchment Areas:
Shropshire and Cross Border
Whitchurch
Ellesmere
Market Drayton
Oswestry
Wem
Shrewsbury
Bayston Hill
Pontesbury
Shifnal
Albrighton
Broseley
Much Wenlock
Church Stretton
Bridgnorth
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Highley
Ludlow
Cleobury Mortimer
Library
Map 4

More than 85% of Market Drayton, Albrighton, Church Stretton, Ellesmere, Bishop's Castle, Ludlow, Broseley, Bridgnorth, Oswestry 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**



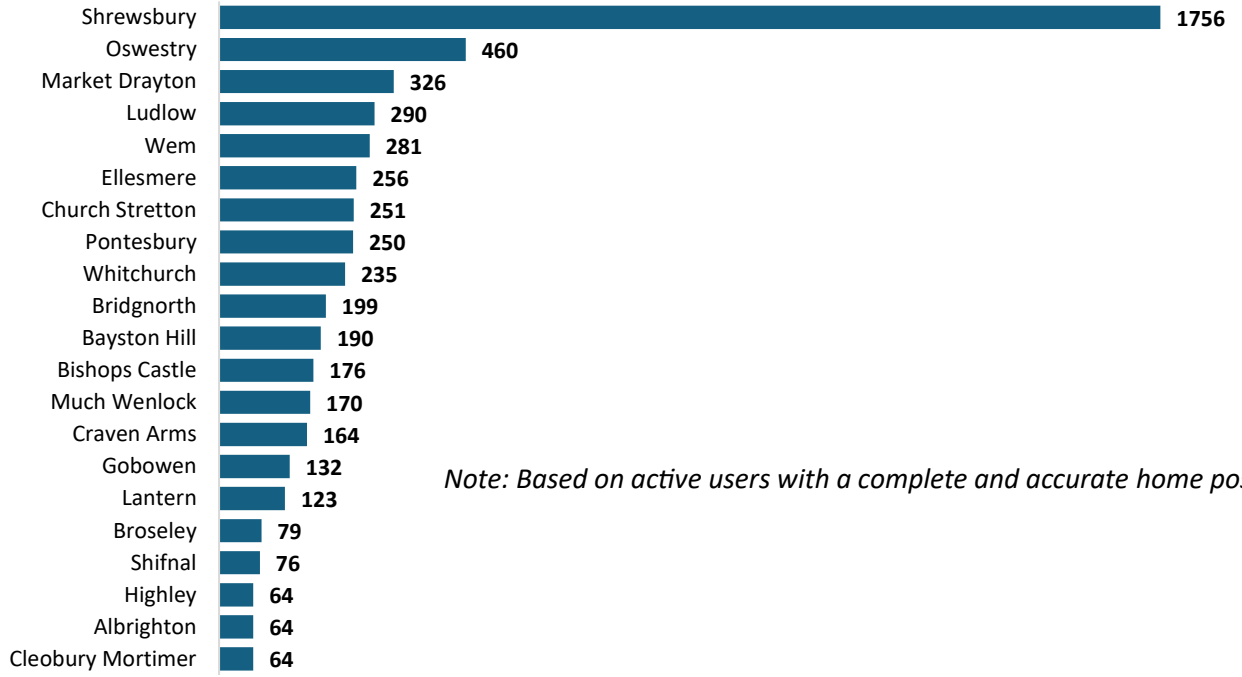

*Note: Based on active users with a complete and accurate home postcode only*

All library catchments contain residents who are active users of an alternative library. The highest number is in the Shrewsbury catchment, where there are 1,756 users of other libraries across Shropshire. 535 users of the Lantern live in the Shrewsbury catchment area (63,8% of all Lantern users with a recognised postcode) as well as 286 Bayston Hill Library users (32.9% of all Bayston Hill library users). 460 people living in the Oswestry catchment area use alternative libraries – of these, 161 use Shrewsbury library and 85 use Gobowen. Nearly a third 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 2026 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




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

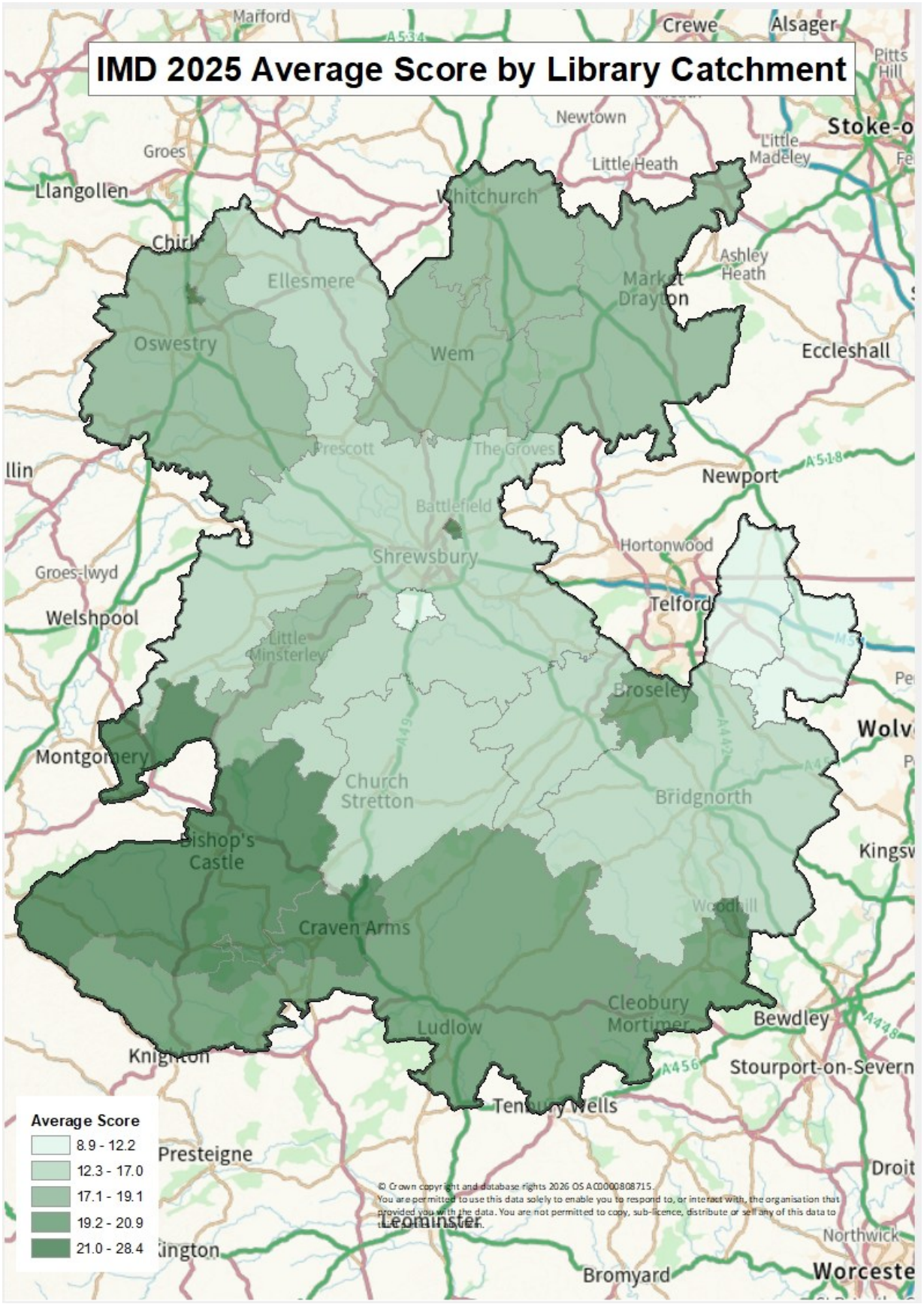
## Library Catchments Average IMD Score

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 Craven Arms are the most deprived.

### Table 7: Average IMD Score by Library Catchment

| Library Catchment | Rank (1= most deprived) | Average core for Catchment |
|---|---|---|
| Lantern | 1 | 28.4 |
| Craven Arms | 2 | 25.7 |
| Highley | 3 | 25.1 |
| Bishop's Castle | 4 | 24.0 |
| Gobowen | 5 | 23.5 |
| Cleobury Mortimer | 6 | 20.9 |
| Ludlow | 7 | 20.2 |
| Broseley | 8 | 20.1 |
| Whitchurch | 9 | 19.2 |
| Oswestry | 10 | 18.9 |
| Wem | 11 | 18.8 |
| Market Drayton | 12 | 18.7 |
| Pontesbury | 13 | 17.8 |
| Ellesmere | 14 | 16.9 |
| Bridgnorth | 15 | 16.2 |
| Shrewsbury | 16 | 15.8 |
| Much Wenlock | 17 | 15.6 |
| Church Stretton | 18 | 15.3 |
| Shifnal | 19 | 12.2 |
| Albrighton | 20 | 10.5 |
| Bayston Hill | 21 | 8.9 |

**Map 5**


IMD 2025 Average Score by Library Catchment
Average Score
8.9 - 12.2
12.3 - 17.0
17.1 - 19.1
19.2 - 20.9
21.0 - 28.4
Marford
Crewe
Alsager
Newtown
Stoke-o
Groes
Little Heath
Llangollen
Whitchurch
Ellesmere
Ashley Heath
Market Drayton
Oswestry
Wem
Eccleshall
Prescott
The Groves
Newport
Battlefield
Shrewsbury
Hortonwood
Groes-lwyd
Telford
Welshpool
Broseley
Montgomery
Church Stretton
Bridgnorth
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Cleobury Mortimer
Ludlow
Bewdley
Stourport-on-Severn
Presteigne
Leominster
Bromyard
Worceste
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## 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. The time frame under review (2021/22 to 2025/26) began just after the Covid Pandemic of 2020/21 which can explain some of the larger rises in library usage since that low level of usage in the Pandemic. The period 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 2021/22 to April to March 2025/26. 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. There is a year-on-year increase in numbers and growth since 2021/22. However, since 2023/24 numbers are at a plateau at a steady number of active users around 33,000.

The number of active library users (Chart 17) has risen from 28,299 in 2021/22 to 33,121 in 2025/26. This is an increase of 17.0%. The number of active library users has increased in all Shropshire libraries except Whitchurch Library which saw a decline of 30.9% (this Library had been closed for a significant period). The largest increases in active users were seen in Broseley Library (56.4%), Much Wenlock (43.1%), Gobowen Library (41.6%), Bayston Hill (32.7%). The main 6 libraries (except Whitchurch) also saw increases: Shrewsbury (22.7%), Bridgnorth (15%), Ludlow (24.2%), Market Drayton (13.2%), Oswestry (17.8%).

The number of visits (Chart 18) has increased from 450,046 in 2021/22 to 631,208 in 2025/26, an increase of 40.3%. This is greater than the increase in the number of active users, suggesting users are visiting more often. All of the main libraries (except Whitchurch) have seen a rise in visits over the 5-year period, Bridgnorth (75.8%), Ludlow (68.7%), Market Drayton (36.9%) Oswestry (63.1%), Shrewsbury (30.6%). *Highley Library had a particularly large increase in visits in the period of 1183%. From 929 visits to 11,847, however this is due a newly installed people counter and the library moving into a different space so now has more groups using it for meetings, also the previous figure was an estimate.*

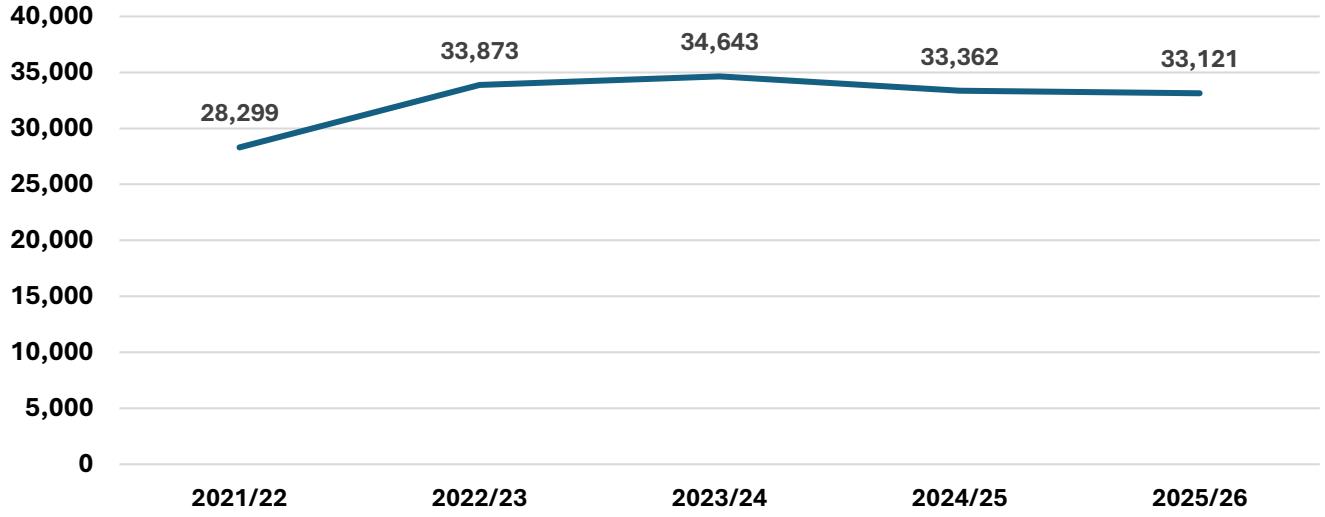
The number of E-loans (Chart 21) has continued to increase, although fallen back slightly between 2024/25 and 2025/26, e-loans have steadily risen from 59,736 in 2021/22 to 79,514 in 2024/25 and fallen to 62,718 in 2025/26, a rise of 5%. E-loans now represent 11% of total loans compared to 10% in 2021/22. The increase in e-loans has had a small impact on physical loans; physical loans were 89.5% of total loans in 2025/26 compared to 67.2% in 2021/22. The number of physical loans has increased by 3% since 2021/22, but numbers have declined since 2023/24 by 5.6%

from 563,510 to 531,949, chart 20 shows a general declining trend. The number of total loans (Chart 19) shows a declining trend since 2022/23 from 674,895 to 594,134 in 2025/25; this suggests while active users and visits have increased people are borrowing fewer items on each visit.

Public computer usage (Chart 24) rose between 2021/22 from 15,215 hours to 25,399 in 2022/23 it has remained reasonably steady at this level.

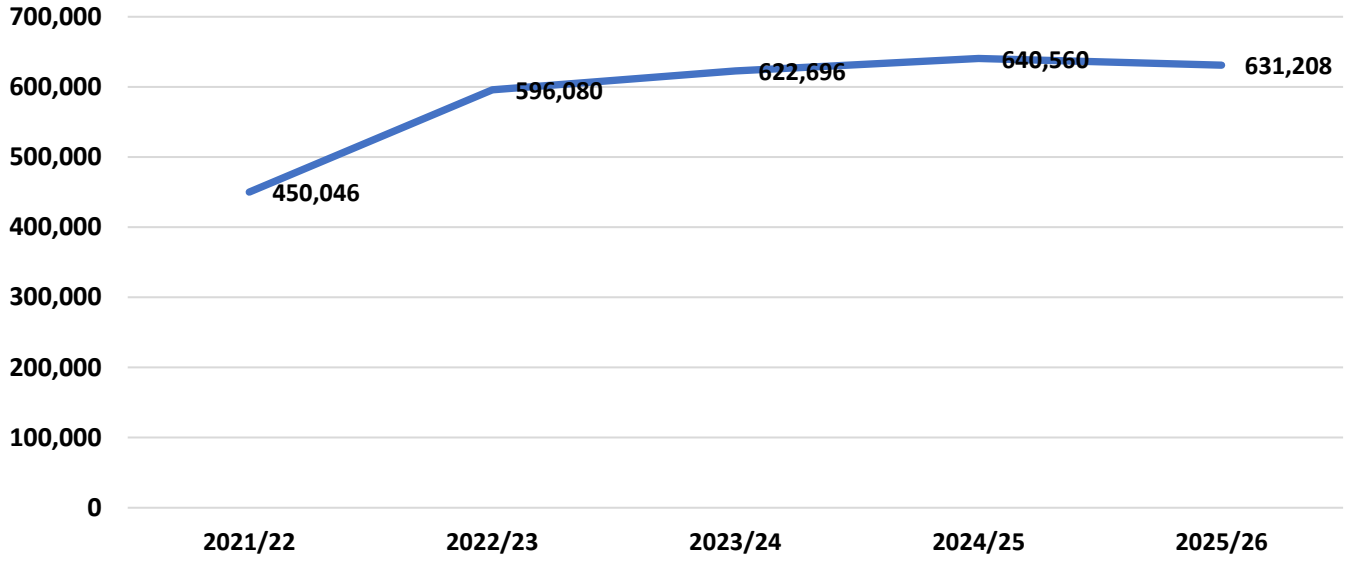
Event attendance (Chart 25) has risen a great deal since 2021/22 showing an upward trend from 17,149 to 82,257 in 2025/26, a rise of (379%). The Community Hubs have also been established in some libraries which will have influenced this trend.

**Chart 17: Number of Active Library Users 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end March, Static Libraries)**

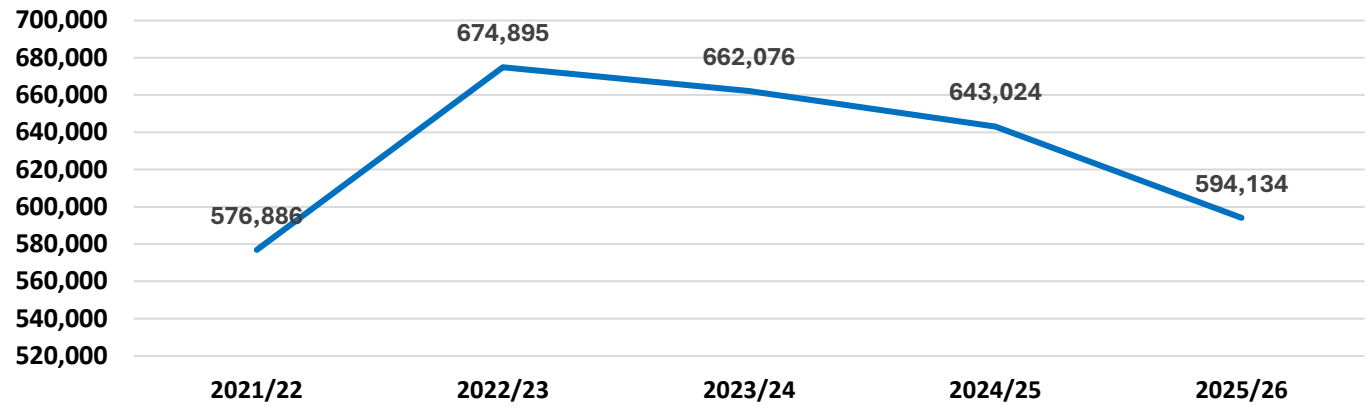



Active Users (borrowers) are registered library users (registered at a certain branch) who have actively used the library in the last 12 months.

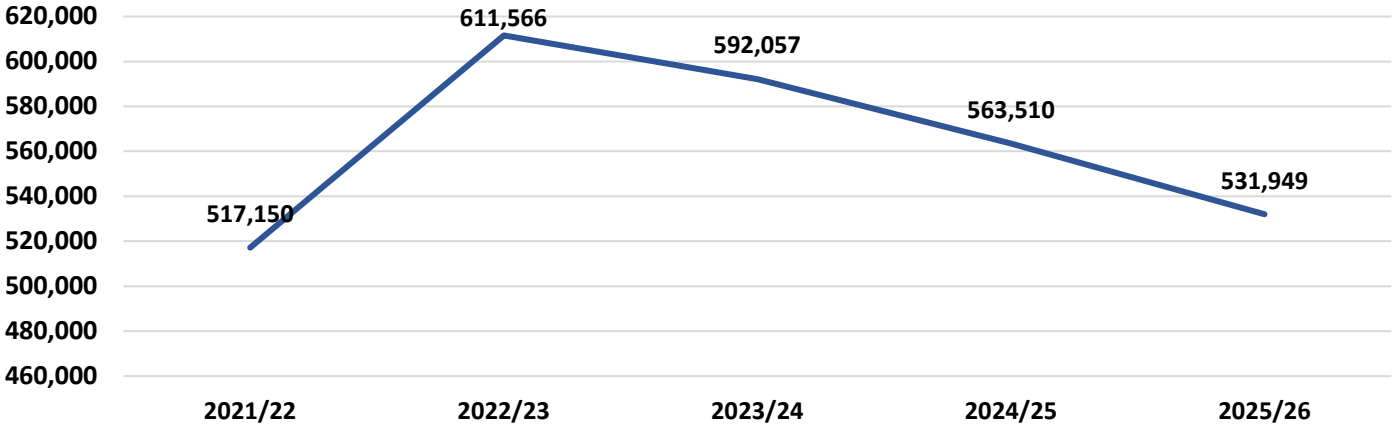
**Chart 18: Number of Visits to Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26**



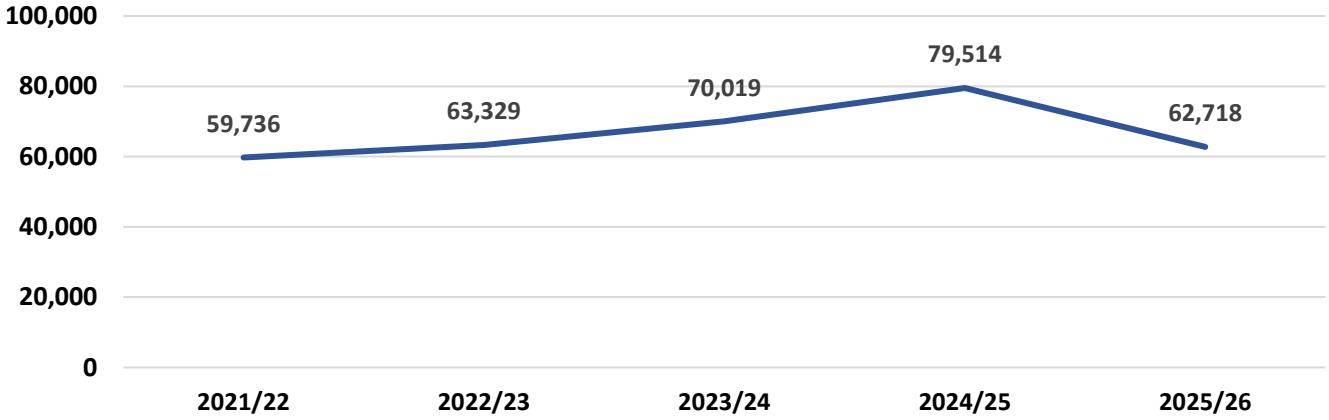
### Chart 19: Number of Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26




### Chart 20: Number of Physical Issues Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26




### Chart 21: Number of E-Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26



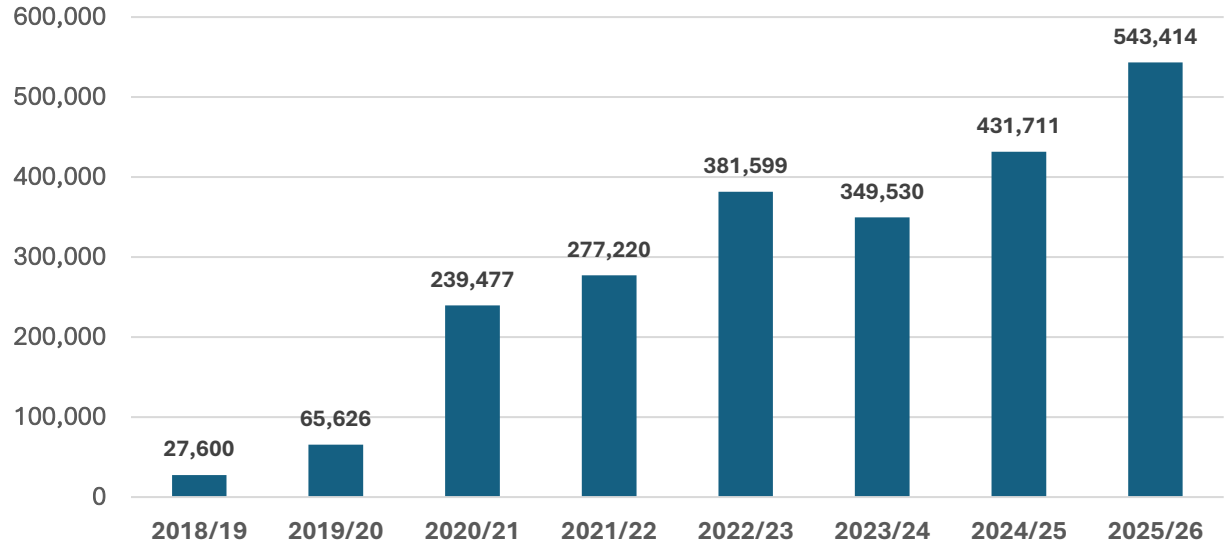

**E-loans includes e-books and e-audio.**

E-mags/newspapers aren't 'issued' in the same way, they're just available to view. In 2025/26 there were 2,266 unique users using the libraries for reading newspapers or magazines, 281,463 sessions and 543,414 issue opens. The number of unique users has risen from 316 in 2018/19 to 2,107 in 2024/25. Table 8 and Chart 22 show a steady year on year rise in newspaper and magazine readers, the number of issue opens has risen by 96% since 2021/22.

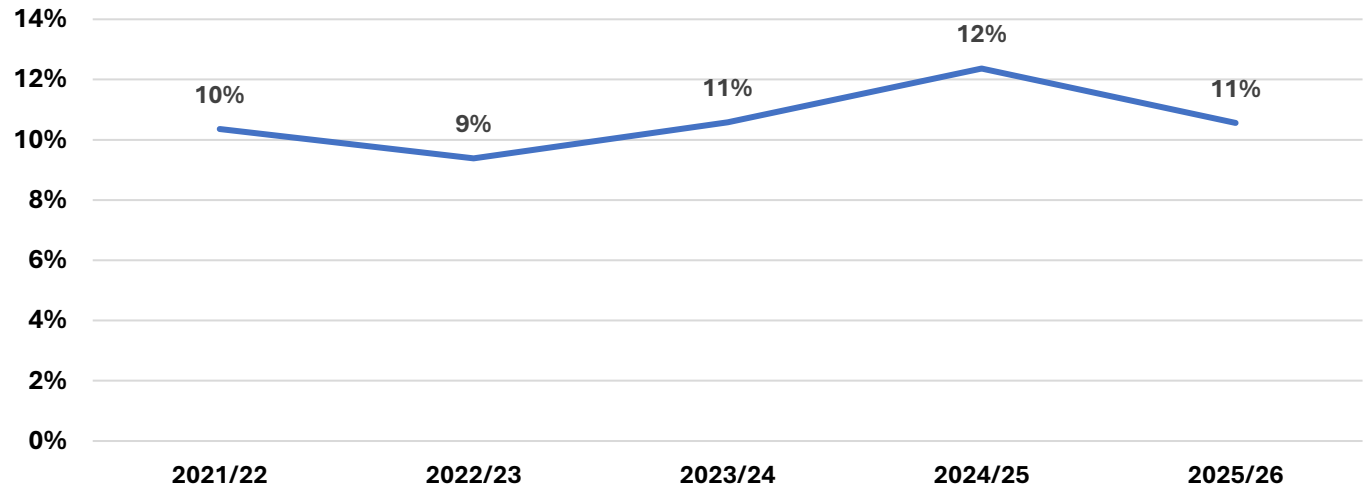
### Table 8 Newspapers and Magazine Readers

| | Sessions | Users | Issue Opens |
|---|---|---|---|
| **18/19** | 14,423 | 316 | 27,600 |
| **19/20** | 52,782 | 753 | 65,626 |
| **20/21** | 163,353 | 1,360 | 239,477 |
| **21/22** | 162,931 | 1,102 | 277,220 |
| **22/23** | 182,626 | 1,405 | 381,599 |
| **23/24** | 184,024 | 1,649 | 349,530 |
| **24/25** | 232,525 | 2,171 | 431,711 |
| **25/26** | 281,463 | 2,266 | 543,414 |

### Chart 22 Newspapers and Magazine Readers 2018/19 to 2025/26




### Chart 23: Number of E-Loans as a Percentage of Total Loans Static Libraries 2020/21 to 2025/26



This data on loans excludes Mobile Libraries and HQ.

**Chart 24: Public Computer Use Time in Hours Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26**

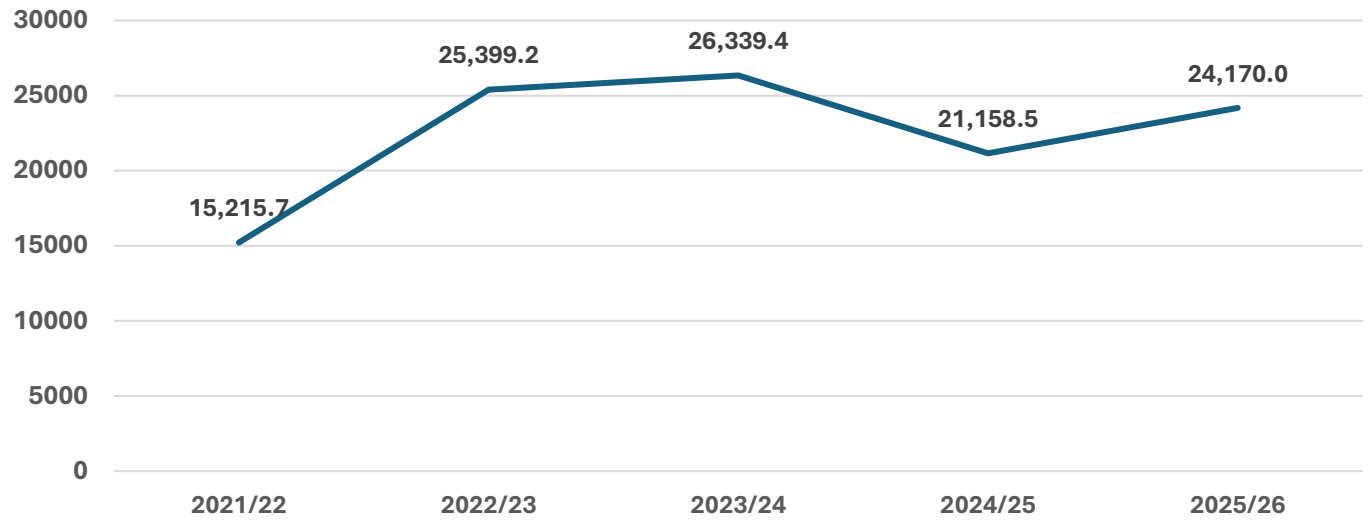



**Chart 25: Event Attendance Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26**

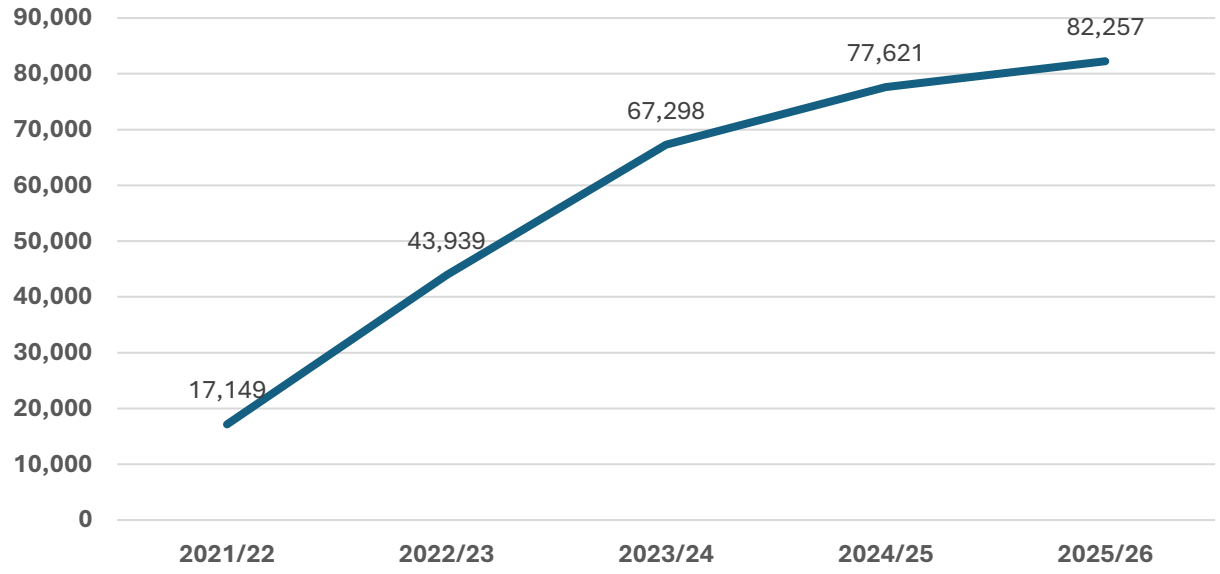


**Table 9: Summary of Shropshire Libraries Usage Data**

| Library Activity | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | %Change 2021/22 to 2025/26 | % Change 2024/25 to 2025/26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Active Library Users | 28,299 | 33,873 | 34,643 | 33,362 | 33,121 | 17% | -0.72% |
| Total Loans | 576,886 | 674,895 | 662,076 | 643,024 | 594,134 | 3% | -7.60% |
| Physical Loans | 517,150 | 611,566 | 592,057 | 563,510 | 531,949 | 3% | -5.60% |
| E-Loans | 59,736 | 63,329 | 70,019 | 79,514 | 79,514 | 33% | 0.00% |
| E-Loans as a % of all loans | 10% | 9% | 11% | 12% | 11% | 10% | -8.33% |
| Public Computer User | 15,215.7 | 25,399.2 | 26,339.4 | 21,158.5 | 24,170 | 59% | 14.23% |
| Event Attendance | 17,149 | 43,939 | 67,298 | 77,621 | 82,257 | 380% | 5.97% |

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 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 2021/22 to 2025/26.

**Table 10: Library Demand/Usage Ranked 2025/26**

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

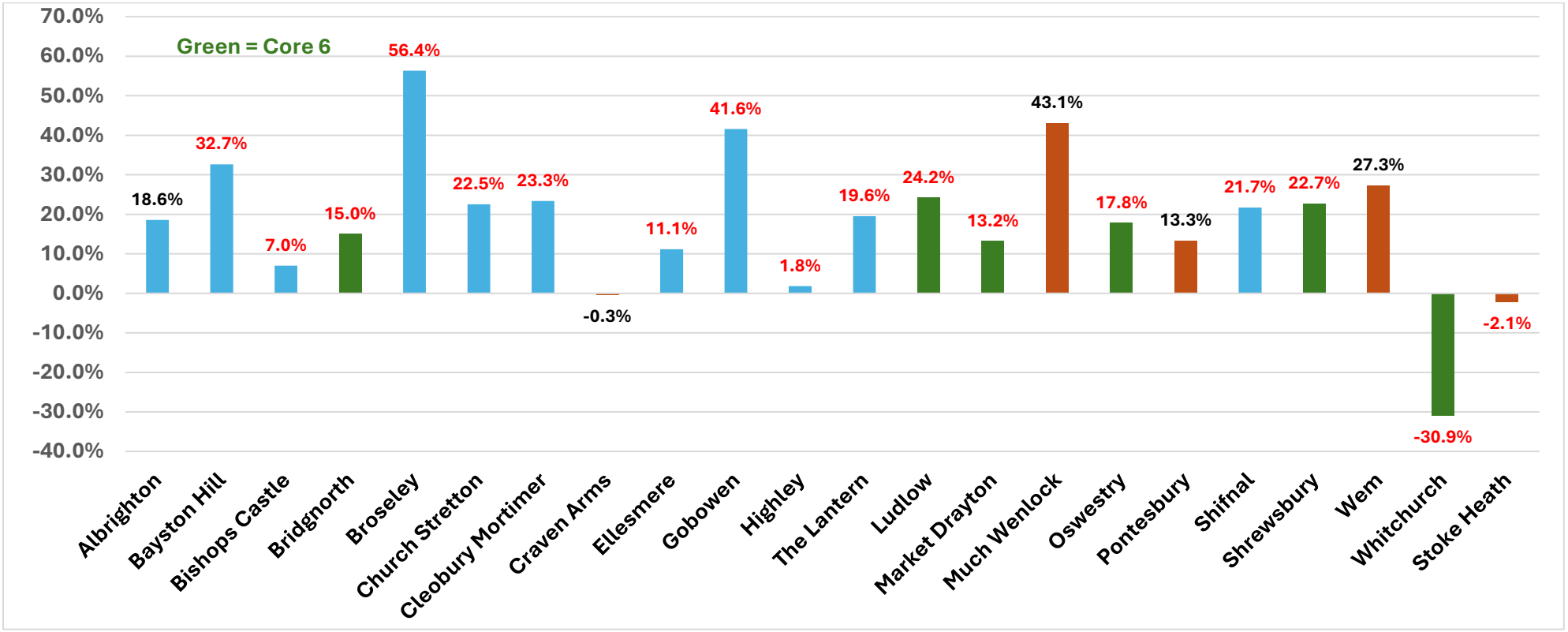
| Library | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albrighton | 492 | 641 | 735 | 779 | 786 | 760 |
| Bayston Hill | 471 | 652 | 754 | 831 | 834 | 865 |
| Bishops Castle | 502 | 668 | 727 | 762 | 752 | 715 |
| Bridgnorth | 1,423 | 1,979 | 2,411 | 2528 | 2384 | 2,276 |
| Broseley | 270 | 385 | 459 | 572 | 642 | 602 |
| Church Stretton | 954 | 1,078 | 1,207 | 1140 | 1219 | 1321 |
| Cleobury Mortimer | 295 | 317 | 444 | 442 | 366 | 391 |
| Craven Arms | 253 | 344 | 413 | 353 | 322 | 343 |
| Ellesmere | 541 | 628 | 744 | 765 | 754 | 698 |
| Gobowen | 135 | 185 | 193 | 231 | 257 | 262 |
| Highley | 90 | 166 | 184 | 176 | 217 | 169 |
| The Lantern | 404 | 670 | 775 | 769 | 781 | 801 |
| Ludlow | 1,791 | 2,424 | 2,986 | 3280 | 3143 | 3,010 |
| Market Drayton | 1,435 | 2,085 | 2,616 | 2761 | 2466 | 2,361 |
| Much Wenlock | 278 | 404 | 461 | 488 | 496 | 578 |
| Oswestry | 2,596 | 3,566 | 4,469 | 4406 | 4355 | 4,201 |
| Pontesbury | 380 | 548 | 617 | 645 | 648 | 621 |
| Shifnal | 435 | 571 | 640 | 659 | 673 | 695 |
| Shrewsbury | 5,787 | 7,690 | 9,208 | 9496 | 9346 | 9,439 |
| Wem | 600 | 839 | 1,024 | 1094 | 1166 | 1,068 |
| Whitchurch | 1,340 | 1,603 | 1,857 | 1539 | 921 | 1,107 |
| Stoke Heath | 617 | 856 | 949 | 927 | 834 | 838 |
| Total | 21,089 | 28,299 | 33,873 | 34643 | 33,362 | 33,121 |

## Trends in Active Library Users by Library

Chart 26 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.

All libraries have seen an increase in active users except Whitchurch (had been closed for a period) and Stoke Heath (Young Offenders) had a small decline. The largest increases in Broseley, Gobowen, Much Wenlock and Bayston Hill.

### Chart 26: Library Active Users Percentage Change Five Years




5 years change all libraries up 17%

## Mobile Libraries

There are three mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council covering 232 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. Map of routes. The number of active borrowers was 1,110 in 2025/26. See appendix for list of mobile library stops.

The number of active library users (Chart 27) for mobile libraries has declined from 1,227 in 2021/22 to 1,110 in 2025/26. This is a decline of -117 (-9.5%). The number of users of mobile libraries was stable at just over 1,200 users in the immediate post-pandemic period but has been in gradual decline since 2023/24.

The number of visits to mobile libraries (Chart 28) was at an unprecedently low level in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recovery was strong in 2022/23 and 2023/24 but has since tailed off, with around 2,500 fewer visits in 2025/26 than in the preceding year.

In terms of the number of loans (Chart 29) there has been a decline of 7,529 (-12%) from 60,298 in 2021/22 to 53,039 in 2025/26.

**Chart 27: Number of Active Library Users 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)**

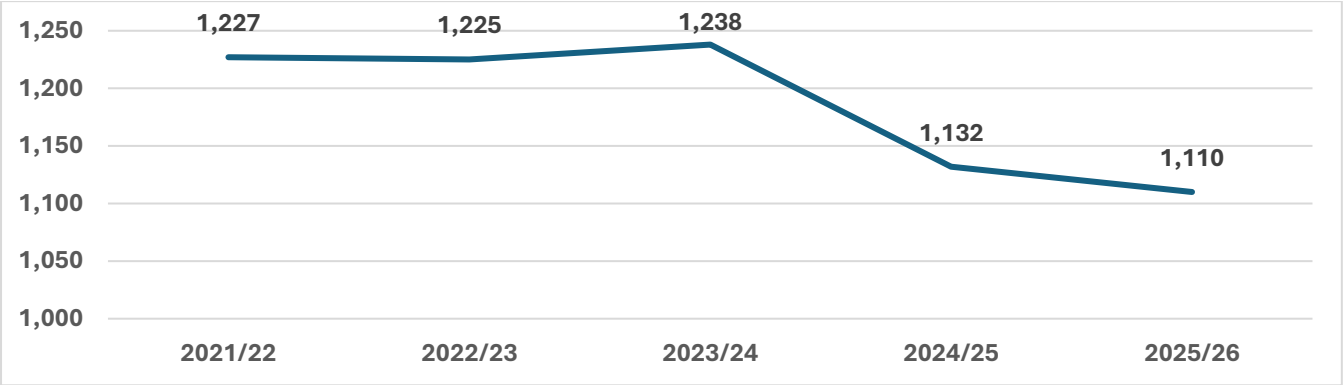



**Chart 28: Number of Visits to Mobile Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)**

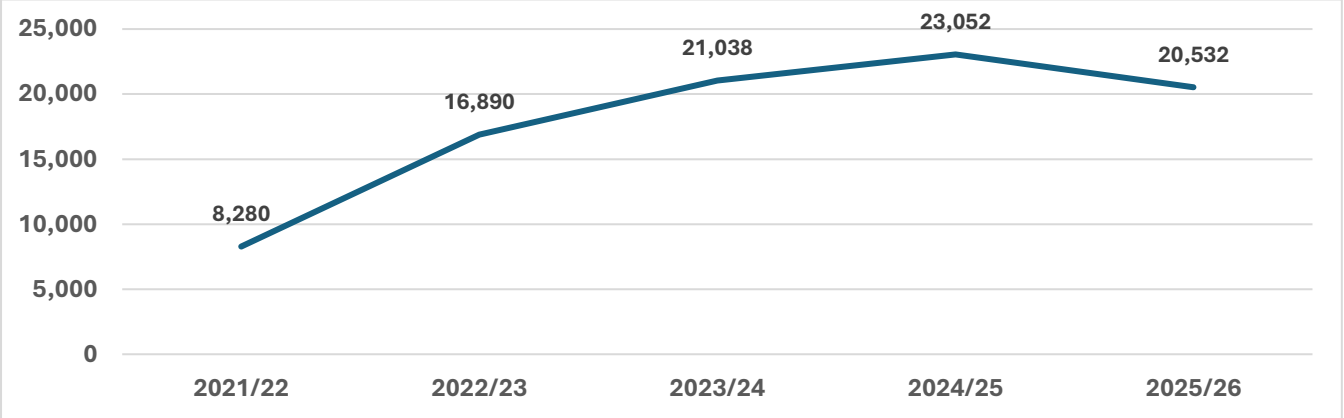
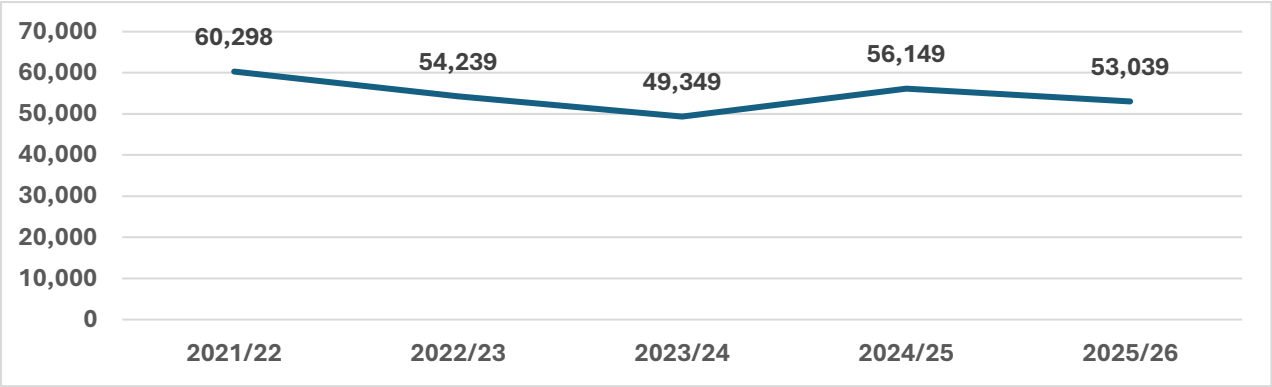


**Chart 29: Number of Loans Mobile Libraries 2021/22 to 205/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)**

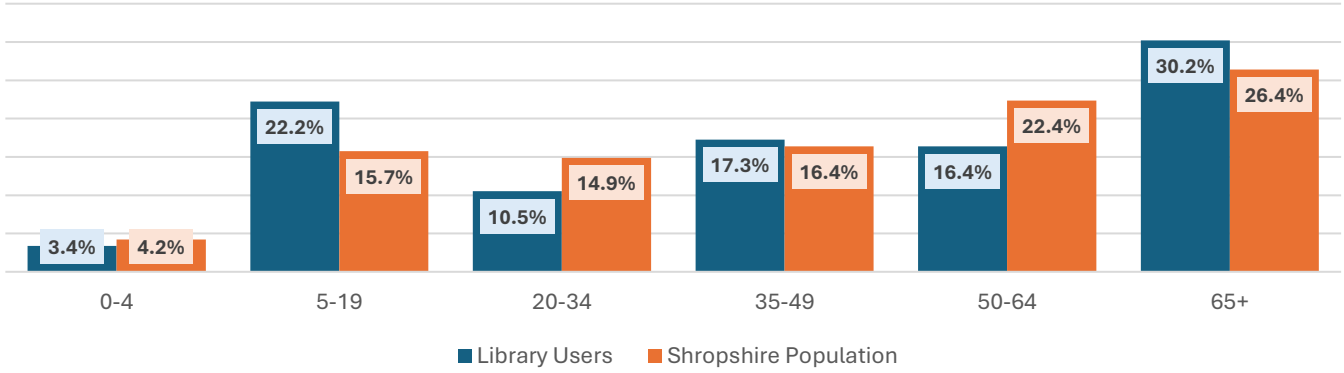


## Profile of Shropshire Library Users

### Age and Gender

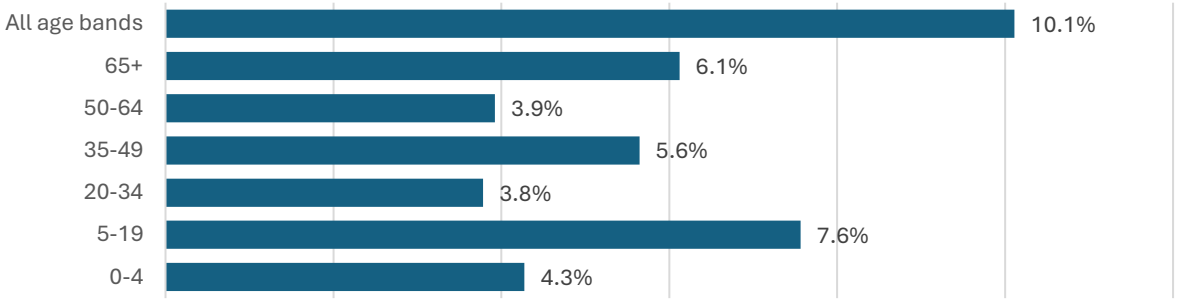
The Shropshire library user base is primarily female, with women accounting for 65% of all users (active users 2024/25). In comparison, just over half (50.7%) of the Shropshire population is female (ONS Mid-Year estimates, 2024). The age profile of library users (for whom the age is known) is also slightly different to the base population, with a much higher representation of children and young adults. People under the age of 20 account for 25.6% 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. The proportion attributable to over 65's is also higher than the Shropshire average (30.2% of library users against 26.4% of the population). Consequently, the 20-64 age band is under-represented, accounting for 44.2% of library users (53.6% 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 highest 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 Shropshire library users resident outside of Shropshire

### Concessionary Users

Almost 3,500 active users of the Shropshire library service have concessionary membership. This equates with 10.4% 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 6% 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 area[3]. 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 (29,746 people) live outside this catchment. 21% live outside a 20-minute drive of a main library, which is the equivalent of 68,654 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 | 256,789 | 77% | 174,151 | 52% |
| Within 15 minutes | 290,611 | 87% | 213,052 | 64% |
| Within 20 minutes | 317,019 | 95% | 263,846 | 79% |
| Within 25 minutes | 329,153 | 99% | 302,754 | 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.

93.6% 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.

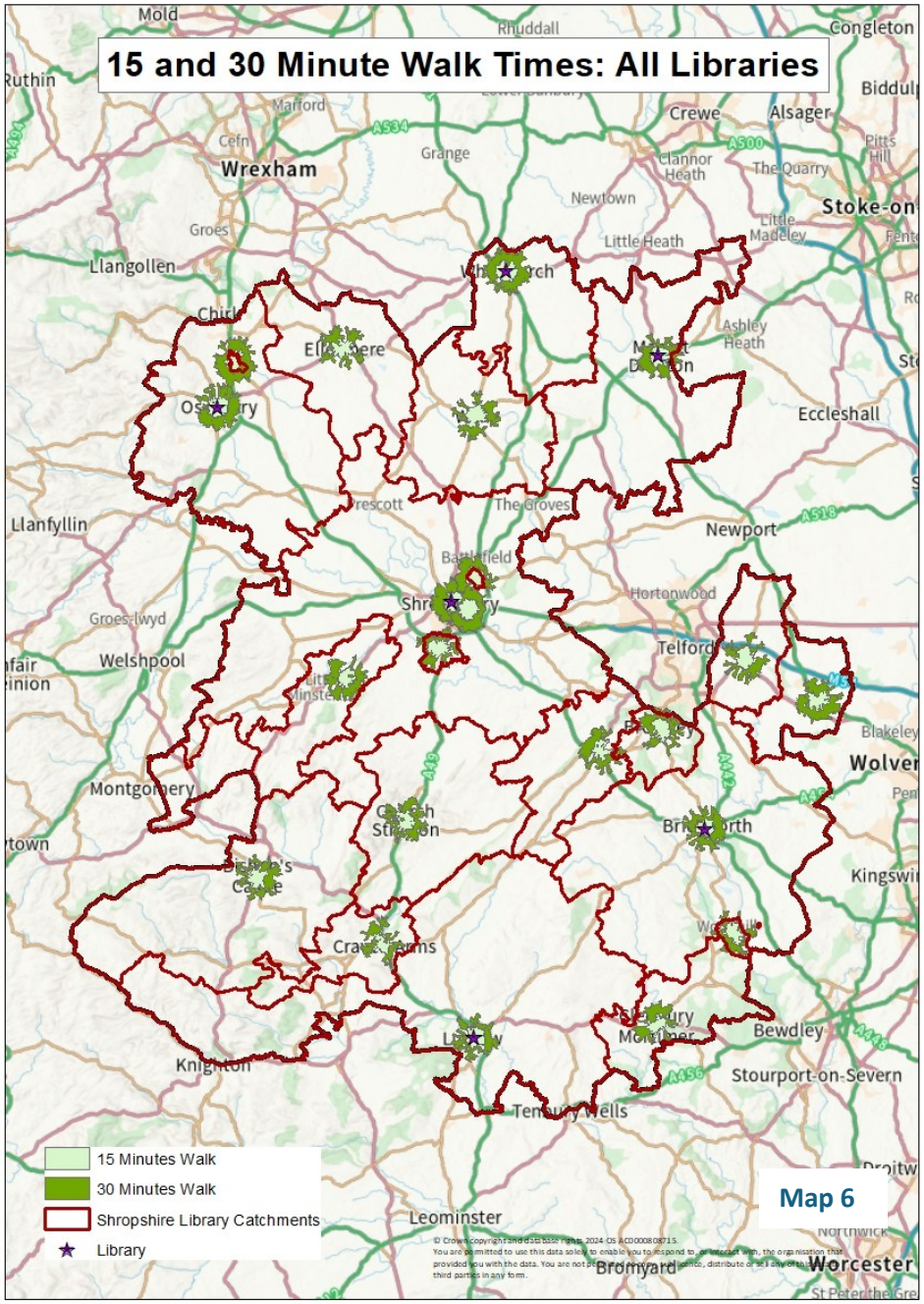
[3] Shropshire is divided into 18 Place Plan areas for planning policy purposes. These are areas of varying size, served by a main town and with a rural hinterland.

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

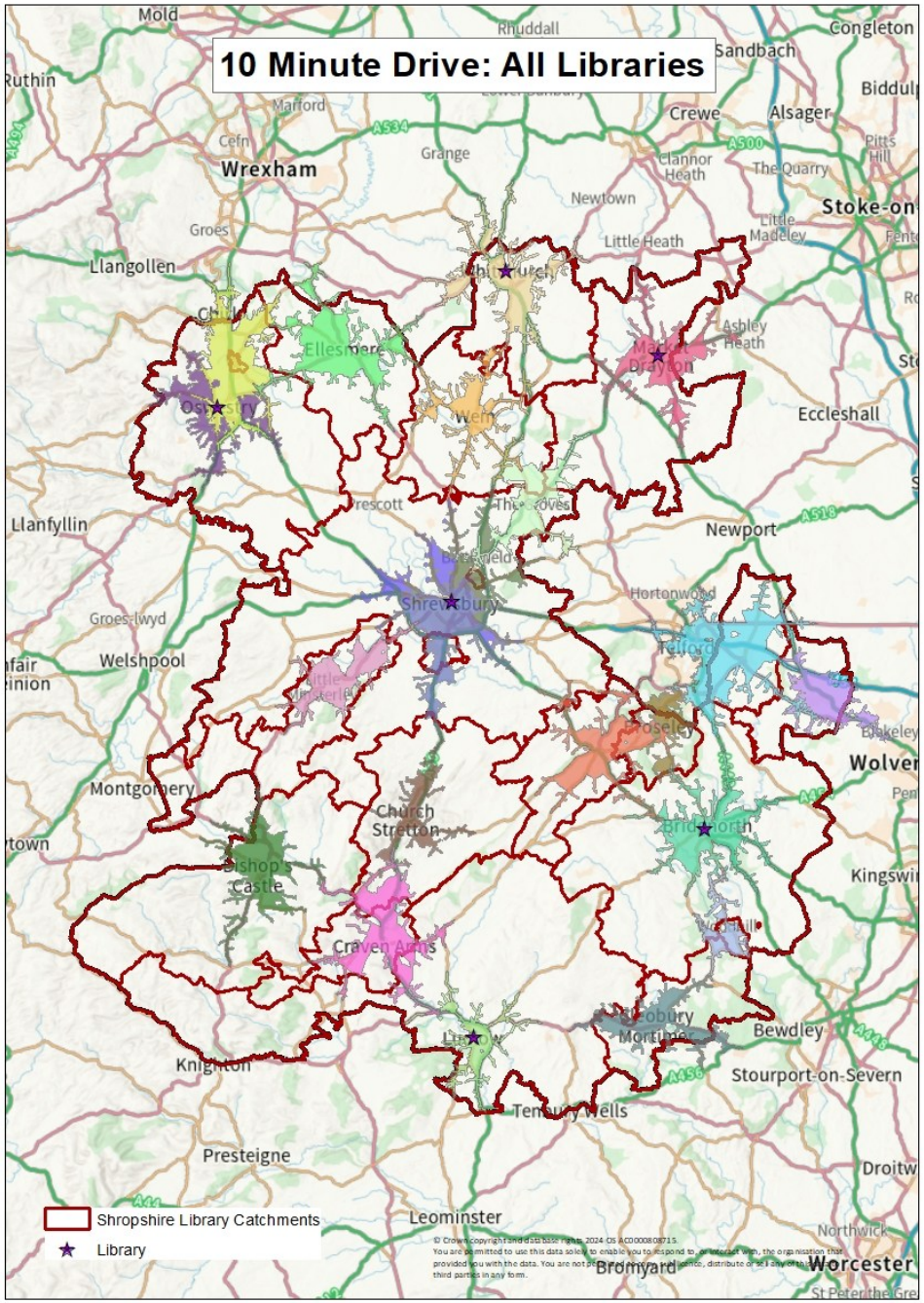
| | % within 15 minute walk | % within 30 minute walk | % within 10 minute drive | % within 15 minute drive | % within 20 minute drive | % within 25 minute drive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albrighton | 66.6% | 79.8% | 84.0% | 89.6% | 95.0% | 97.4% |
| Bayston Hill | 57.7% | 63.0% | 87.1% | 93.3% | 96.1% | 97.1% |
| Bishop's Castle | 38.5% | 42.4% | 55.2% | 72.4% | 86.7% | 93.6% |
| Bridgnorth | 28.1% | 60.3% | 68.8% | 77.6% | 88.2% | 92.0% |
| Broseley | 69.0% | 84.1% | 90.0% | 92.5% | 96.3% | 97.6% |
| Church Stretton | 49.1% | 65.6% | 76.7% | 85.7% | 90.9% | 94.8% |
| Cleobury Mortimer | 66.9% | 68.7% | 79.8% | 89.4% | 93.4% | 98.0% |
| Craven Arms | 28.8% | 38.6% | 54.2% | 70.9% | 81.8% | 91.4% |
| Ellesmere | 52.5% | 58.7% | 83.4% | 92.7% | 95.8% | 97.2% |
| Gobowen | 66.2% | 69.9% | 91.4% | 94.7% | 96.2% | 97.0% |
| Highley | 72.7% | 84.5% | 86.3% | 89.4% | 91.3% | 93.8% |
| Library at the Lantern | 37.5% | 55.4% | 83.1% | 91.2% | 93.4% | 96.8% |
| Ludlow | 33.1% | 55.0% | 56.5% | 71.8% | 82.0% | 89.2% |
| Market Drayton | 29.9% | 55.9% | 66.6% | 82.9% | 91.4% | 95.8% |
| Much Wenlock | 48.6% | 54.3% | 71.4% | 85.1% | 92.2% | 96.1% |
| Oswestry | 23.9% | 43.0% | 59.0% | 78.7% | 88.2% | 93.1% |
| Pontesbury | 34.6% | 42.3% | 70.6% | 85.3% | 95.7% | 97.5% |
| Shifnal | 68.9% | 83.8% | 89.8% | 94.6% | 97.5% | 98.5% |
| Shrewsbury | 10.5% | 38.8% | 75.9% | 81.2% | 87.8% | 92.2% |
| Wem | 54.8% | 59.0% | 69.0% | 85.1% | 91.6% | 96.0% |
| Whitchurch | 40.2% | 54.7% | 68.4% | 82.8% | 90.7% | 94.3% |
| All Users | 31.1% | 51.6% | 71.2% | 81.9% | 89.4% | 93.6% |

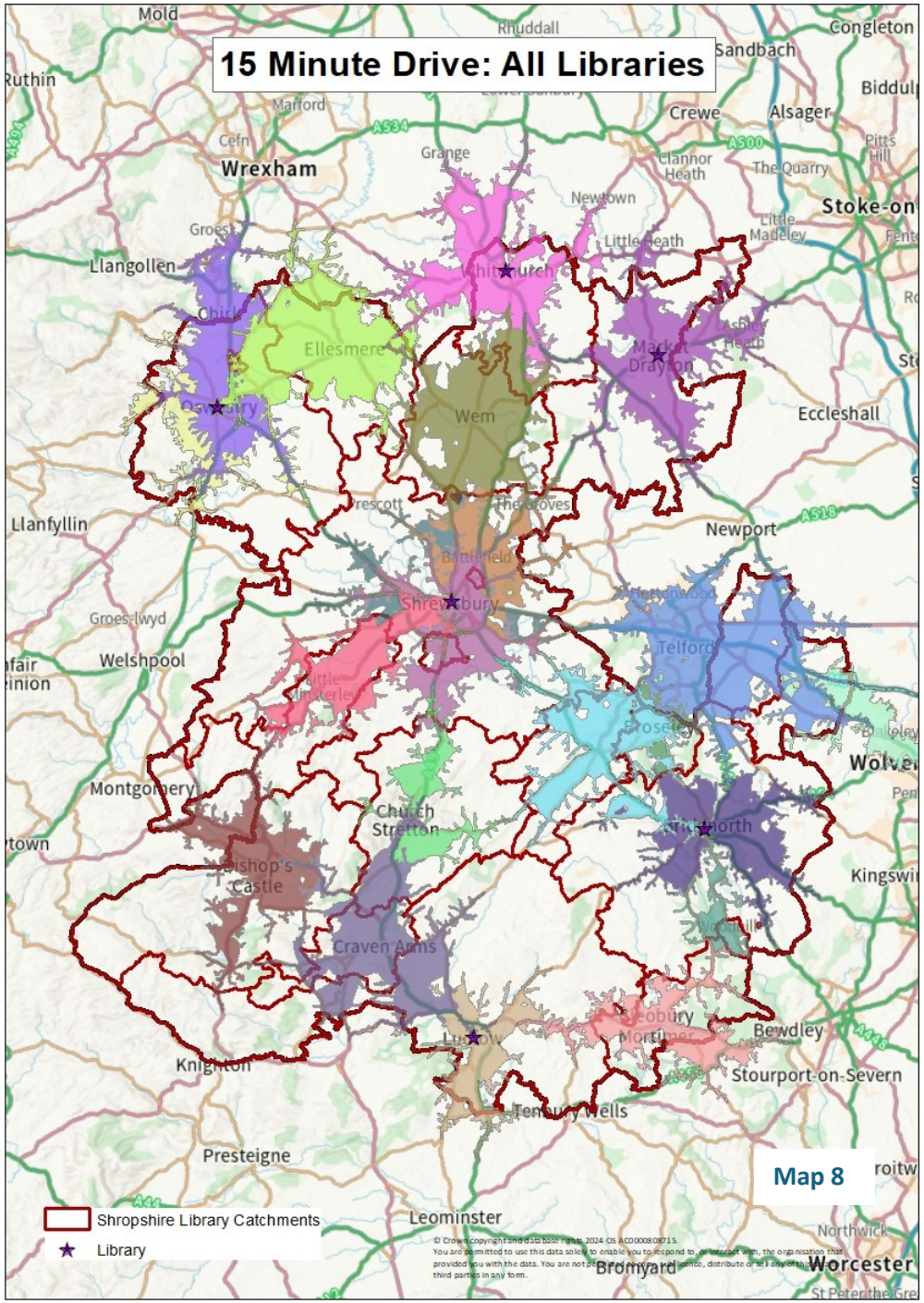
Note: Walk and drive times refer to the library to which each user is registered. They may live closer to alternative library provision.

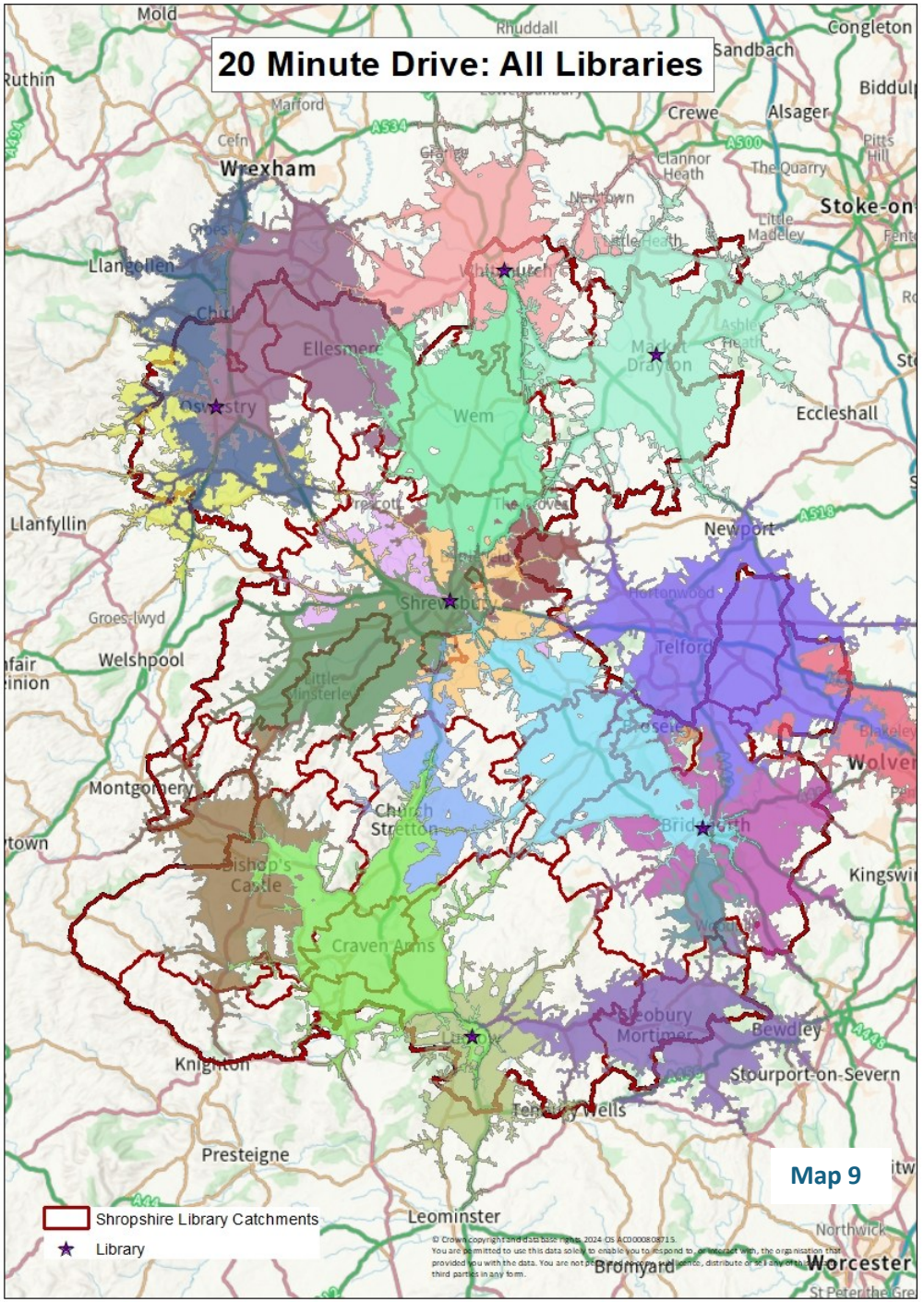
Th following maps show walk and drive times for all of Shropshire's 21 static libraries.

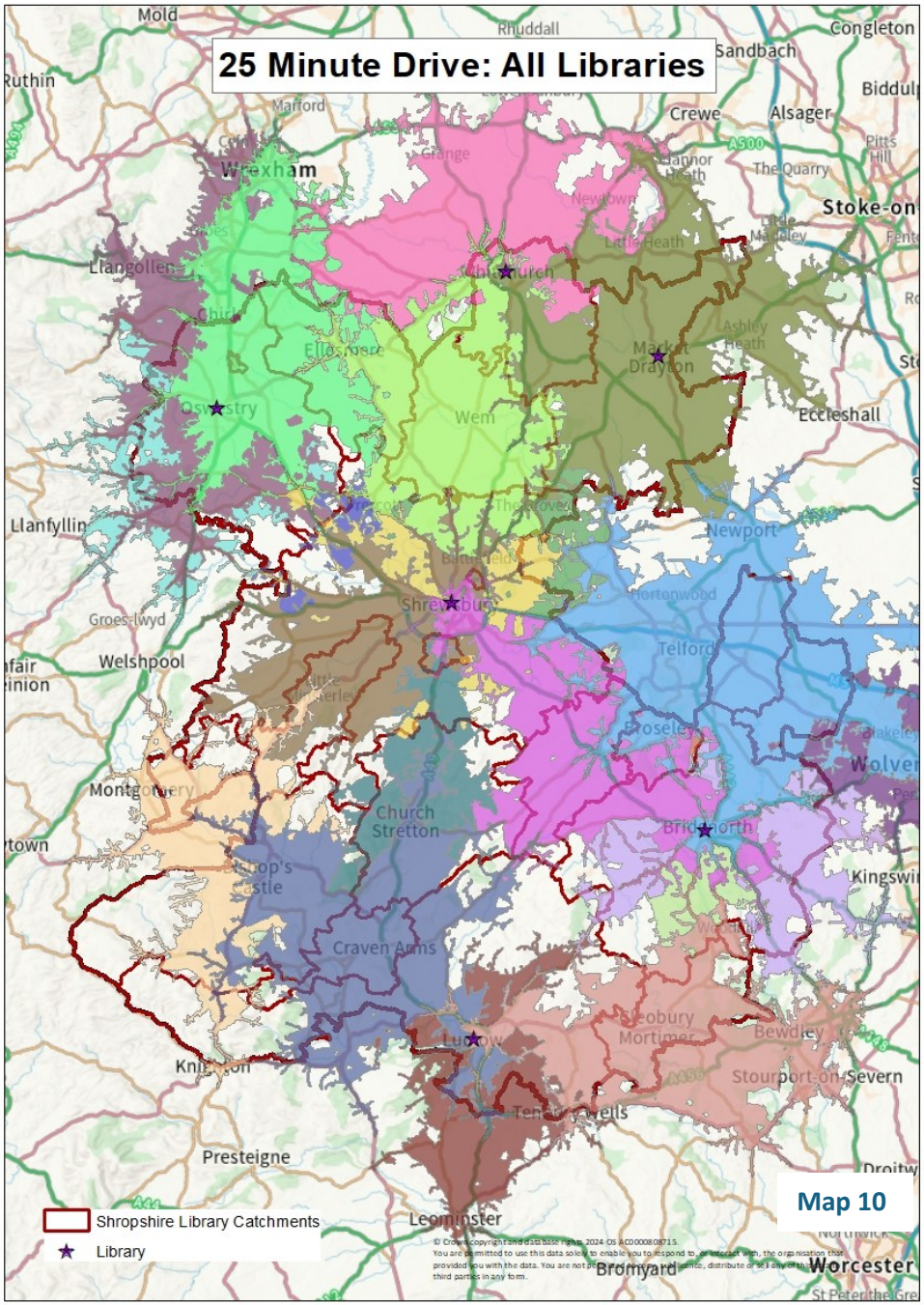

15 and 30 Minute Walk Times: All Libraries
Wrexham
Llangollen
Oswestry
Ellesmere
Eccleshall
Newport
Shrewsbury
Telford
Welshpool
Montgomery
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Ludlow
Bewdley
Stourport-on-Severn
Tenbury Wells
Kidderminster
Bromyard
Leominster
Worcester
Knighton
Llanfyllin
Groes-lwyd
Kingswinford
Wolverhampton
15 Minutes Walk
30 Minutes Walk
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library

Map 6


10 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Wrexham
Llangollen
Oswestry
Ellesmere
Eccleshall
Newport
Shrewsbury
Telford
Welshpool
Montgomery
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Ludlow
Bewdley
Stourport-on-Severn
Tenbury Wells
Kidderminster
Bromyard
Leominster
Worcester
Knighton
Presteigne
Llanfyllin
Kingswinford
Wolverhampton
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library


15 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Mold
Rhuddall
Congleton
Sandbach
Ruthin
Biddul
Marford
Crewe
Alsager
Cefn
A534
Grange
A500
Clannor Heath
The Quarry
Pitts Hill
Wrexham
Newtown
Stoke-on
Little Heath
Little Madeley
Llangollen
Ellesmere
Market Drayton
Wem
Eccleshall
Llanfyllin
Prescott
Newport
A518
Battlefield
Shrewsbury
Groes-lwyd
Welshpool
Telford
Montgomery
Church Stretton
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Kingswi
Bewdley
Knighton
Stourport-on-Severn
Tenbury Wells
Presteigne
Leominster
Northwick
Bromyard
Worcester
Map 8
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library


20 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Mold
Rhuddall
Congleton
Sandbach
Ruthin
Biddul
Marford
Crewe
Alsager
Cefn
A534
A500
Clannor Heath
The Quarry
Pitts Hill
Wrexham
Newtown
Stoke-on
Little Madeley
Llangollen
Ellesmere
Market Drayton
Wem
Eccleshall
Llanfyllin
Newport
A518
Shrewsbury
Groes-lwyd
Welshpool
Telford
Montgomery
Church Stretton
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Kingswi
Bewdley
Knighton
Stourport-on-Severn
Presteigne
Leominster
Northwick
Bromyard
Worcester
Map 9
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library


25 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library
Map 10

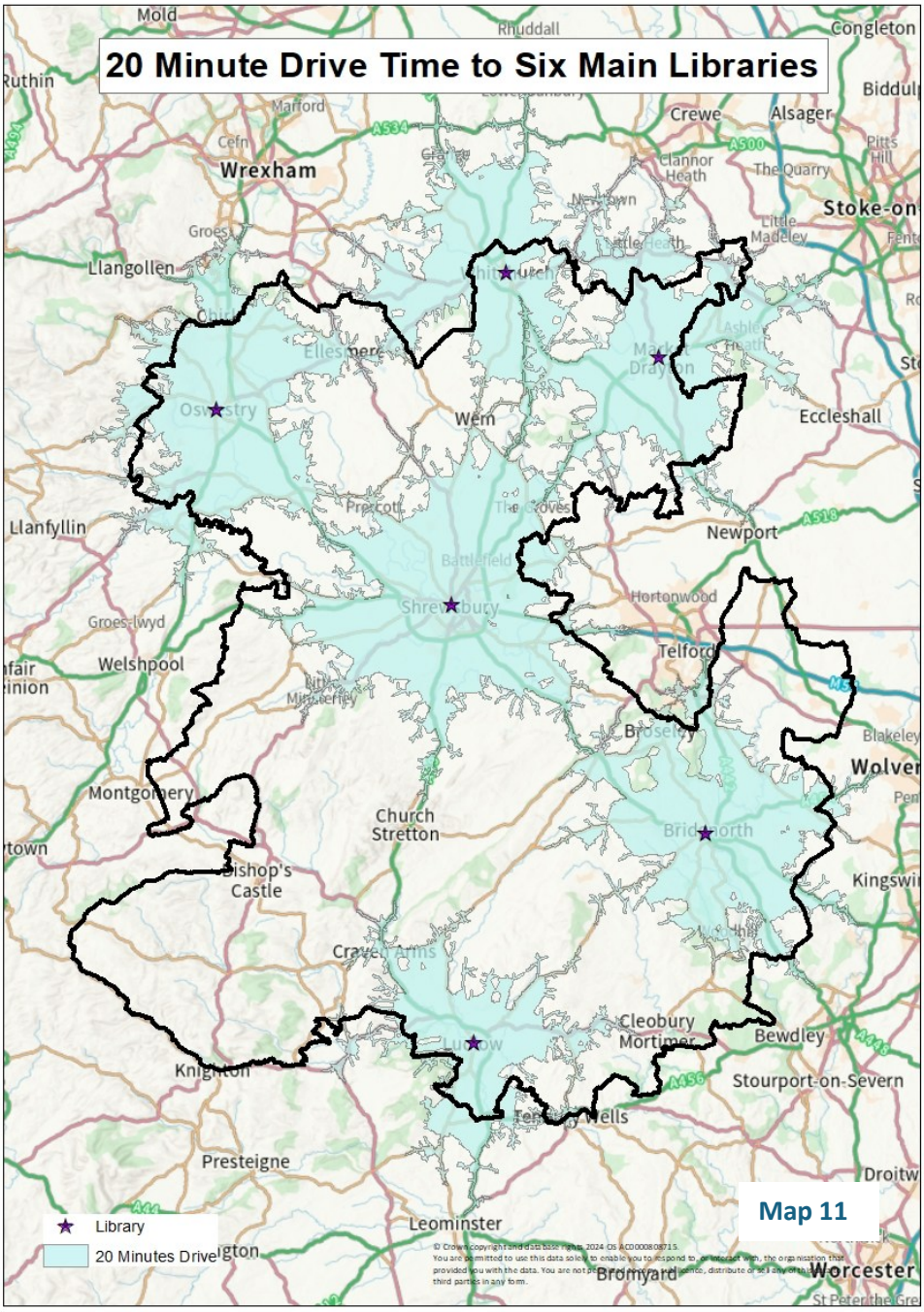
Currently, 98% of library users live within a 25-minute drive of their closest library (which is not necessarily the library to which they are registered). Almost three-quarters live within a 10-minute drive. The time required to travel to one of the main libraries is much longer. 48% of current users (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 | 7,748 | 23% | 15,979 | 48% |
| More than 15 minutes | 3,806 | 11% | 11,853 | 35% |
| More than 20 minutes | 1,475 | 4% | 7,353 | 22% |
| More than 25 minutes | 550 | 2% | 3,310 | 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<br><br>Shrewsbury | 11.2 miles<br><br>24.0 miles | 22 mins<br><br>32 mins | Train to Shifnal, 114 bus to Bridgnorth<br>Train to Shrewsbury | 1.5-2 hours<br><br>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<br>Shrewsbury | 18 miles<br>22 miles | 31 mins<br>41 mins | 553 bus to Shrewsbury, train to Ludlow<br>553 bus | 2-3 hours<br>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<br>435 bus to Ludlow | 15 mins<br>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<br>Train | 20 mins<br>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)<br>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 £507,370 followed by Ludlow and Oswestry. The lowest costs were Craven Arms, Albrighton, Shifnal and Broseley. The total cost for all static libraries was £2,624,370. The average cost was £120,277. 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 2025/26 (Annual Budget)

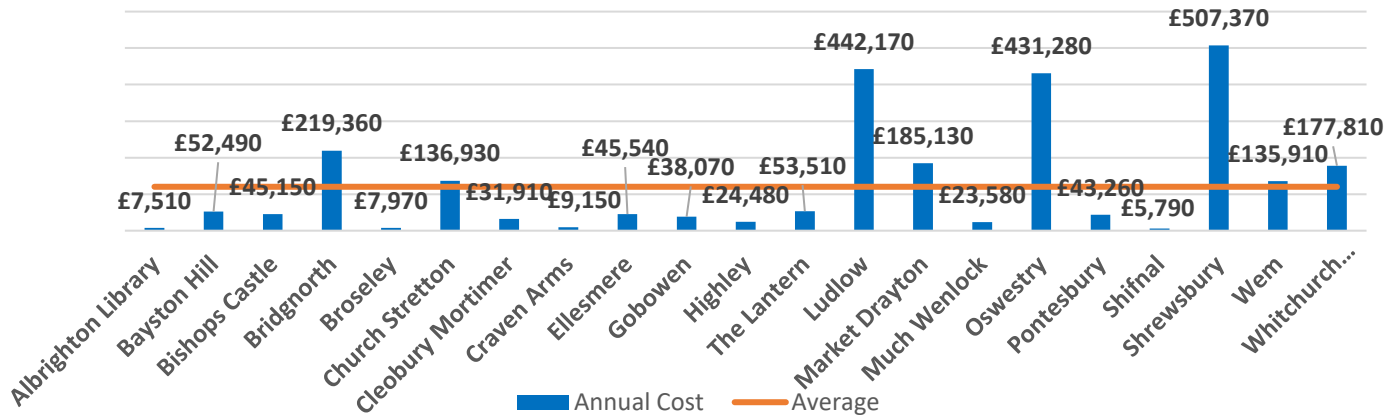



Chart 33 shows Ludlow Library had the highest cost per opening hour followed by Shrewsbury and Oswestry libraries. Craven Arms, Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley had the lowest cost. The average cost for all libraries was £73.12 per opening hour.

### Chart 33: Cost Per Opening Hour 2025/26

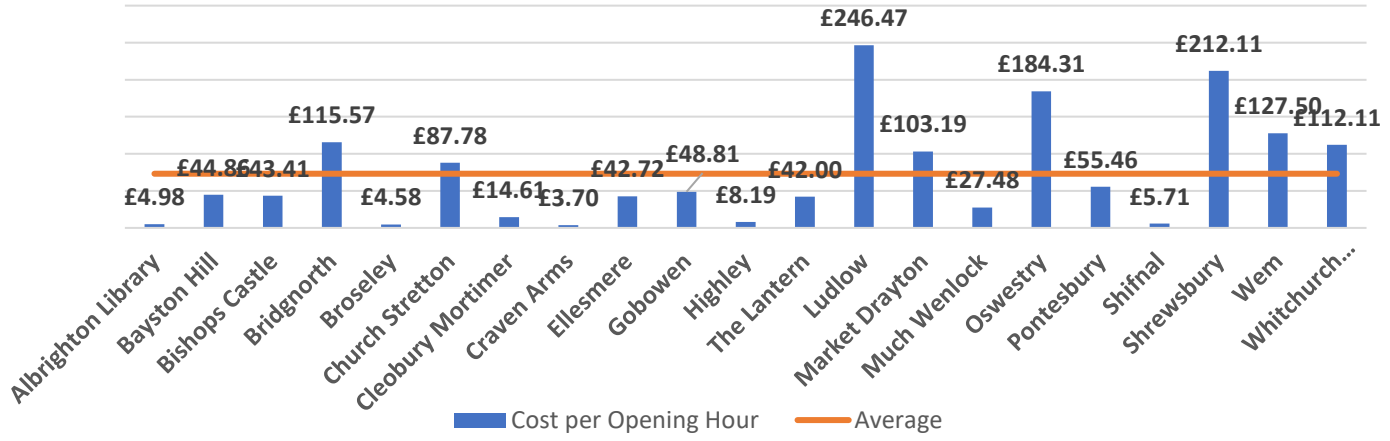



Chart 34 shows Whitchurch Library had the highest cost per active borrower (this library has been closed therefore this has altered these figures). Ludlow Library had the second highest cost per active library user followed by Gobowen and Highley libraries. The lowest cost libraries were Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley. The average cost per active user was £79.33.

### Chart 34: Cost per Active Library Borrower 2025/26

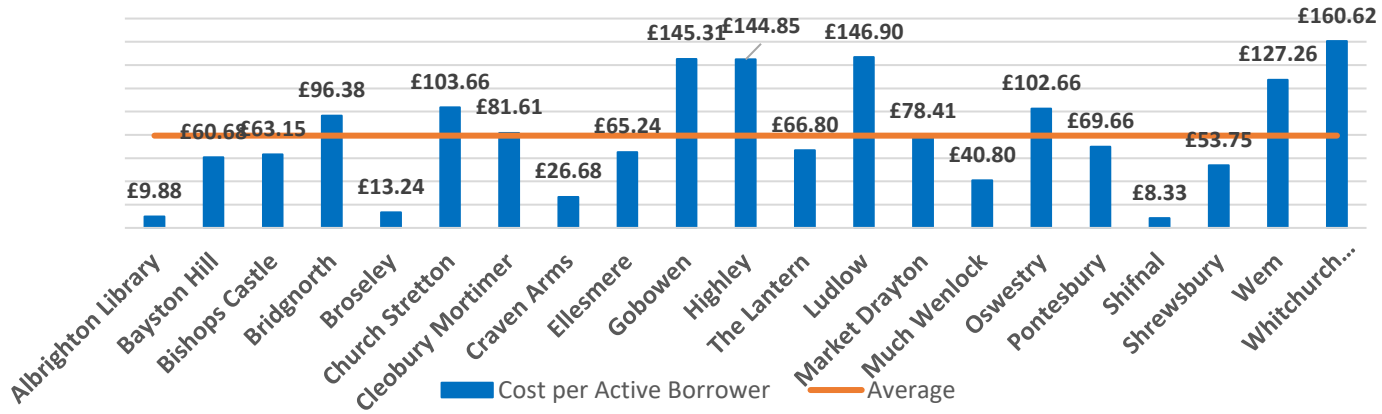



Chart 35 shows Highley had the highest cost per book loan followed by Whitchurch (this library has been closed for a period of time), Ludlow and Cleobury Mortimer. Craven Arms, Broseley. Albrighton and Shifnal libraries had the lowest costs per book loan. The average cost was £4.70.

### Chart 35: Cost per Book Loan 2025/26

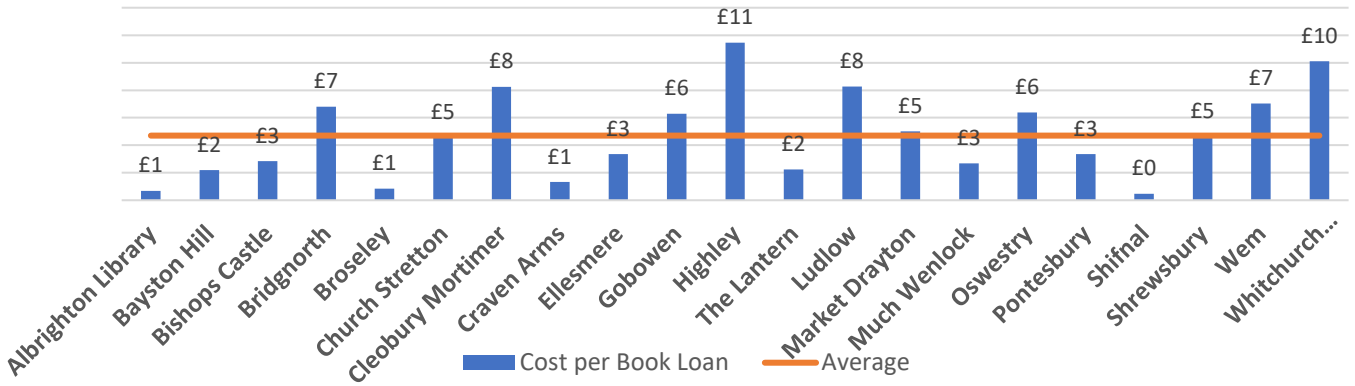



Chart 36 shows Whitchurch had the highest cost per individual footfall at £14.13 followed by Gobowen (£9.21) and Gobowen (8.47) compared to an average for all libraries of £4.13. Craven Arms, Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley had the lowest cost per individual footfall.

### Chart 36: Cost Per Individual Walk in Footfall 2025/26

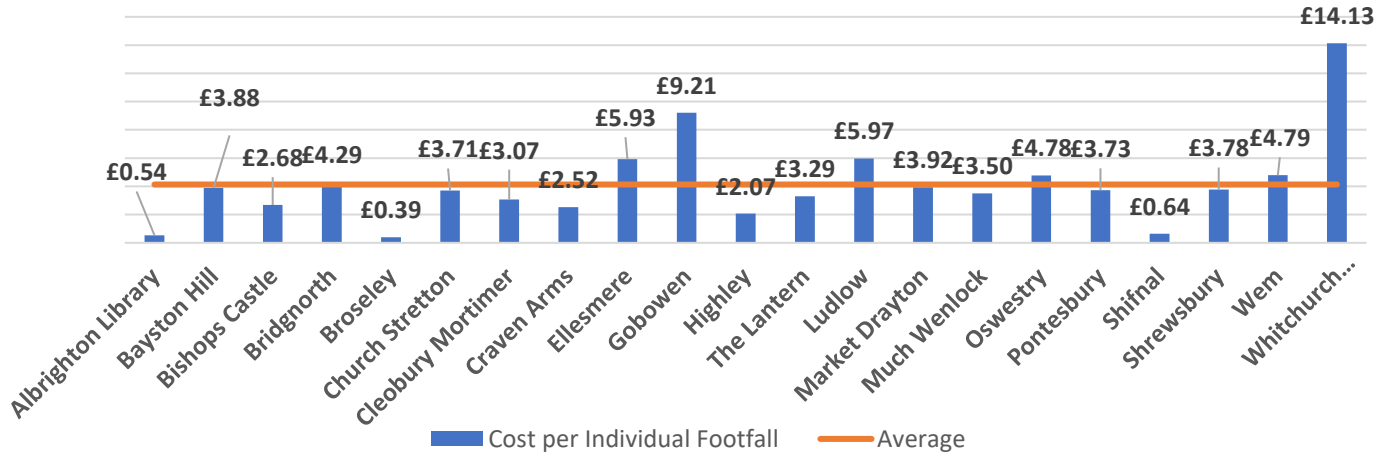


**Table 16: Library Costs Ranked 2025/26**

| 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Shifnal Library** | 18 | 21 | 19 | 21 | 1 |
| **Albrighton Library** | 19 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 1 |
| **Broseley Library** | 20 | 19 | 21 | 19 | 1 |
| **Craven Arms Library** | 21 | 18 | 17 | 18 | 2 |
| **Much Wenlock Library** | 15 | 17 | 13 | 15 | 3 |
| **Bishop's Castle Library** | 12 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 4 |
| **Library at the Lantern** | 14 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 5 |
| **Bayston Hill Library** | 11 | 15 | 9 | 17 | 6 |
| **Pontesbury Library** | 9 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 7 |
| **Cleobury Mortimer Library** | 16 | 9 | 15 | 4 | 8 |
| **Ellesmere Library** | 13 | 13 | 4 | 12 | 9 |
| **Highley Library** | 17 | 4 | 18 | 1 | 10 |
| **Shrewsbury Library** | 2 | 16 | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| **Church Stretton Library** | 8 | 6 | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| **Market Drayton Library** | 7 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 13 |
| **Bridgnorth Library** | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 14 |
| **Oswestry Library** | 3 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 15 |
| **Gobowen Library** | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 16 |
| **Wem Library** | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 17 |
| **Whitchurch Library** | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 18 |
| **Ludlow Library** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 19 |

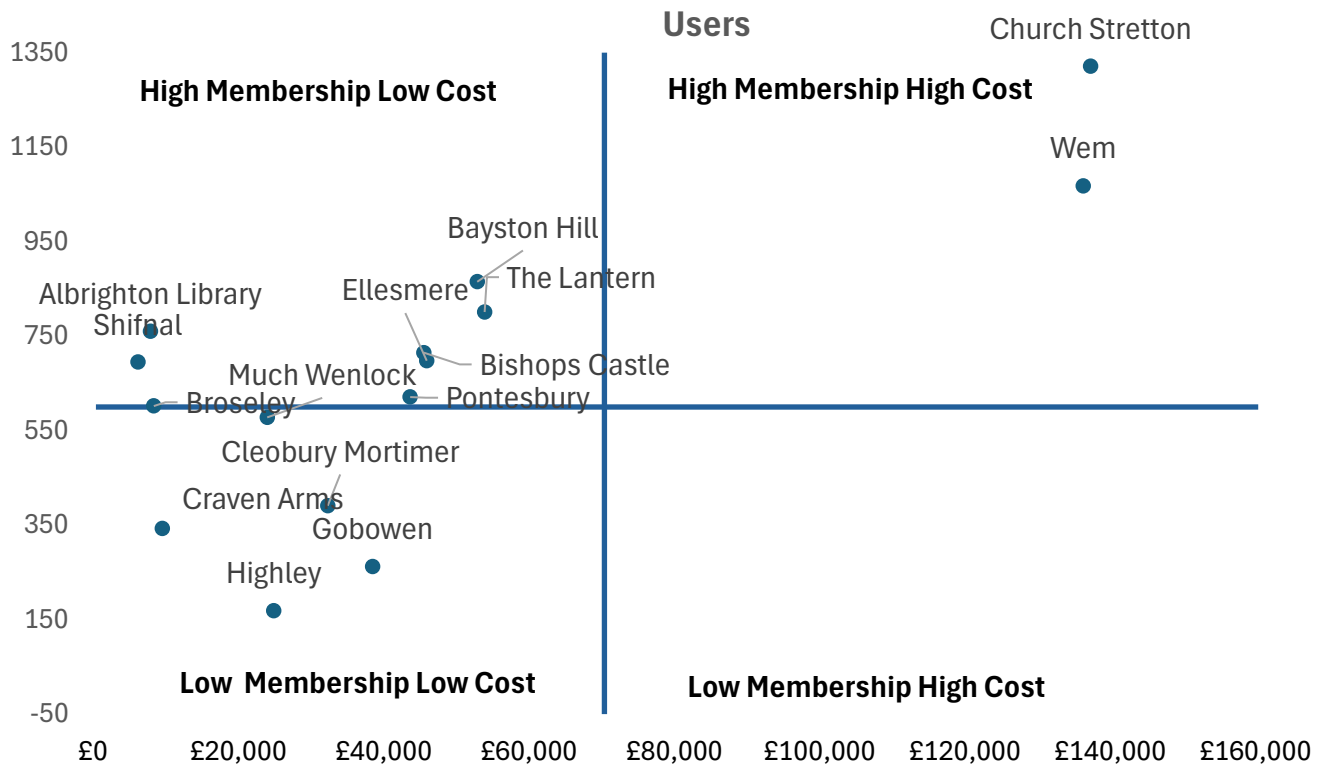
**Each rank of cost was added up to a total score and then an overall rank of the score was given. 1 = the least expensive and 22 (19 in practice as three libraries were rank 1 with same score) the most expensive based on these measures. Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley had the same total score so were ordered in cost per opening hour order in the table. Excludes Stoke Heath and Mobile Libraries.**

Ludlow Library was the most expensive library with the highest overall score, followed by Whitchurch, Wem and Gobowen. Highley was ranked one of the most expensive in terms of cost per loan and cost per active borrower but one of the least expensive for cost per opening hour and cost per individual walk in.

## 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 2025/26.

### Chart 37 – Users by Running Cost Smaller Libraries




### Chart 38 – Users by Running Cost Main Libraries

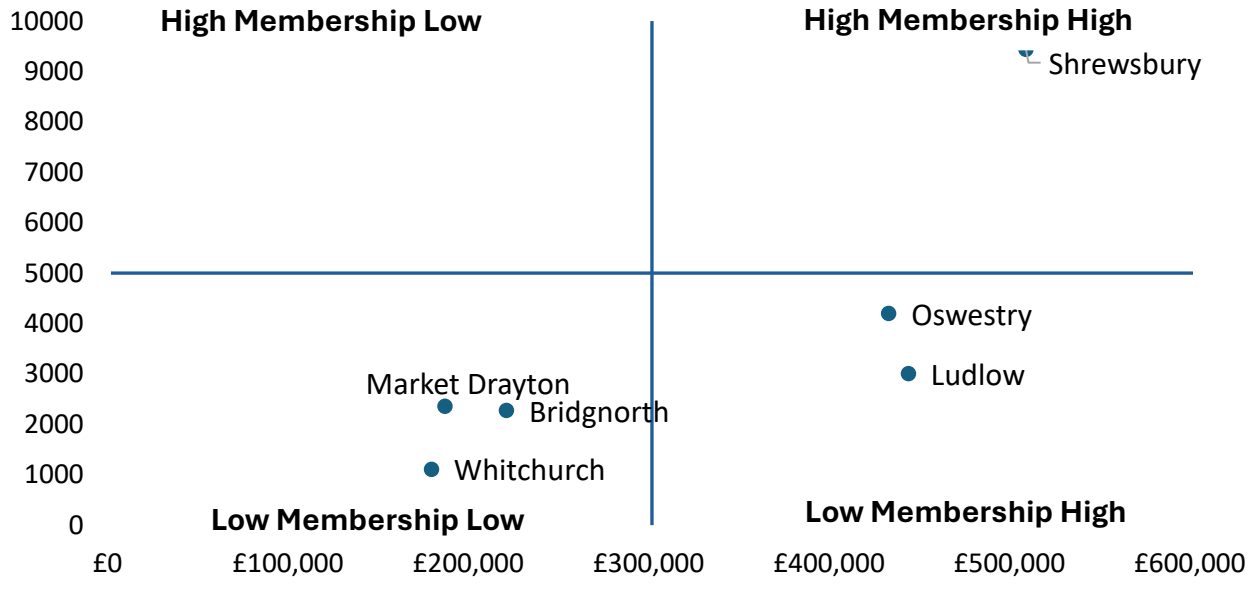


**Table 17: Library Opening Hours 2024/25**

| Library | Opening Hours Per Week | Opening Hours Per Annum |
|---|---|---|
| Albrighton Library | 29 | 1508 |
| Bayston Hill | 22.5 | 1170 |
| Bishops Castle | 20 | 1040 |
| Bridgnorth | 36.5 | 1898 |
| Broseley | 33.5 | 1742 |
| Church Stretton | 30 | 1560 |
| Cleobury Mortimer | 42 | 2184 |
| Craven Arms | 47.5 | 2470 |
| Ellesmere | 20.5 | 1066 |
| Gobowen | 15 | 780 |
| Highley | 57.5 | 2990 |
| The Lantern | 24.5 | 1274 |
| Ludlow | 34.5 | 1794 |
| Market Drayton | 34.5 | 1794 |
| Much Wenlock | 16.5 | 858 |
| Oswestry | 45 | 2340 |
| Pontesbury | 15 | 780 |
| Shifnal | 19.5 | 1014 |
| Shrewsbury | 46 | 2392 |
| Wem | 20.5 | 1066 |
| Whitchurch | 30.5 | 1586 |
| HMP Stoke Heath prison | 60.5 | 3,146 |

## Mobile Libraries

There are three mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council covering 232 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. Map of routes. The number of active borrowers was 1,110 in 2025/26.

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.

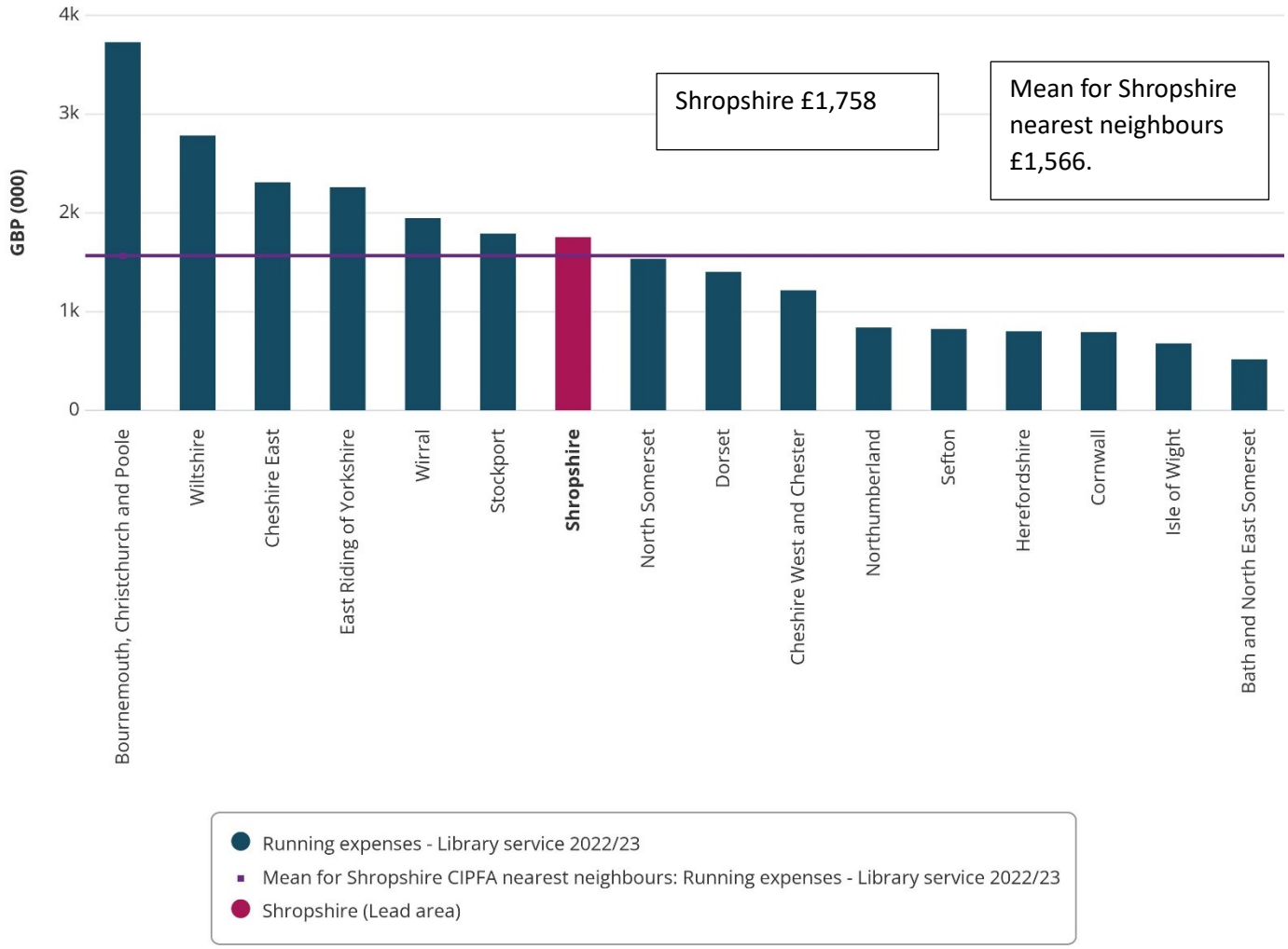
The mobile libraries are open for 46.75 hours per week and 2,431 hours per annum. However additional time and costs are involved in drive times and vehicle maintenance.

**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 | £211,540 | £87.02 | £191 | £10.30 | £4.00 |
| Shropshire Static Library Average | £120,277 | £78.80 | £81.0 | £4.23 | £5.0 |

## 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

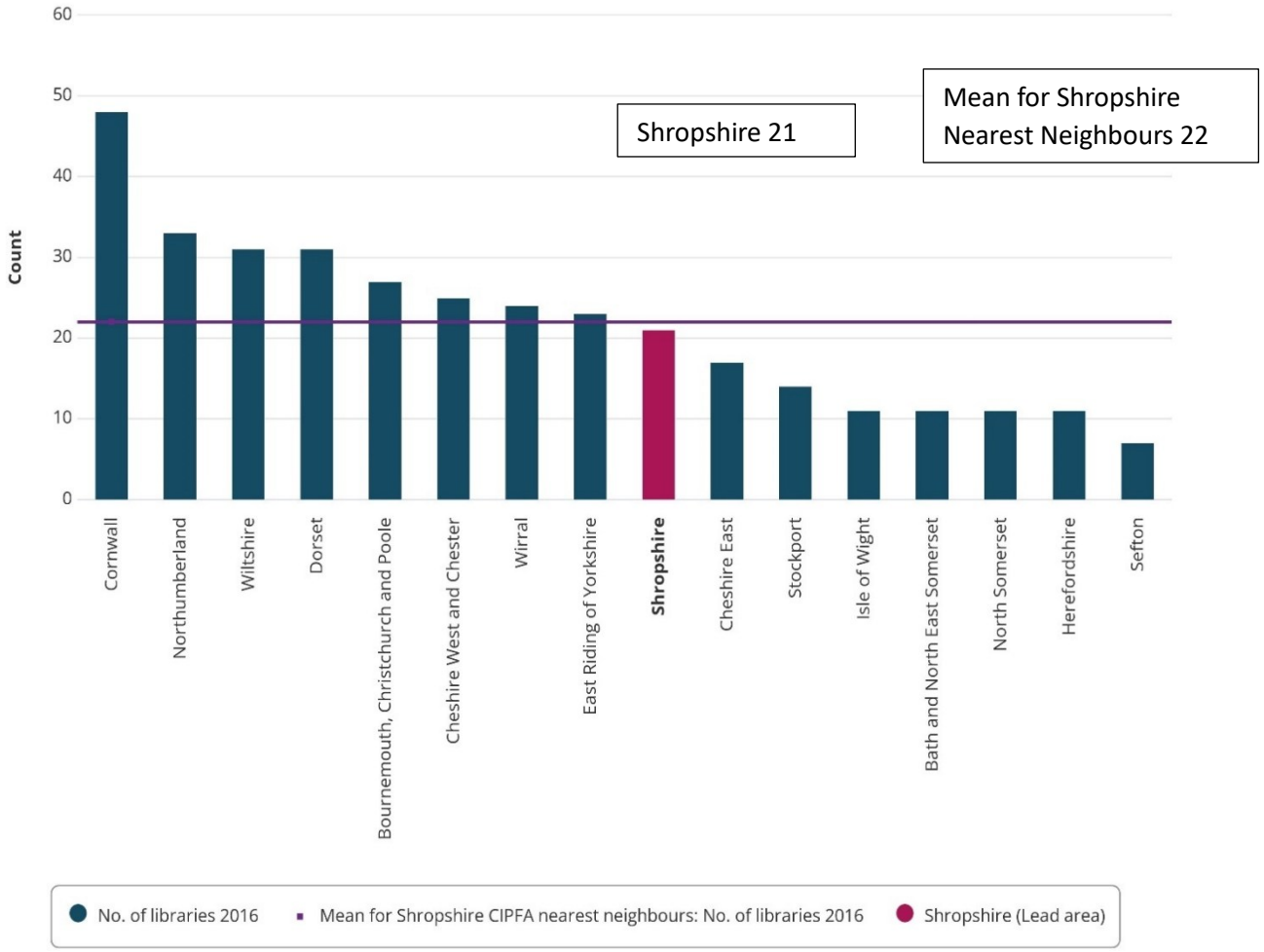
Annual Cost. Running expenses exclude employee costs.

## 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

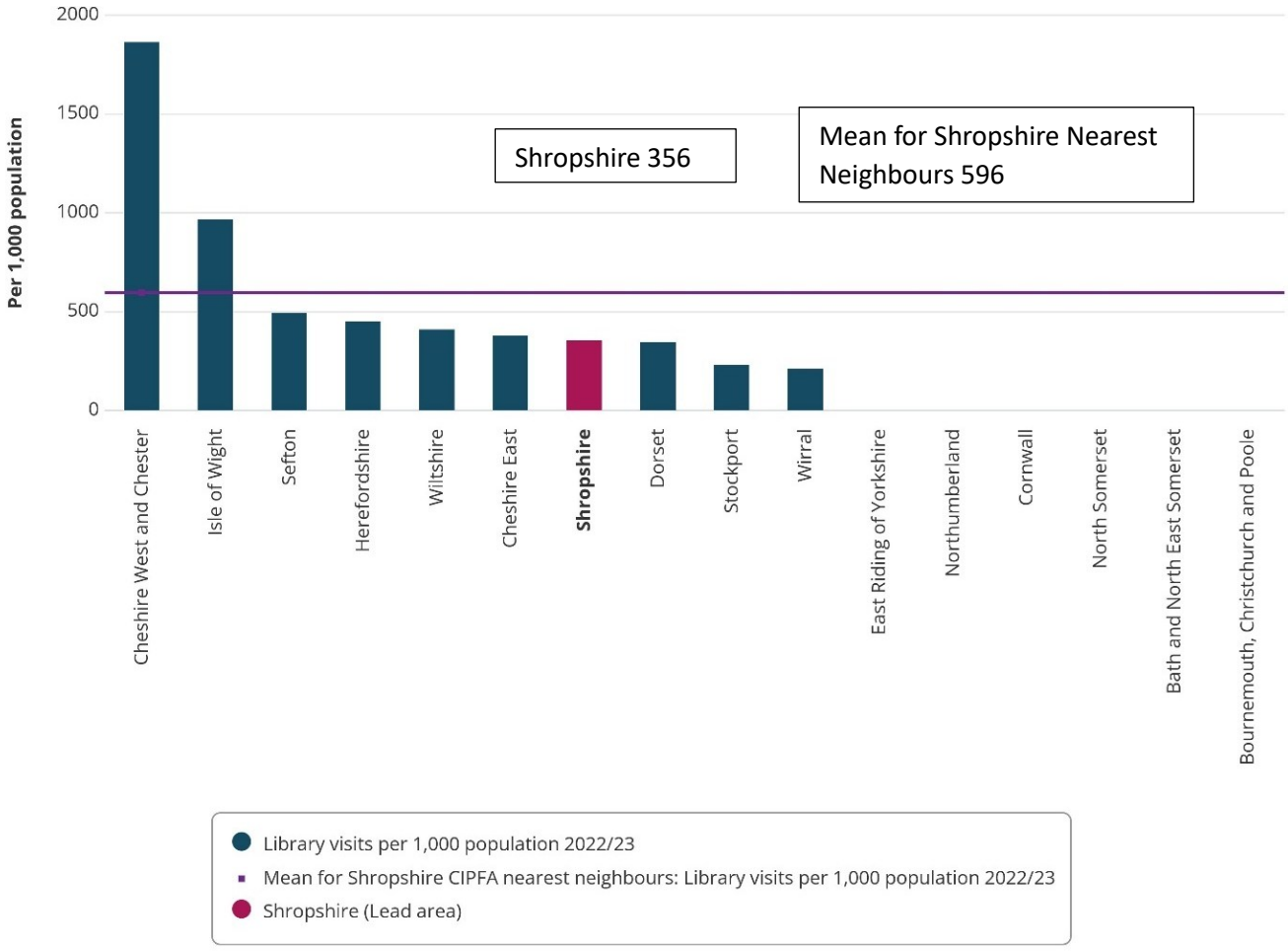



**Source:**
Local collection
Powered by LG Inform

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**

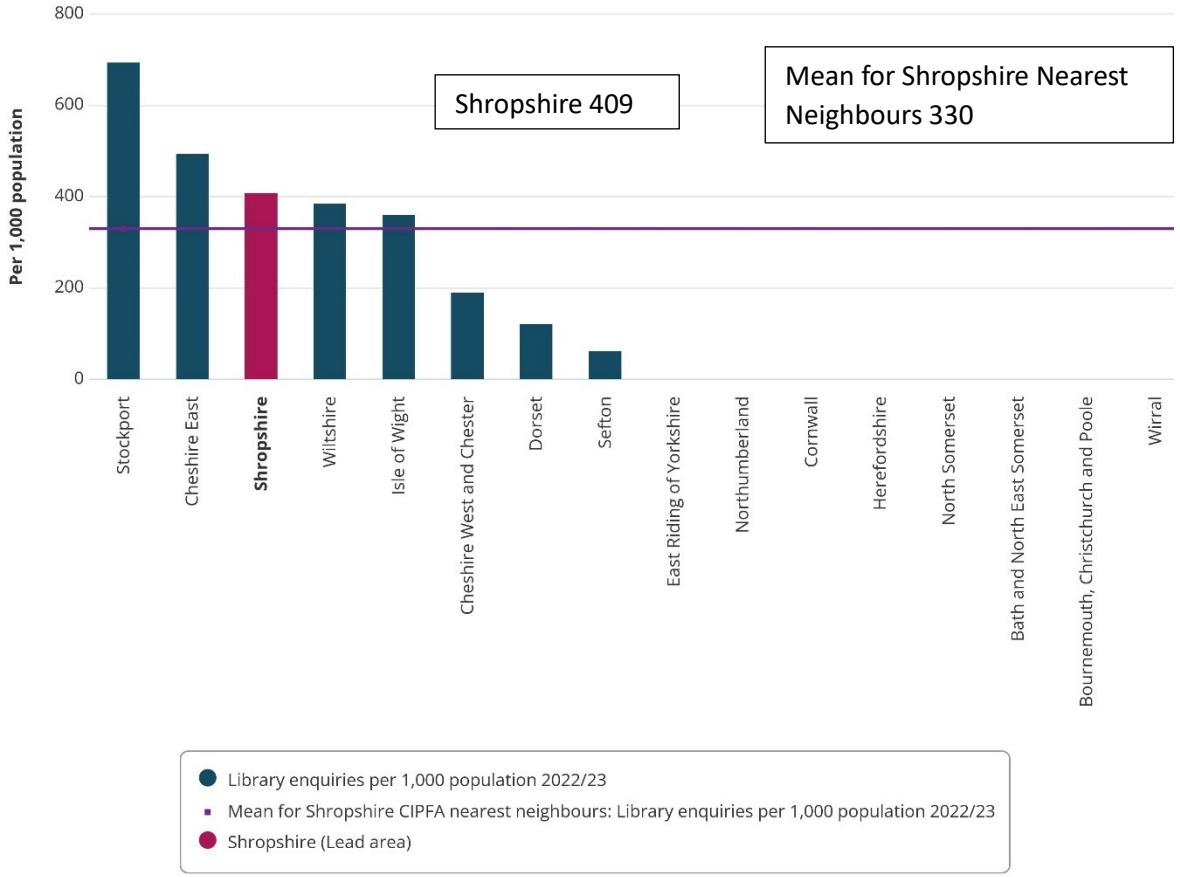



**Source:**
CIPFA Statistical Information Services
Powered by LG Inform

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.

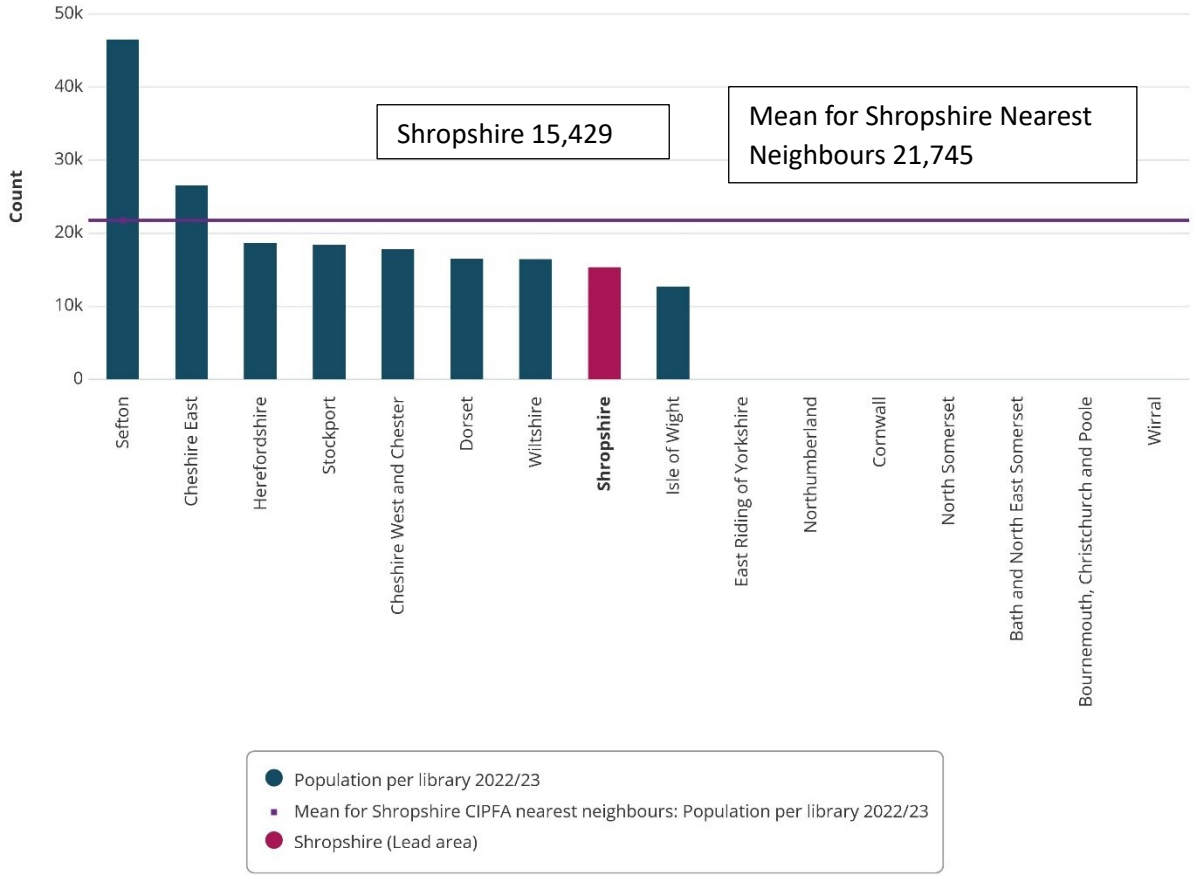
**Chart 42: Number of Enquiries to the Library Service per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours**




**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

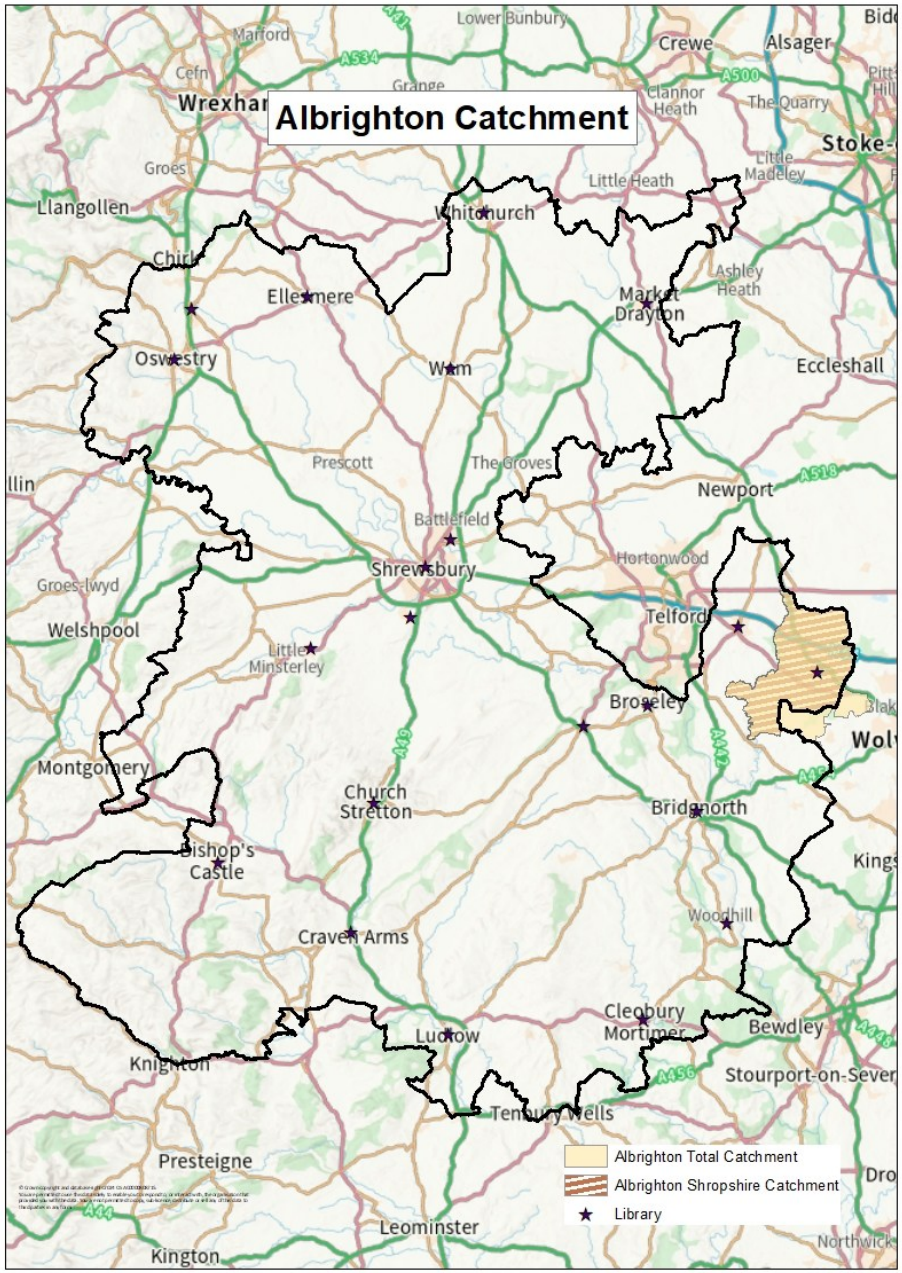
- Albrighton is a large village in the east of Shropshire, approximately two miles from the border with Wolverhampton.
- The library is located in the centre of the village, less than 10 minutes' walk from the railway station, which is on the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton route.
- It is a single storey 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 9,400 comprising 3,196 households.
- 453 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 |

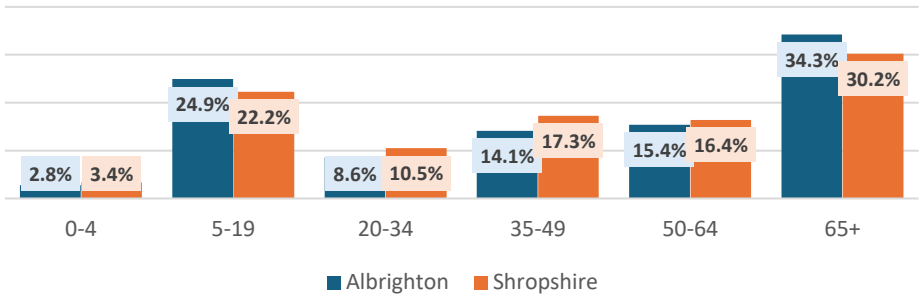
- The library employs 0.8 FTE persons with no volunteer support in 2025/26.



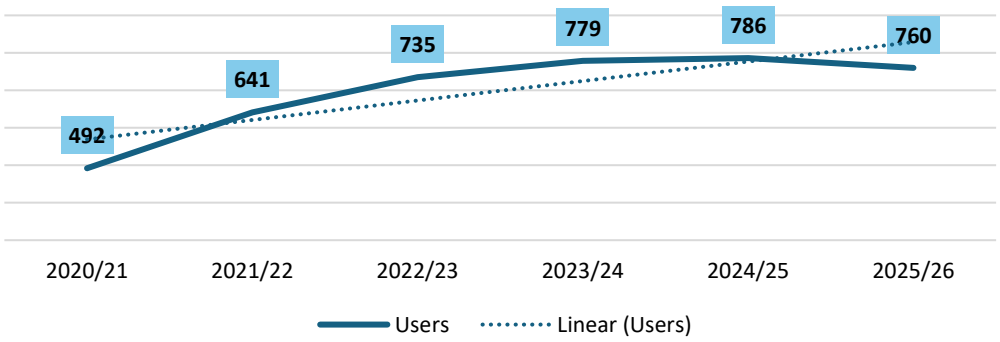
## Library Users

- Albrighton library had 760 active users in the 2025/26 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 (includes all Shropshire libraries, not necessarily Albrighton library).
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly fewer adults aged 20-64and a higher proportion of people aged 65 and above.

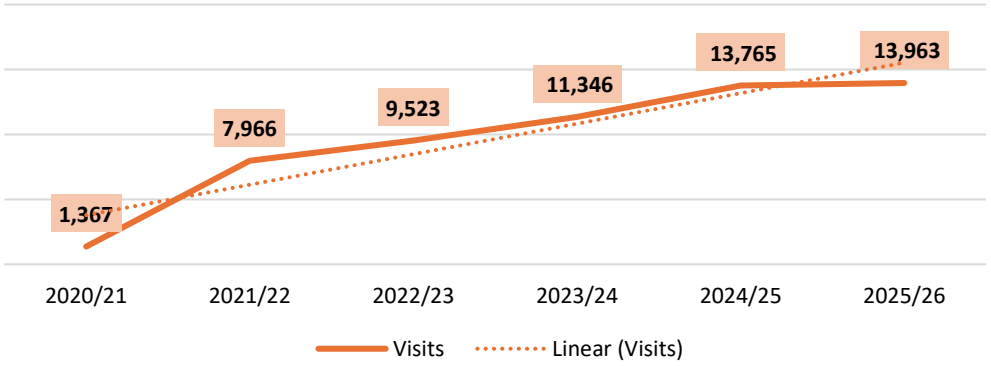
### Breakdown of Albrighton Library Users by Age



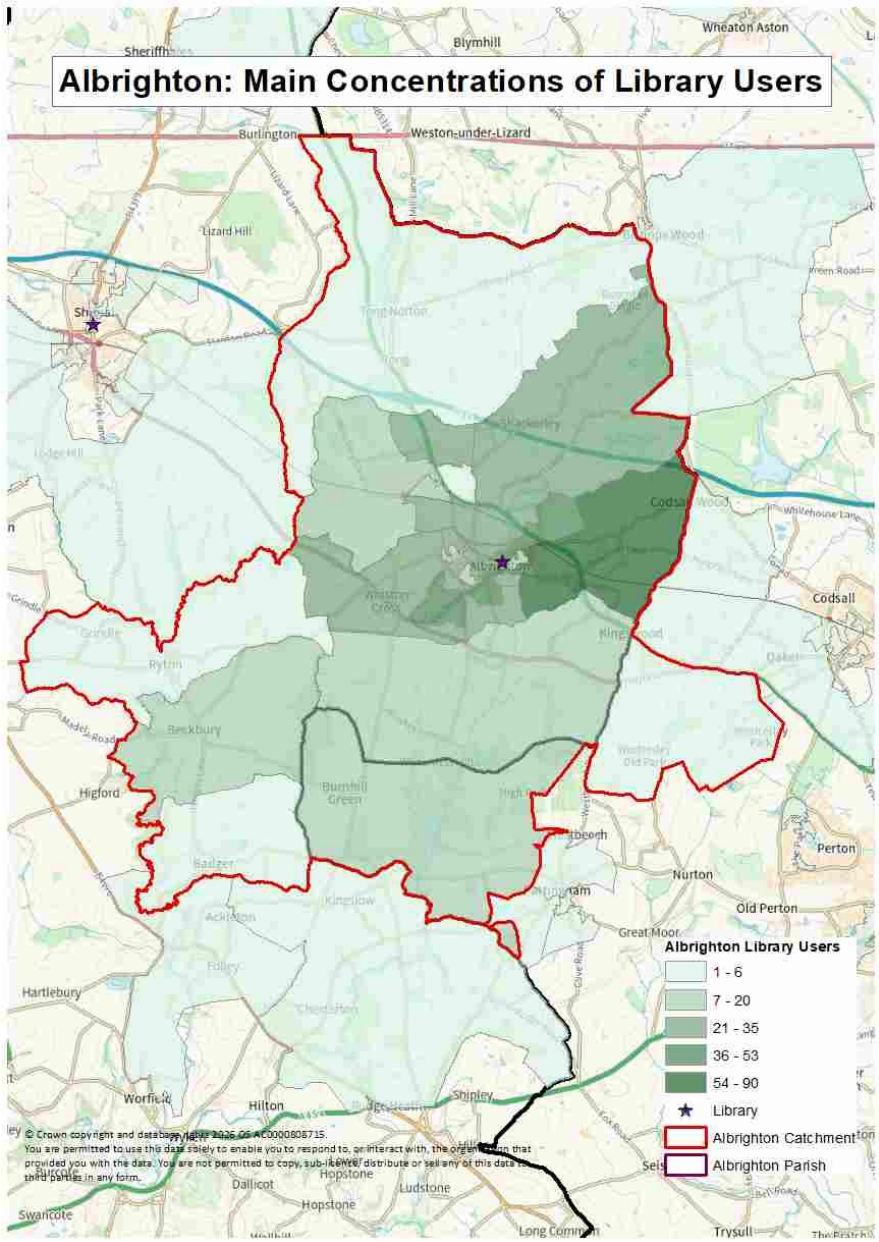

### Albrighton: Number of Active Users




### Albrighton: Number of Visits




- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although growth has tailed off over the last year.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 268 users (+54.5%) which is comparable to the average increase across all 21 Shropshire libraries (+57.7%).
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 13,963, 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 2021/22-2025/26 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 more than 10 times higher in 2025/26 than it had been in 2020/21.
- 10,990 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 14 per active user and under 1 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 12% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library also fell by 7% but computer time used was up by 1%.




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.
- 82% of users live within Albrighton parish (please note parish boundary has changed since 2025).
- 8.1% 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 (25 people).
- Over the six months to May 2026, 94.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Albrighton library were to Albrighton, and these accounted for 93.8% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Albrighton include Shrewsbury, Shifnal, Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth.

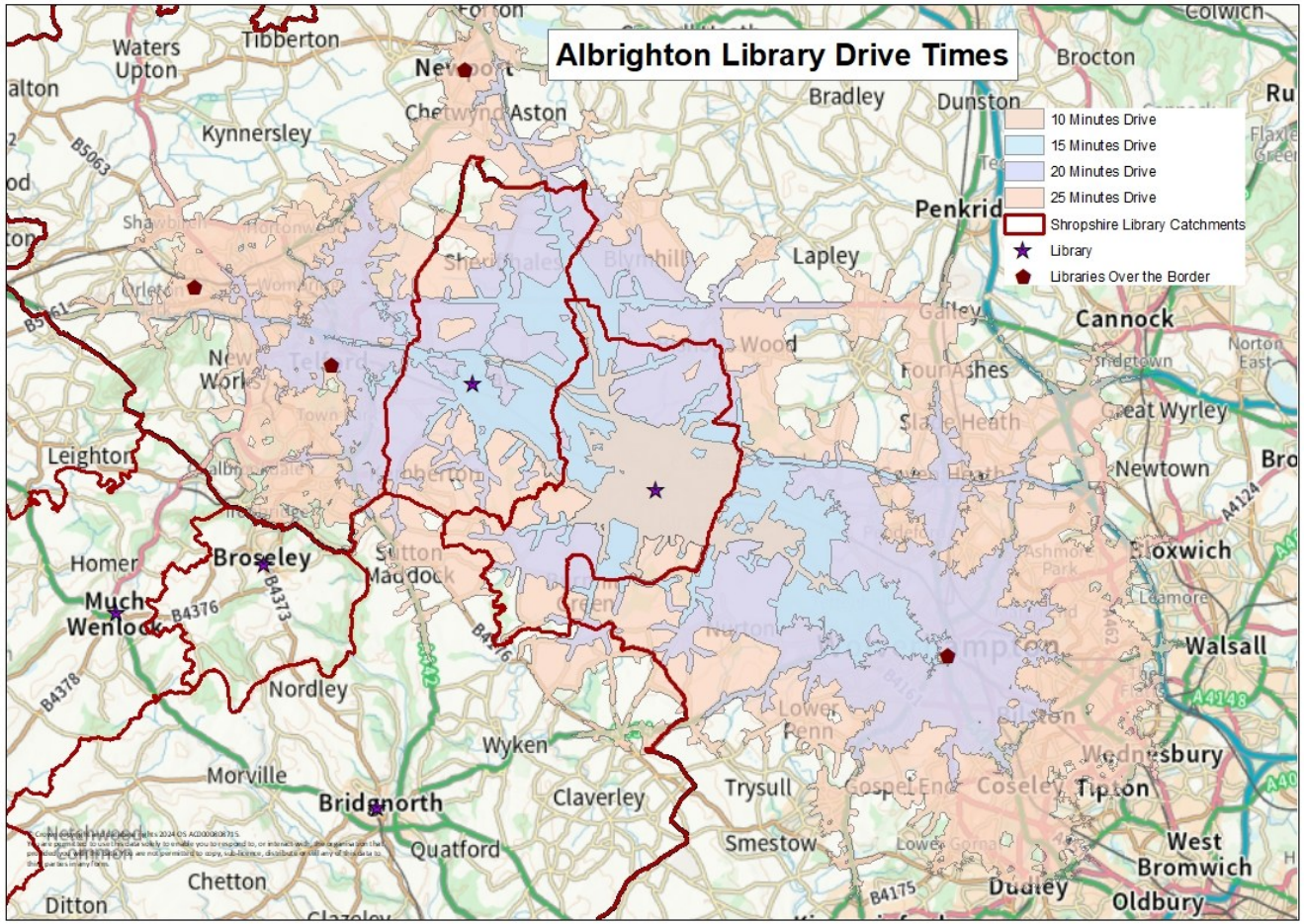
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 66.6% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 79.8% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 84.0% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 89.6% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 95.0% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 97.4% |

## 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 accessibly 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 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 second least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shifnal.
- The annual cost to Shropshire Council is £7,510 (2025/26)
- Albrighton library costs less than average per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £4.98 | £78.80 | 19th |
| **Per Active User** | £9.88 | £81.29 | 20th |
| **Per Visit** | £0.54 | £4.23 | 20th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £0.68 | £5.07 | 20th |

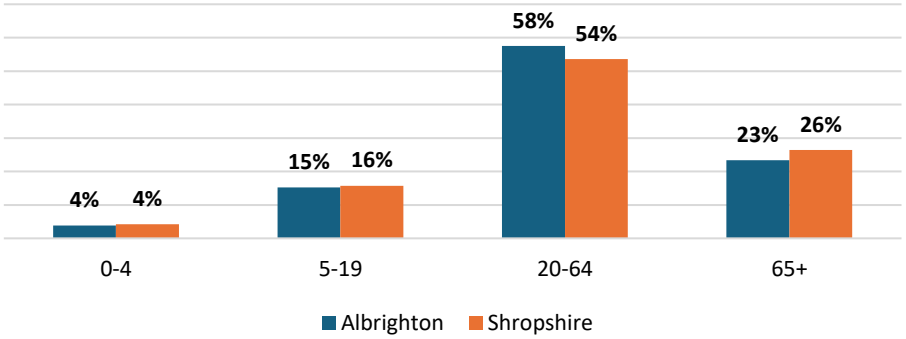
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## 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 8,954 people and a total population of 9,407.
- 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.

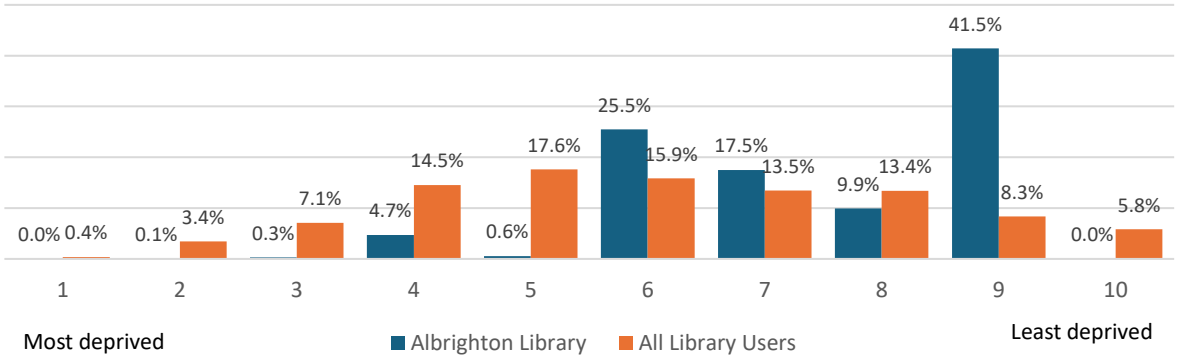
**Age Breakdown of Albrighton Catchment**




*Albrighton catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Albrighton Library Users by IMD Decile**



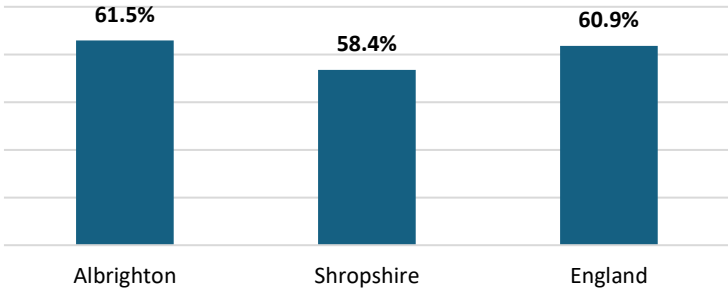

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- 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 41.5% of Albrighton library users live in the least deprived 20% of England compared with 14.1% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- A significant proportion are also resident in decile six and seven (43.0% compared with 19.4% 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.

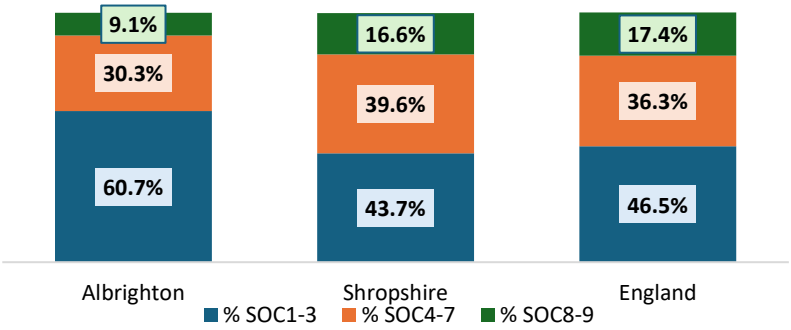
### Albrighton: Economic Activity Rate




## 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 lesiure occupations (SOC 4-7) or in elementary occupations and process and plant operatives (SOC 8-9).

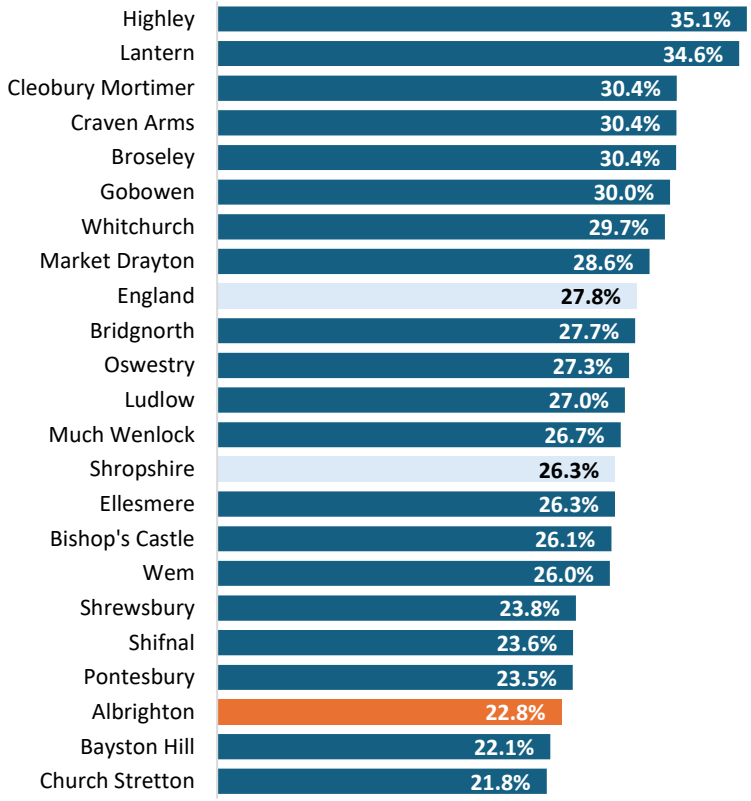
### Albrighton: Occupation Types




## Qualifications

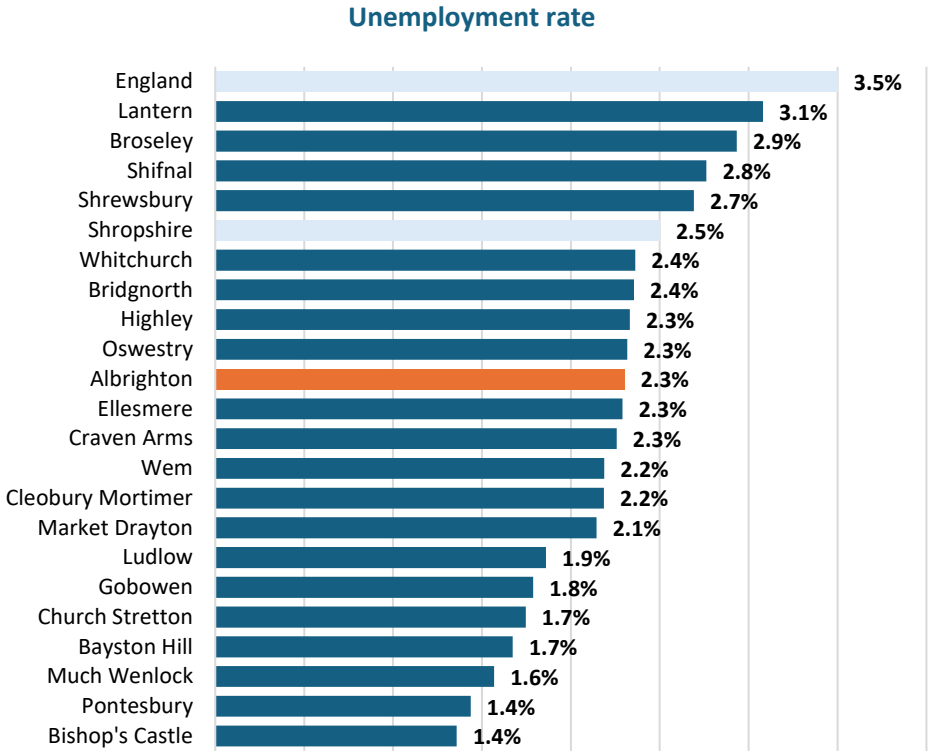
- The Albrighton population is amongst the best qualified in Shropshire, with just 22.8% with low (NVQ level 1) or no qualifications. This is lower than the Shropshire and national averages (26.3% and 27.8% respectively) and corresponds with the high proportion of people employed in SOC 1-3 occupations.

### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications



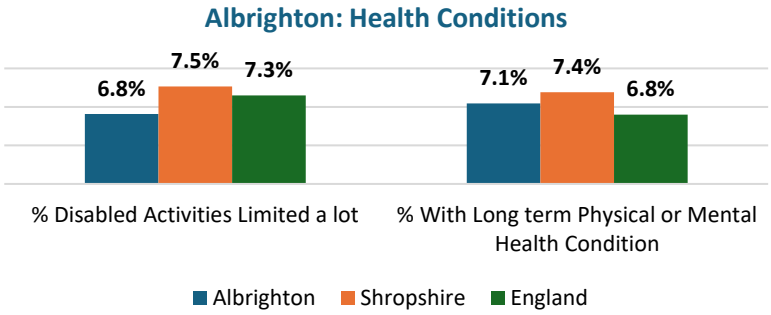
## Unemployment

- 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.



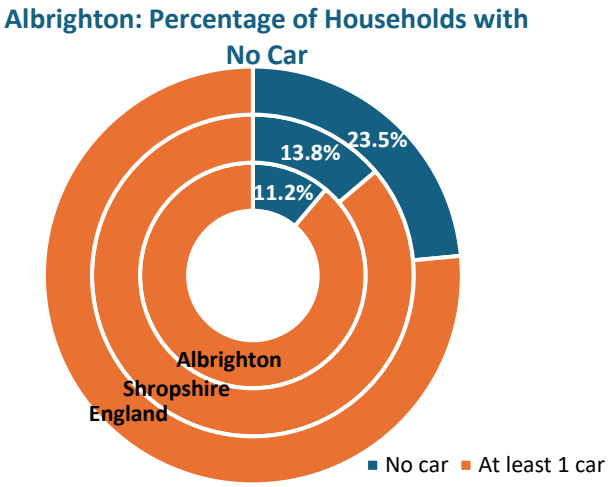

## Health Conditions

- 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%).




## Car Ownership

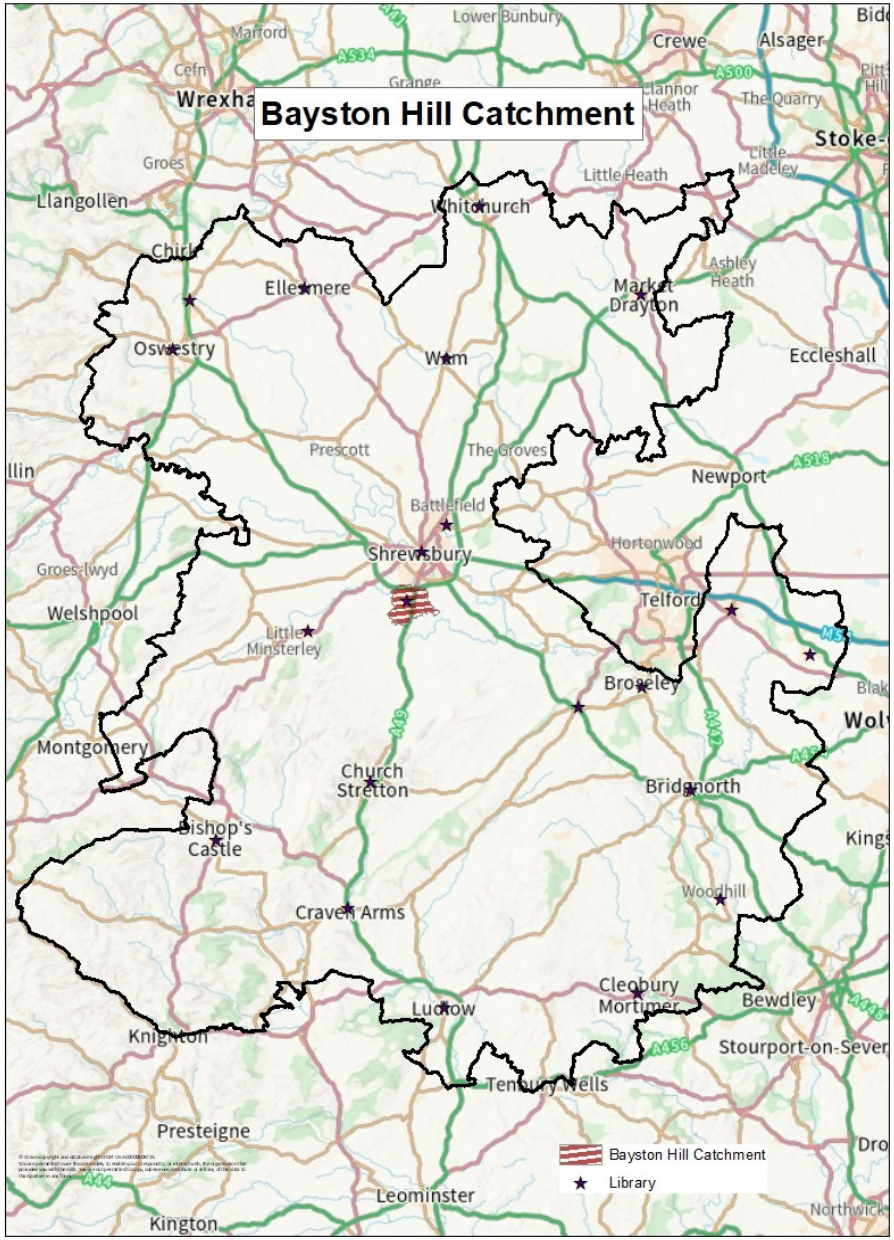
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Albrighton households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



# Bayston Hill Library Profile

## Background

- Bayston Hill is a large village in the centre of Shropshire, approximately three miles south of Shrewsbury town centre.
- The library is located in the centre of the village and is within close proximity of the A49 which gives access to Shrewsbury to the north and Church Stretton to the south.
- The library building is owned by Shropshire Council and library services are likewise operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 864 hectares – about 0.3% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the smallest in Shropshire. The catchment area is identical to Bayston Hill parish council.
- The total population within the Bayston Hill library catchment area is 5,147 comprising 2,208 households.
- The total catchment is within Shropshire and is entirely subsumed within the Shrewsbury catchment.




## Opening Hours

The library is open 22.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

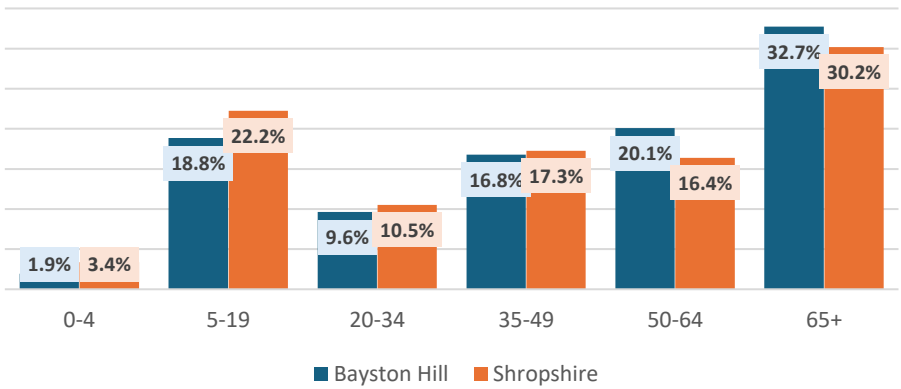
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | Closed | 0 |
| Tuesday | 10.00am-17.00pm | 7 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 10.00am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Friday | 10.00am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library employs 1.13 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from two volunteer contributing a total of 162 volunteer hours.

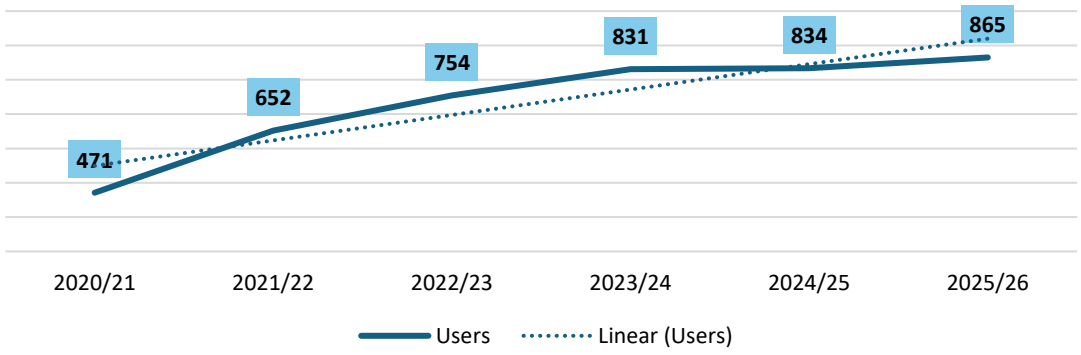
## Library Users

- Bayston Hill library had 865 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.7% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.2% of the Bayston Hill catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes usage of all Shropshire libraries, not just Bayston Hill.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (64%) (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly fewer children and young people and a higher proportion of people aged 50 and above.

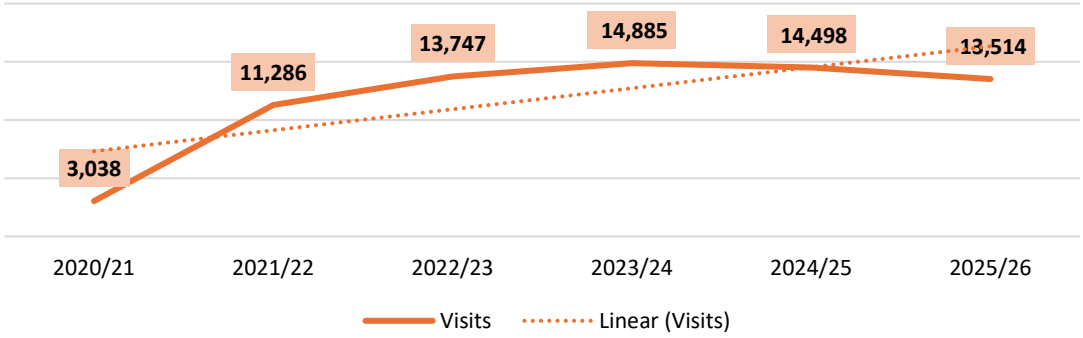
### Breakdown of Bayston Hill Library Users by Age



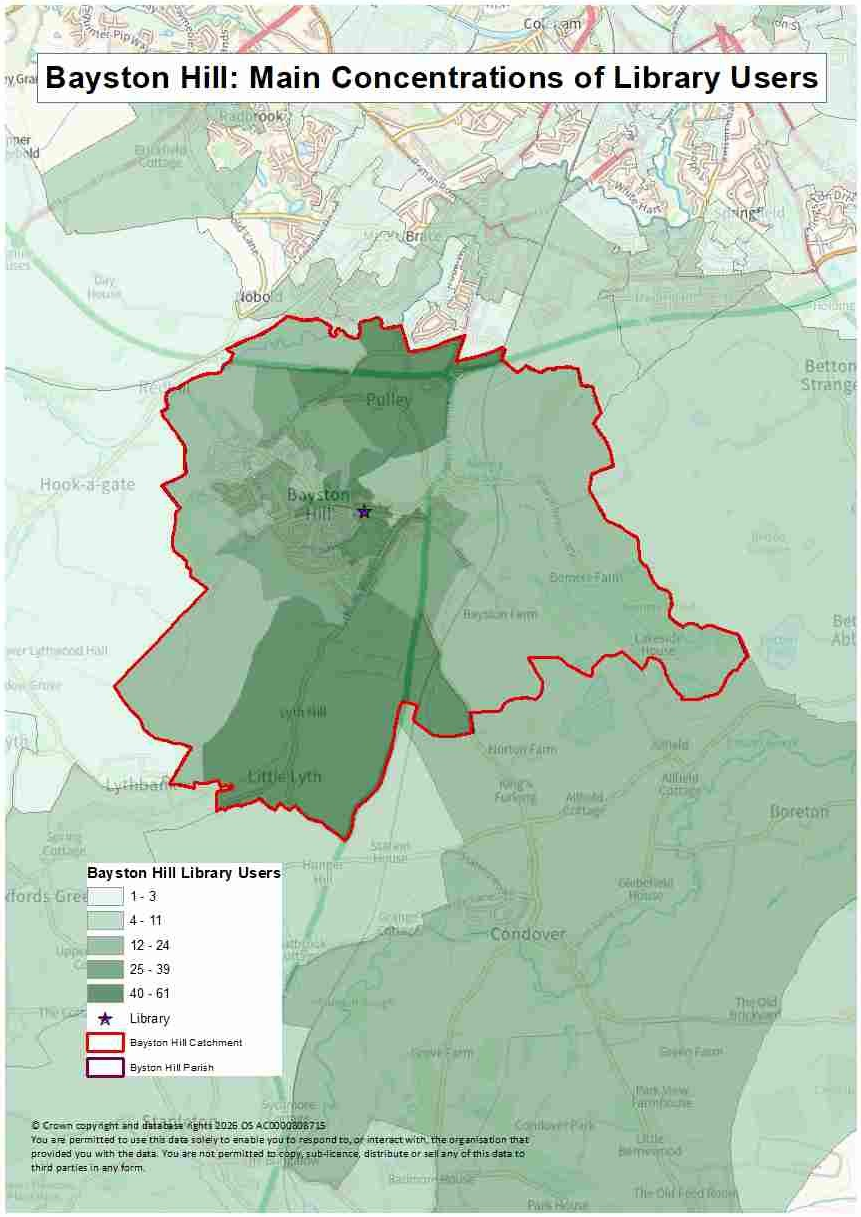

### Bayston Hill: Number of Active Users




### Bayston Hill: Number of Visits




- 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 between 2024/25 and 2025/26 was much more muted.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 394 users (+83.7%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 13,514, 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 and although recovery has occurred in the 2021/22-2025/26 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 increased threefold between 2020/21 and 2025/26.
- 23,985 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 28 per active user and just over 1.8 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 17%.
- Computer time used was down by 3%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- Under two-thirds (62.0%) of all Bayston Hill library users live within the main catchment area. This is amongst the lowest proportions of all Shropshire libraries.
- 14.1% 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 8% to more than 20%. **This includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.**
- Of the 38.0% of Bayston Hill library users that do not live in the catchment, significant numbers live within the Shrewsbury catchment. Around 33% 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 1.8% of all Shrewsbury active users).
- Over the six months to May 2026, 87.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bayston Hill library were to Bayston Hill, and these accounted for 90.0% 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

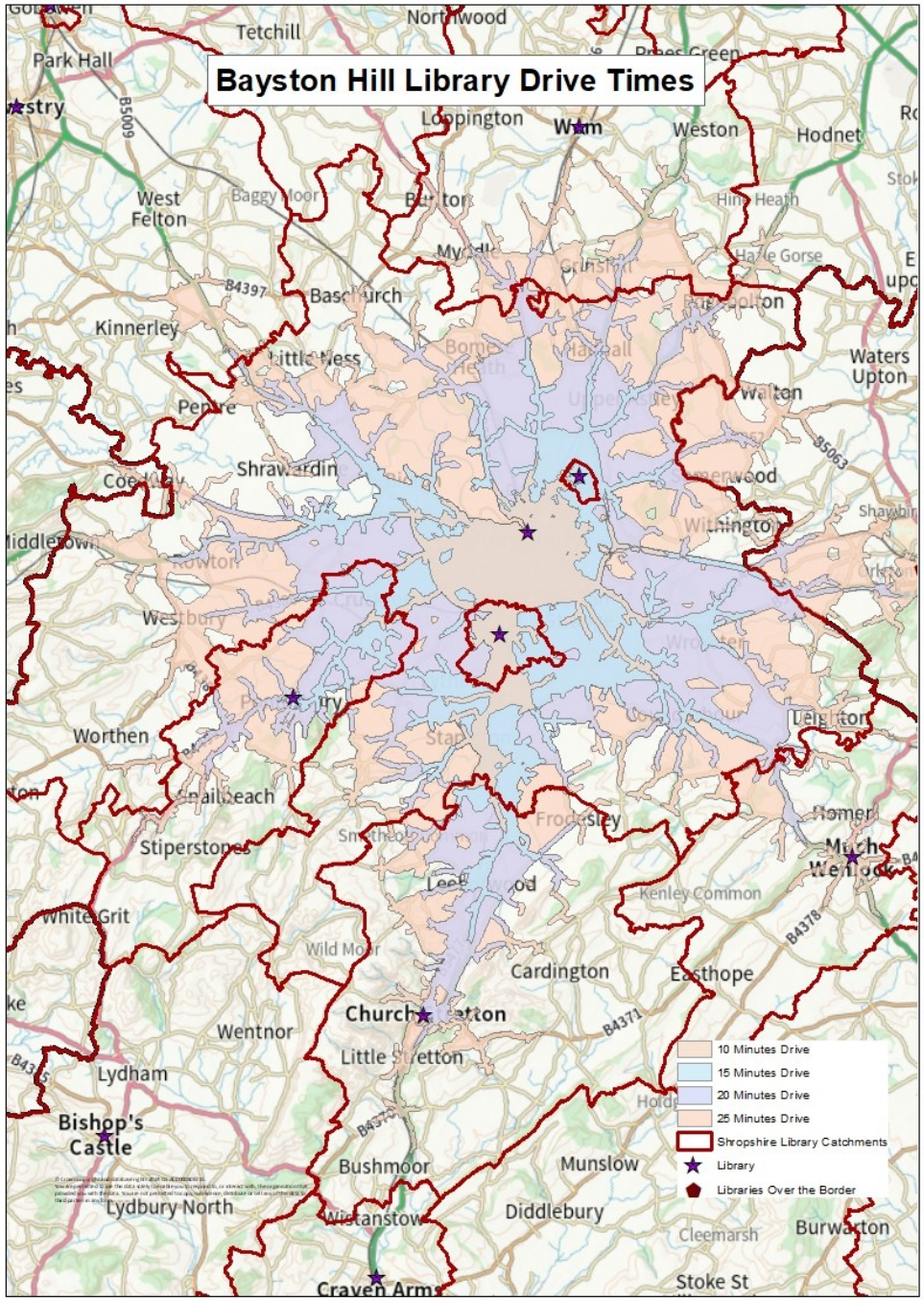
- The following table shows the proportion of active Bayston Hill library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 57.7% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 63.0% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 87.1% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 93.3% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 96.1% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 97.1% |

## 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 eleventh most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the fifth most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual running costs are £52,490 (2025/26)
- 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** | £44.86 | £78.80 | 11th |
| **Per Active User** | £60.68 | £81.29 | 15th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.88 | £4.23 | 9th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £2.19 | £5.07 | 17th |

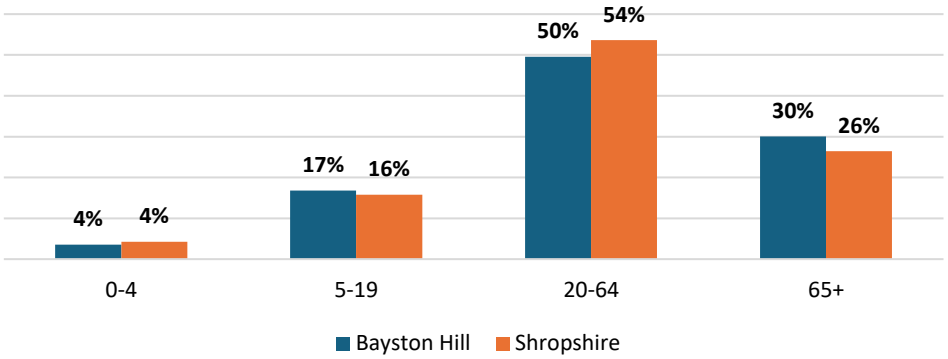
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bayston Hill Catchment Area

### Population

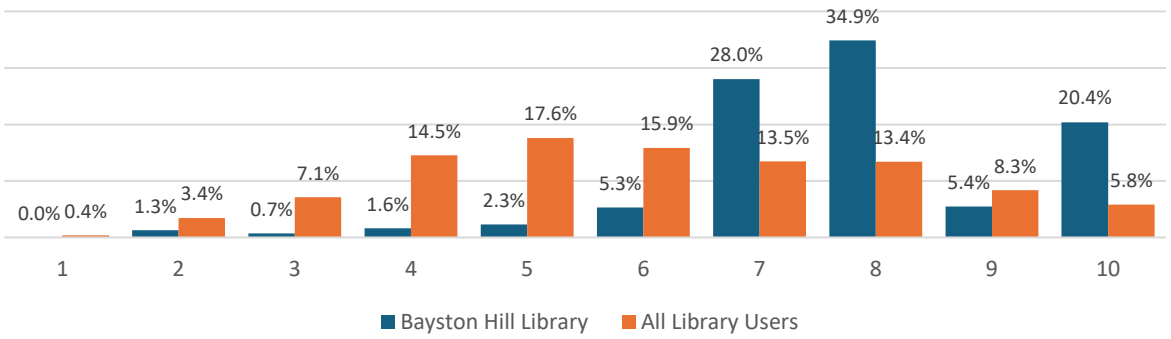
- Bayston Hill library catchment is the 15th largest in terms of population size, accommodating a total population of 5,147.
- The age breakdown of the population is similar to the Shropshire breakdown, although there is a lower representation of adults of working age and slightly more aged 65+.
- There 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*

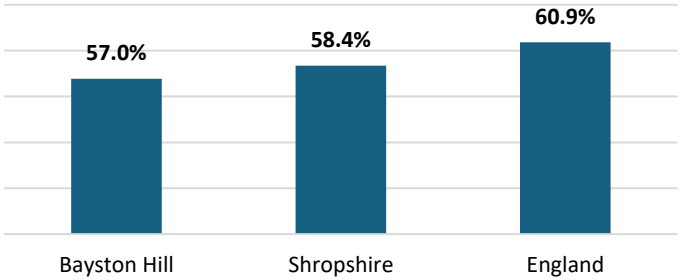
Most deprived

- 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 60% of Bayston Hill library users live in the least deprived 30% of England compared with 27.5% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- Just 5.3% 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.

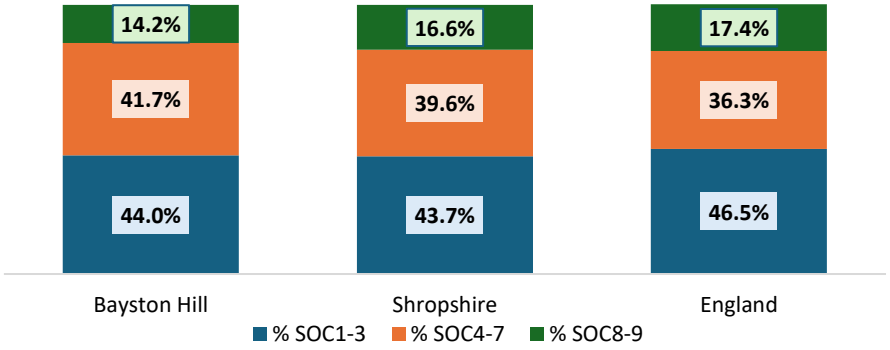
### Bayston Hill: Economic Activity Rate



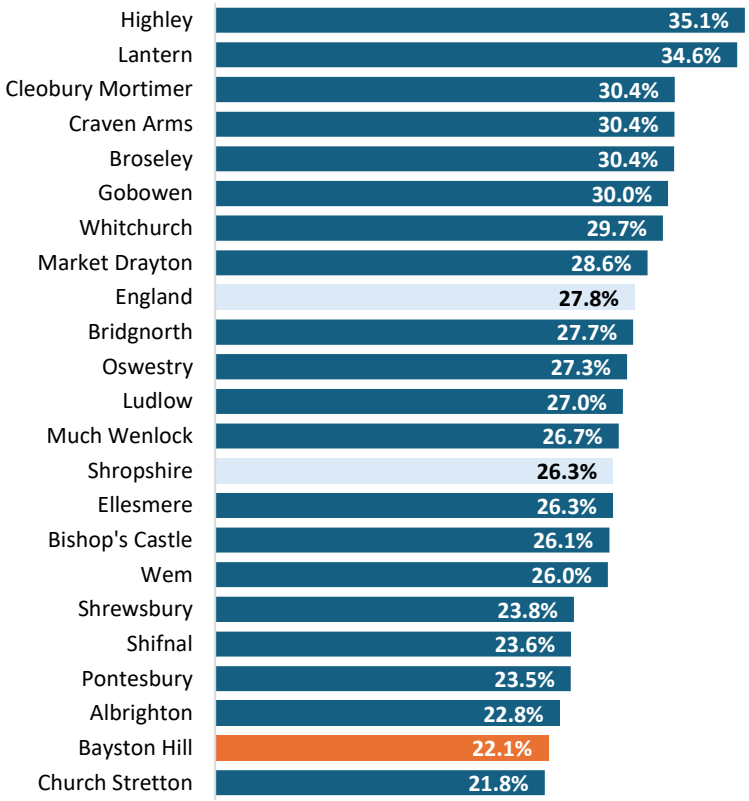

## Employment

- 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%. Slighly 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




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications

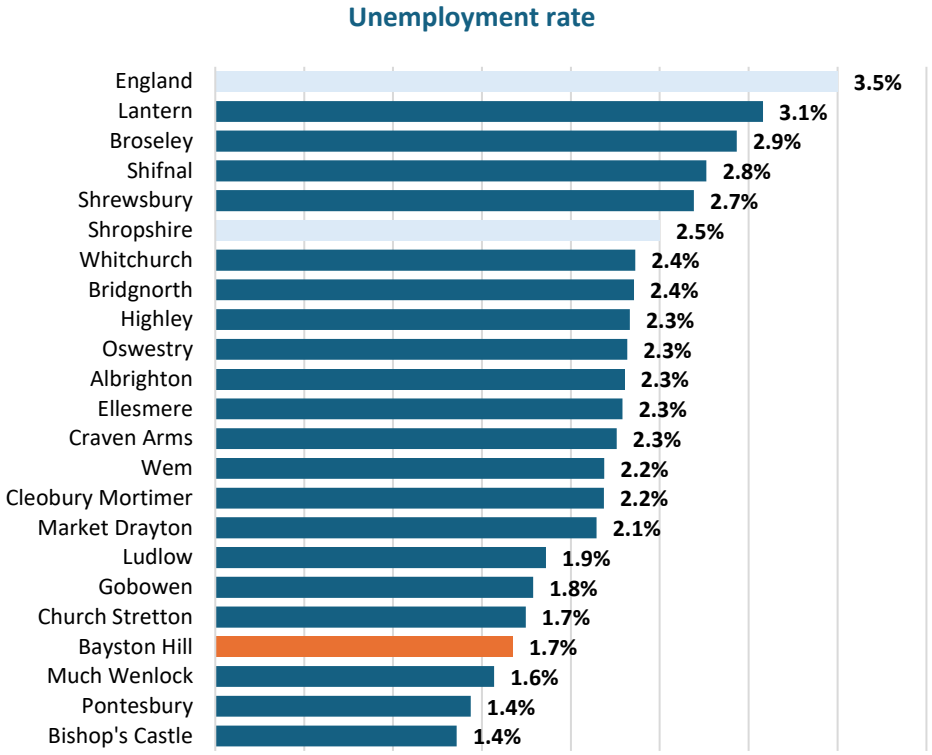



## Qualifications

- 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.

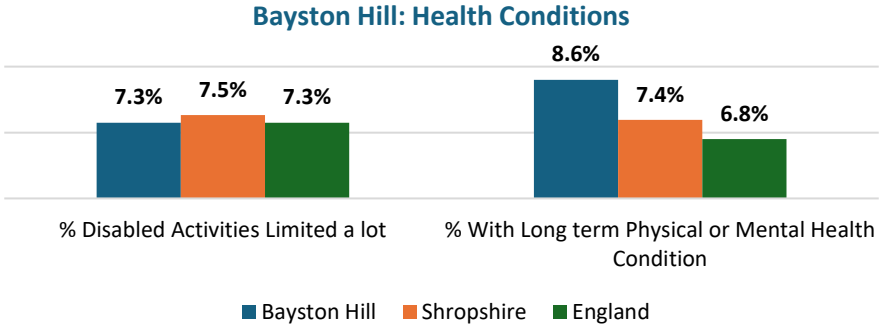
## Unemployment

- 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.



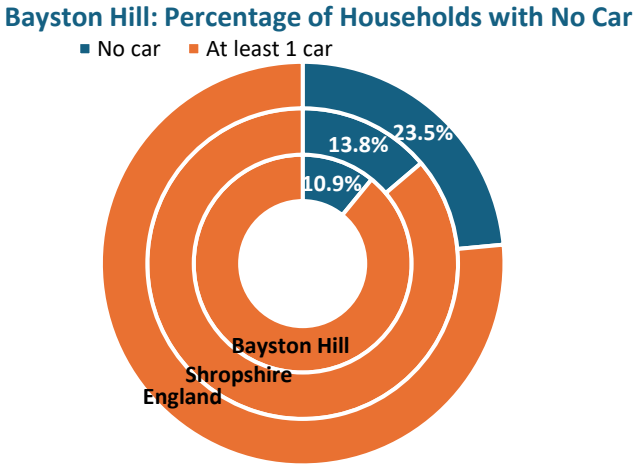

## Health Conditions

- 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%).




## Car Ownership

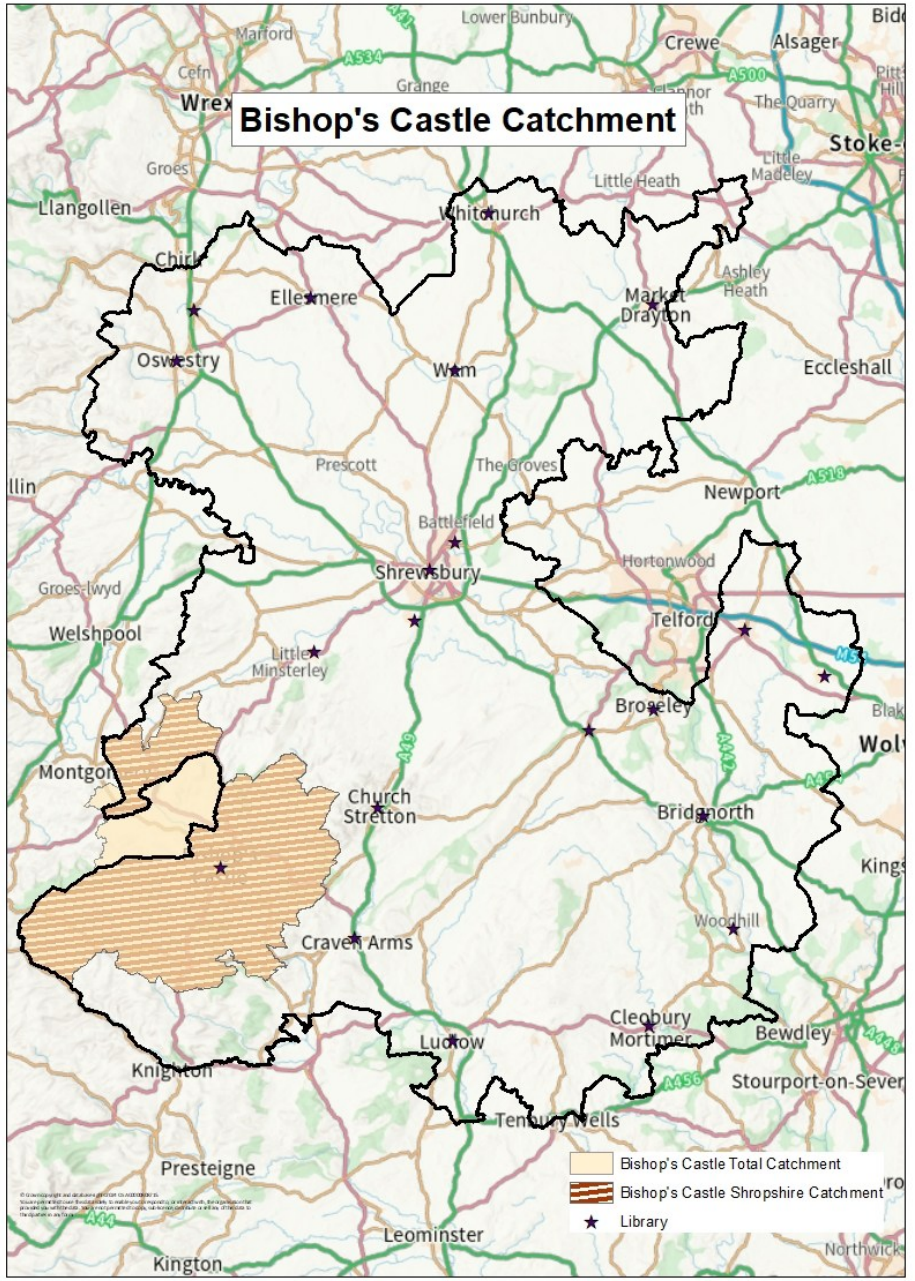
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bayston Hill households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



# 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 7,704 comprising 3,420 households. The Shropshire population (5,853 people) accounts for 76.0% 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:

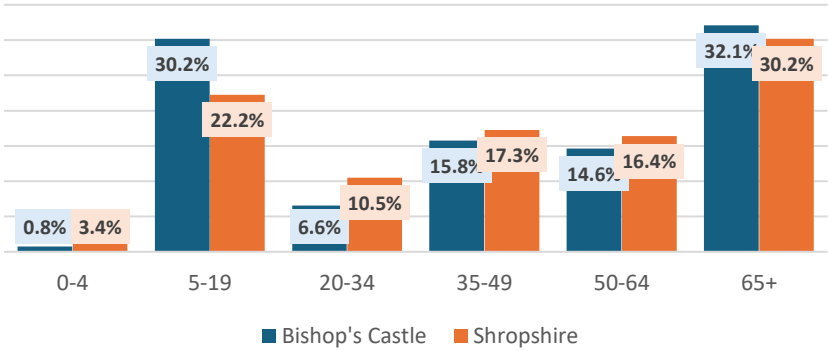
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 10.00am-13.00pm | 3 |
| Tuesday | 10.00am-17.00pm | 7 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | Closed | 0 |
| Friday | 10.00am-17.00pm | 7 |
| Saturday | 10.00am-13.00pm | 3 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library employs 1 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 11 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 173 volunteer hours.

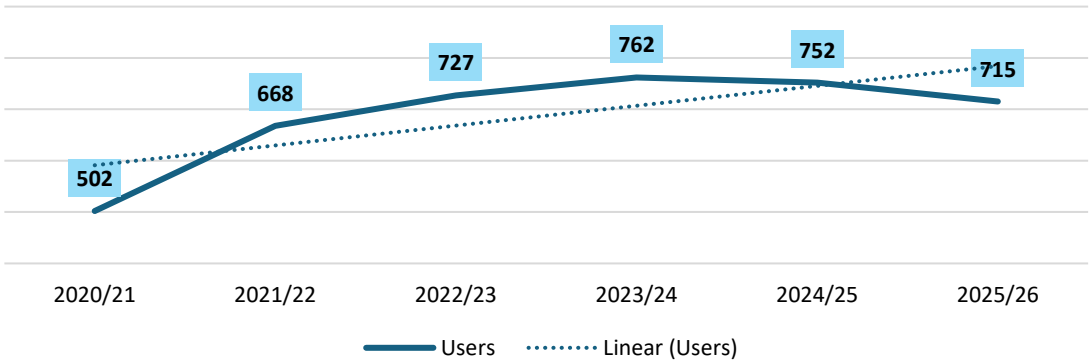
## Library Users

- Bishop's Castle library had 715 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.2% of the Bishop's Castle catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average (including all Shropshire libraries not just Bishop's Castle).
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) 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.

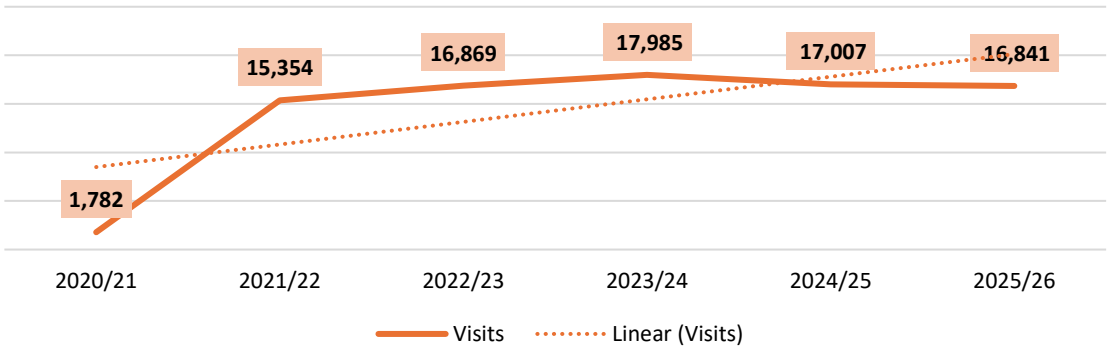
### Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Library Users by Age



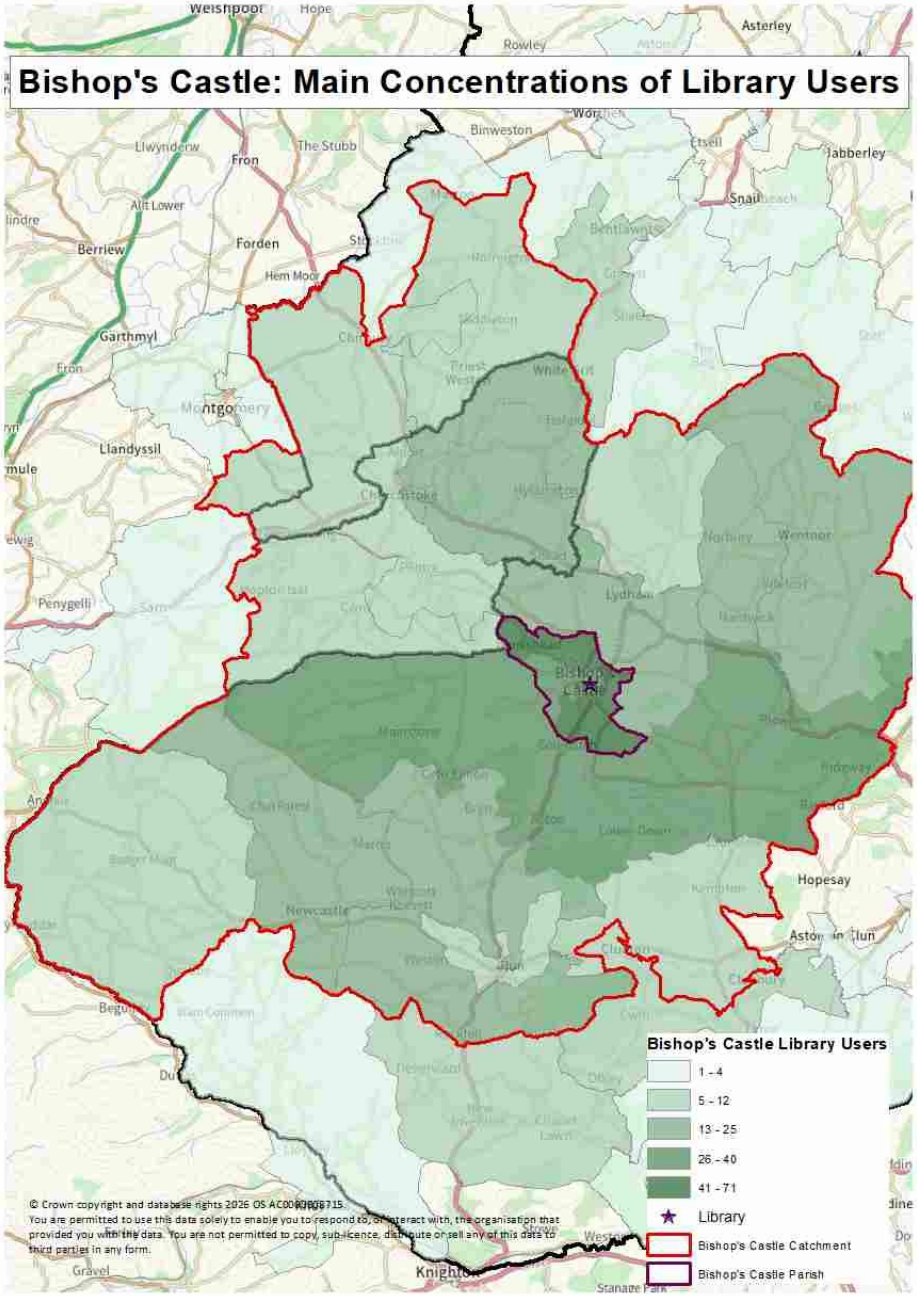

### Bishop's Castle: Number of Active Users




### Bishop's Castle: Number of Visits




- 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 increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 213 users (+42.4%). This compares with an average rise in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 16,841, 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, at almost once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels.
- The overall number of visits was more than nine times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 15,831 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 22 per active user and about 1 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 10% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 15%.
- Computer time was, however, up by 5%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 88.3% of all Bishop's Castle library users live within the main catchment area.
- 41.3% live within Bishop's Castle Parish.
- 10.2% 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 3% to over a fifth.
- Of the 11.7% 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 May 2026, 87.8% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bishop's Castle library were to Bishop's Castle, and these accounted for 87.9% 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.

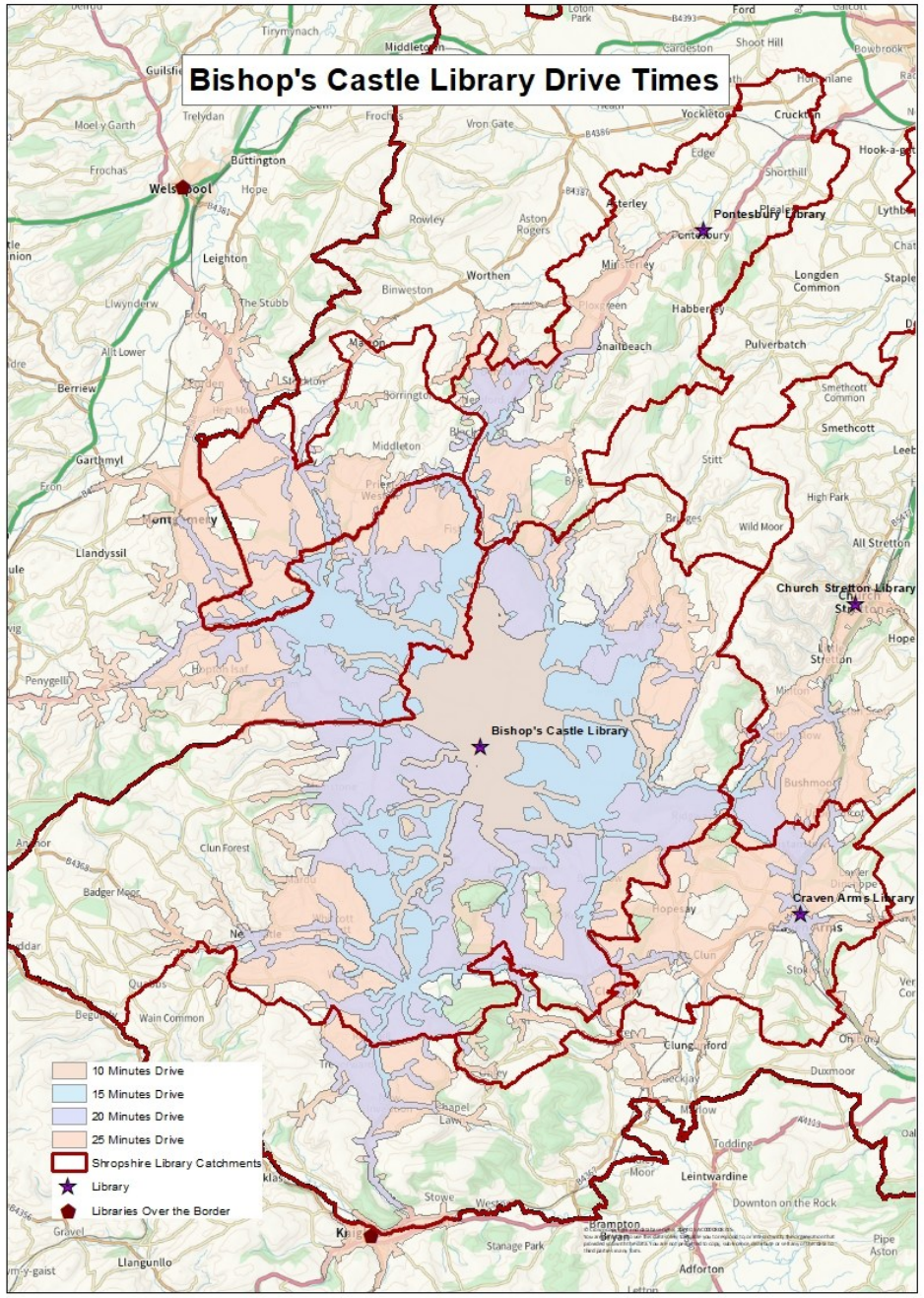
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 38.5% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 42.4% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 55.2% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 72.4% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 86.7% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 93.6% |

## 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 twelfth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the sixth most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual costs to the Council are £45.150 (2025/26)
- 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** | £43.42 | £78.80 | 12th |
| **Per Active User** | £63.15 | £81.29 | 14th |
| **Per Visit** | £2.68 | £4.23 | 16th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £2.85 | £5.07 | 14th |

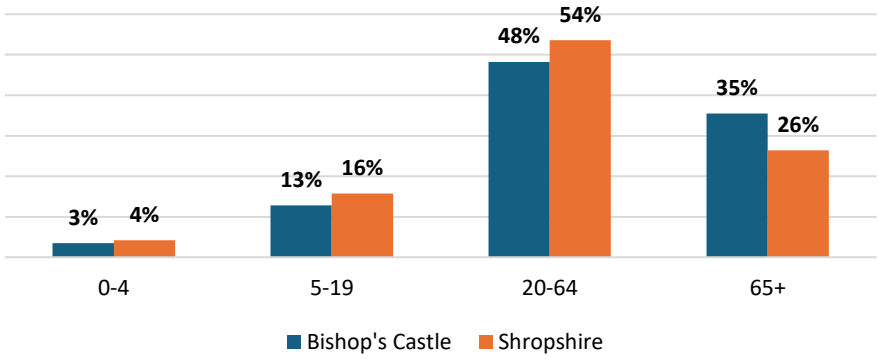
*Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= least expensive*

## 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 7,704 and a Shropshire population of 5,853.
- 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.

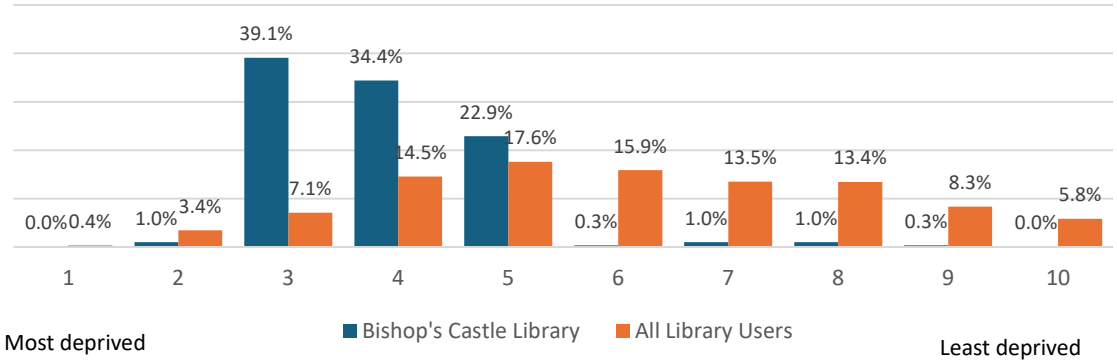
**Age Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Catchment**




*Bishop's Castle catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Library Users by IMD Decile**



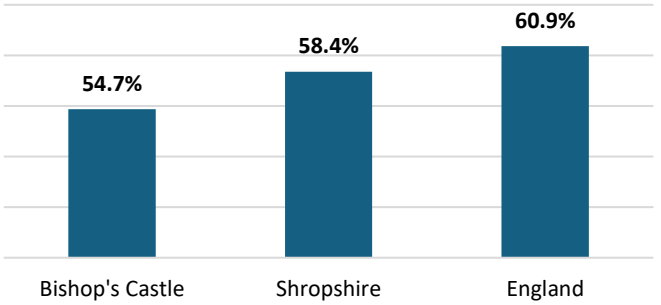

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Bishop's Castle library is in one of the more deprived locations in Shropshire (decile 3 according to IMD 2025), 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 43% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- Most of these people live in deciles three, four and five rather than in the most deprived 20% of the country.

## 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.

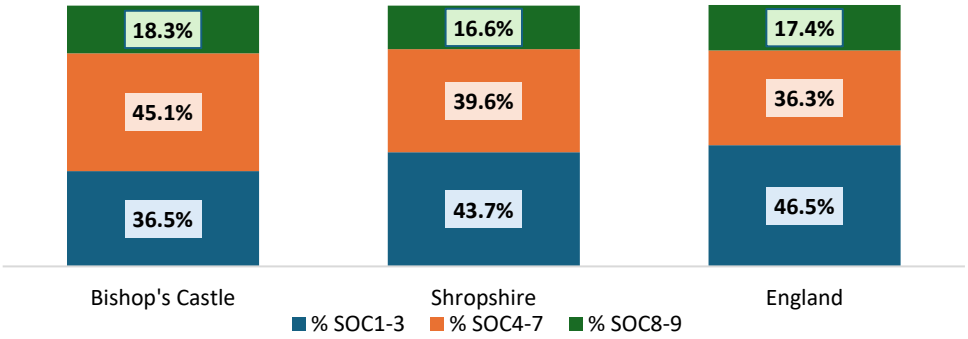
### Bishop's Castle: Economic Activity Rate




## 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%. Slighly 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).

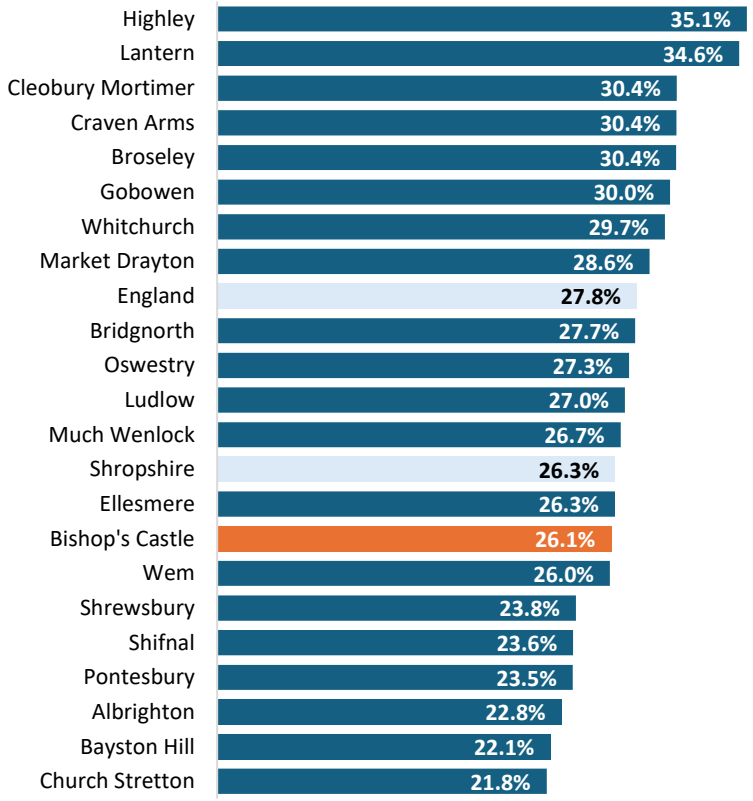
### Bishop's Castle: Occupation Types




## Qualifications

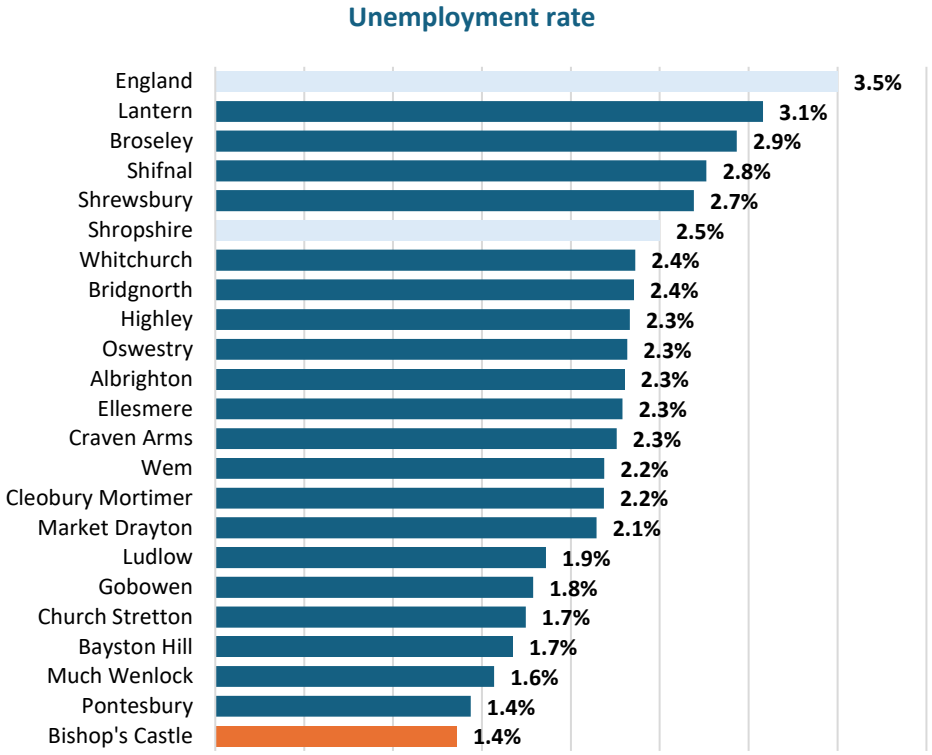
- A similar proportion of the Bishop's Castle population have no or low qualifications to the Shropshire average at 26.1%. This is lower than the national average of 27.8%

### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications



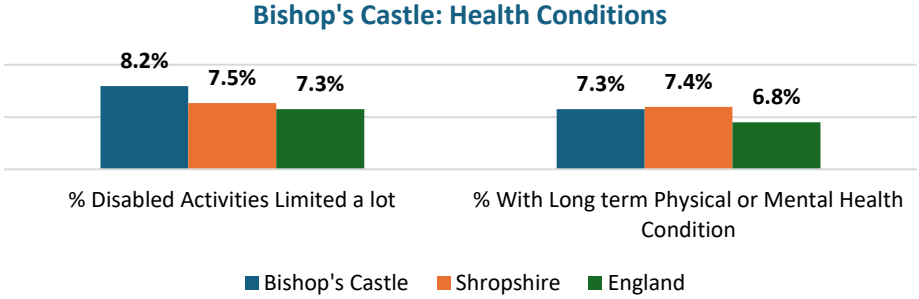
## Unemployment

- 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.



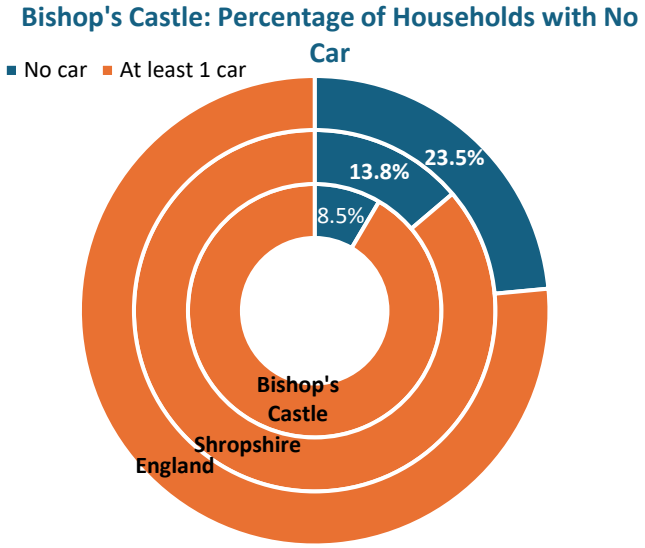

## Health Conditions

- 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%).




## 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%.



# Bridgnorth Library Profile

## Background

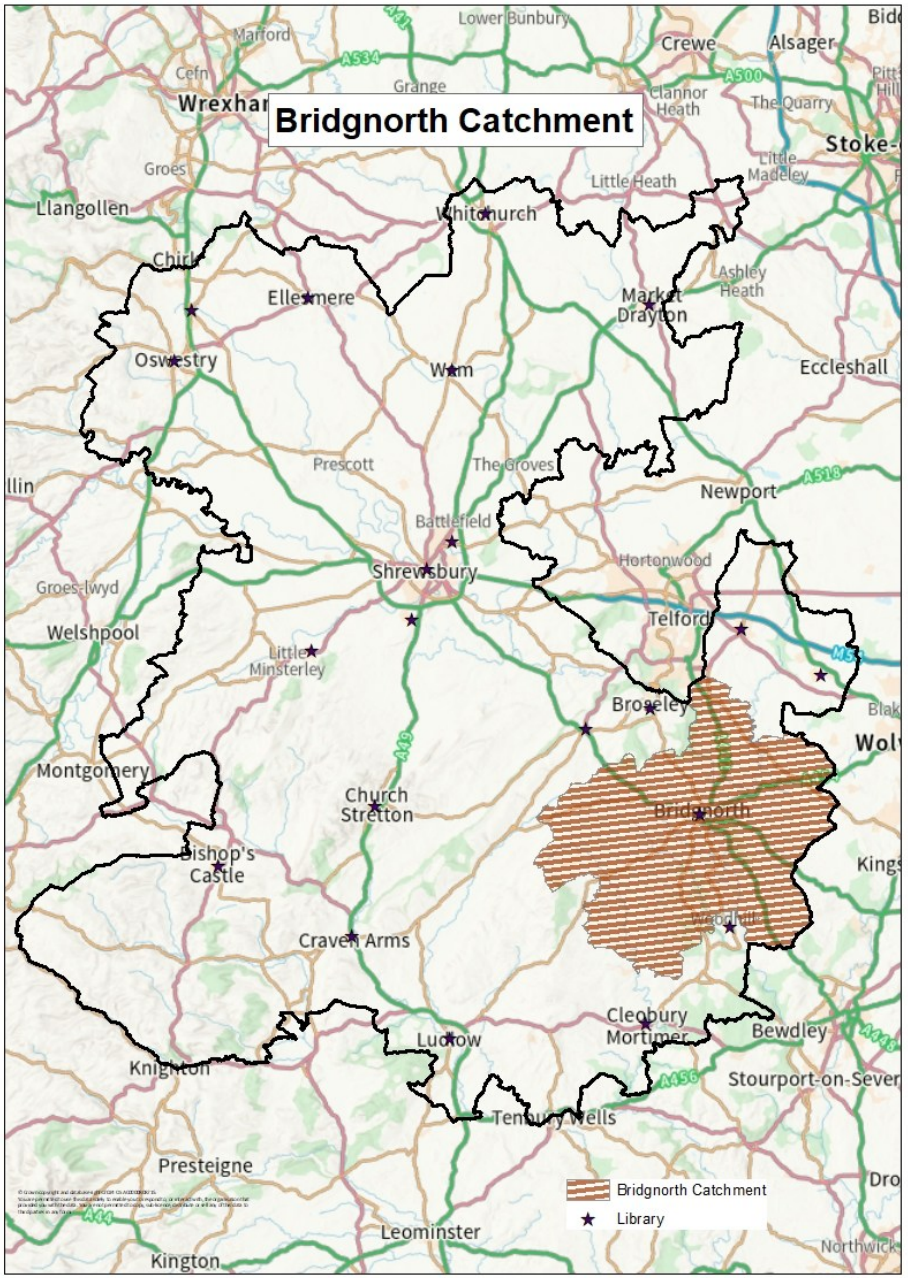
- Bridgnorth is a town in the south east of Shropshire on the River Severn. It is approximately 7 miles from the Shropshire border and 14 miles from Wolverhampton.
- The library is a single storey building located in the centre of the town, with parking to the rear. The building is owned by Shropshire 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 25,740 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 |

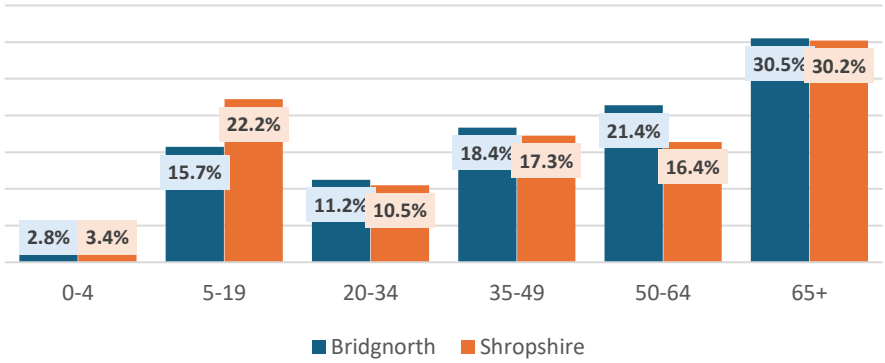
- The library employs 4.38 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 222 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 596 volunteer hours.



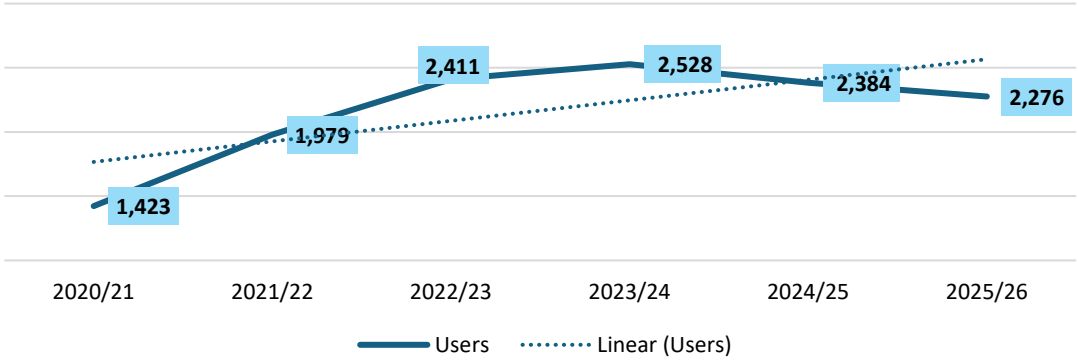
## Library Users

- Bridgnorth library had 2,276 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 7.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.3% 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 (2025/26) 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.

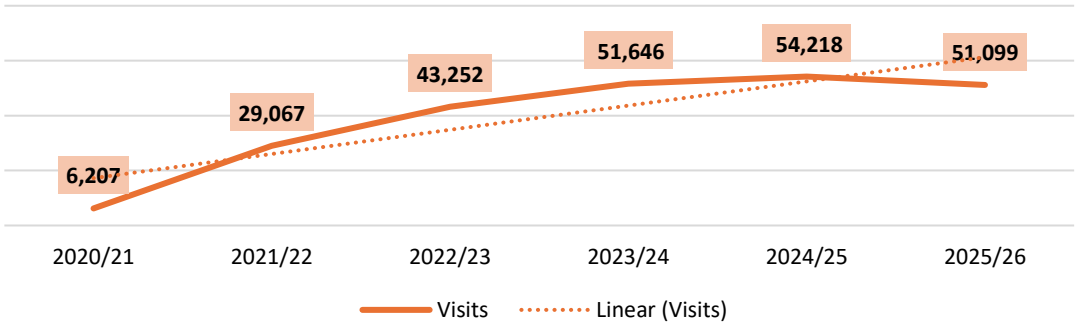
### Breakdown of Bridgnorth Library Users by Age



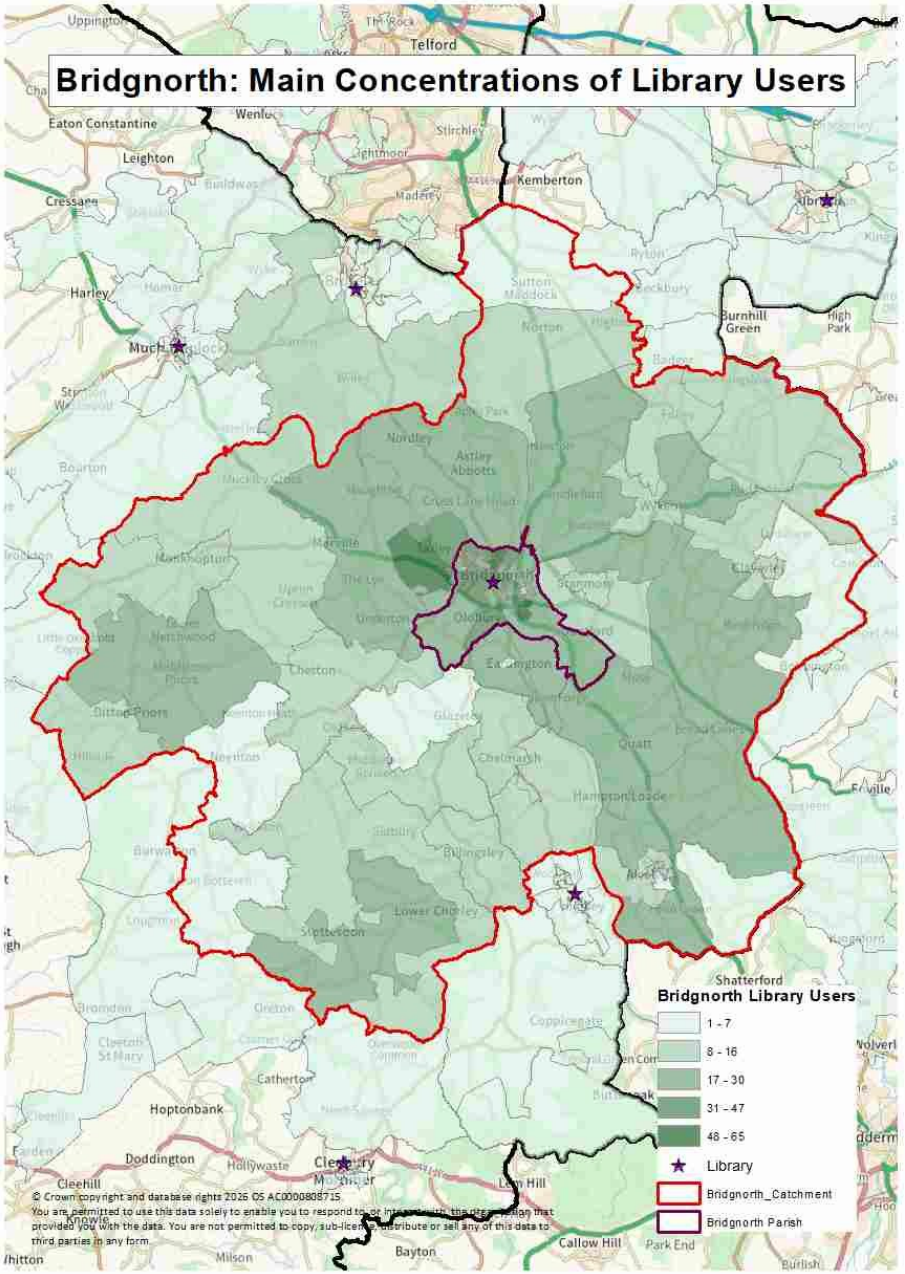

### Bridgnorth: Number of Active Users




### Bridgnorth: Number of Visits




- 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 and again in 2025/26. The number of users remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- Post pandemic there has been a notable recovery, with the number of users increasing between 2019/20 and 2024/25 by 853 users (+59.9%). This is comparable to the average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 51,099, 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 is now slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels (21 visits per user).
- The overall number of visits in 2025/26 was more than eight times higher than in 2020/21.
- 32,248 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 14 per active user and about 0.6 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 12% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 17% over the last year.
- Computer time was down substantially (-14%).




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 85.0% of all Bridgnorth library users live within the main catchment area.
- 56.1% live within the Bridgnorth town council area.
- 8.3% 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 3% to over 18%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 15.0% 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 May 2025, 88.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bridgnorth library were to Bridgnorth, and these accounted for 88.5% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bridgnorth include Much Wenlock, Broseley, Highley, Albrighton, Shrewsbury and Ludlow as well as the Brookes mobile.

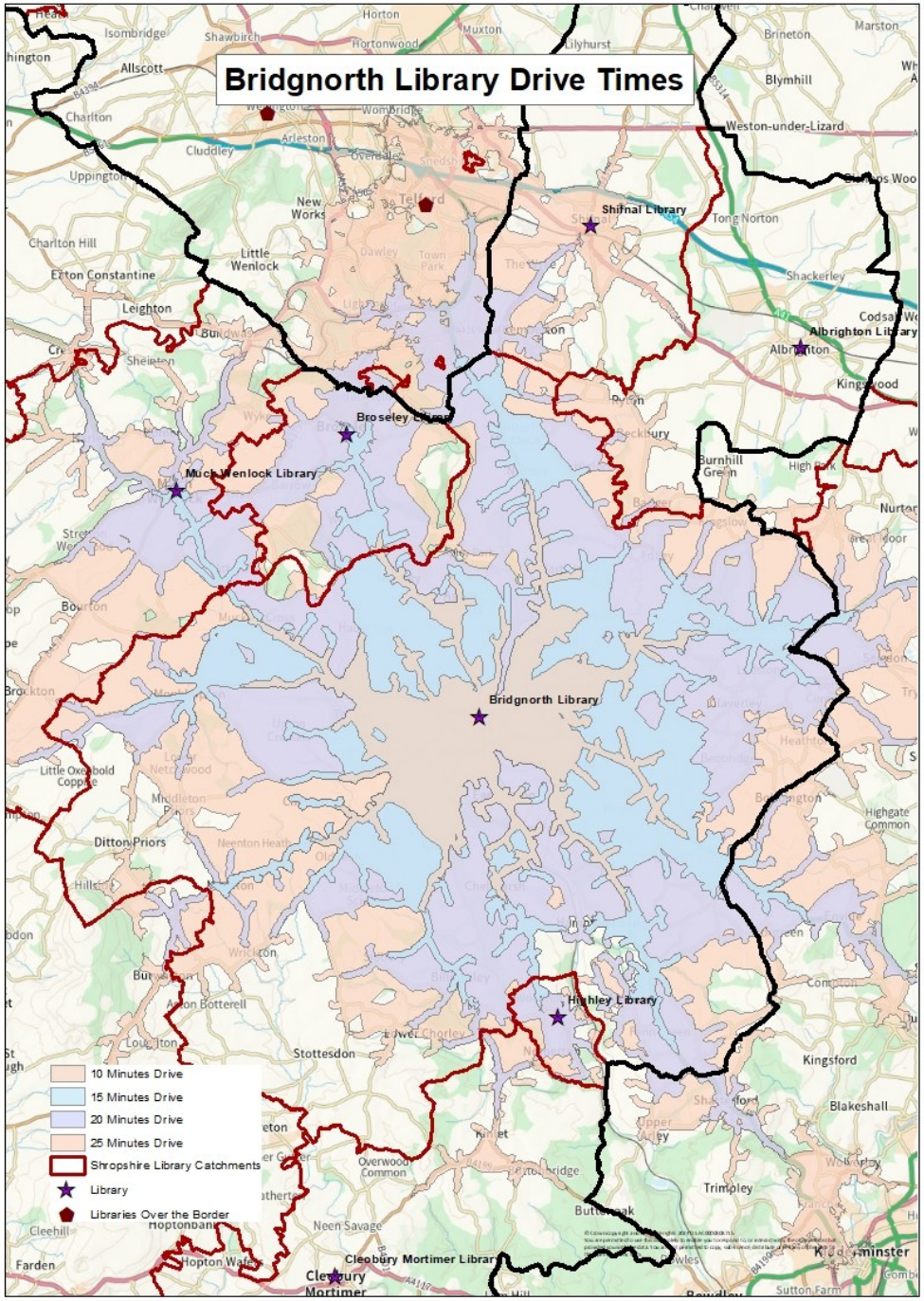
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 28.1% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 60.3% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 68.8% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 77.6% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 88.2% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 92.0% |

## 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 £219,360 (2025/26)
- Bridgnorth library costs more than average per hour open, per active user and per book loan but around average per visit.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £115.57 | £78.80 | 5th |
| **Per Active User** | £96.38 | £81.29 | 8th |
| **Per Visit** | £4.29 | £4.23 | 7th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £6.80 | £5.07 | 6th |

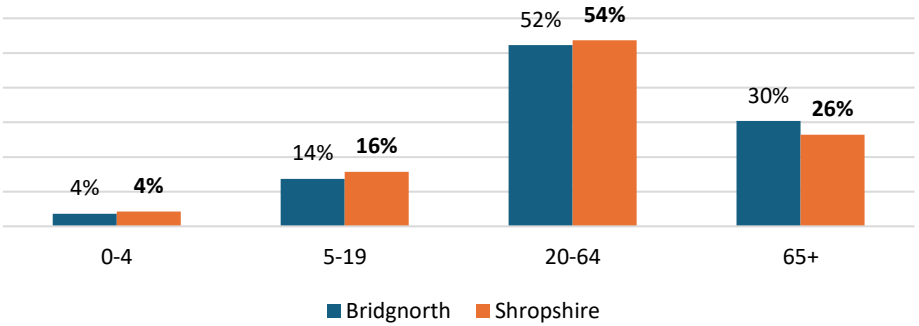
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bridgnorth Catchment Area

### Population

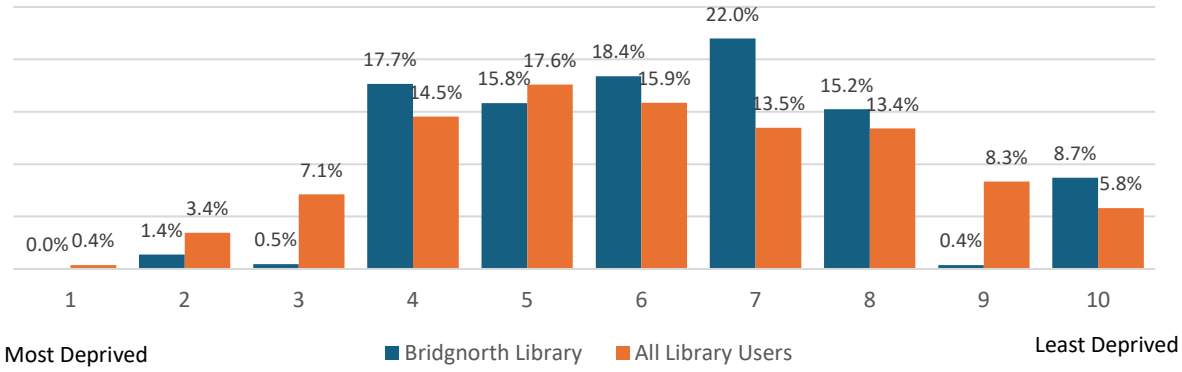
- Bridgnorth library catchment is the third largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 25,740.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There 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**

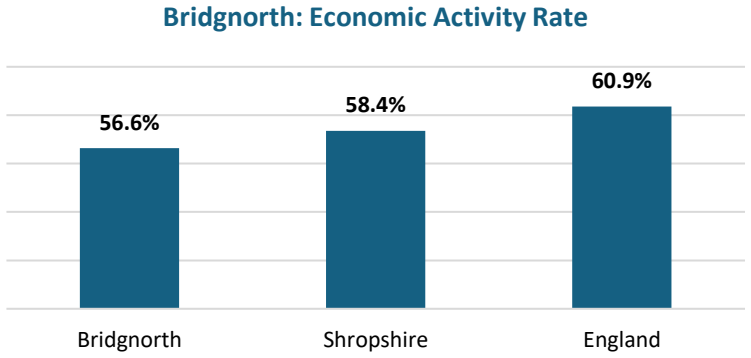



*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Bridgnorth library is in decile 6 according to the IMD 2025, and as such is in an area with average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that less than 2% of Bridgnorth library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.8% for all Shropshire library users)
- 89.1% of users are drawn from deciles four to eight, with numbers relatively evenly spread across these deciles.
- 9.1% live in the least deprived 20% of England.

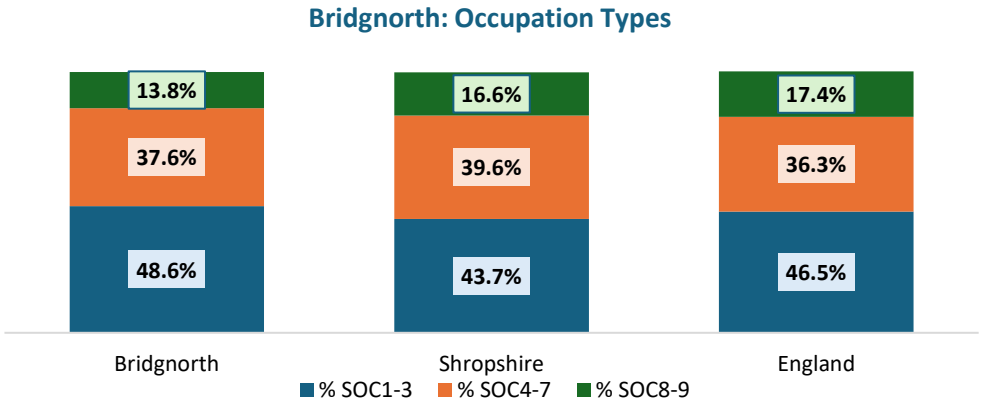
## Economic Activity

- 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.



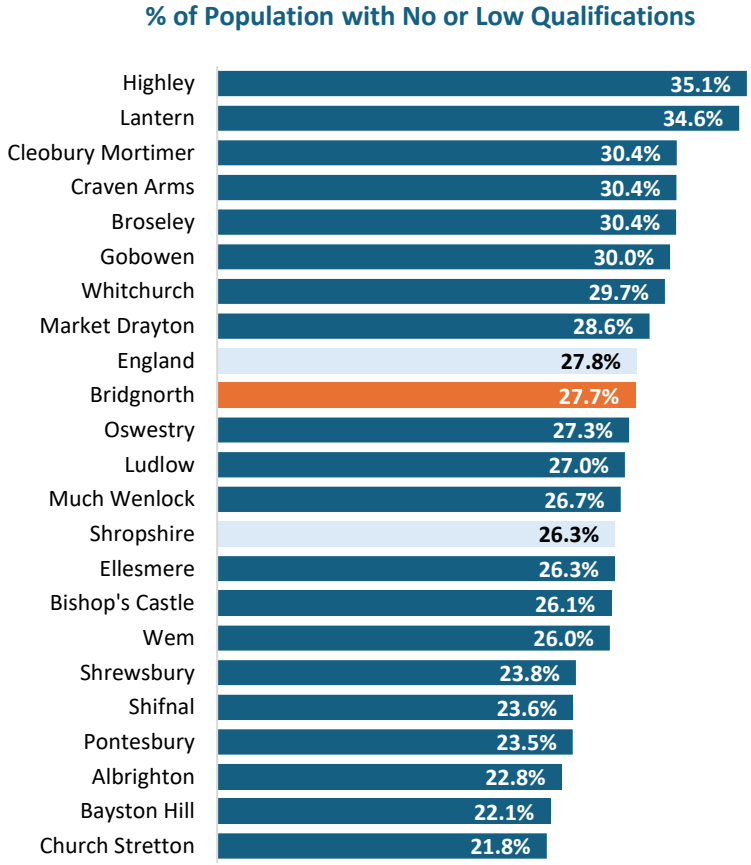

## Employment

- 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).



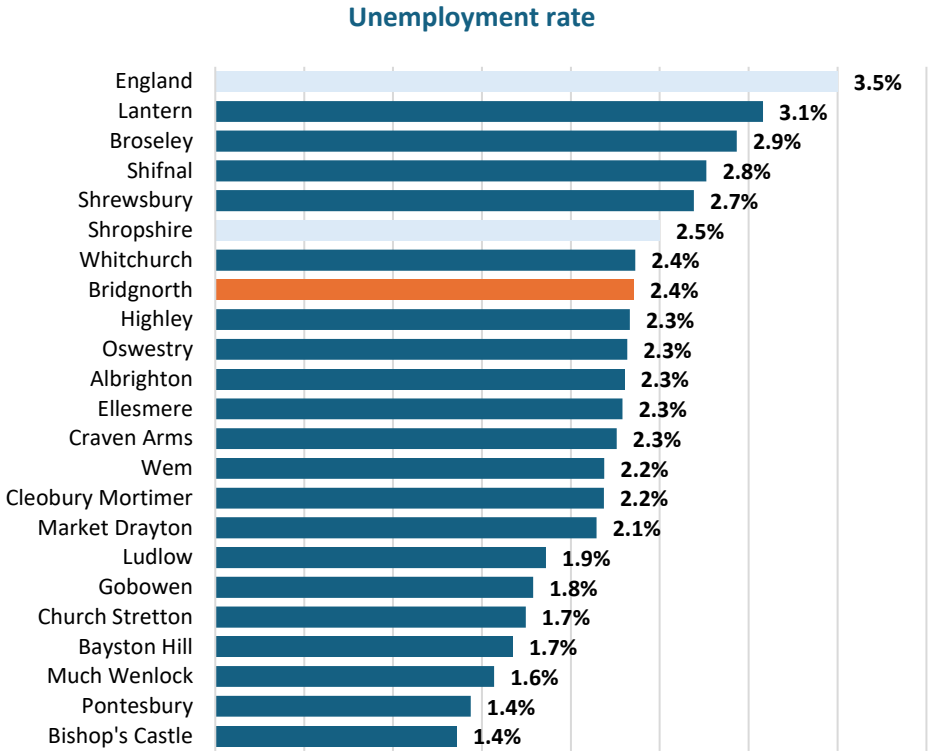

## Qualifications

- 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%).



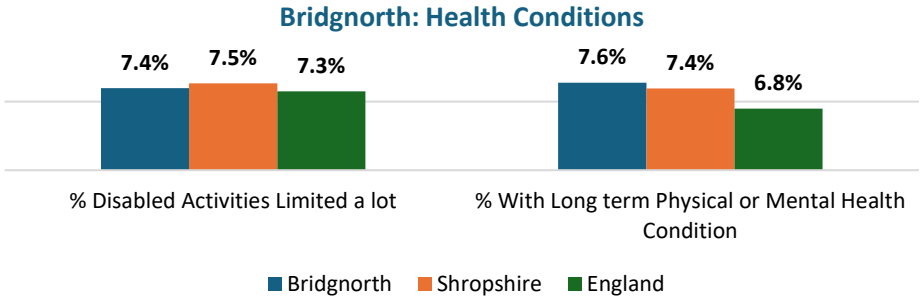
## Unemployment

- 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.



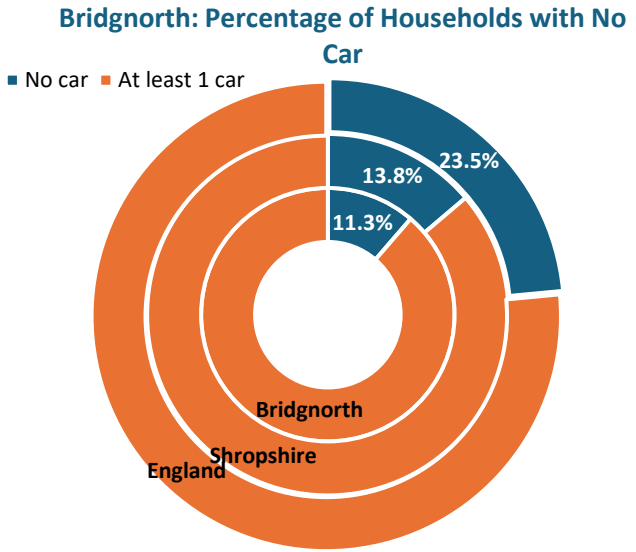

## Health Conditions

- 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%.



# Broseley Library Profile

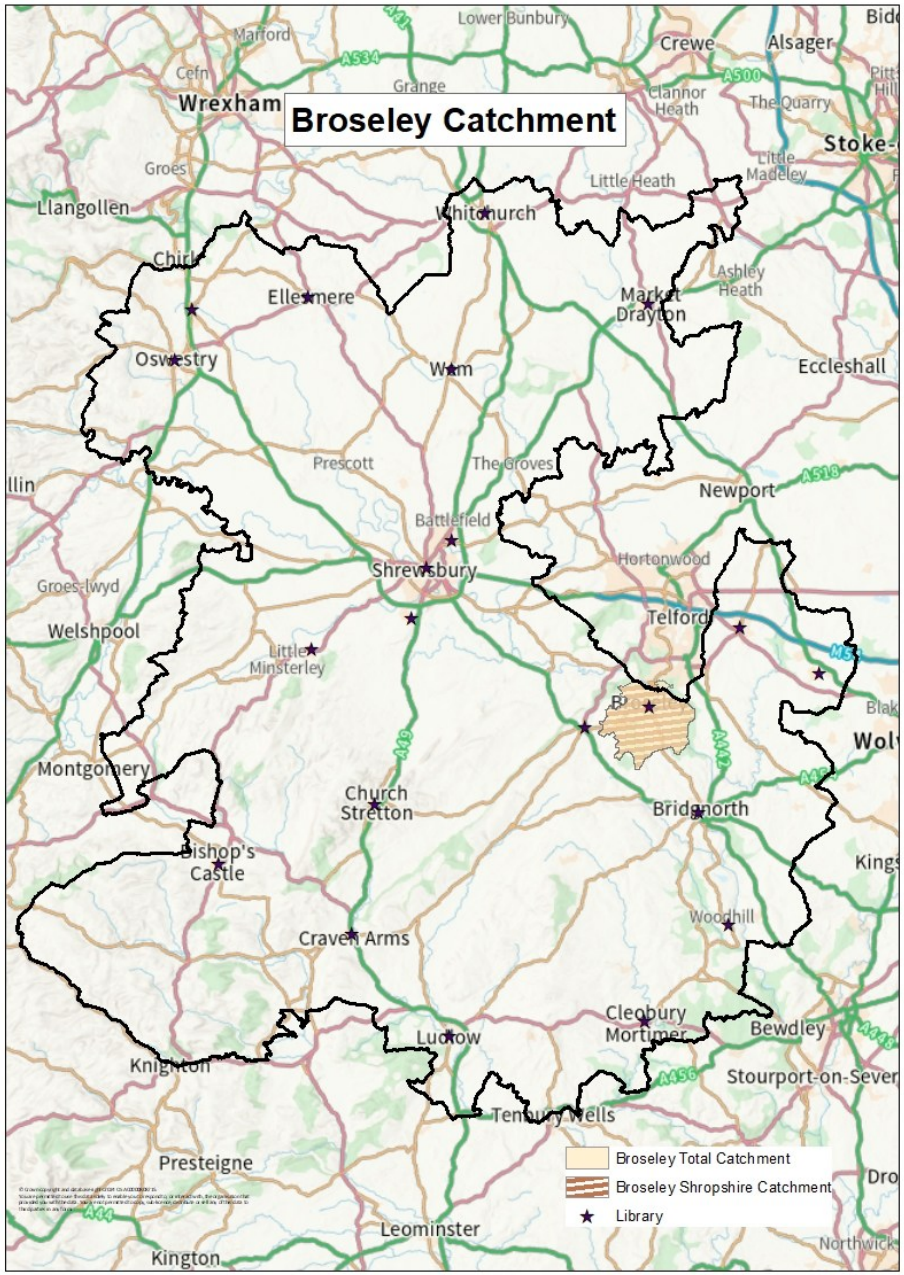
## Background

- 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 6,341 comprising 2,737 households. The Shropshire population (6,047 people) accounts for 95.4% 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<br>14.00pm-16.30pm | 6.5 |
| Tuesday | 9.30am-13.30pm<br>14.00pm-16.30pm | 6.5 |
| Wednesday | 9.30am-13.30pm | 4 |
| Thursday | 9.30am-13.30pm<br>14.00pm-16.30pm | 6.5 |
| Friday | 9.30am-13.30pm<br>14.00pm-16.30pm | 6.5 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

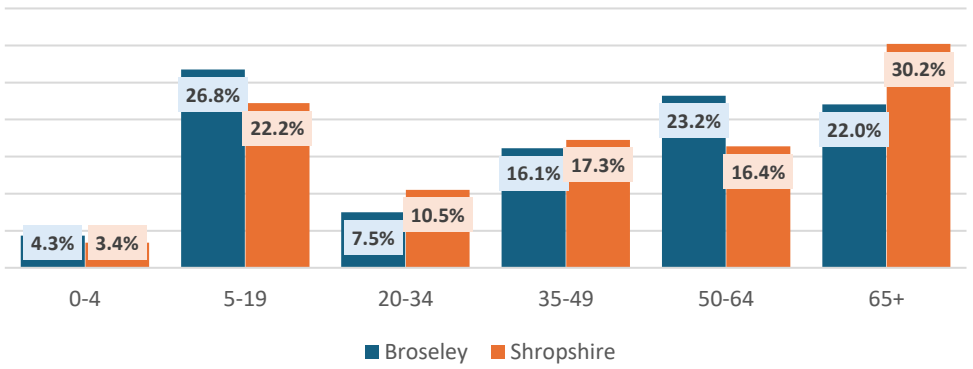



- In 2025/26 the library benefited from 36 volunteers, contributing 298 volunteer hours throughout the year.

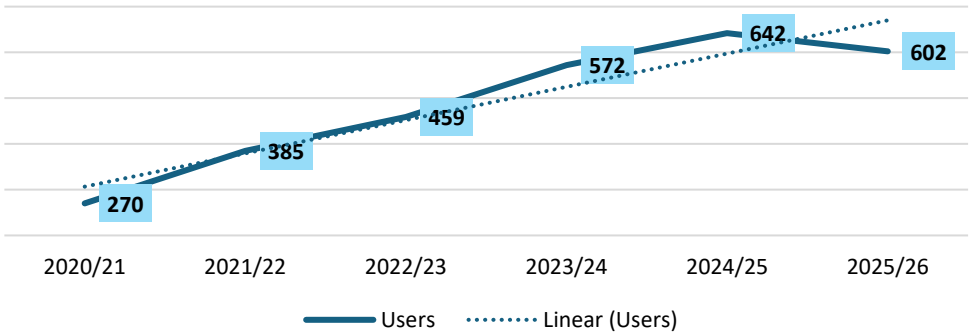
## Library Users

- Broseley library had 602 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.9% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.9% of the Broseley catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries not just Broseley.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and fewer adults aged 20-49. The representation of the 65+ cohort is also under-represented.

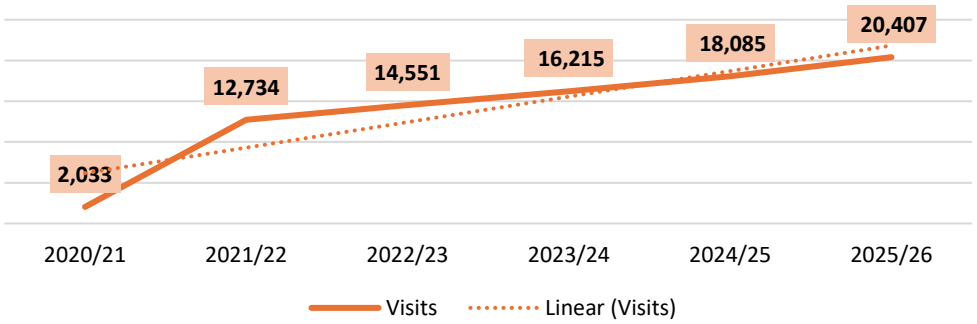
### Breakdown of Broseley Library Users by Age



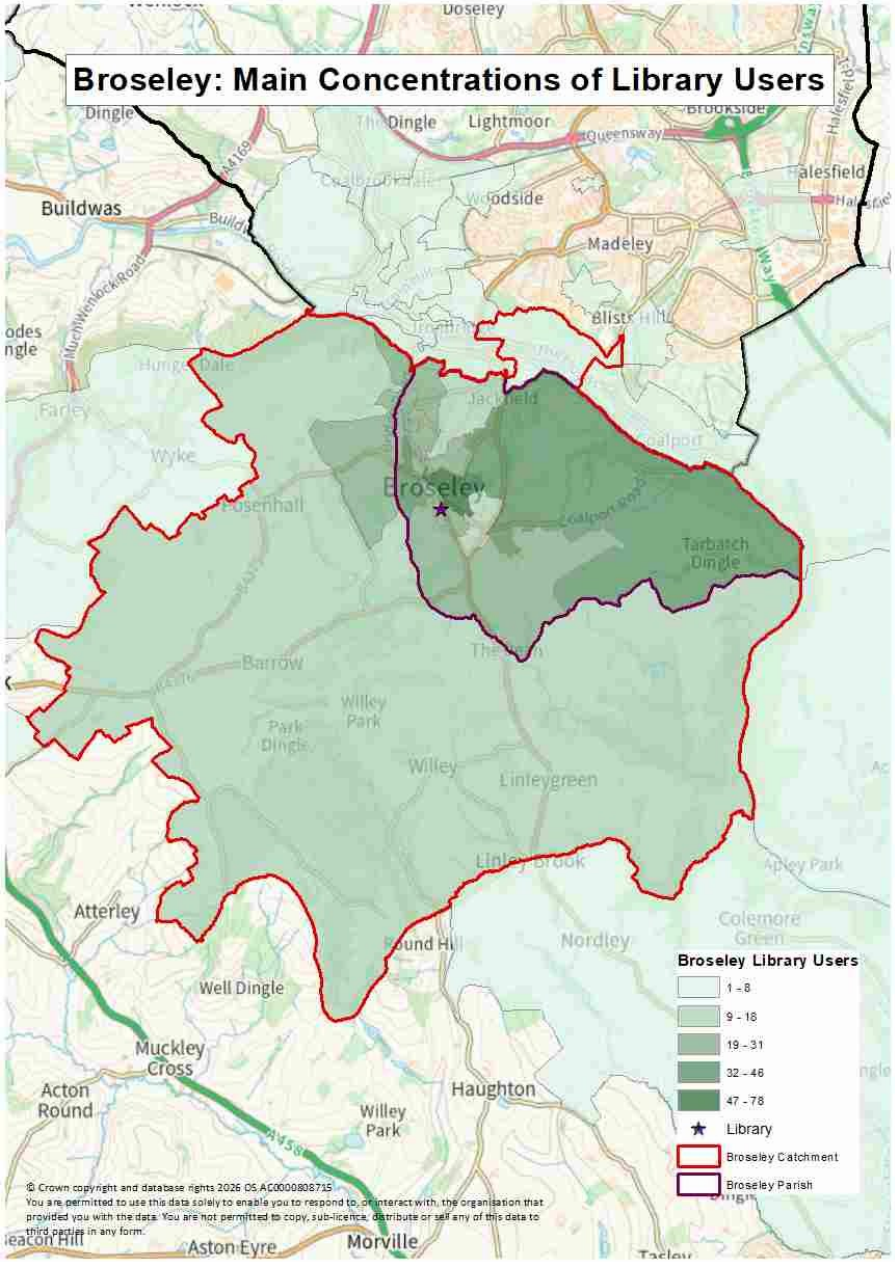

### Broseley: Number of Active Users




### Broseley: Number of Visits




- 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 number fell back slightly in 2025/26.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 332 users (+123.0%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 20,407, which is the equivalent of about 34 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 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 10 times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 9,481 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.5 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 13% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 9%.
- Computer time increased by a significant 70%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.3% of all Broseley library users live within the main catchment area.
- 79.5% live within Broseley Parish.
- 9.9% 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 5% to around 15%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 12.7% 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 May 2026, 91.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Broseley library were to Broseley, and these accounted for 91.1% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Broseley include Bridgnorth and Church Stretton.

## 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.

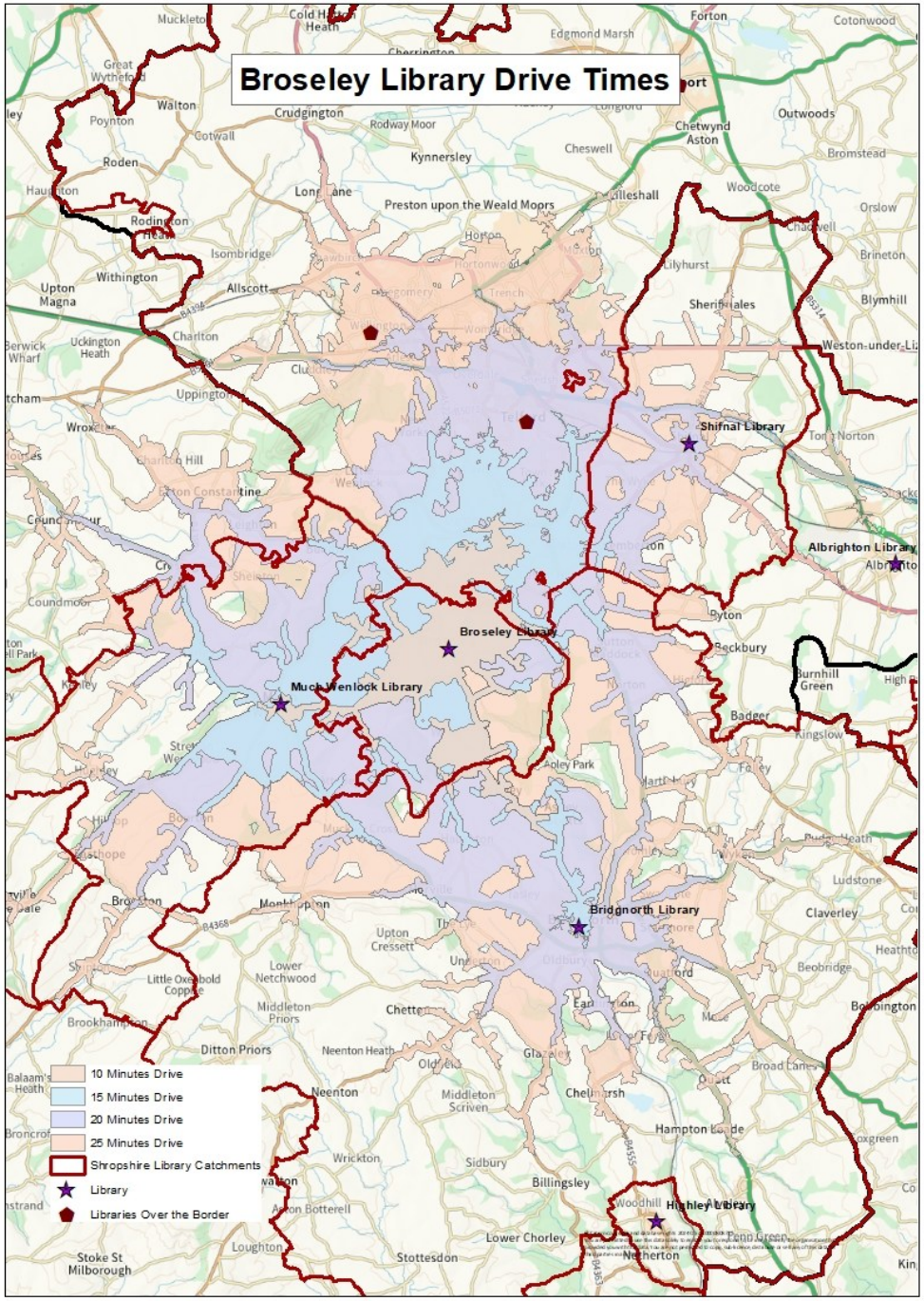
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 69.0% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 84.1% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 90.0% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 92.5% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 96.3% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 97.6% |

## 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 Albrighton and Shifnal.
- Annual Council costs are £7,970 (2025/26)
- Broseley ranks amongst the three least expensive Shropshire libraries in relation to costs per hour open, per active user, per book loan and per visit.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £4.58 | £78.80 | 20th |
| **Per Active User** | £13.24 | £81.29 | 19th |
| **Per Visit** | £0.39 | £4.23 | 21st |
| **Per Book Loan** | £0.84 | £5.07 | 19th |

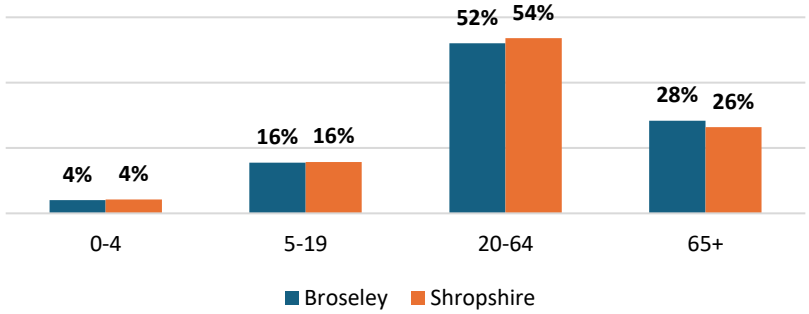
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## 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 6,341 and a Shropshire population of 6,047.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (28% compared with 26% 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.

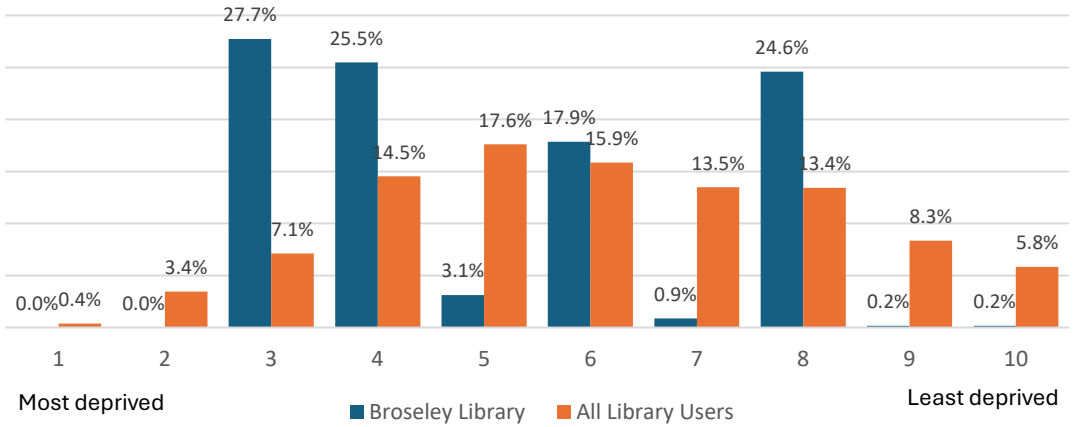
**Age Breakdown of Broseley Catchment**




*Broseley catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Broseley Library Users by IMD Decile**



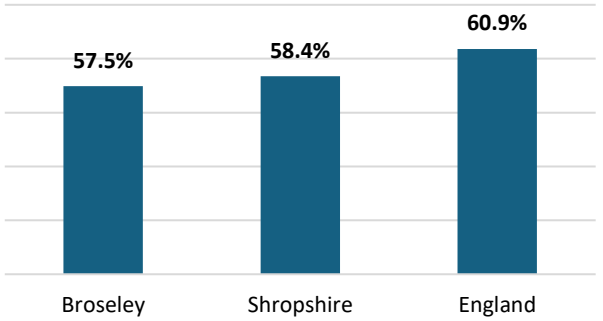

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Broseley library is in decile 4 according to the 2025 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that 25.5% of Broseley library users live in this decile compared with 14.5% of all Shropshire library users.
- A high proportion also live in deciles 3 and 8.
- No library users live in either the most or least deprived 20% of England.

## 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.

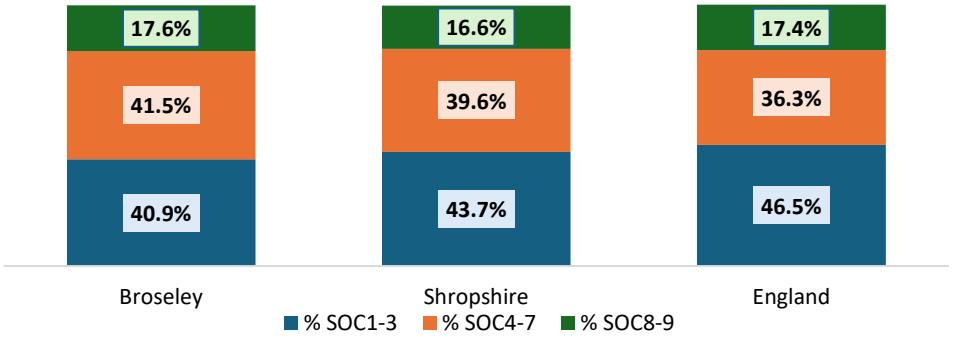
### Broseley: Economic Activity Rate



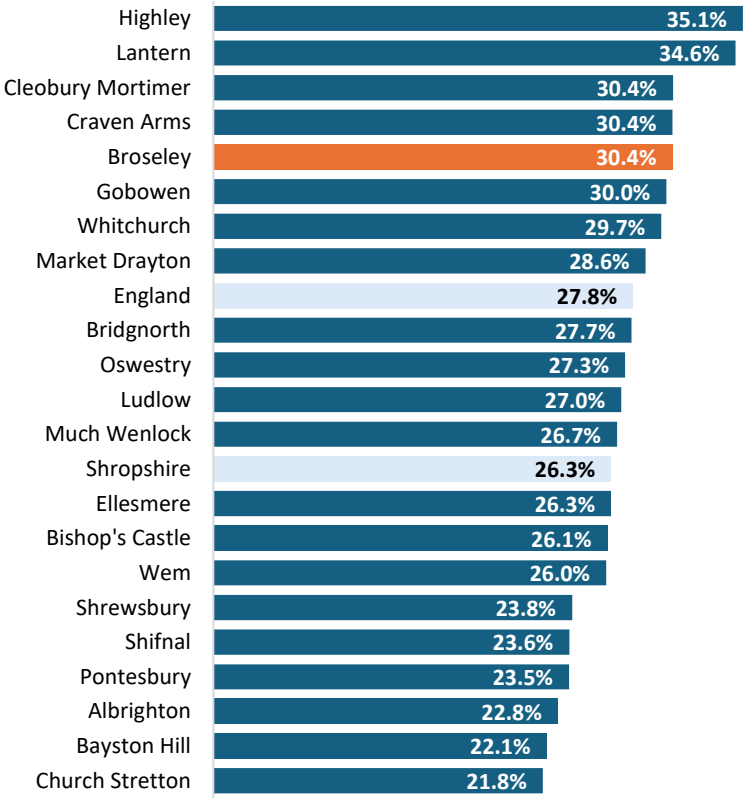

## Employment

- 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%. Slighly 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

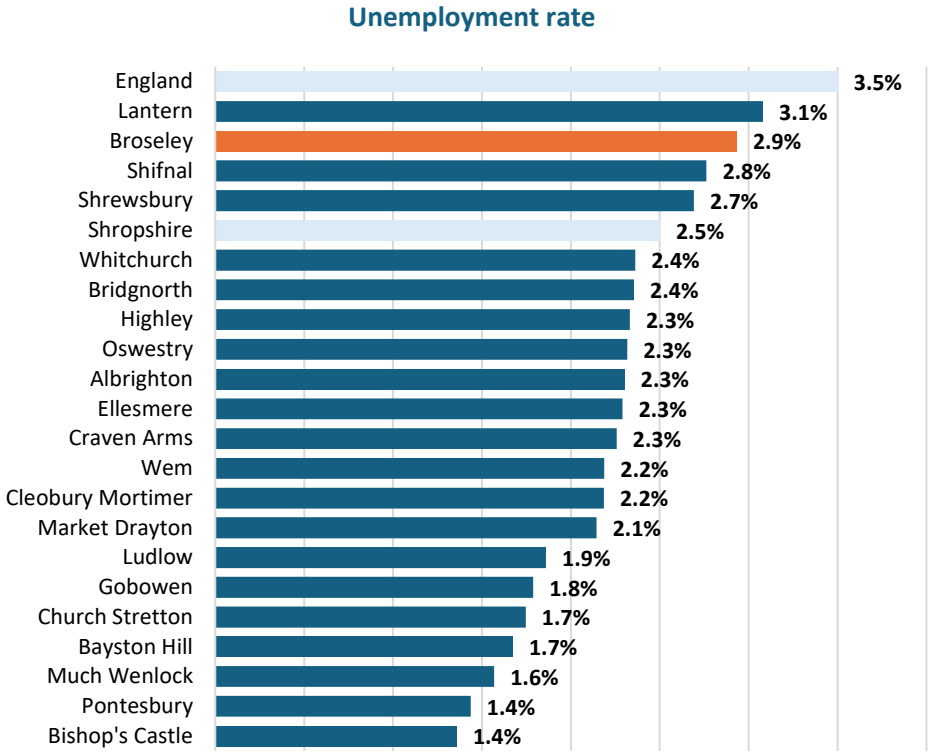



## Qualifications

- 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.

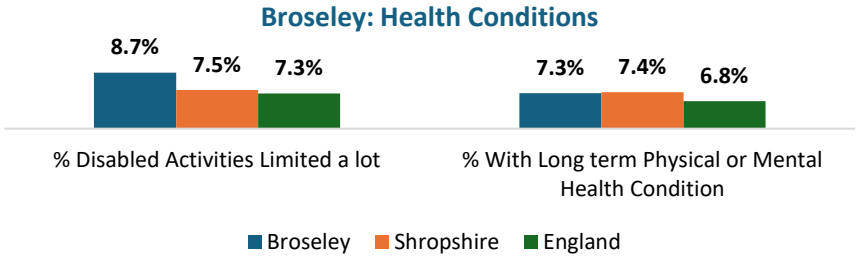
## Unemployment

- 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.



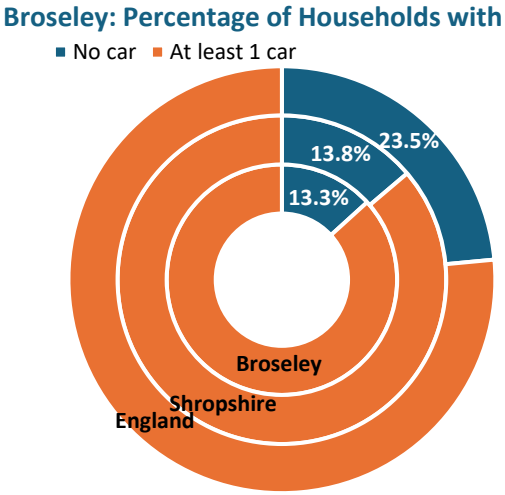

## Health Conditions

- 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

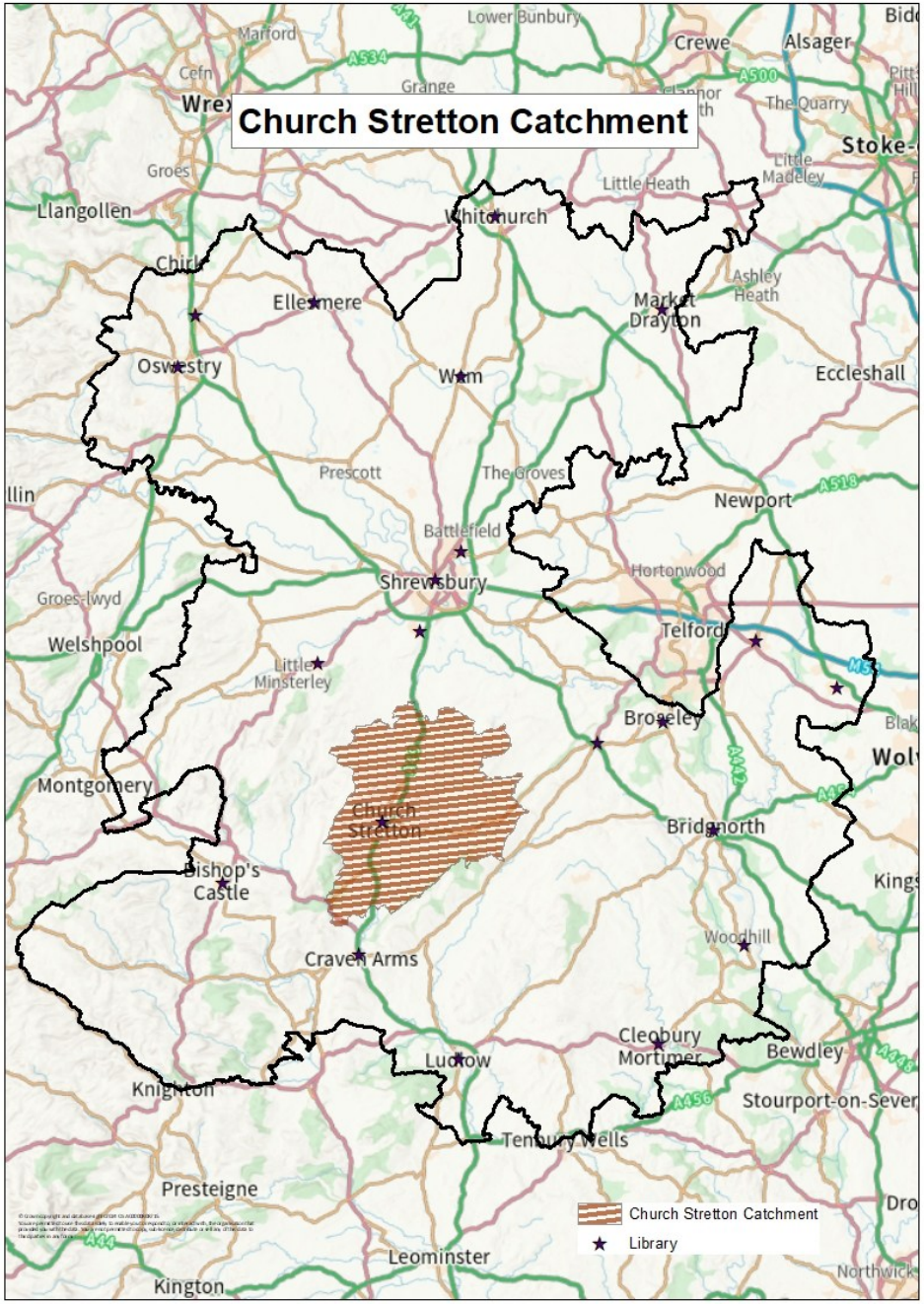
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Broseley households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



# 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 7,962 comprising 3,691 households.




### Opening Hours

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

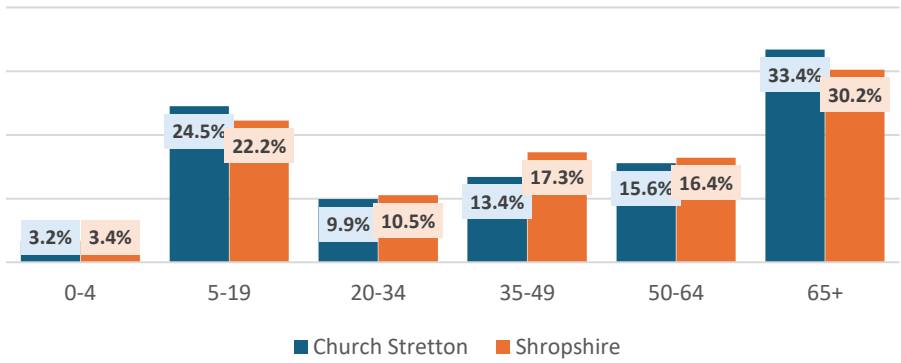
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | Closed | 0 |
| Tuesday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Friday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library employs 2.27 FTEs and in 2025/26 benefited from 251 volunteers, contributing 1,509 volunteer hours throughout the year.

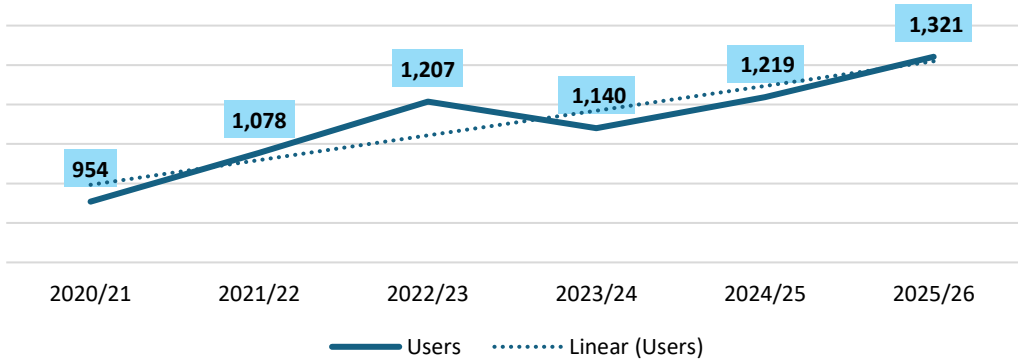
## Library Users

- Church Stretton library had 1,321 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 4.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 18.0% of the Church Stretton catchment population are active library users (all Shropshire libraries not just Church Stretton), 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more users aged 65 and above and also more children, but fewer adults of working age.

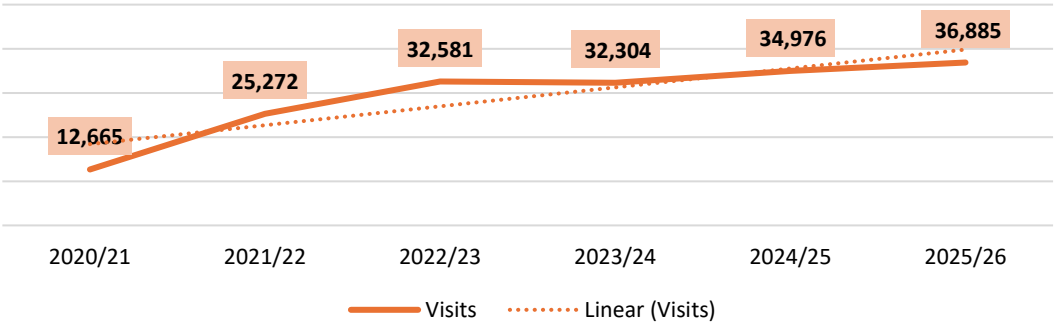
### Breakdown of Church Stretton Library Users by Age



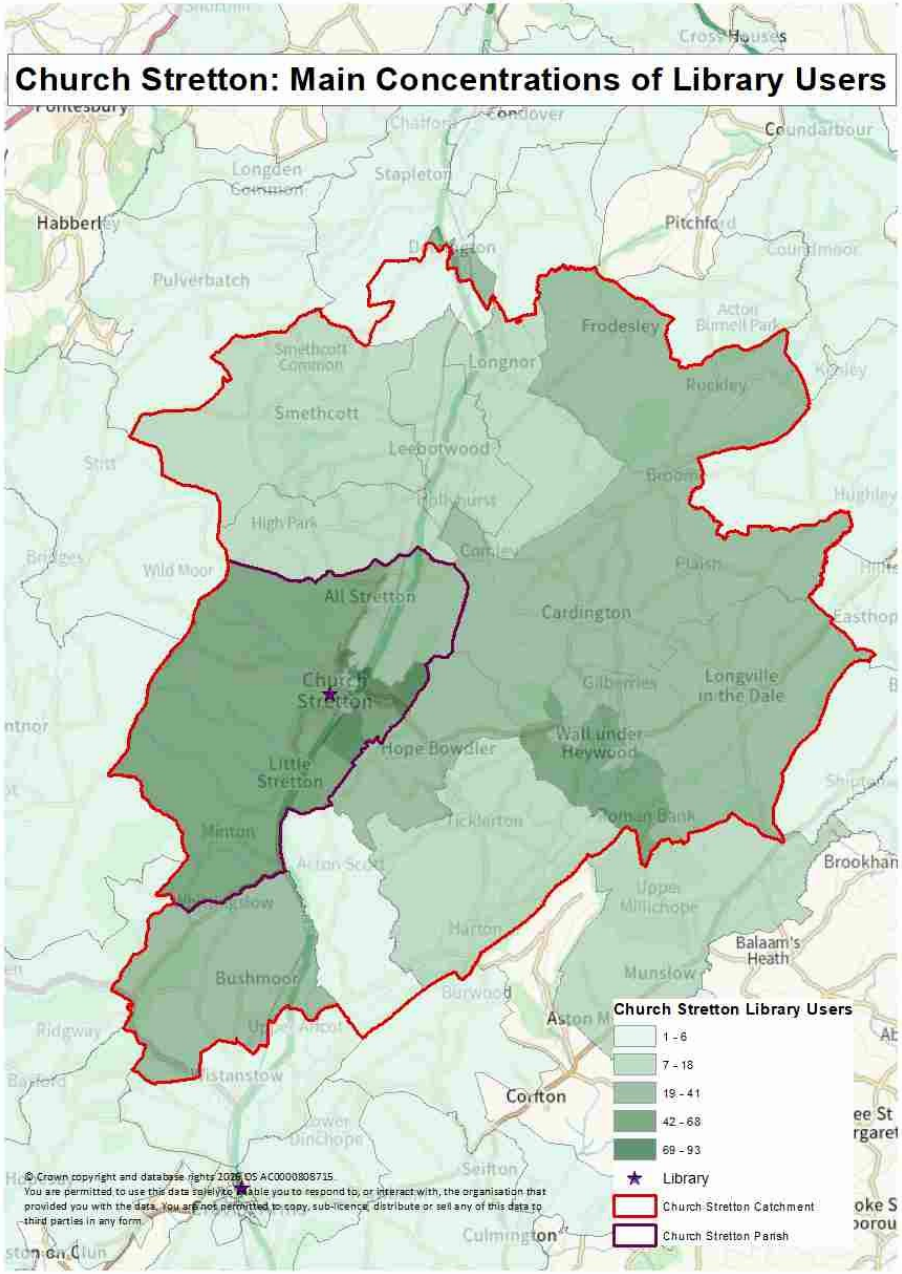

### Church Stretton: Number of Active Users




### Church Stretton: Number of Visits




- 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 and 2025/26.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 367 users (+38.5%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 36,885, 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 (27 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost three times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 29,835 loans were made in 2023/24, which equates with 23 per active user and 0.8 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 1% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 5%.
- Computer time was up significantly (+23%).




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 88.6% of all Church Stretton library users live within the main catchment area.
- 69.2% live within Church Stretton Parish.
- 18.0% 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 5% to almost a third. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 11.4% 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 May 2026, 87.4% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Church Stretton library were to Church Stretton, and these accounted for 88.2% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Church Stretton include Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Craven Arms as well as the Sabrina mobile library service.

## 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.

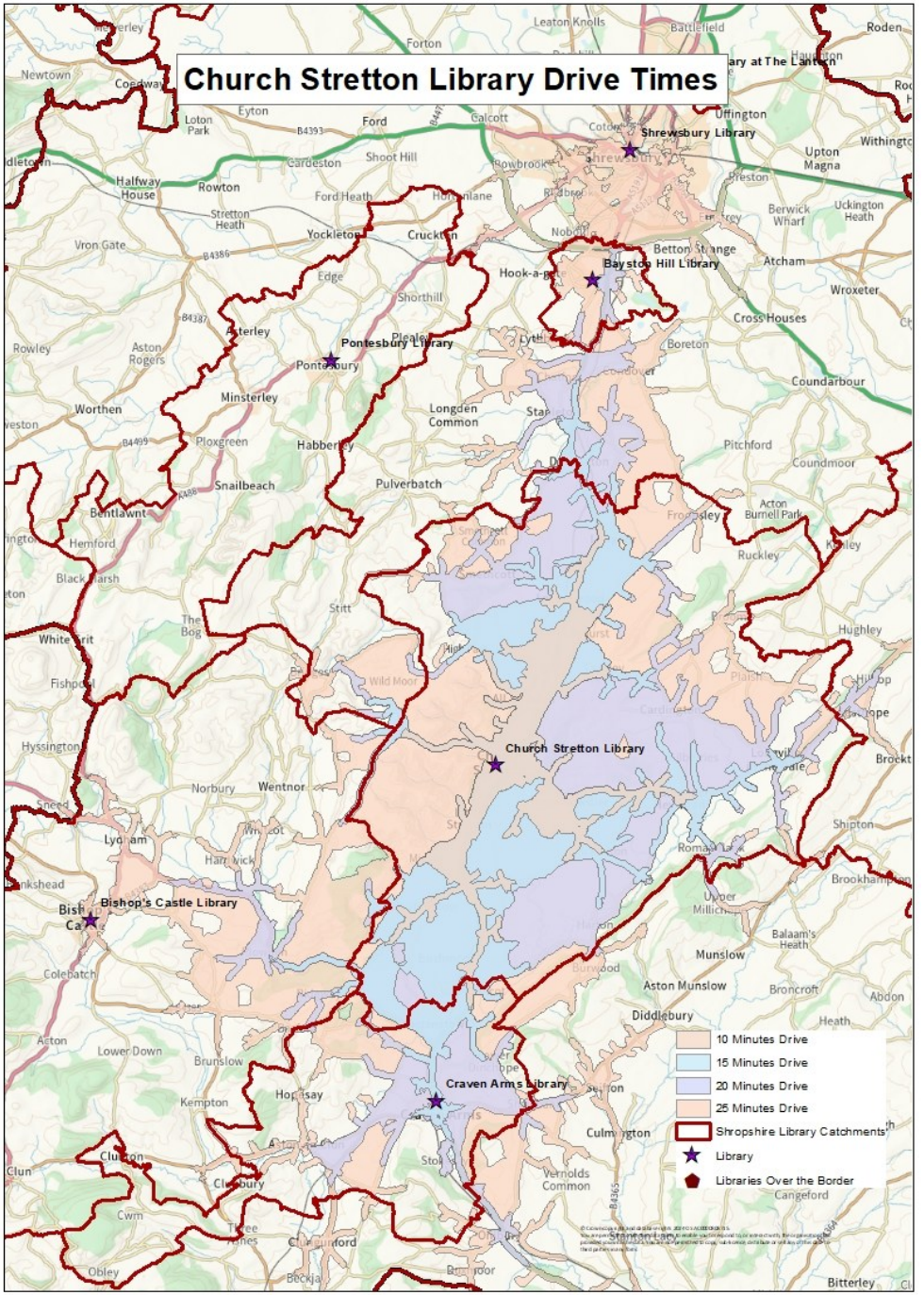
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 49.1% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 65.6% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 76.7% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 85.7% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 90.9% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 94.8% |

## 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<br>435 Bus | 8 mins<br>20 mins |

| Library | Nearest Main Library | Distance | Drive Time | Public Transport | Approx Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Church Stretton** | Ludlow | 15.5 miles | 25 mins | Train<br>435 Bus | 15 mins<br>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 £136,930 (2025/26)
- Church Stretton library costs more than average per hour open and per active user but less per visit and per book loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £87.78 | £78.80 | 8th |
| **Per Active User** | £103.66 | £81.29 | 6th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.71 | £4.23 | 12th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £4.59 | £5.07 | 11th |

*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

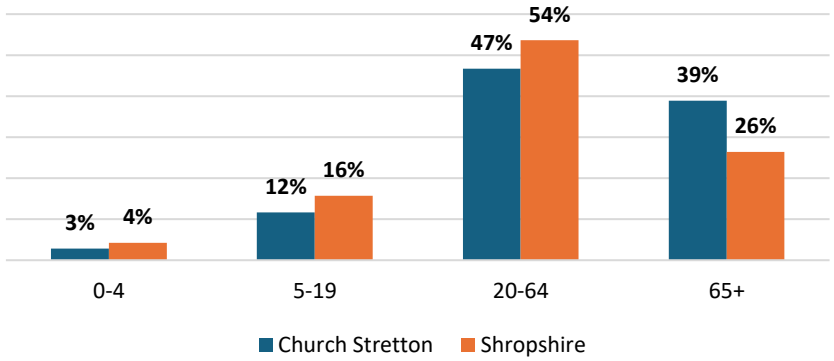
## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Church Stretton Catchment Area

### Population

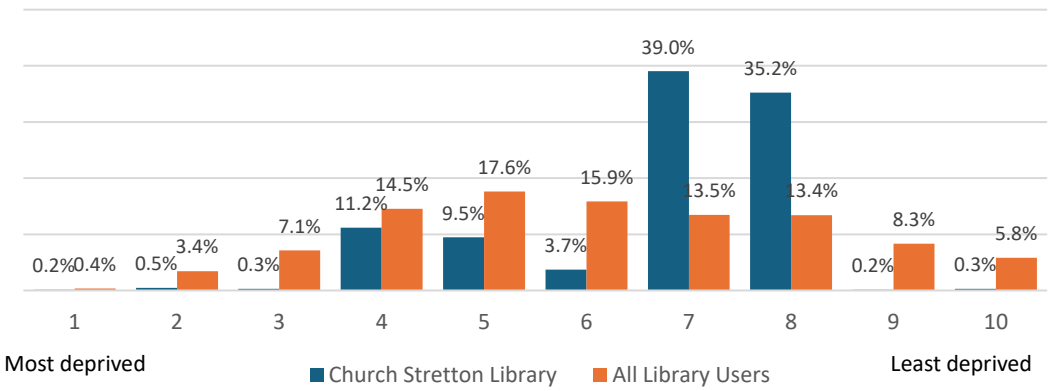
- Church Stretton library catchment is the 11th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 7,962.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a much higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (39% compared with 26% for Shropshire).
- There are 3,691 households in the 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

### Deprivation

**Age Breakdown of Church Stretton Catchment**




**Breakdown of Church Stretton Library Users by IMD Decile**



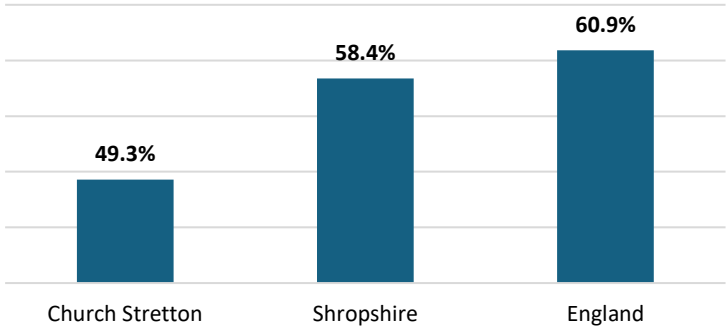

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Church Stretton library is in a relatively un-deprived location (decile 8 according to the IMD 2015), 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 (41.0% 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.

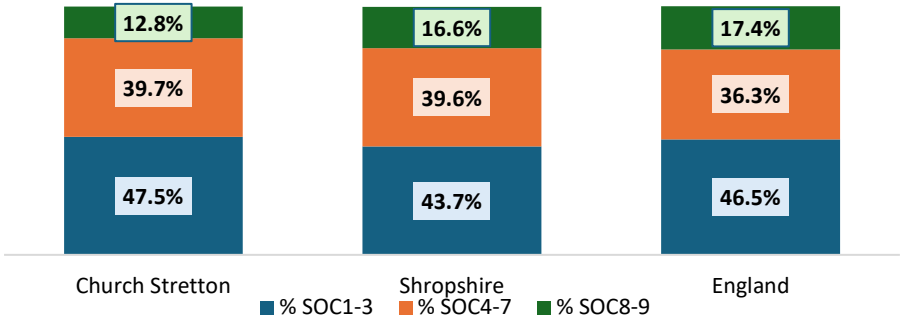
### Church Stretton: Economic Activity Rate




## 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.

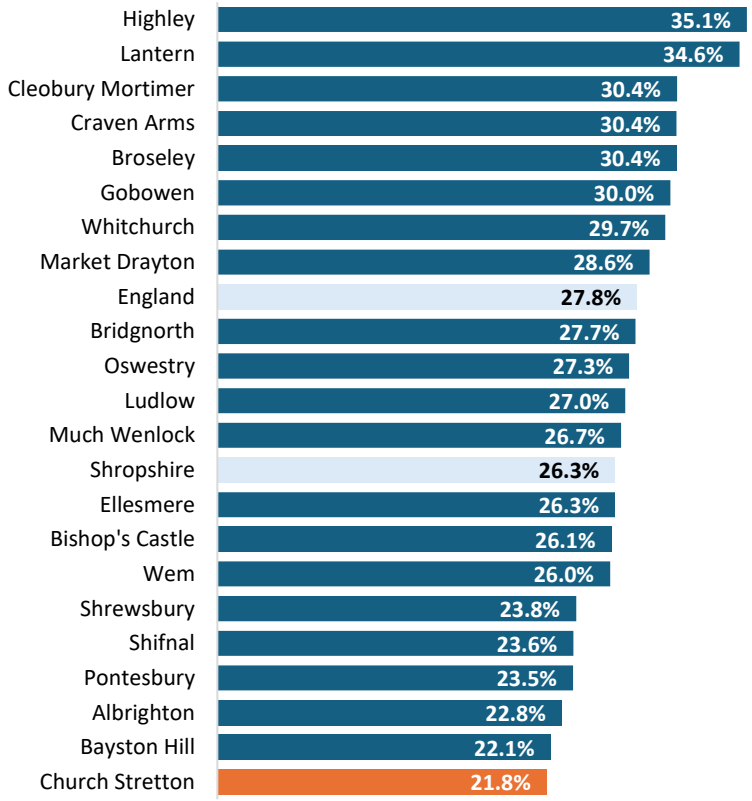
### Church Stretton: Occupation Types




## Qualifications

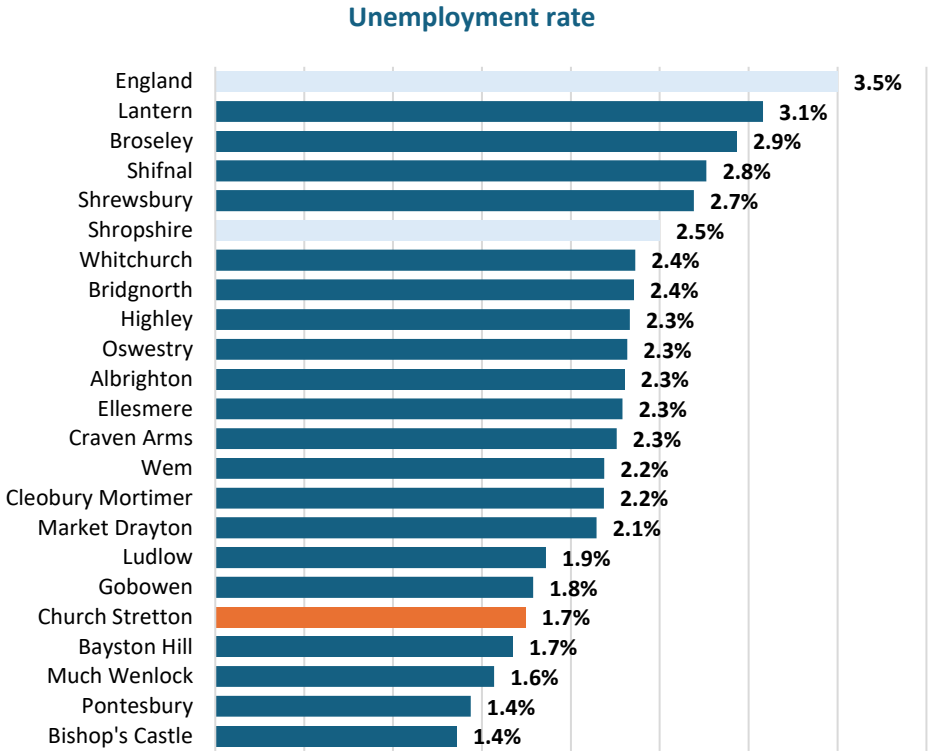
- The proportion of the Church Stretton population with no or low qualifications is the lowest in Shropshire at 21.8% of the 16+ population. This corresponds with the high proportion of workers in SOC 1-3 occupations.

### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications



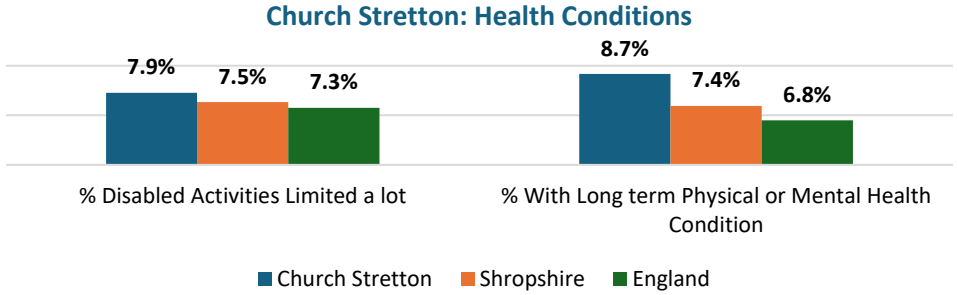
## Unemployment

- 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.



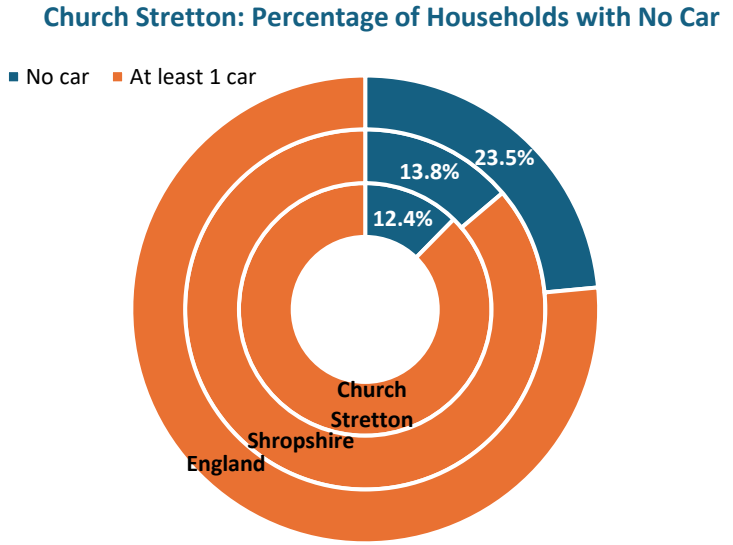

## Health Conditions

- 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).




## 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%.



# Cleobury Mortimer Library Profile

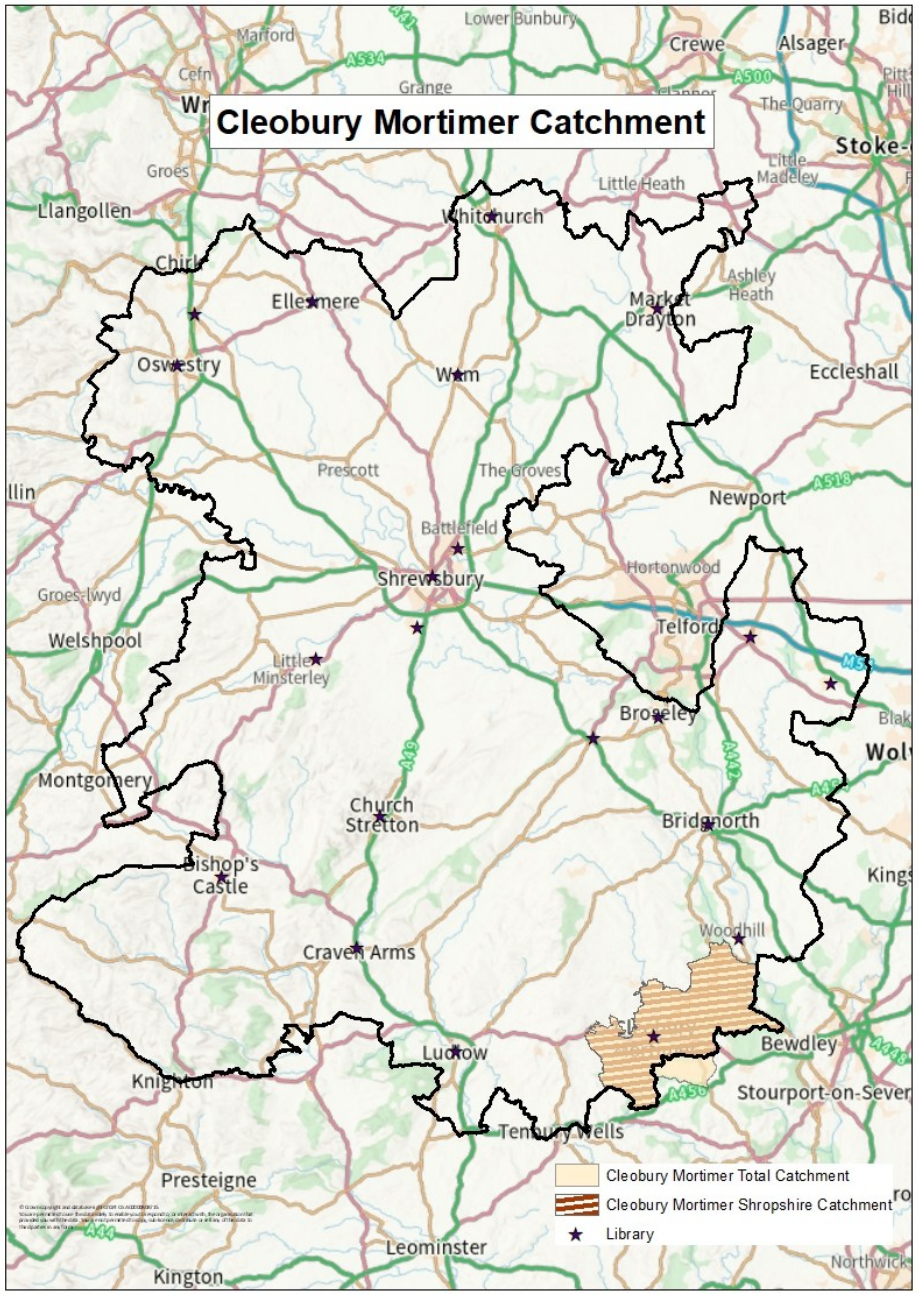
## Background

- 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 5,774 comprising 2,509 households. The Shropshire population is 5,266.

### Opening Hours

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

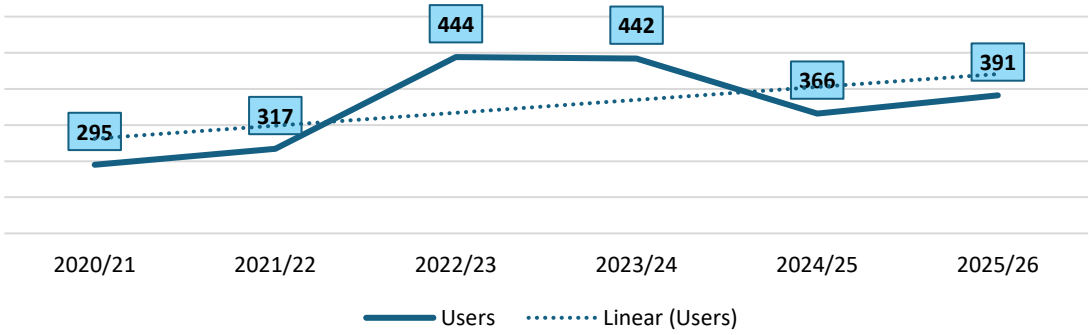
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 9.00am-17.00pm | 8 |
| Tuesday | 9.00am-17.00pm | 8 |
| Wednesday | 9.00am-17.00pm | 8 |
| Thursday | 9.00am-17.00pm | 8 |
| Friday | 9.00am-17.00pm | 8 |
| Saturday | 10.00am-12.00pm | 2 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |



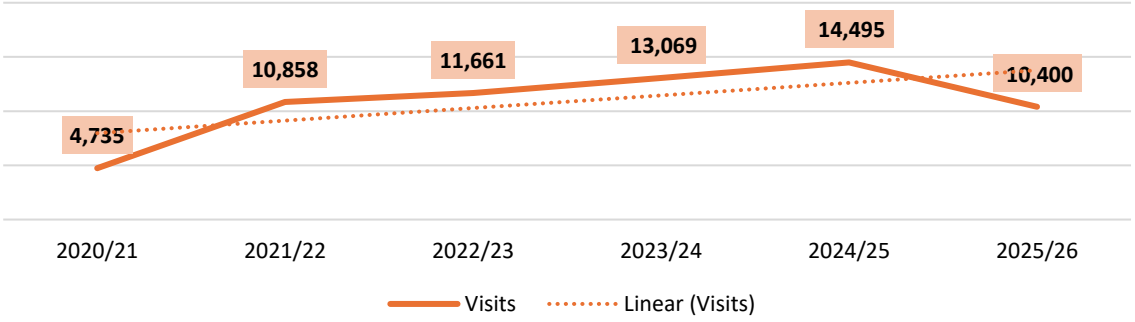
## Library Users

- Cleobury Mortimer library had 391 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 6.9% of the Cleobury Mortimer catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries, not just Cleobury Mortimer.
- 57.4% of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) 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 aged 50+. Indeed, over a third of users are under the age of 20.

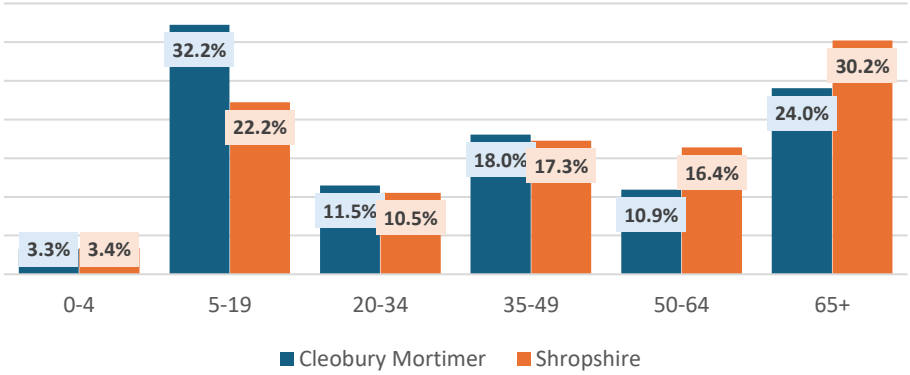
### Cleobury Mortimer: Number of Active Users



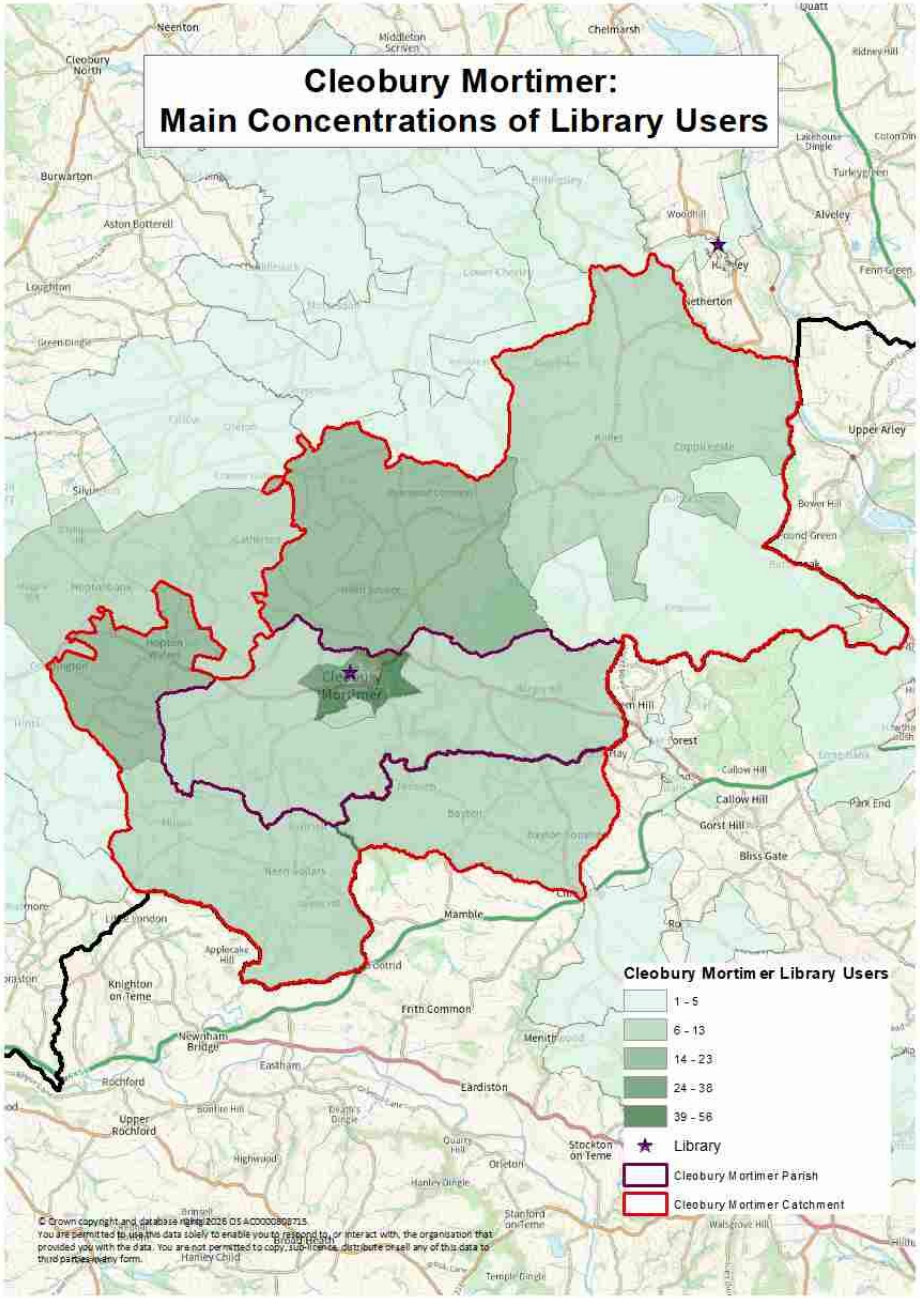

### Cleobury Mortimer: Number of Visits




### 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. There was an upturn in 2025/26 although user numbers were still lower than they had been in 2023/24.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 96 users (+32.5%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 10.400, which is the equivalent of about 27 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business. Visits peaked in 2024/25 before declining by 28.3% in 2025/26.
- 3,871 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 10 per active user and 0.4 per visit, suggesting that the majority of visits are not associated with book loans.
- The number of loans decreased by 18% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 19%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 84.3% of all Cleobury Mortimer library users live within the main catchment area.
- 69.4% live within Cleobury Mortimer Parish.
- 6.9% 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 12.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 15.7% 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 May 2026, 86.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Cleobury Mortimer library were to Cleobury Mortimer, and these accounted for 84.3% of all issues.
- Ludlow was the most frequently visited alternative library.

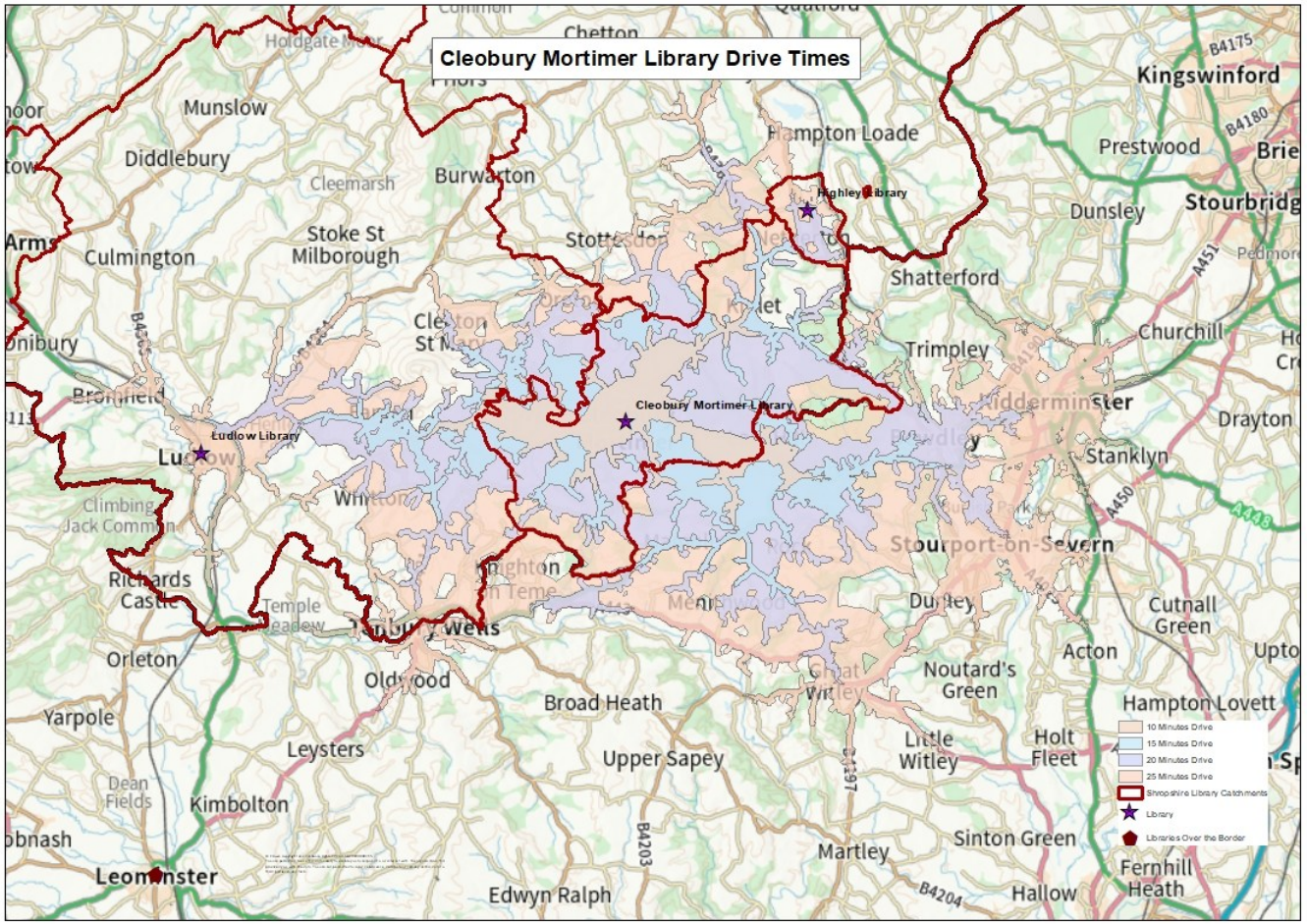
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 66.9% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 68.7% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 79.8% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 89.4% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 93.4% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 98.0% |

## 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 seventh least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £31,910 (2025/26).
- 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** | £14.61 | £78.80 | 16th |
| **Per Active User** | £81.61 | £81.29 | 9th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.07 | £4.23 | 15th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £8.24 | £4.50 | 4th |

*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

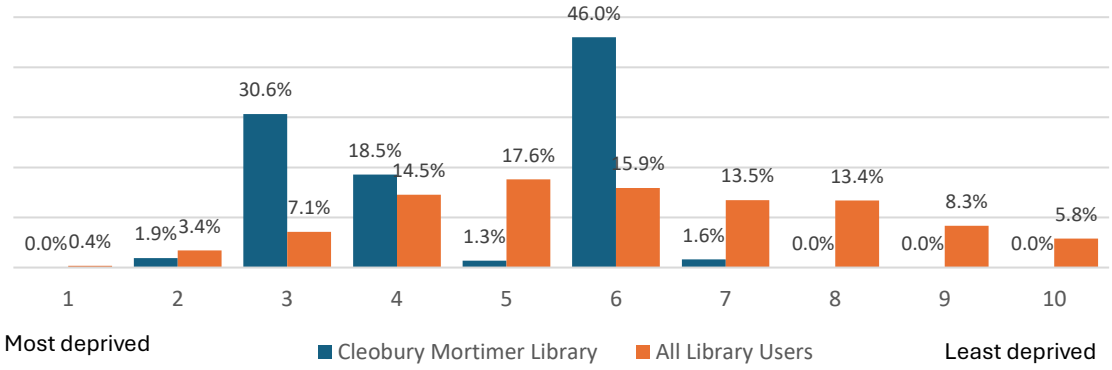
## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Cleobury Mortimer Catchment Area

### Population

- Cleobury Mortimer library catchment is the 6th smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 5,266 and a total population of 5,774.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a much higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (34% compared with 26% 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.

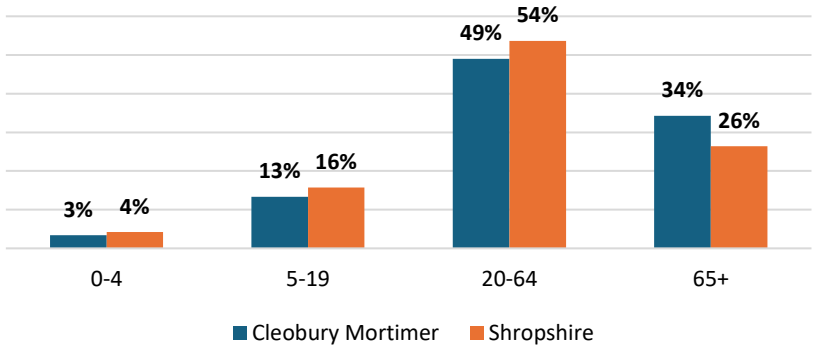
### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Library Users by IMD Decile**




*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

**Age Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Catchment**



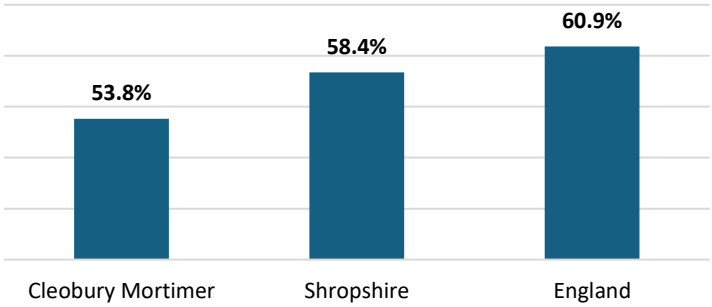

*Cleobury Mortimer catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

- Cleobury Mortimer library is in an area with average levels of deprivation (in decile 6 according to the IMD 2025).
- The adjacent chart shows that a large proportion of library users are also drawn from decile 6 (46% compared with 15.9% for Shropshire).
- Around a third live in the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- No library users are resident in the least deprived 30% of England.

## 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.

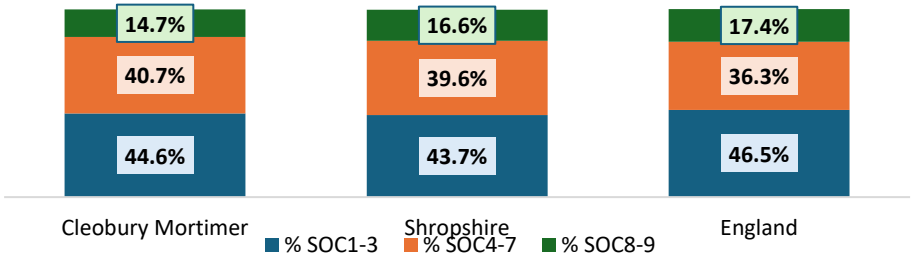
### Cleobury Mortimer: Economic Activity Rate



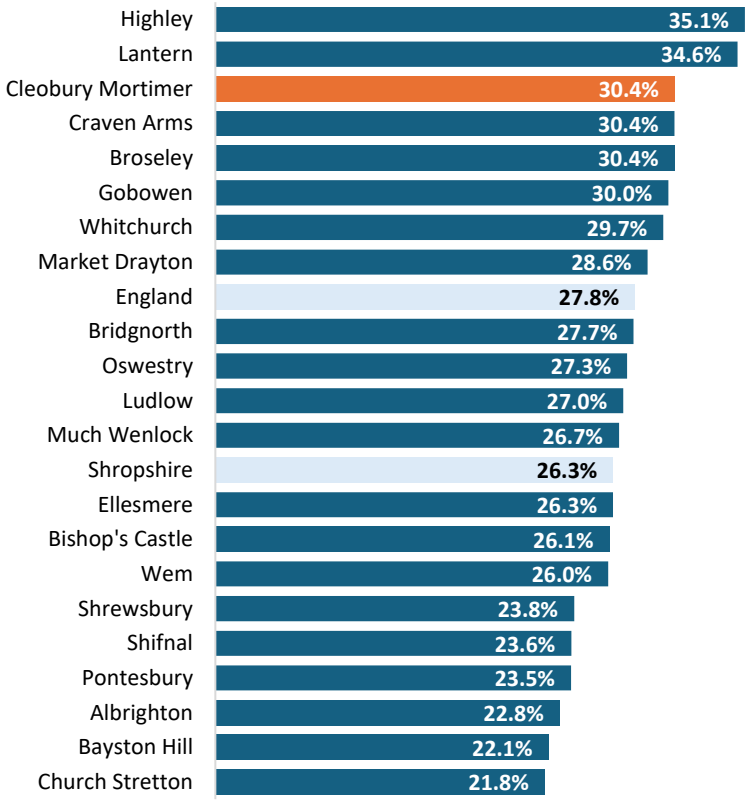

## Employment

- 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 verys lightly higher than the Shropshire average.

### Cleobury Mortimer: Occupation Types




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications

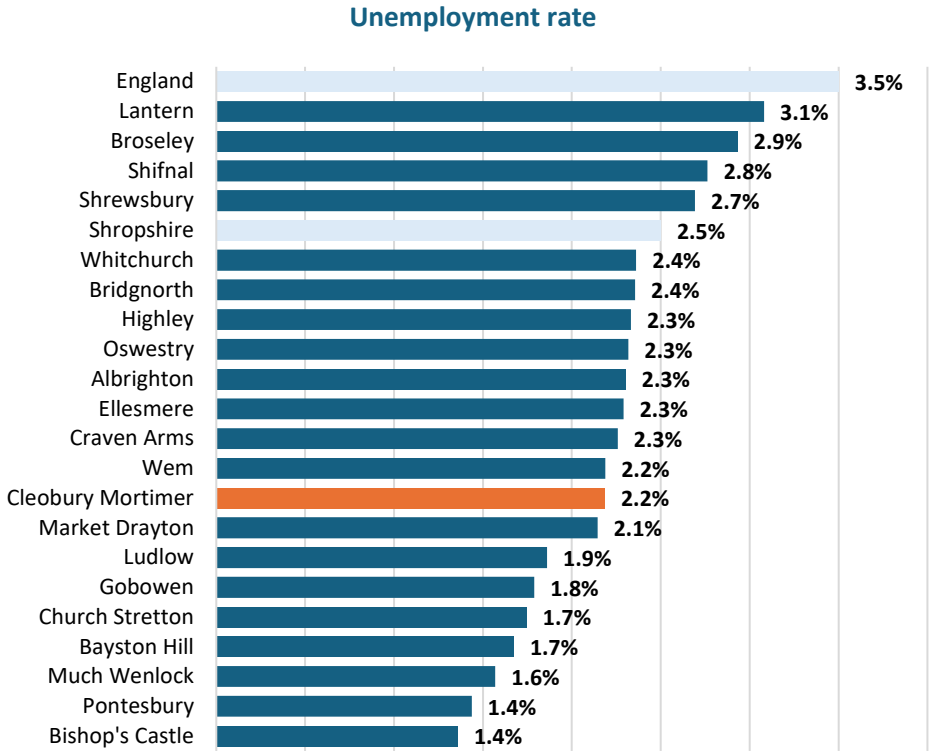



## Qualifications

- 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.

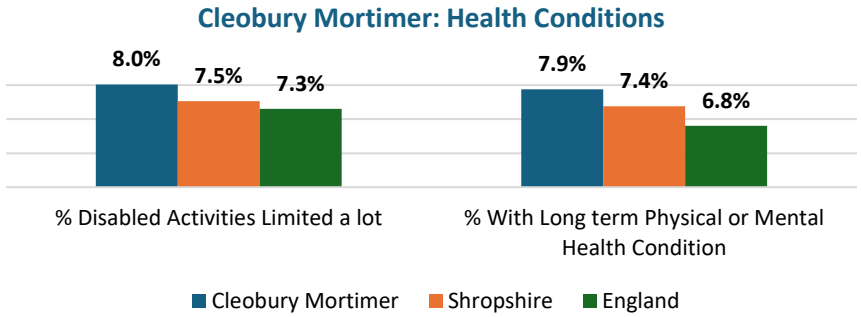
## Unemployment

- 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.



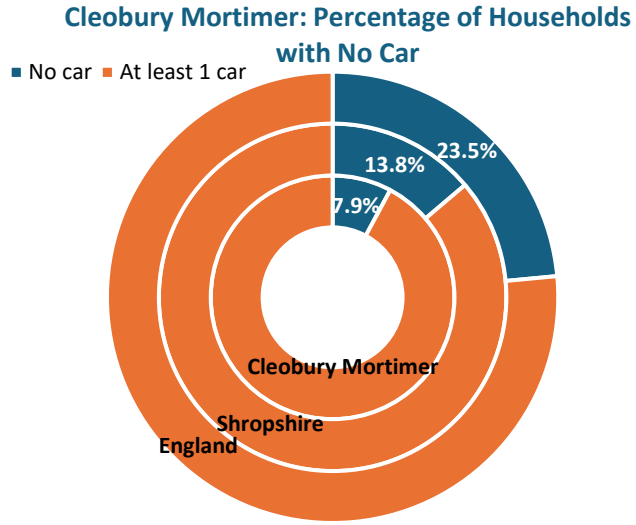

## Health Conditions

- 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.




## 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%.



# Craven Arms Library Profile

## Background

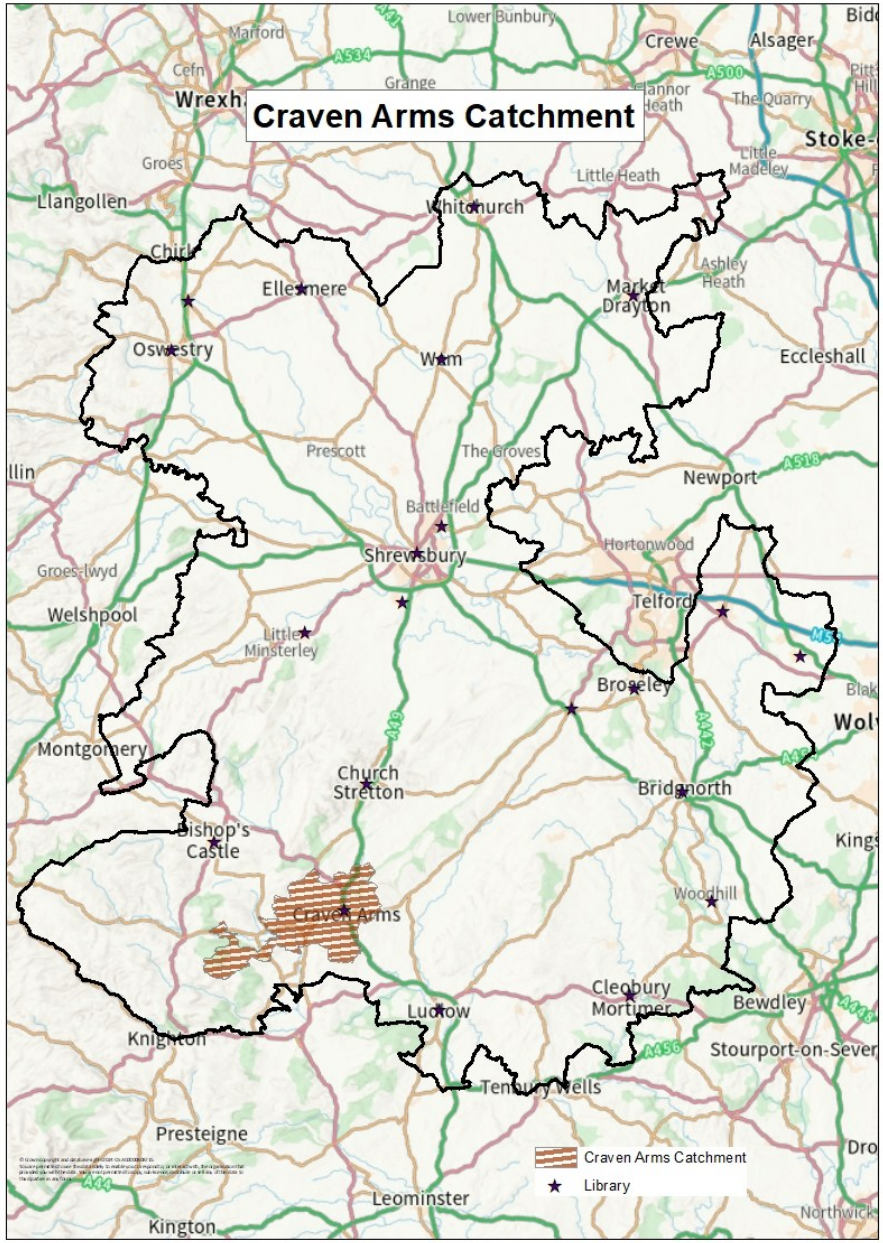
- Craven Arms is a small town in the south of Shropshire, located along the A49 between Church Stretton and Ludlow.
- The library is located in Craven Arms Community Centre and offers free parking. The venue also has meeting rooms, a sports hall, gym and pre-school nursery.
- The library is run by Halo 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 3,847 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 |

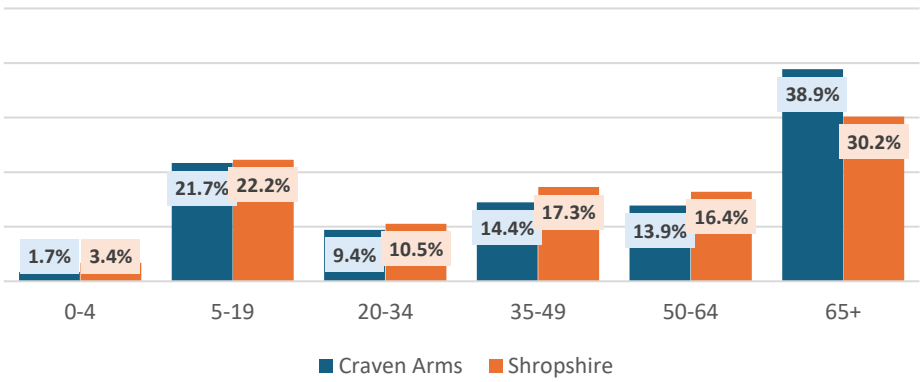
- The library employs 1.62 FTE.



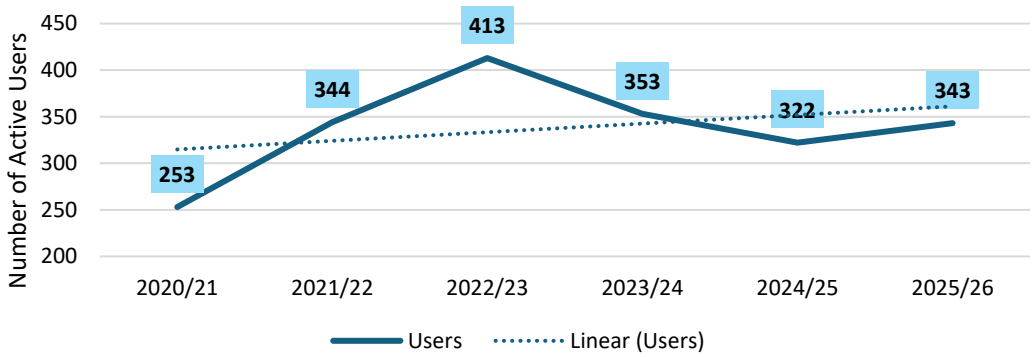
## Library Users

- Craven Arms library had 343 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.1% 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 for the year 2025/26 is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more people aged 65+ and lower numbers of people aged 20-64.

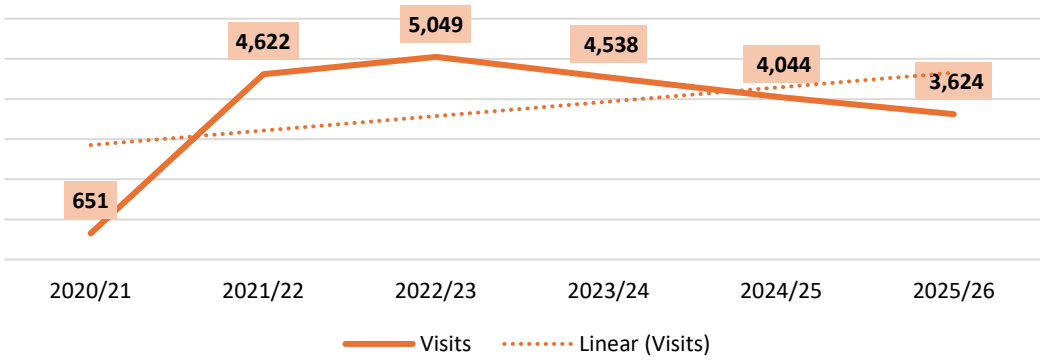
### Breakdown of Craven Arms Library Users by Age



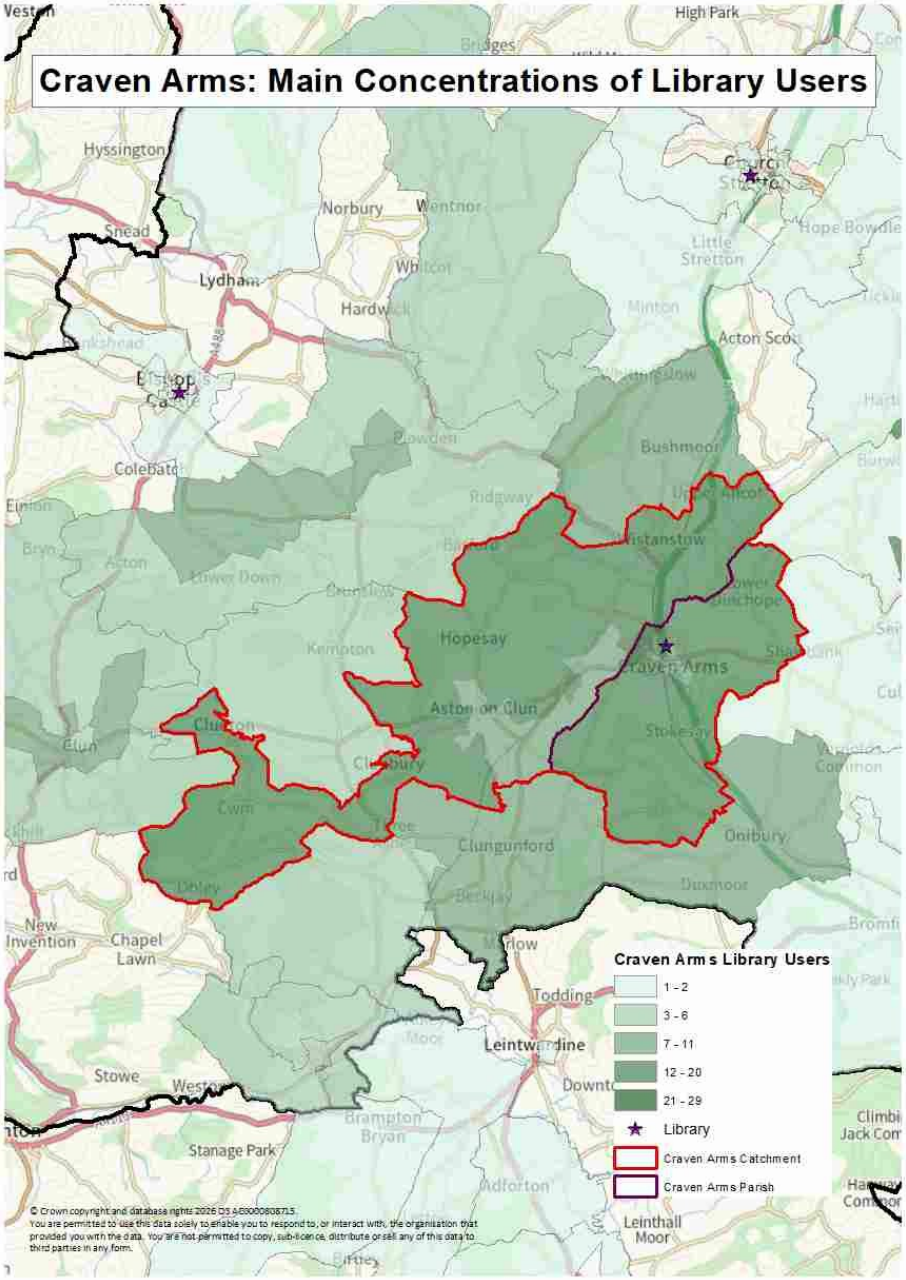

### Craven Arms: Number of Active Users




### Craven Arms: Number of Visits




- 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. There was an uptick in 2025/26, although user numbers remain lower than the 2022/23 peak.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 90 users (+35.6%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 3,624, which is the equivalent of about 11 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/five weeks on average, remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (17 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was more than five times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 6,906 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 20 per active user and 1.9 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 1% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 15%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 53.9% of all Craven Arms library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is the lowest in Shropshire.
- 37.2% live within Craven Arms Parish.
- 9.1% 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 4.8% to 15.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 46.1% of Craven Arms library users that do not live in the catchment, most live 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 May 2026, 74.0% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Craven Arms library were to Craven Arms, and these accounted for 74.1% of all issues.
- Ludlow and Church Stretton were the most frequently visited alternative libraries.

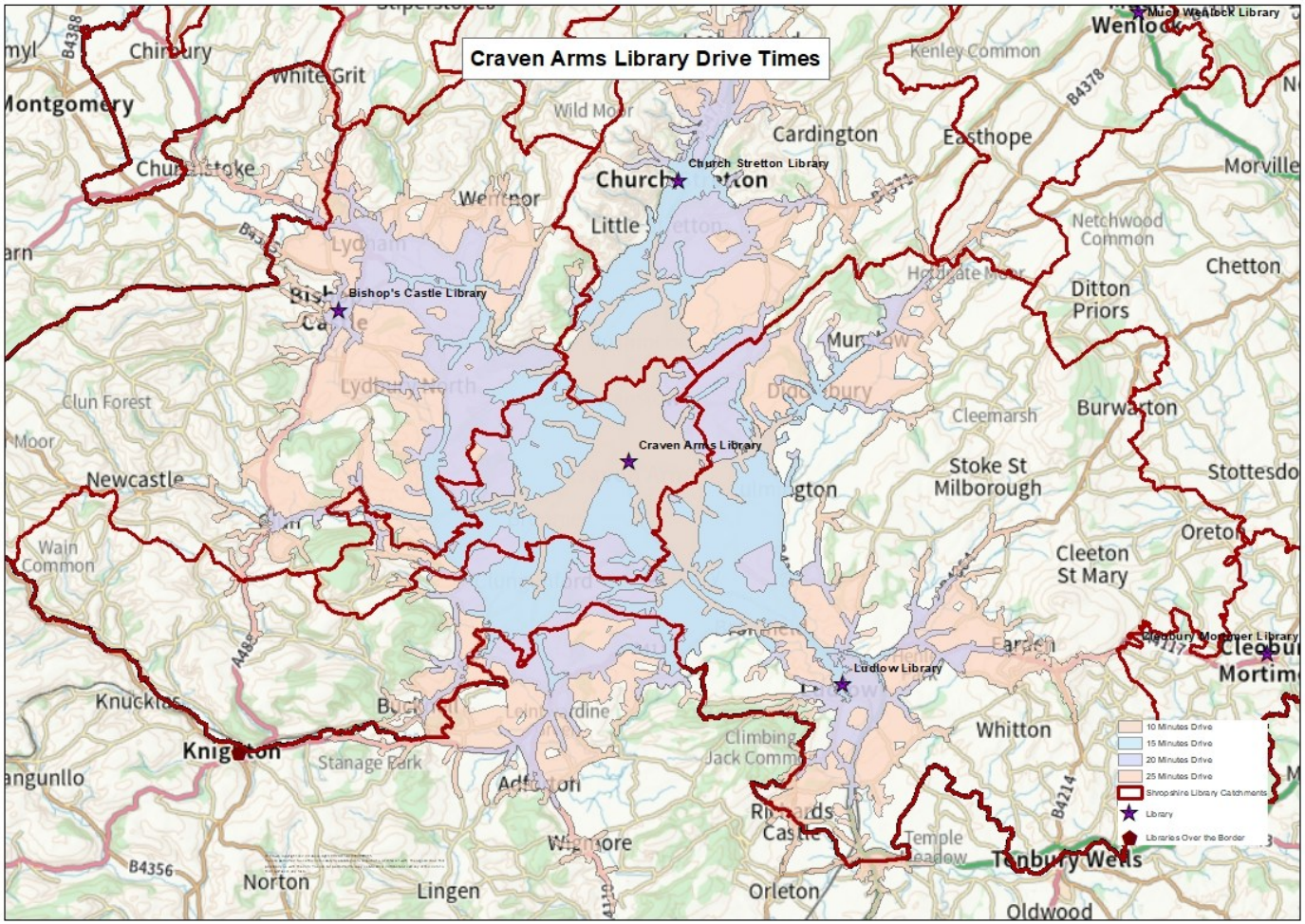
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 28.8% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 38.6% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 54.2% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 70.9% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 81.8% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 91.4% |

## 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<br>Train | 20 minutes<br>10 minutes |

## Costs

- Craven Arms is the fourth least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £9,150 (2025/26)
- Craven Arms ranks as the cheapest library per hour open and amongst the least expensive per active user, per book loan and per visit.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £3.70 | £78.80 | 21st |
| **Per Active User** | £26.68 | £81.29 | 18th |
| **Per Visit** | £2.52 | £4.23 | 17th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £1.32 | £5.07 | 18th |

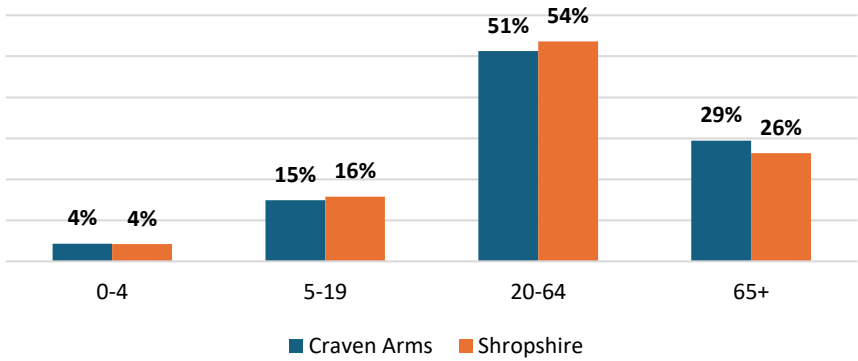
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Craven Arms Catchment Area

### Population

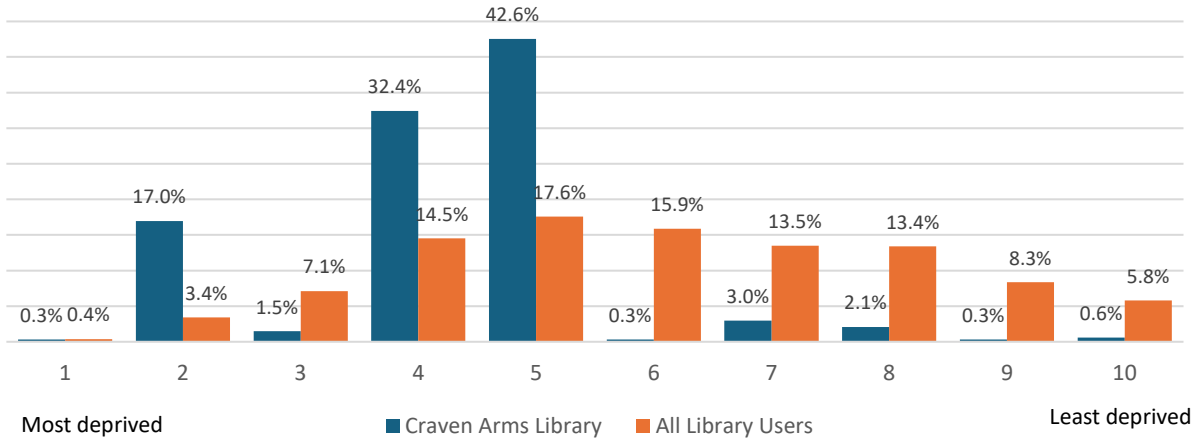
- Craven Arms library catchment is the 3rd smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 3,847.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion aged 65+ but a slightly lower proportion of 20-64-year-olds.
- There are 1,715 households in 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**



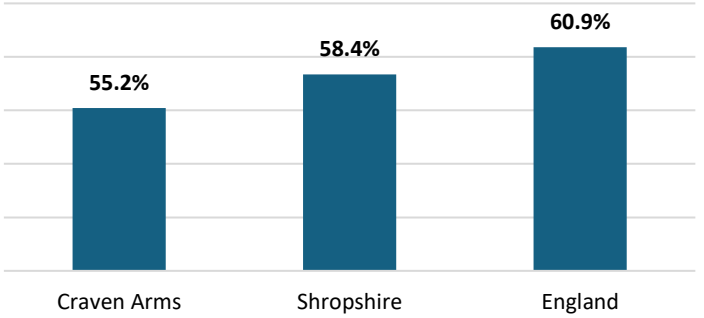

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Craven Arms library is in the second decile according to the IMD (2025), which means it is one the five libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% 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 90% living in deciles 2 to 5.
- Just 3.0% live in the least deprived 30% of the country.

## 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.

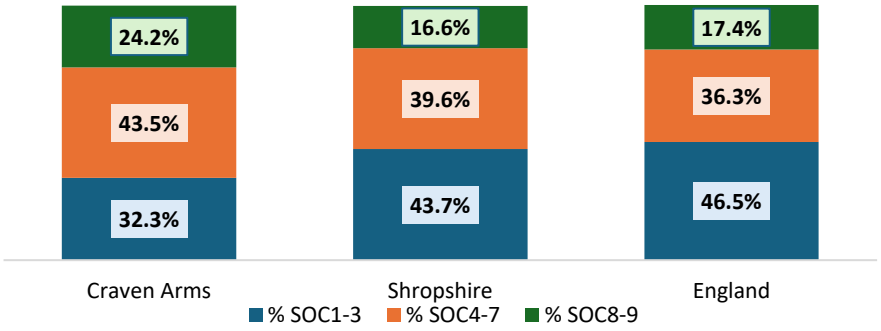
### Craven Arms: Economic Activity Rate



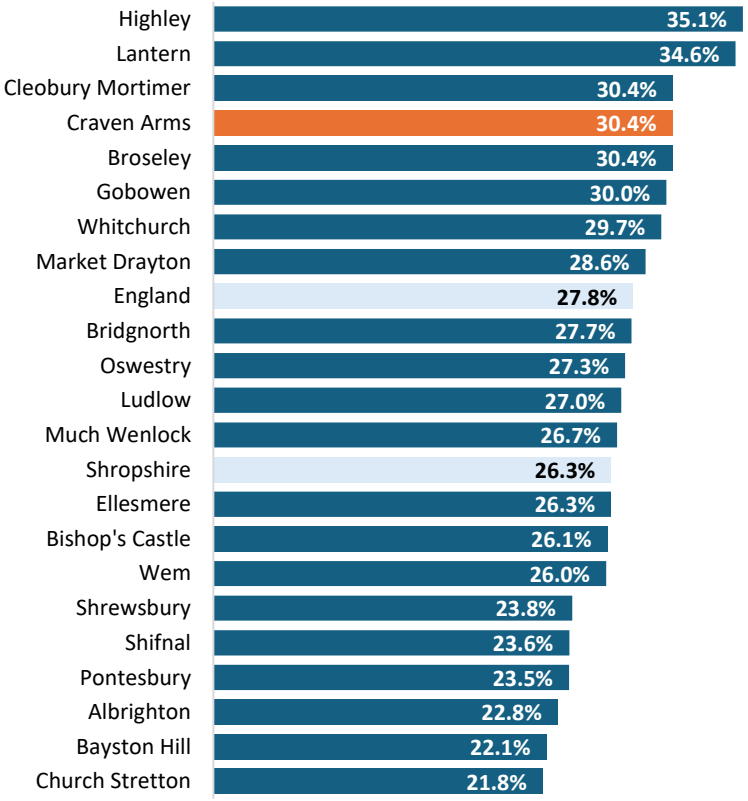

## Employment

- 1,718 people in Cravens 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

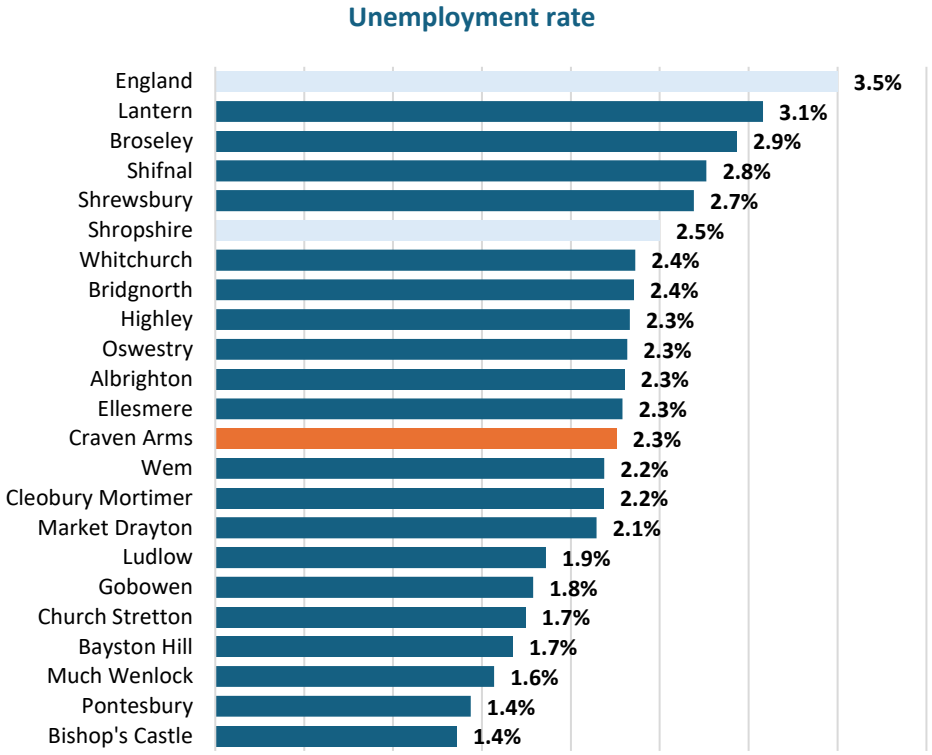



## Qualifications

- 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.

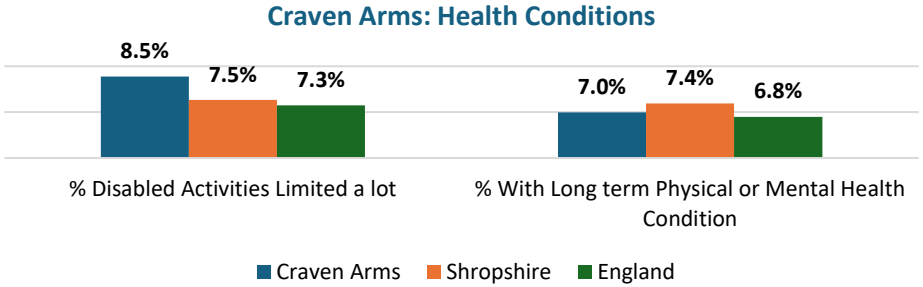
## Unemployment

- 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.



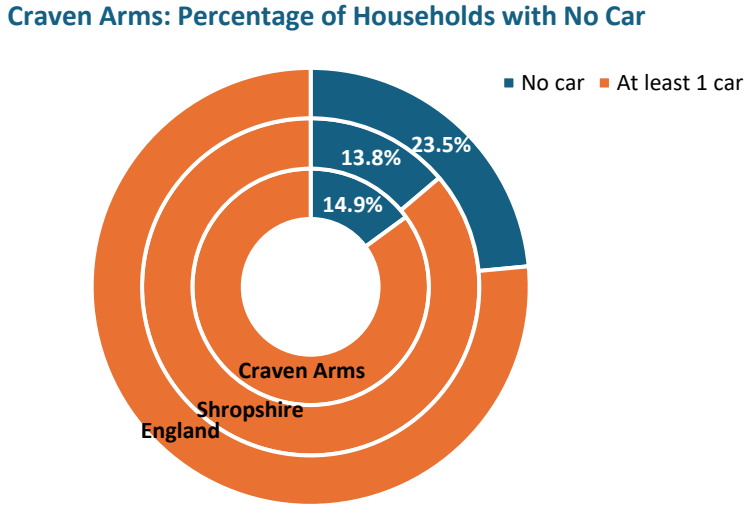

## Health Conditions

- 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.




## Ca

- 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%.



# Ellesmere Library Profile

## Background

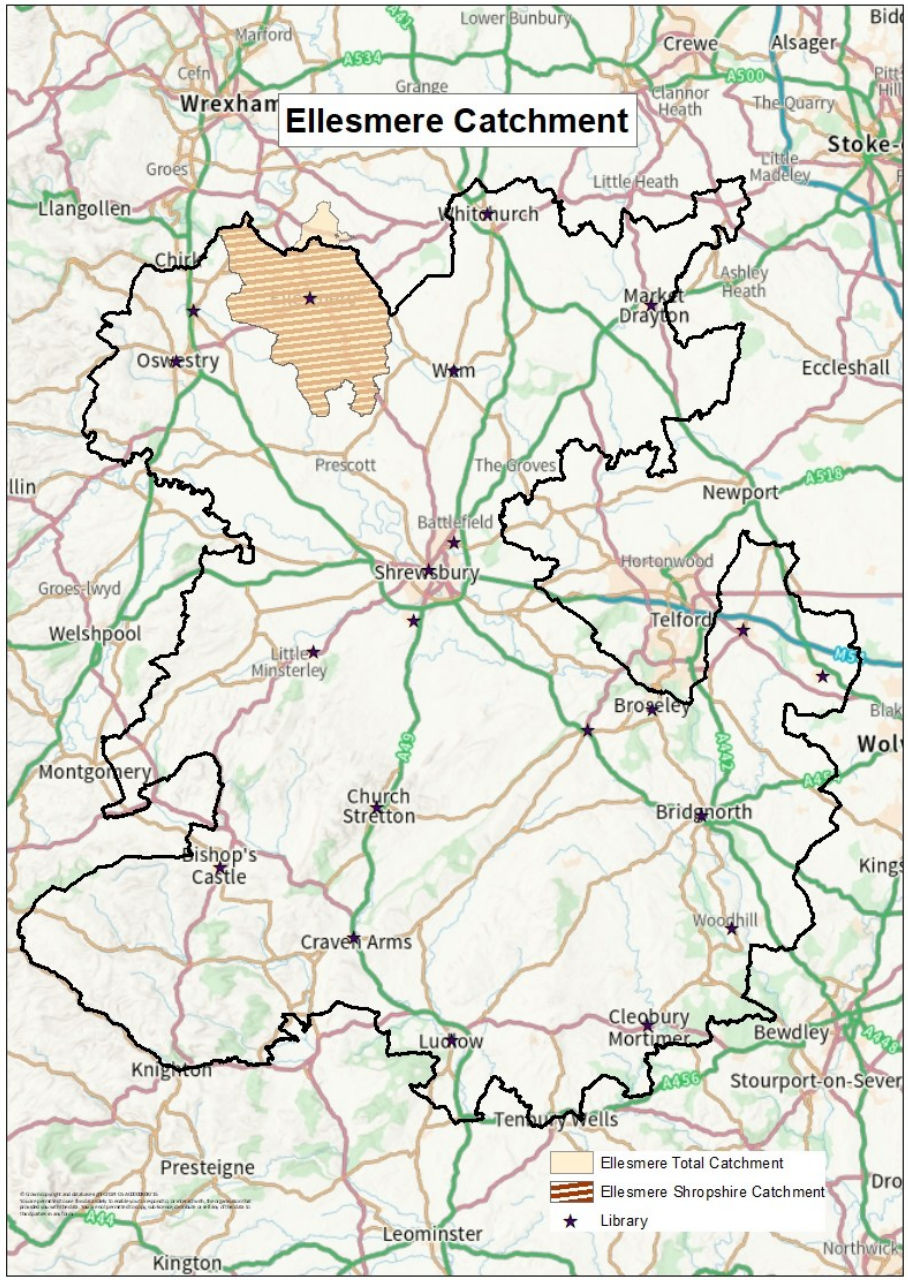
- Ellesmere is a small town in the north of Shropshire, located on the A495 between Oswestry to the west and Whitchurch to the east.
- The library is located in the centre of Ellesmere in the Our Space building on Trimpley Street.
- The library is run by Bethphage on behalf of Shropshire Council. Bethphage 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 10,123 comprising 4,255 households. The Shropshire population is 9,111.

### 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 |

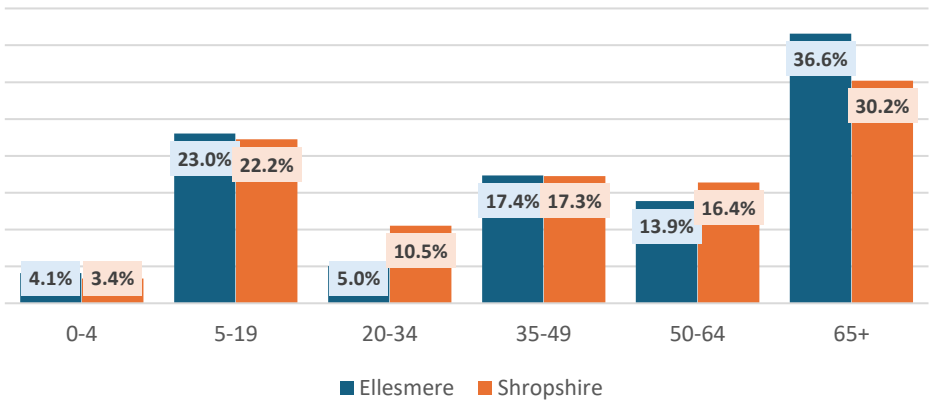
- The library benefitted from 20 volunteers in 2025/26, amounting to 823 volunteer hours.



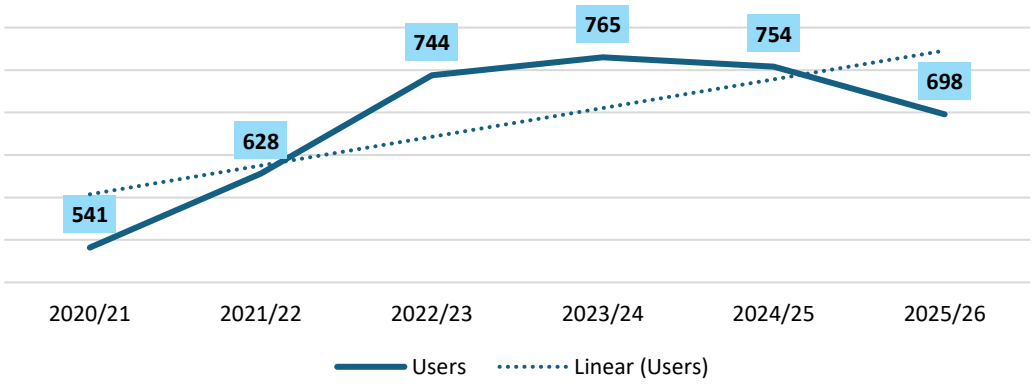
## Library Users

- Ellesmere library had 698 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.7% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more people aged 0-19, significantly more aged 65+ and lower numbers of people aged 20-64.

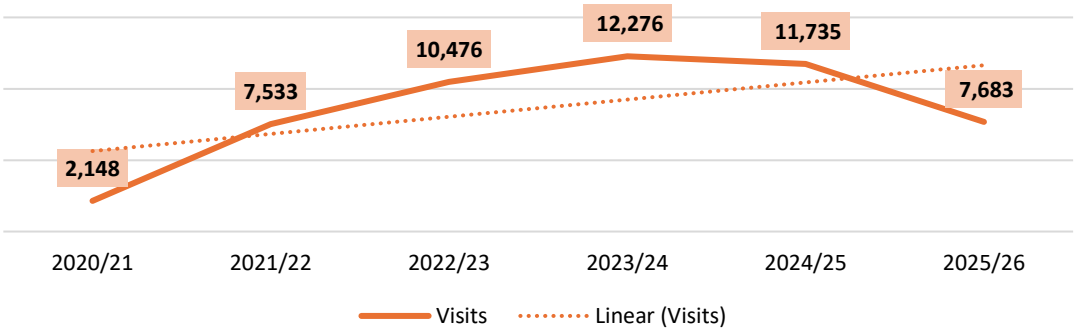
### Breakdown of Ellesmere Library Users by Age



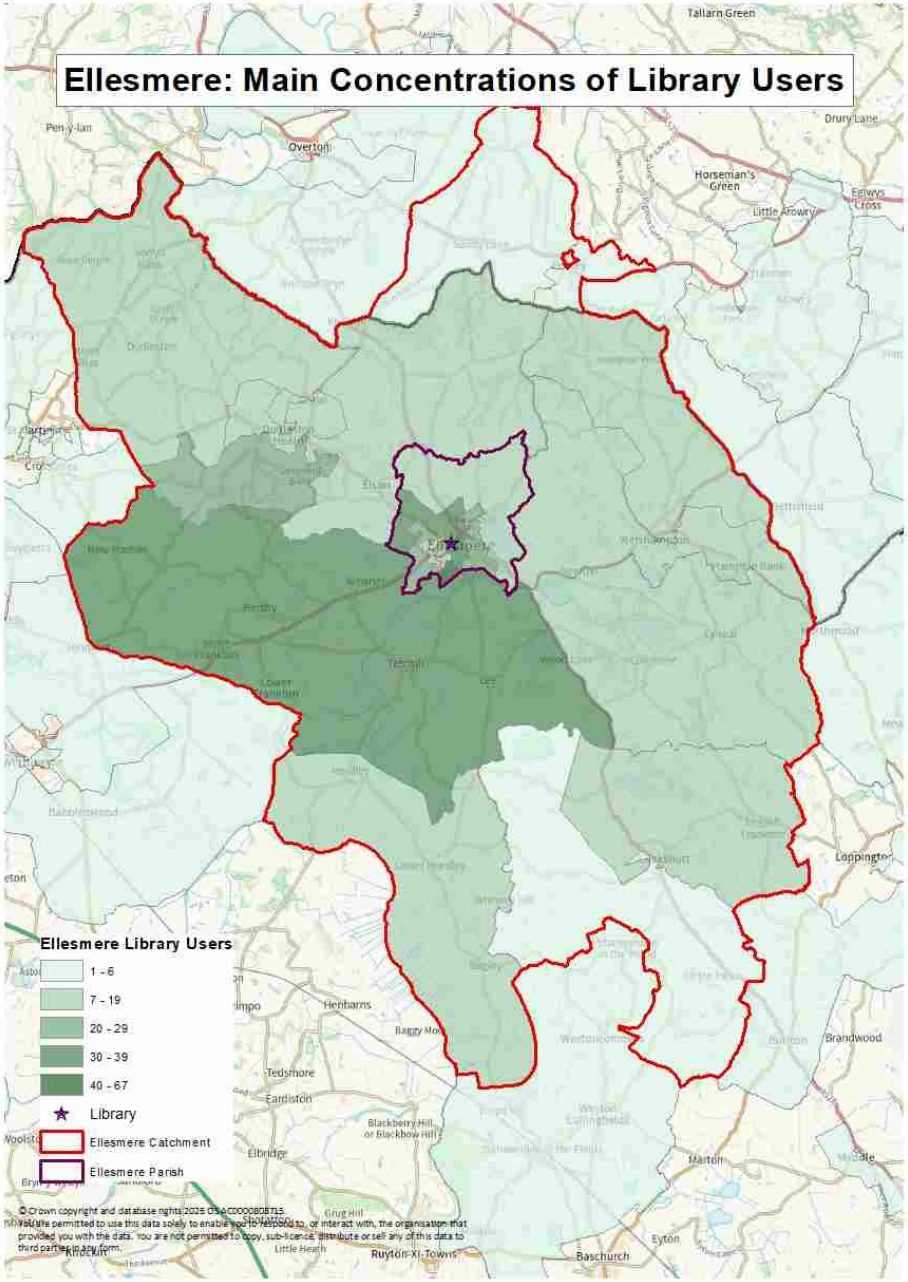

### Ellesmere: Number of Active Users




### Ellesmere: Number of Visits




- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although user numbers dipped over the last year.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 157 users (+29.0%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 7,683, which is the equivalent of about 11 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 remains lower than it was pre-pandemic (15 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits fell by 34.5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 13,572 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 19 per active user and 1.8 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 5%.
- Computer usage 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

- 88.6% of all Ellesmere library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the highest in Shropshire.
- 55.7% live within Ellesmere Urban Parish.
- 8,7% 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 less than 1.0% to 16%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 11.4% 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 May 2026, 82.1% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Ellesmere library were to Ellesmere, and these accounted for 79.9% 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.

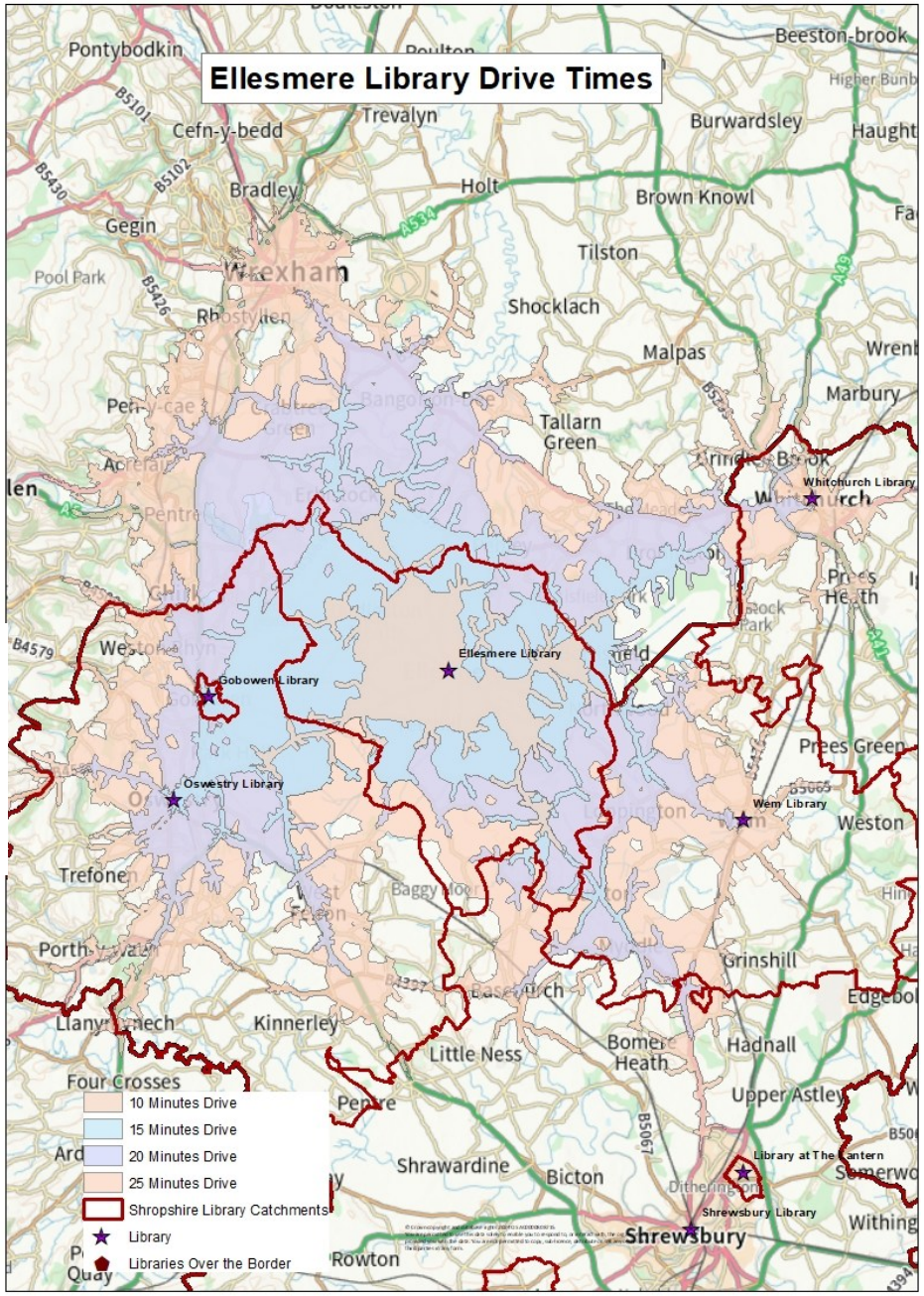
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 52.5% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 58.7% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 83.4% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 92.7% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 95.8% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 97.52% |

## 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 11th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual costs to the Council are £45,540 (2025/26).
- Ellesmere is the fourth most expensive library in terms of cost per visit, but costs less than the average per hour open, per active user and per book loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £42.72 | £77.80 | 13th |
| **Per Active User** | £65.24 | £81.29 | 13th |
| **Per Visit** | £5.93 | £4.23 | 4th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £3.36 | £5.07 | 10th |

*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1 = most expensive*

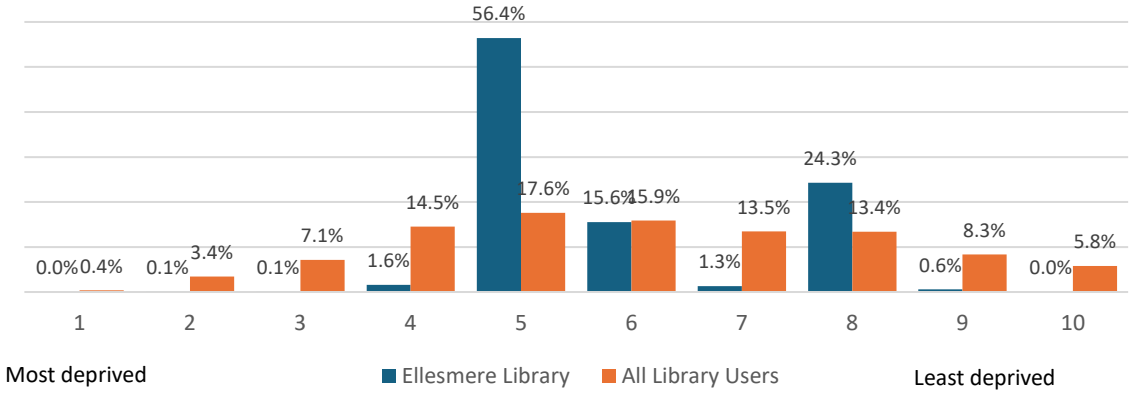
## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ellesmere Catchment Area

### Population

- Ellesmere library catchment is the 9th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 10,123 (9,111 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.

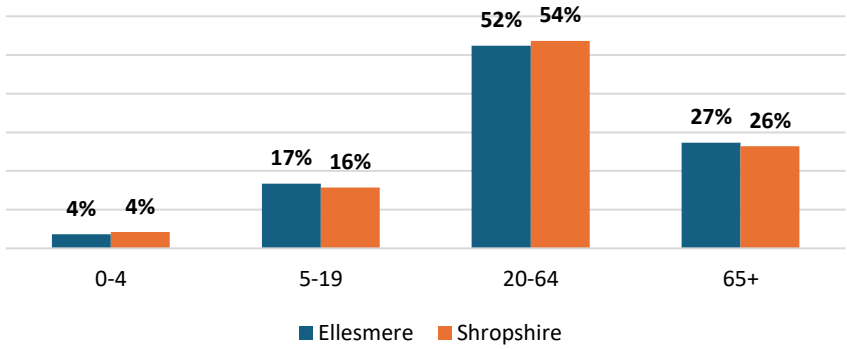
### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Ellesmere Library Users by IMD Decile**




*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

**Age Breakdown of Ellesmere Catchment**



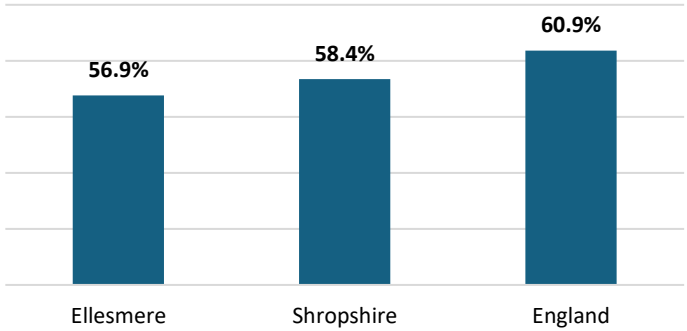

*Ellesmere catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

- Ellesmere library is in the eighth decile according to the IMD 2025, which means it is one the four libraries in Shropshire located in the 30% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a quarter of users are drawn from this decile compared with 13.4% of all Shropshire library users.
- 72% of users live in the fourth and fifth decile.

## 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.

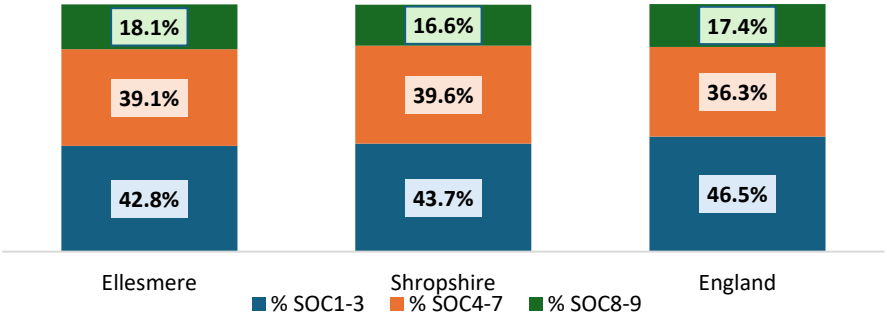
### Ellesmere: Economic Activity Rate



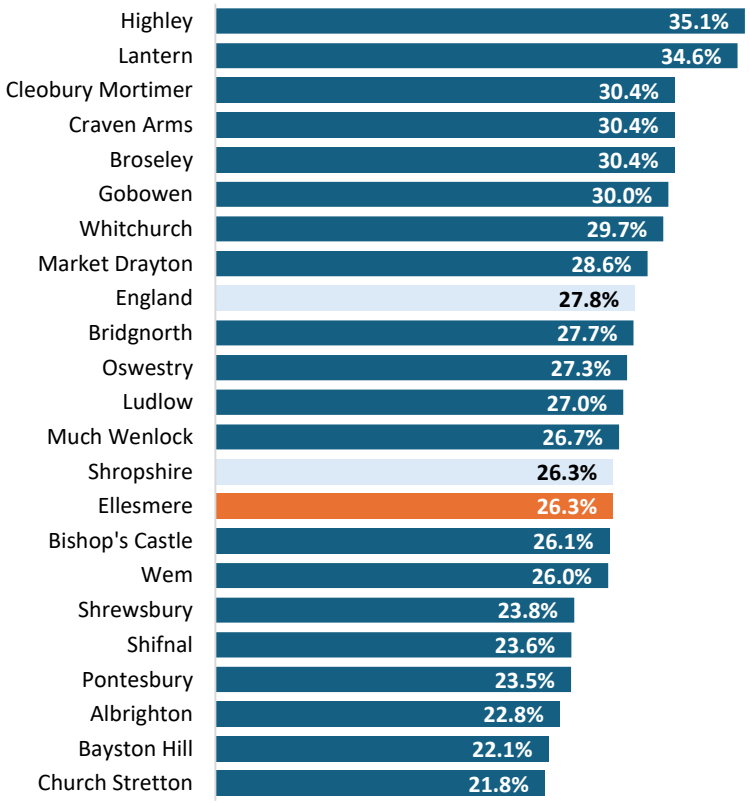

## Employment

- 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

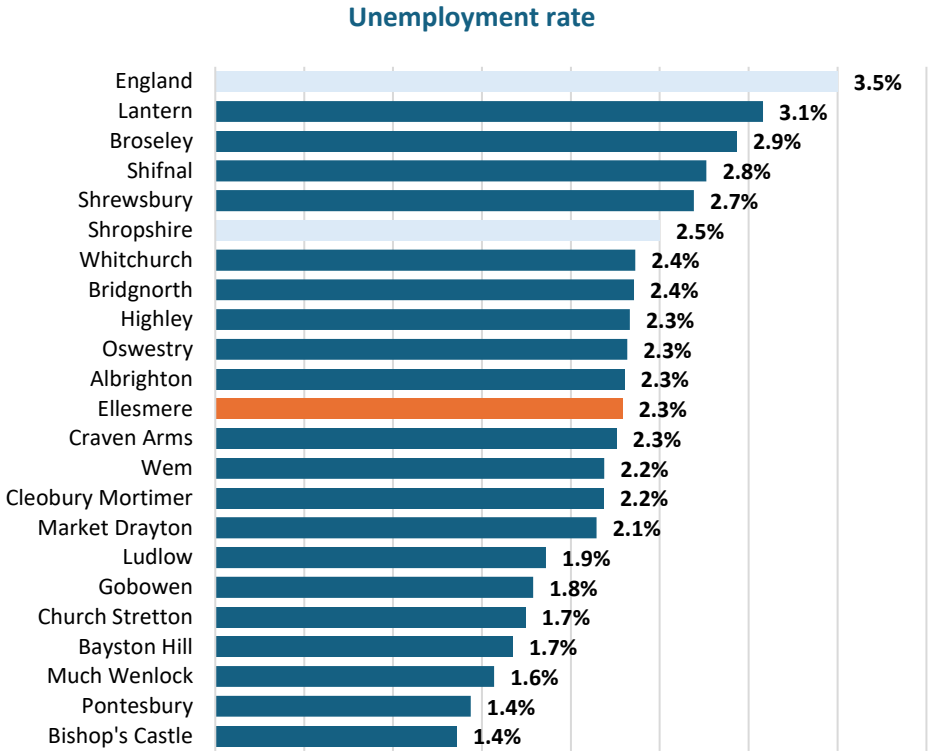



## Qualifications

- 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.

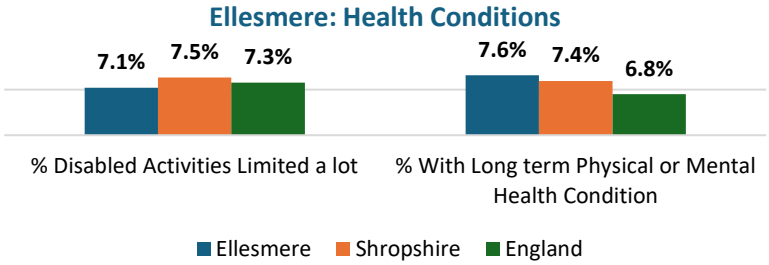
## Unemployment

- 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.



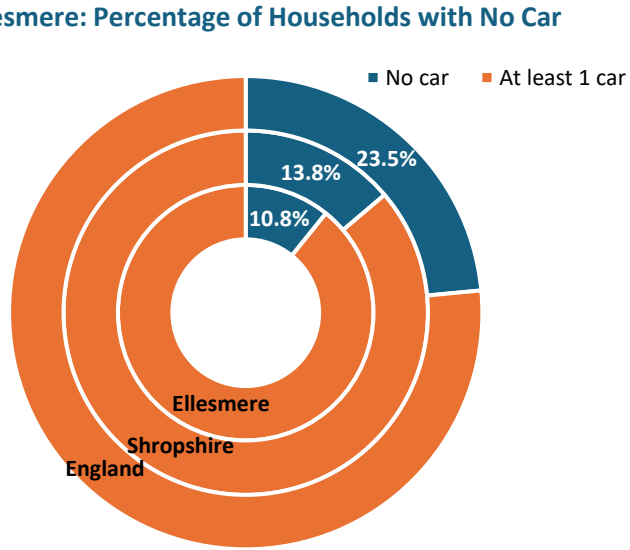

## Health Conditions

- 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%.



# Gobowen Library Profile

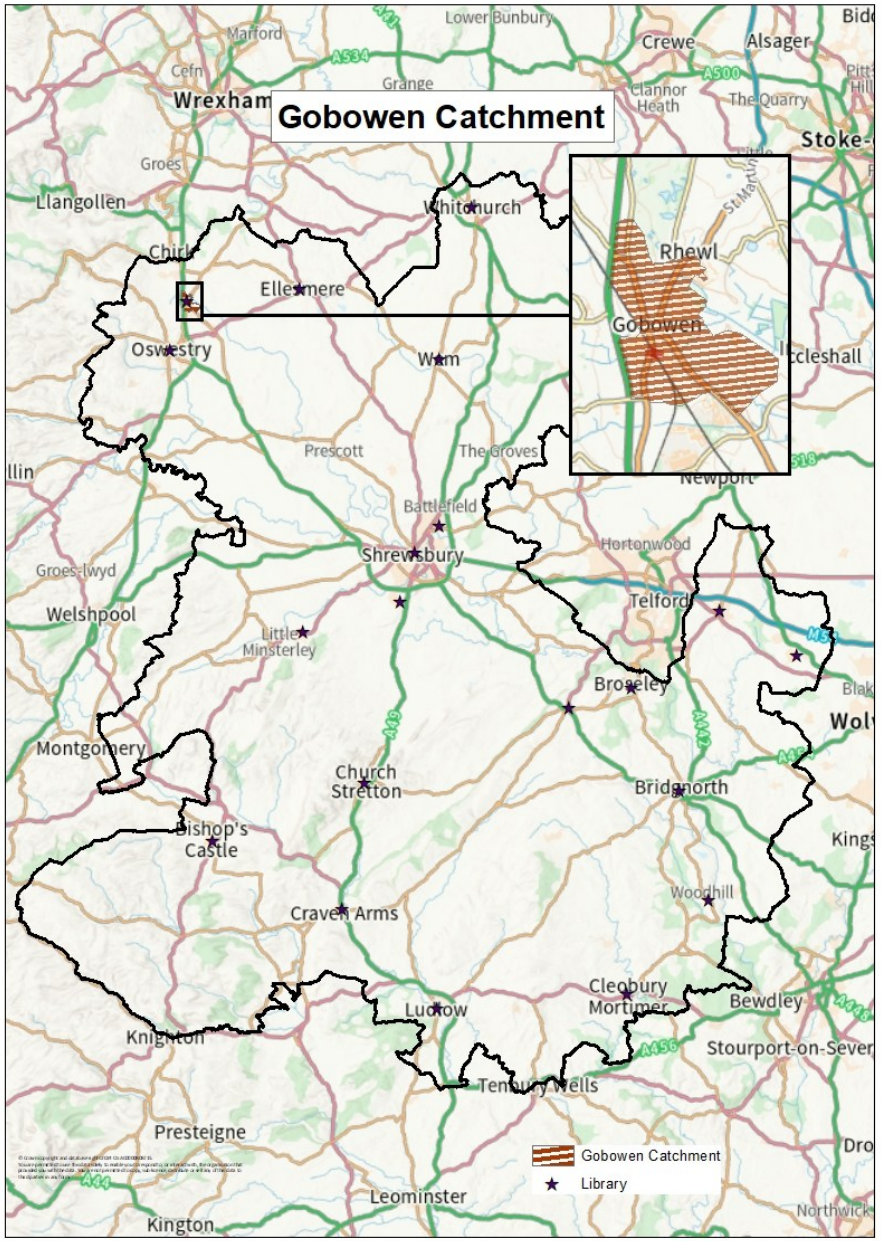
## Background

- 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 2,830 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<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 10.00am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Friday | Closed | 0 |
| Saturday | 10.00am-13.00pm | 3 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

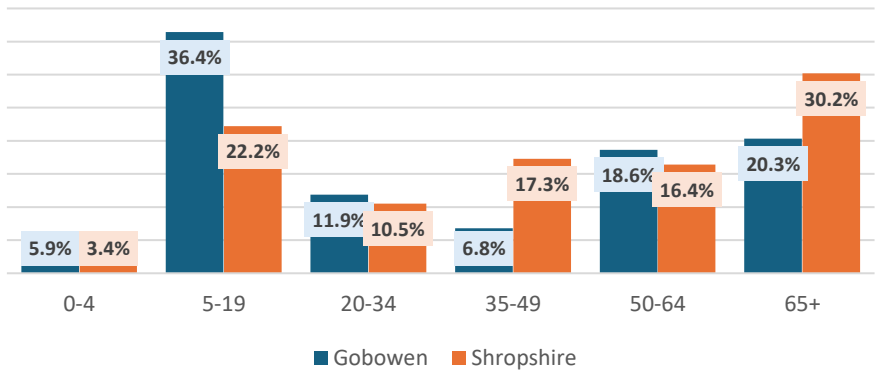



- The library has 0.41 FTE employees and benefitted from 118 volunteers in 2025/26, amounting to 257 volunteer hours.

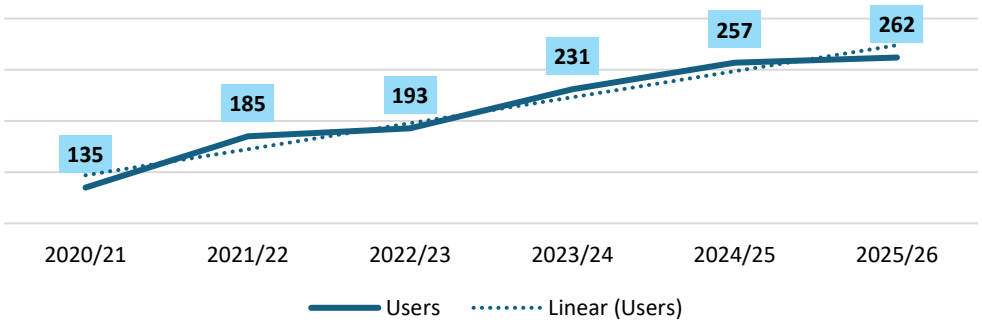
## Library Users

- Gobowen library had 262 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 0.8% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.4% 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 (2025/26) 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 35.

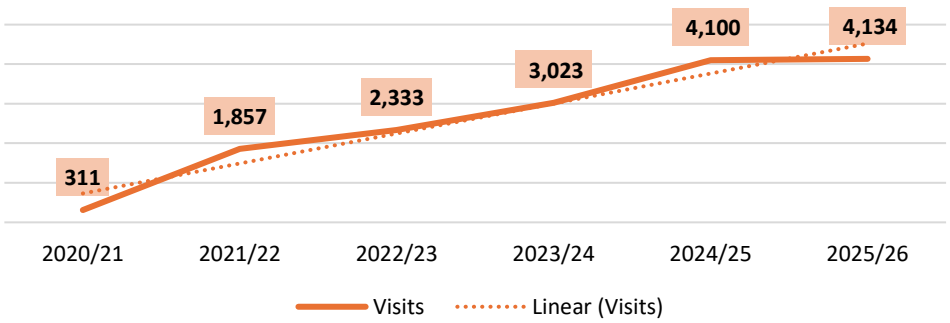
### Breakdown of Gobowen Library Users by Age



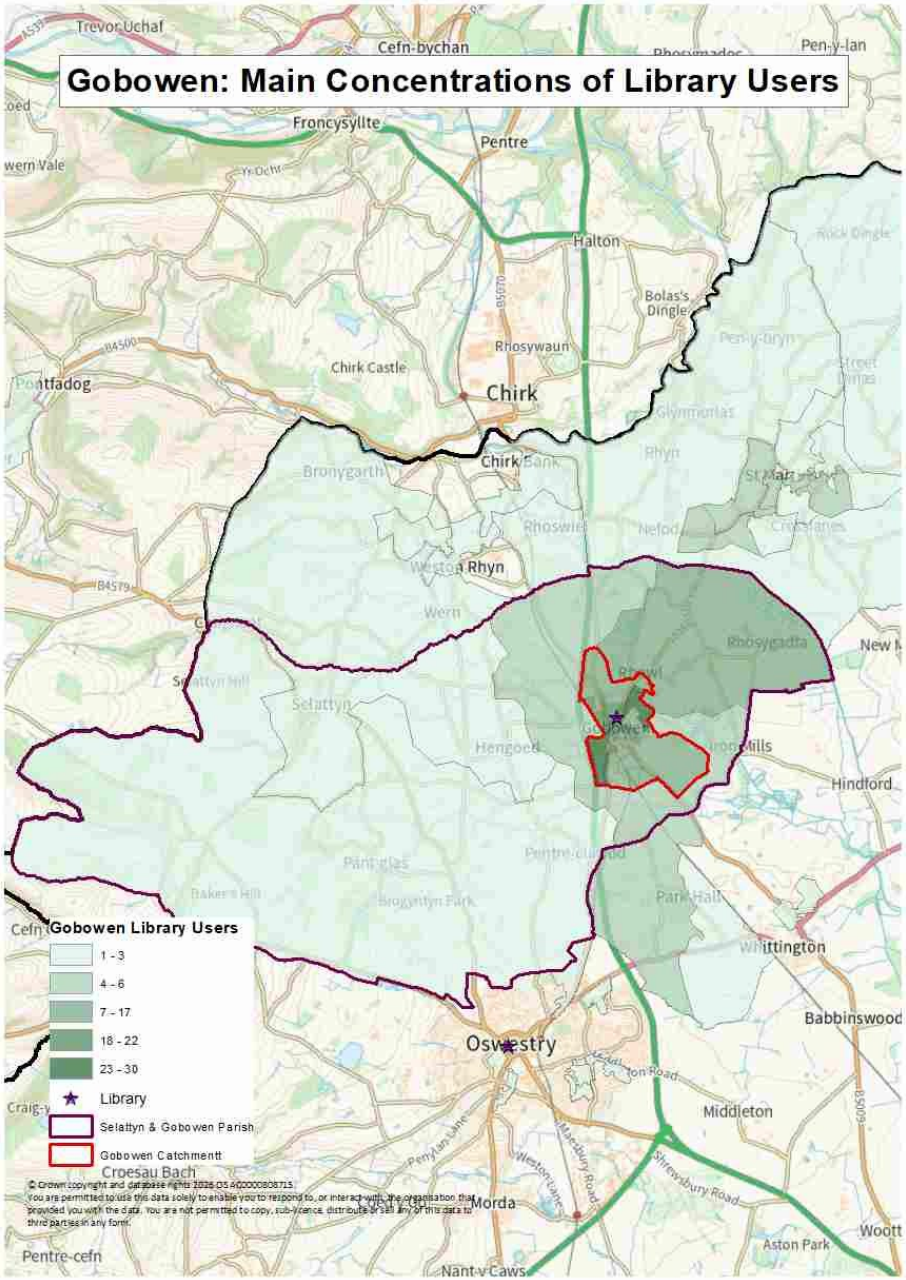

### Gobowen: Number of Active Users




### Gobowen: Number of Visits




- 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 five in 2025/26.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 127 users (+94.1%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 4,134, 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 stable in 2025/26 in comparison with the previous year.
- 6,062 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 23 per active user and 1.5 per visit.
- The number of loans rose by 4% between 2025/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 12%.
- Computer usage was up by a substantial 67%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 61.3% of all Gobowen library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- 70.3% live within Selattyn and Gobowen Parish, which covers a much larger geographic area than the library catchment.
- 10.4% 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 6.6% to 14.2%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 38.7% 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 May 2026, 76.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Gobowen library were to Gobowen, and these accounted for 72.5% of all issues.
- Oswestry was the most frequently visited alternative library.

## Walk/Drive Times

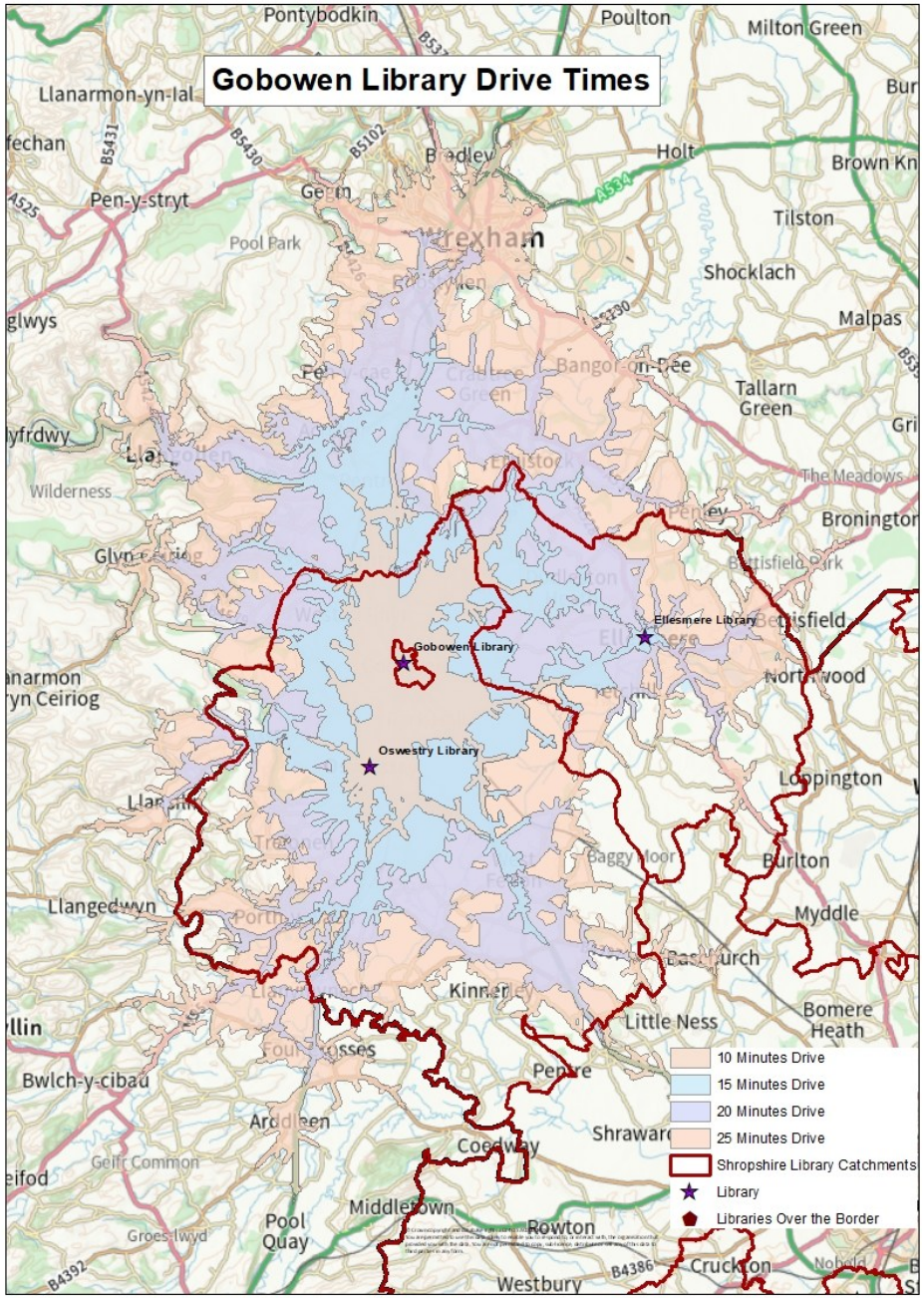
- The following table shows the proportion of active Gobowen library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 66.2% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 69.9% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 91.4% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 94.7% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 96.2% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 97.0% |

## 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 £38,070 (2025/26)
- However, the library ranks as the third most expensive per active user behind Ludlow and Whitchurch and second most expensive per visit behind Whitchurch. It is also more expensive than average per book loan but is less expensive per hour open.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £48.81 | £78.80 | 10th |
| **Per Active User** | £145.31 | £81.29 | 3rd |
| **Per Visit** | £9.21 | £4.23 | 2nd |
| **Per Book Loan** | £6.28 | £5.07 | 8th |

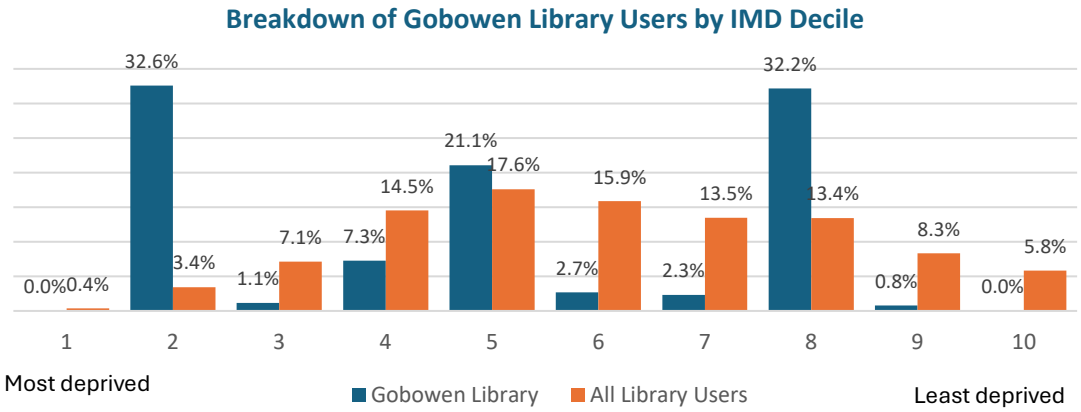
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

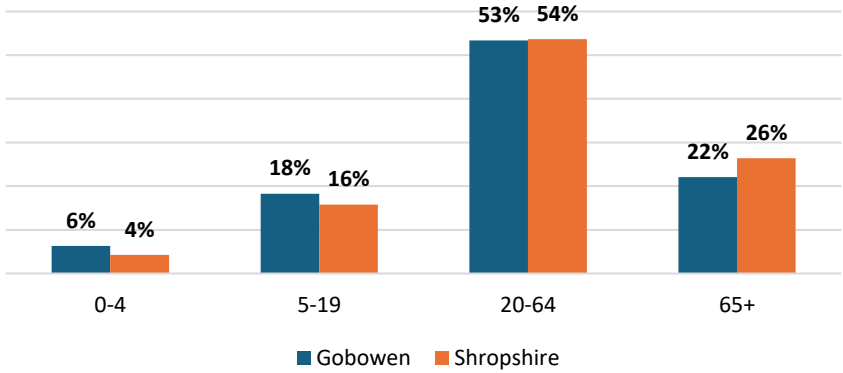
## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Gobowen Catchment Area

### Population

- Gobowen library catchment is the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 2,830.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of 0–19-year-olds and a slightly lower proportion aged 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.

### Deprivation



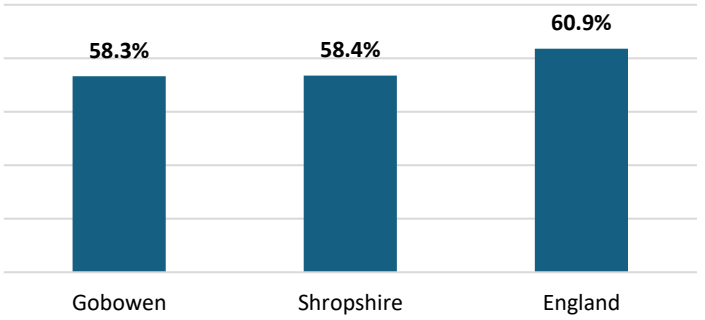

- Gobowen library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2024, which means it is one the five libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a third of users are drawn from this decile compared with 3.4% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further third of users live within 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 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.

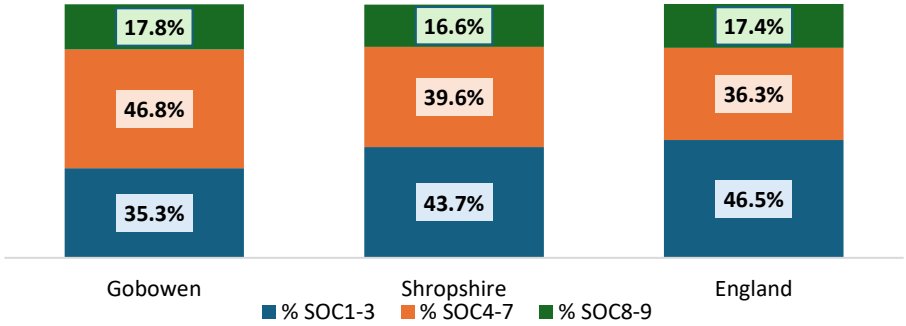
### Gobowen: Economic Activity Rate



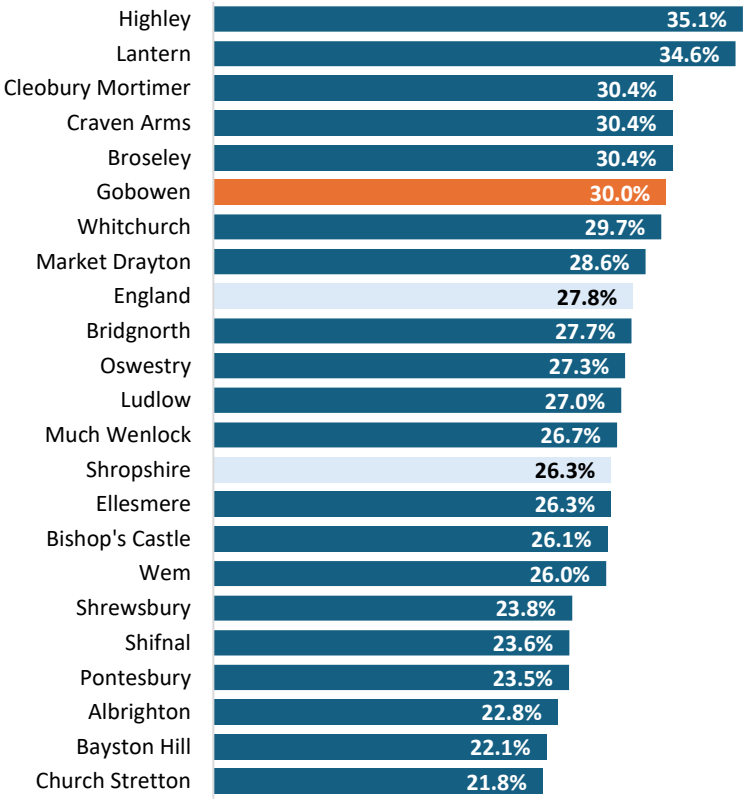

## Employment

- 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

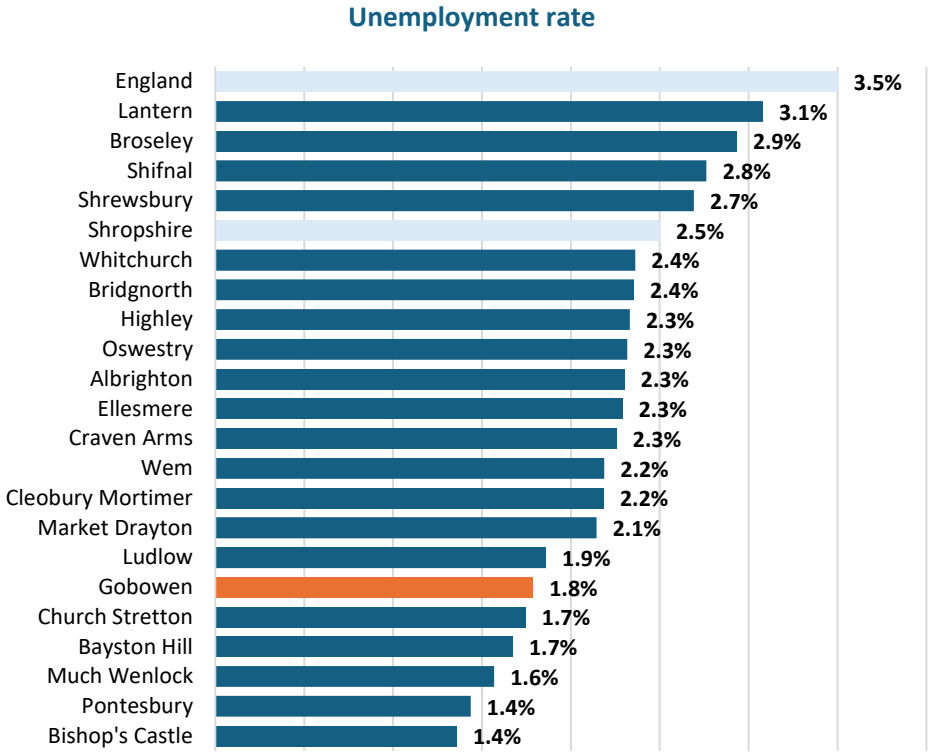



## Qualifications

- 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.

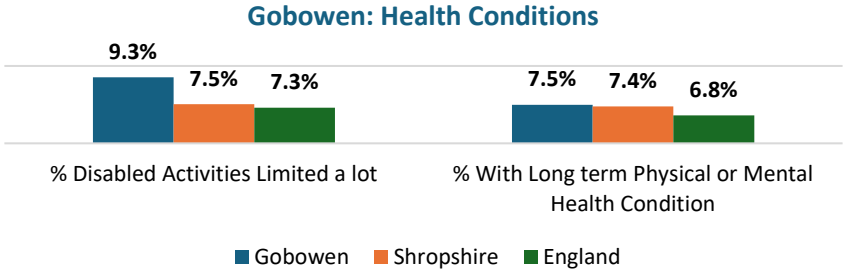
## Unemployment

- 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.



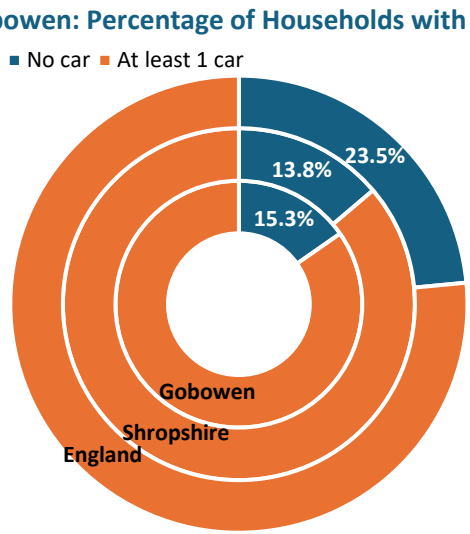

## Health Conditions

- 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.




## 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%.



# Highley Library Profile

## Background

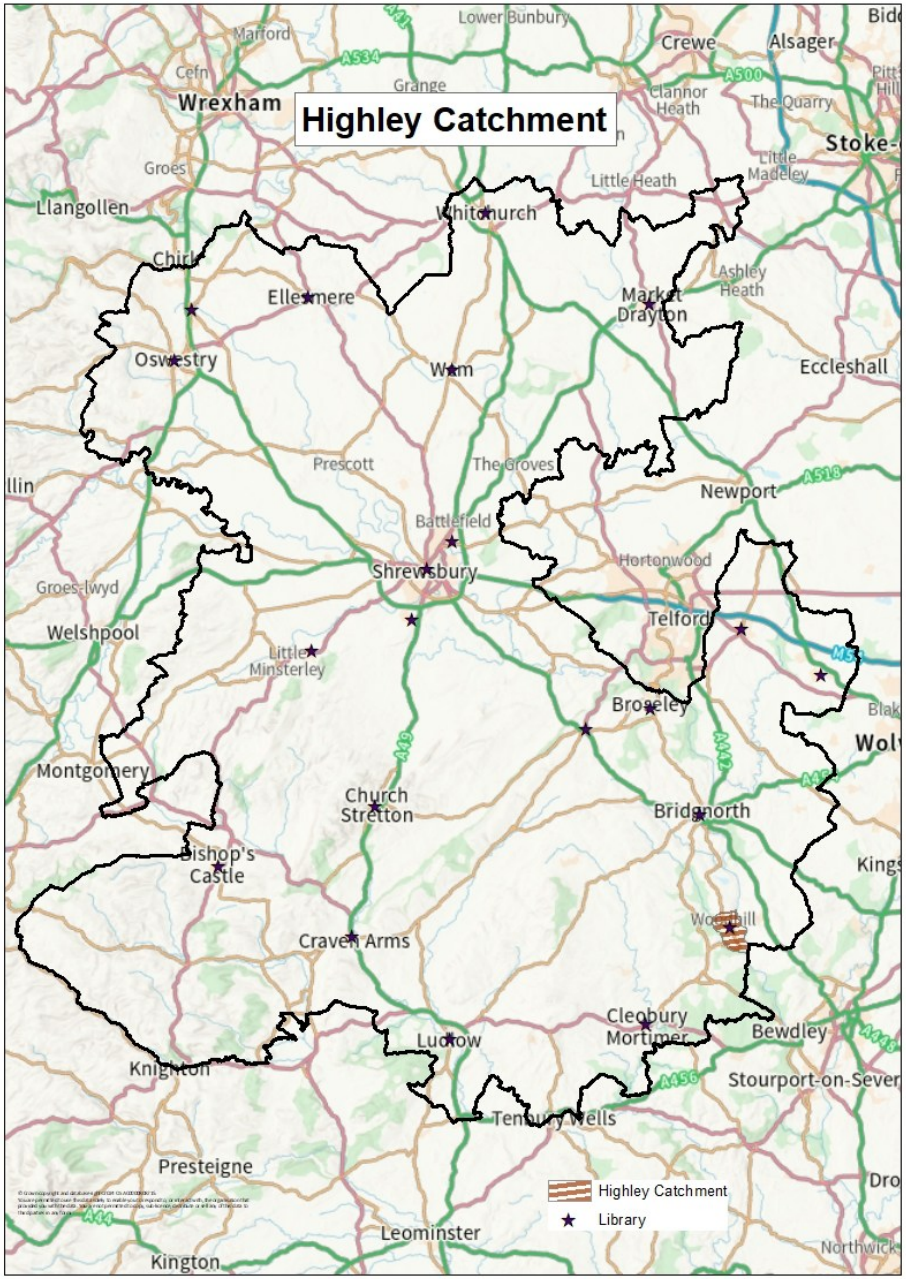
- Highley is a large village in the south east of Shropshire, close to the Worcestershire border.
- The library is located within the Severn Centre in the middle of the village and offers on-site parking.
- The Severn Centre is a multi-purpose facility with an outdoor pool, gym, sports hall and cafe 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 3,785 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 |

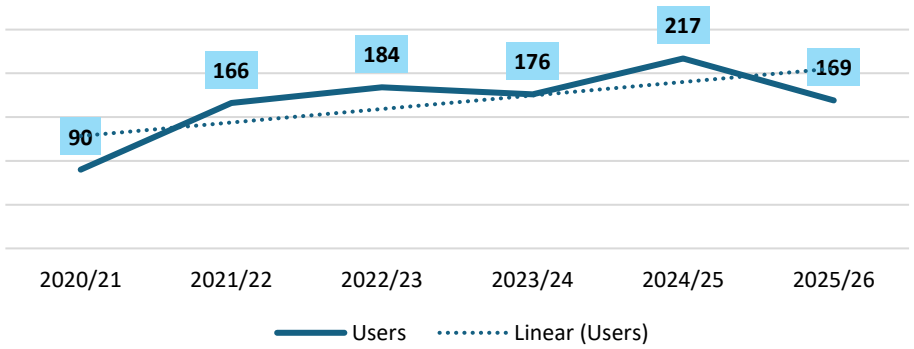
- The library has 2 FTE employees.in 2025/26 the library benefited from one volunteer offering a total of 17 hours.



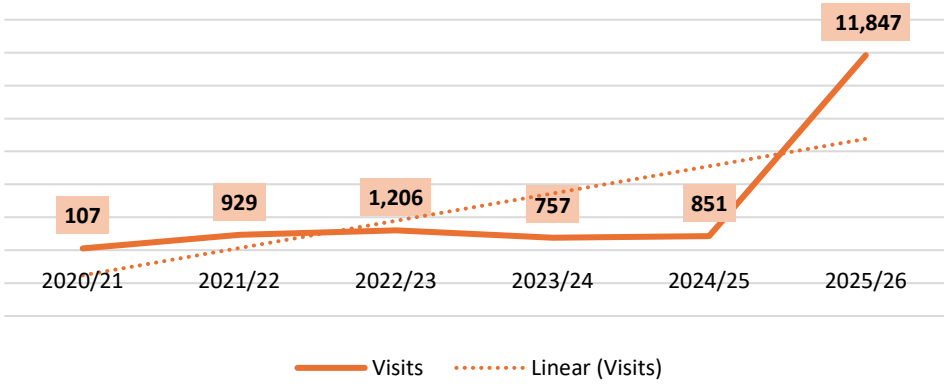
## Library Users

- Highley library had 169 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 0.5% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 5.2% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more people aged 65 and above and also more aged 5-34.

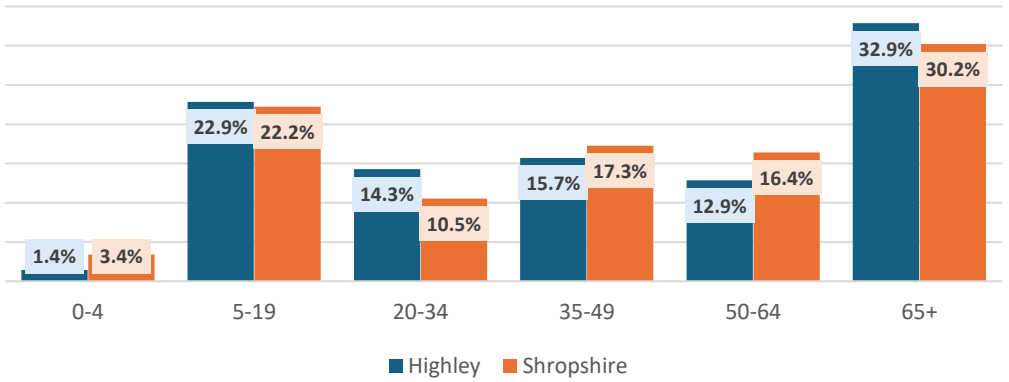
### Highley: Number of Active Users



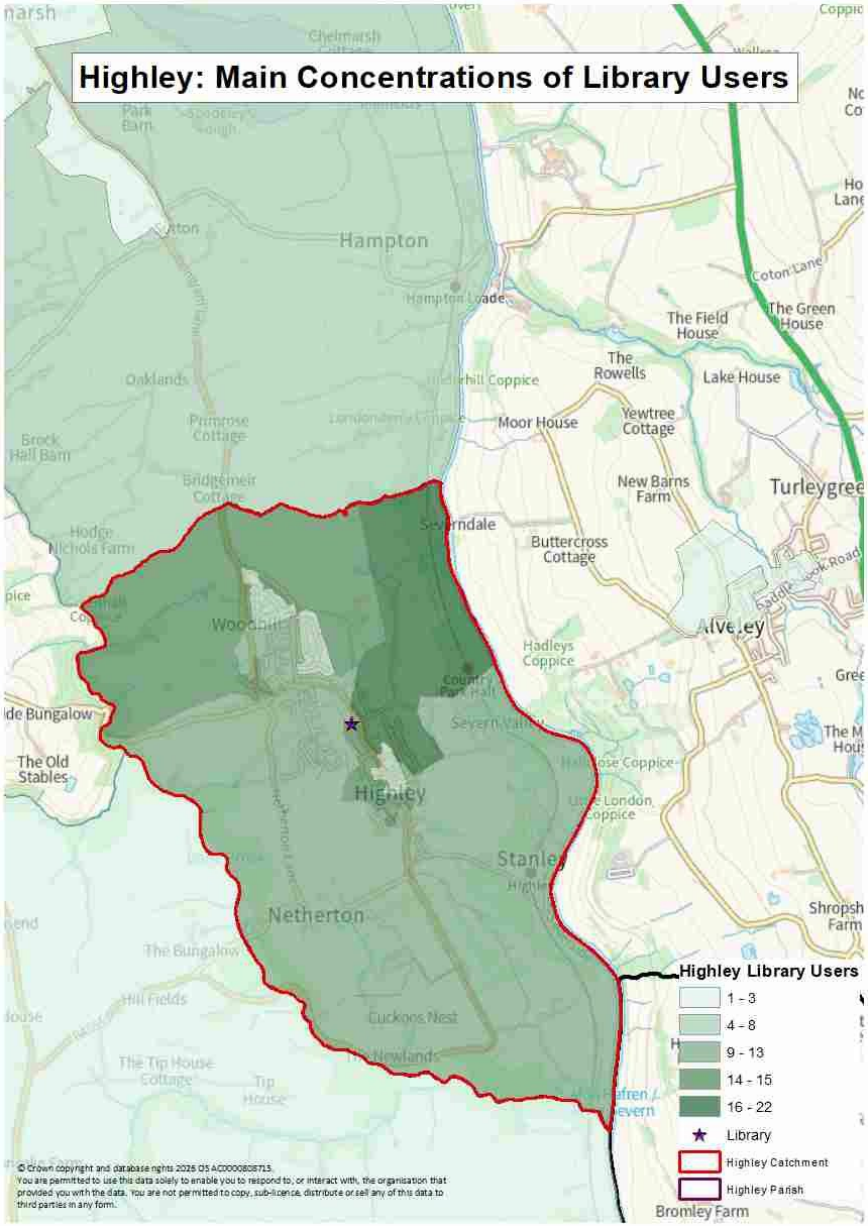

### Highley: Number of Visits




### 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, although user numbers declined by 28 in 2025/26.
- Since 2020/21 user numbers rose by 79 (+87.8%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 11,847, which is the equivalent of about 70 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business; thereafter, visits increased but the number of visits spiked upwards in 2025/26 from less than 1,000 in 2024/25.
- 2,135 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 13 per active user and 0.2 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 2% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 110%.
- Computer usage was up by a significant 91%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 82.6% 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.
- 5.2% 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 7.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 17.4% 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 May 2022, 80.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Highley library were to Highley, and these accounted for 78.2% of all issues.
- Bridgnorth was the most frequently visited alternative library.

## Walk/Drive Times

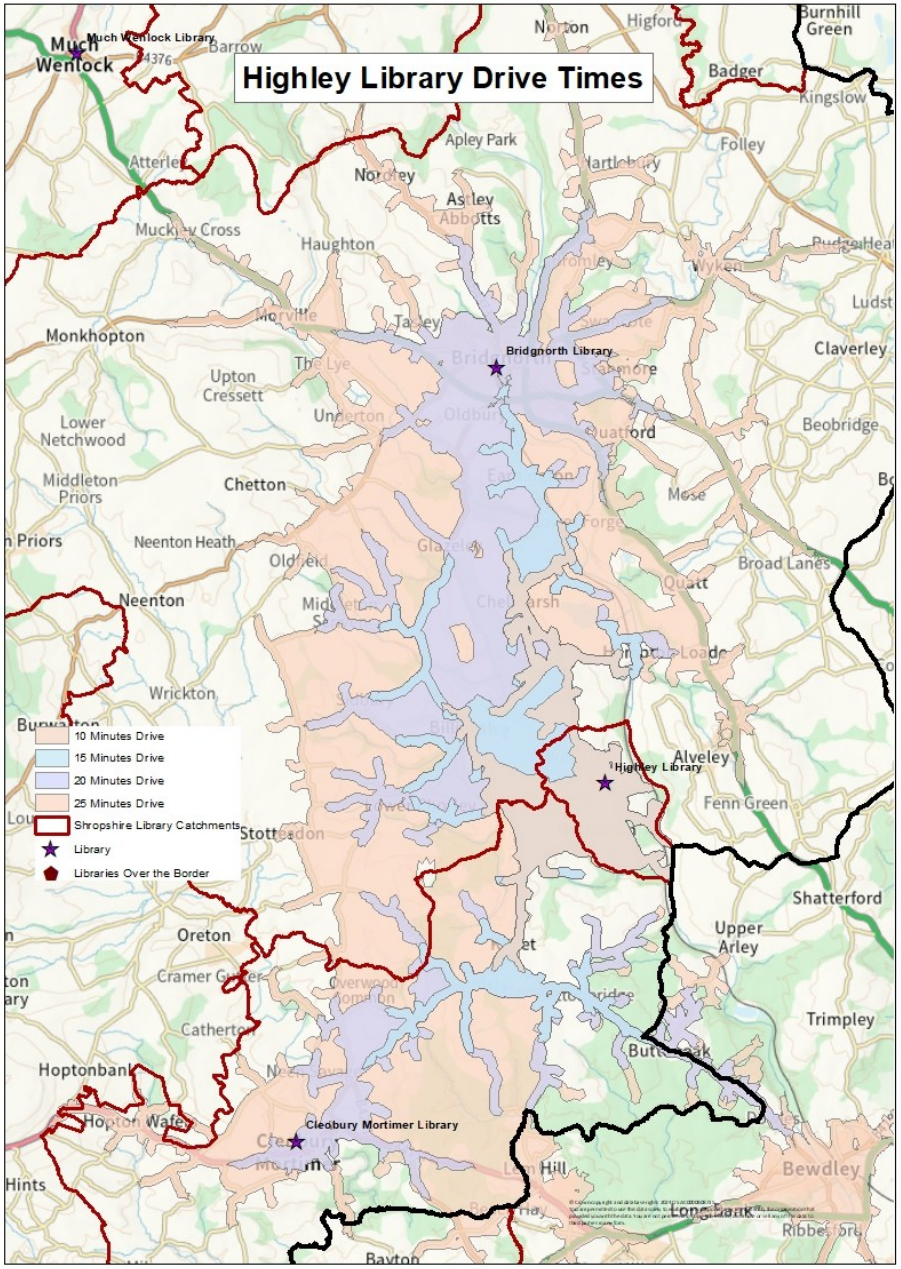
- The following table shows the proportion of active Highley library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 72.7% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 84.5% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 86.3% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 89.4% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 91.3% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 93.8% |

## 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 6th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual Shropshire Council costs are £24,480 (2025/26).
- However, the library ranks as the fourth most expensive per visit and the most expensive per book loan. Long opening hours mean that Highley ranks amongst the least expensive per visit and per hour open.

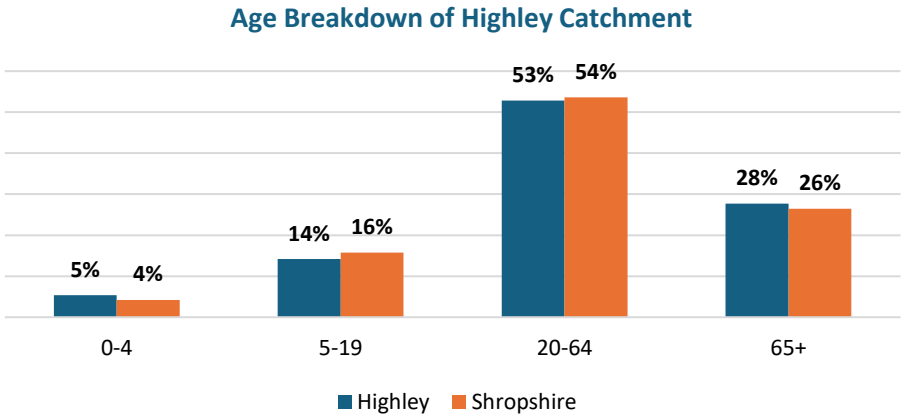
| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £8.19 | £78.80 | 17th |
| **Per Active User** | £144.85 | £81.29 | 4th |
| **Per Visit** | £2.07 | £4.23 | 18th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £11.47 | £5.07 | 1st |

*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

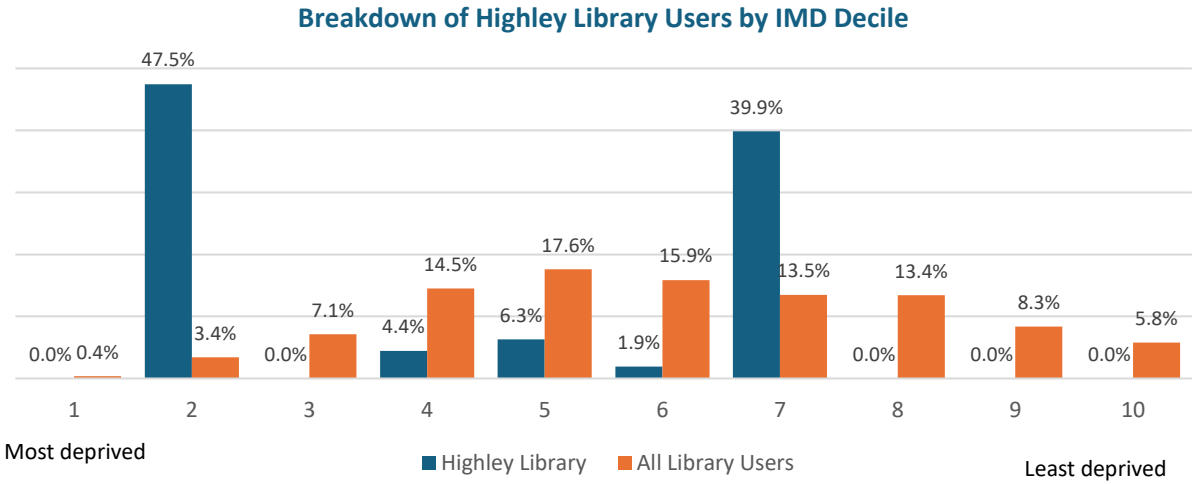
## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Highley Catchment Area

### Population

- Highley library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 3,785.
- 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.




### Deprivation



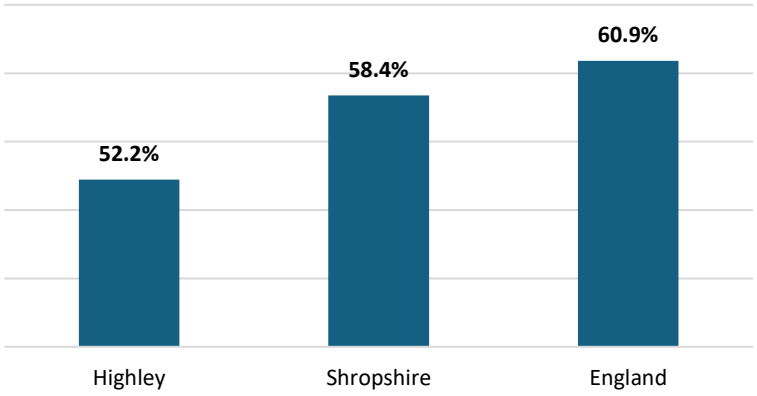

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Highley library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2025, which means it is one the five libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost half of users are drawn from this decile compared with 3.4% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further 39.9% of users live within the least deprived 40% of the country (all in decile 7).

## 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.

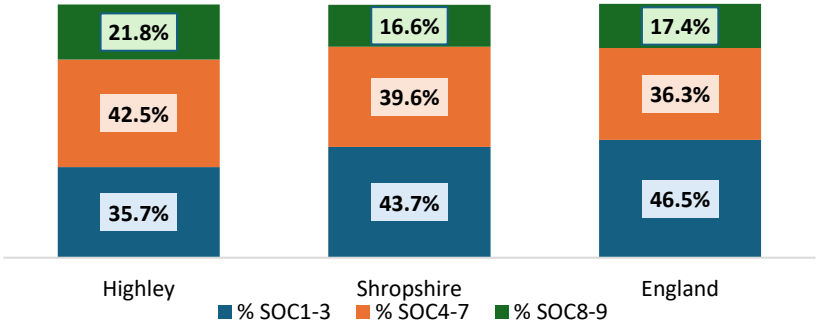
### Highley: Economic Activity Rate

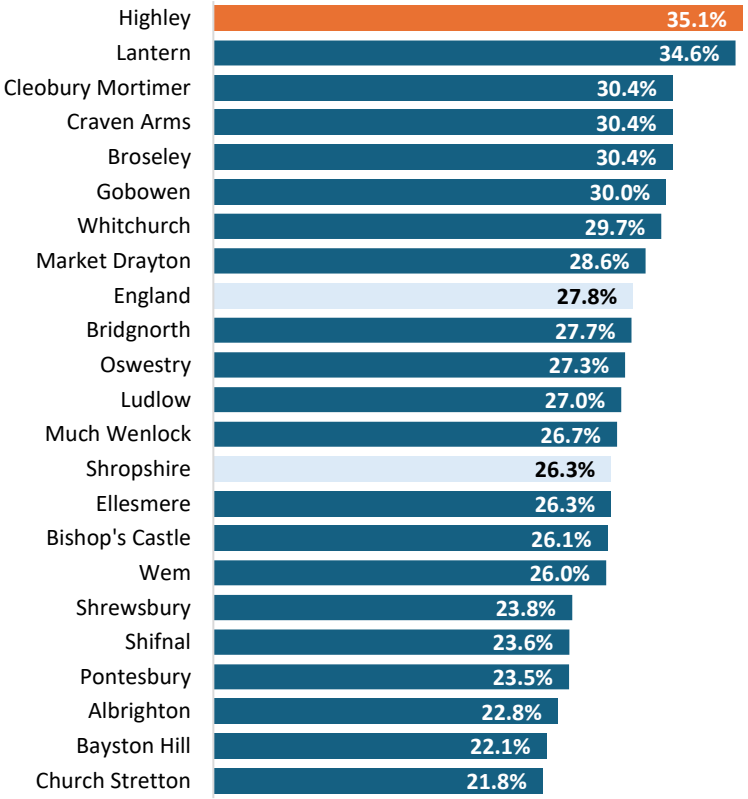



## Employment

- 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



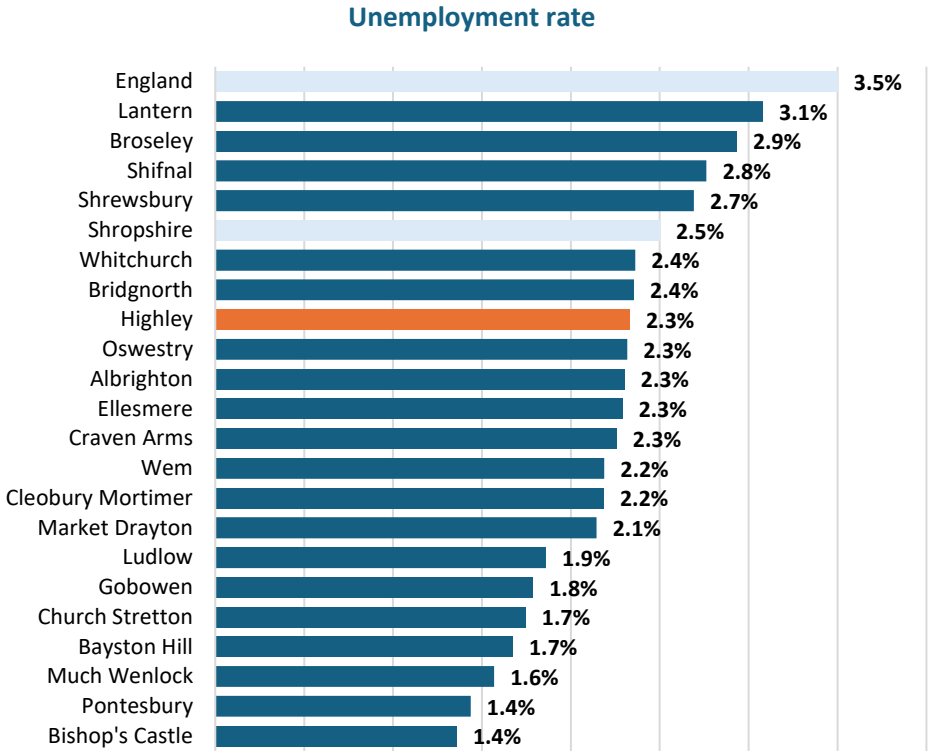




## Qualifications

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

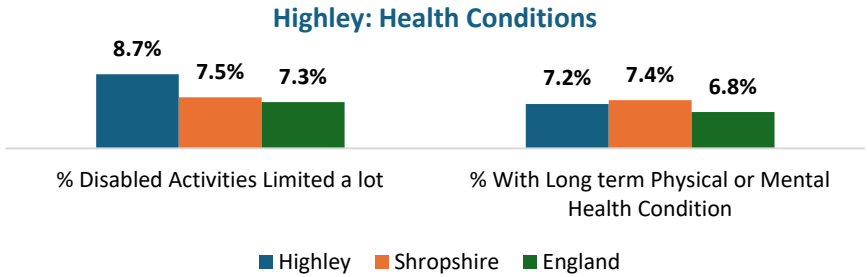
## Unemployment

- 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.



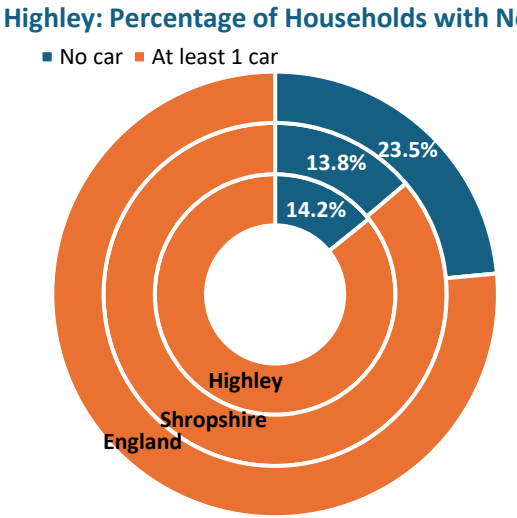

## Health Conditions

- 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%.



# Library at the Lantern Profile

## Background

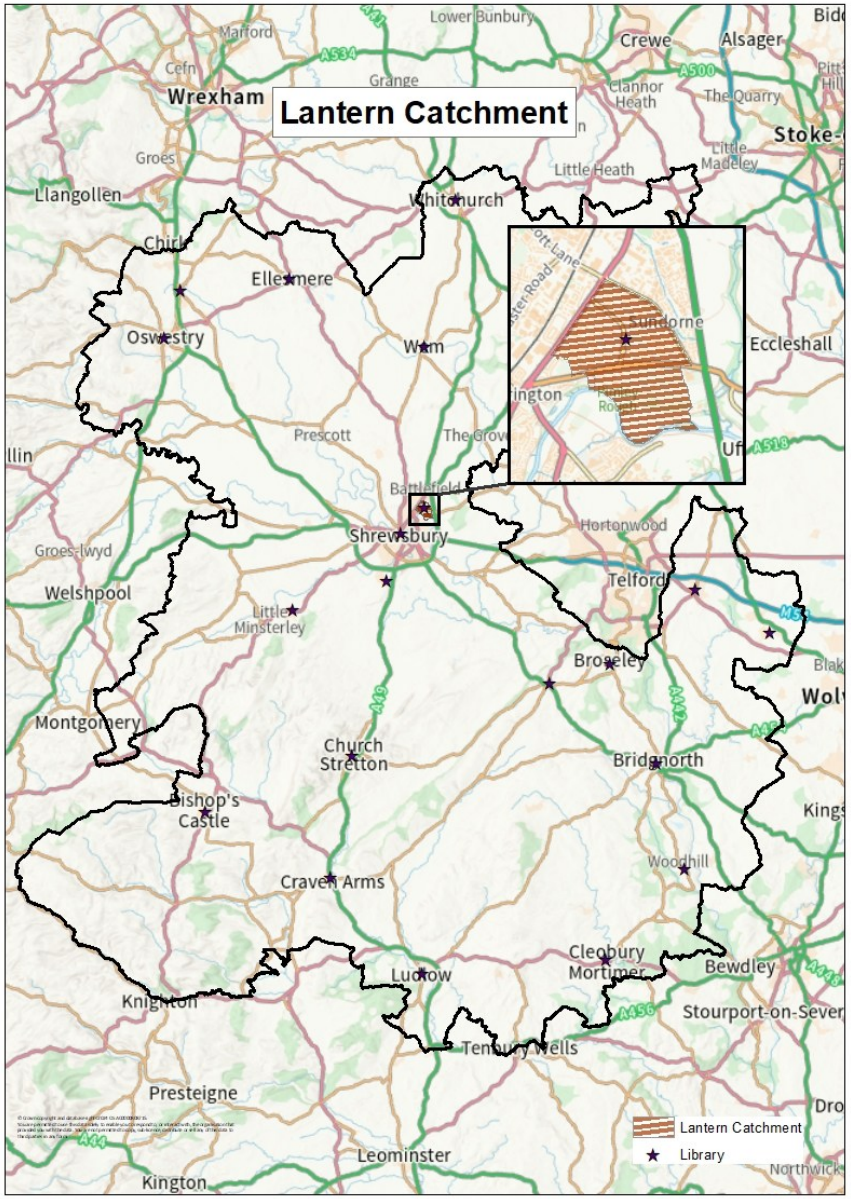
- The library at the Lantern is located in north east Shrewsbury, approximately two miles from the centre of town.
- The library is located within the Lantern Community building which has bookable rooms and a cafe. On-site parking is available.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 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 4,642 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 |

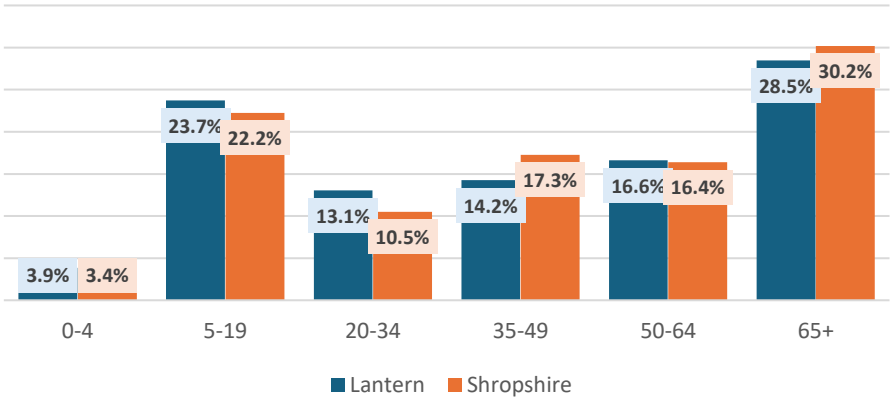
- The library has 1.21 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from 5 volunteers providing a total of 60 volunteer hours.



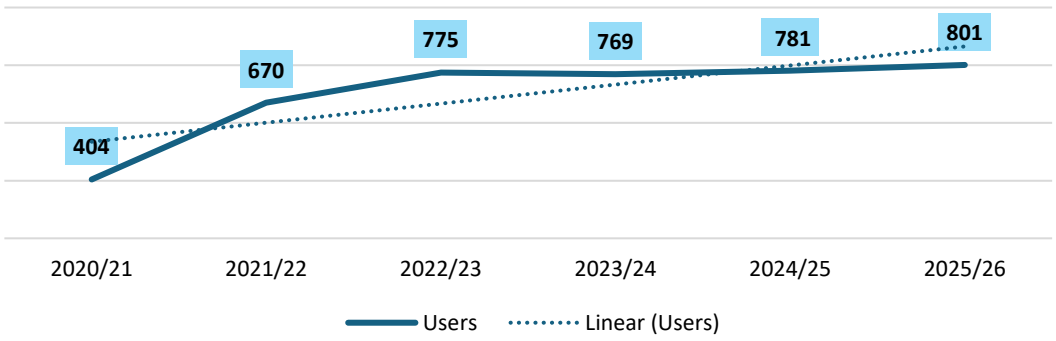
## Library Users

- The Lantern library had 801 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 7.9% 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 (2025/26) 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 65.

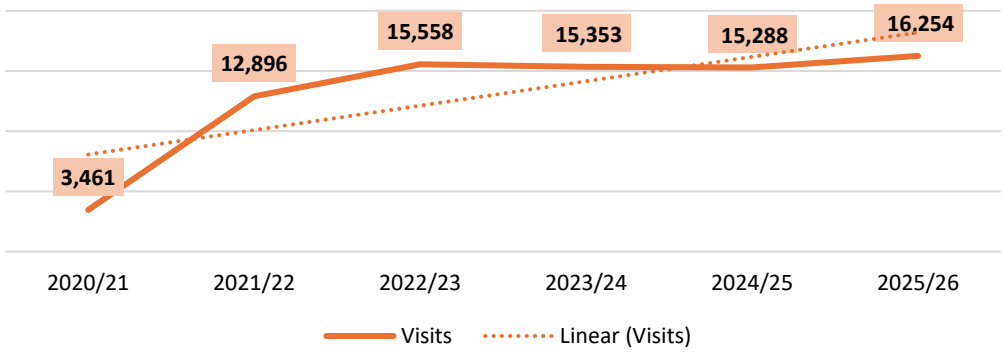
### Breakdown of Lantern Library Users by Age



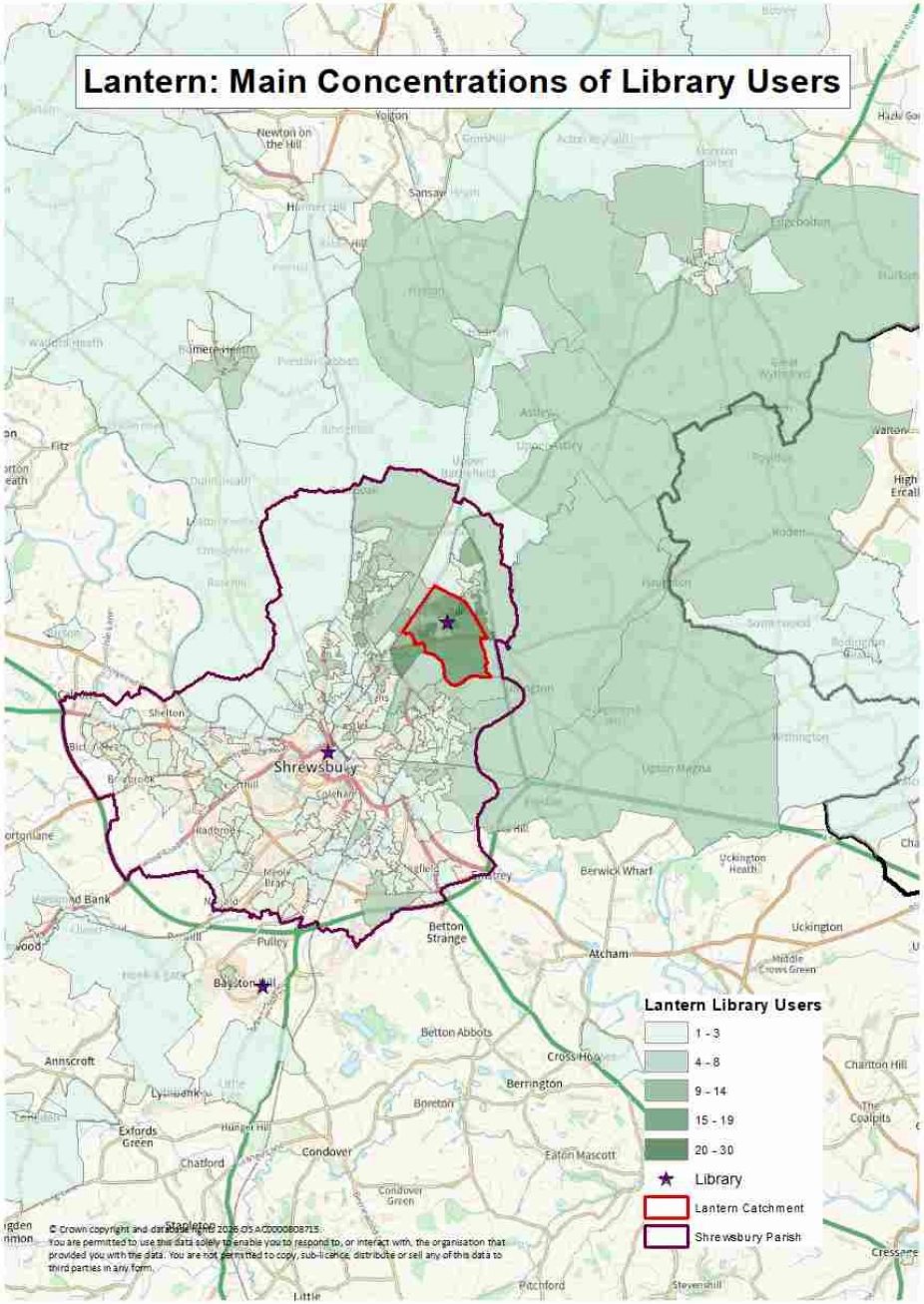

### Lantern: Number of Active Users




### Lantern: Number of Visits




- 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 increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 397 users (+98.3%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 16,, 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 more than four times higher in 2025/26 than it was in 2020/21.
- 24,000 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 30 per active user and 1.5 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 4% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 8%.
- 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

- 29.0% 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 – 82.6% of all Lantern library users live within this geography.
- 7.9% 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 6% to 11.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 71.0% 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 May 2026, 87.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with the Lantern library were to the Lantern, and these accounted for 89.7% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

## Walk/Drive Times

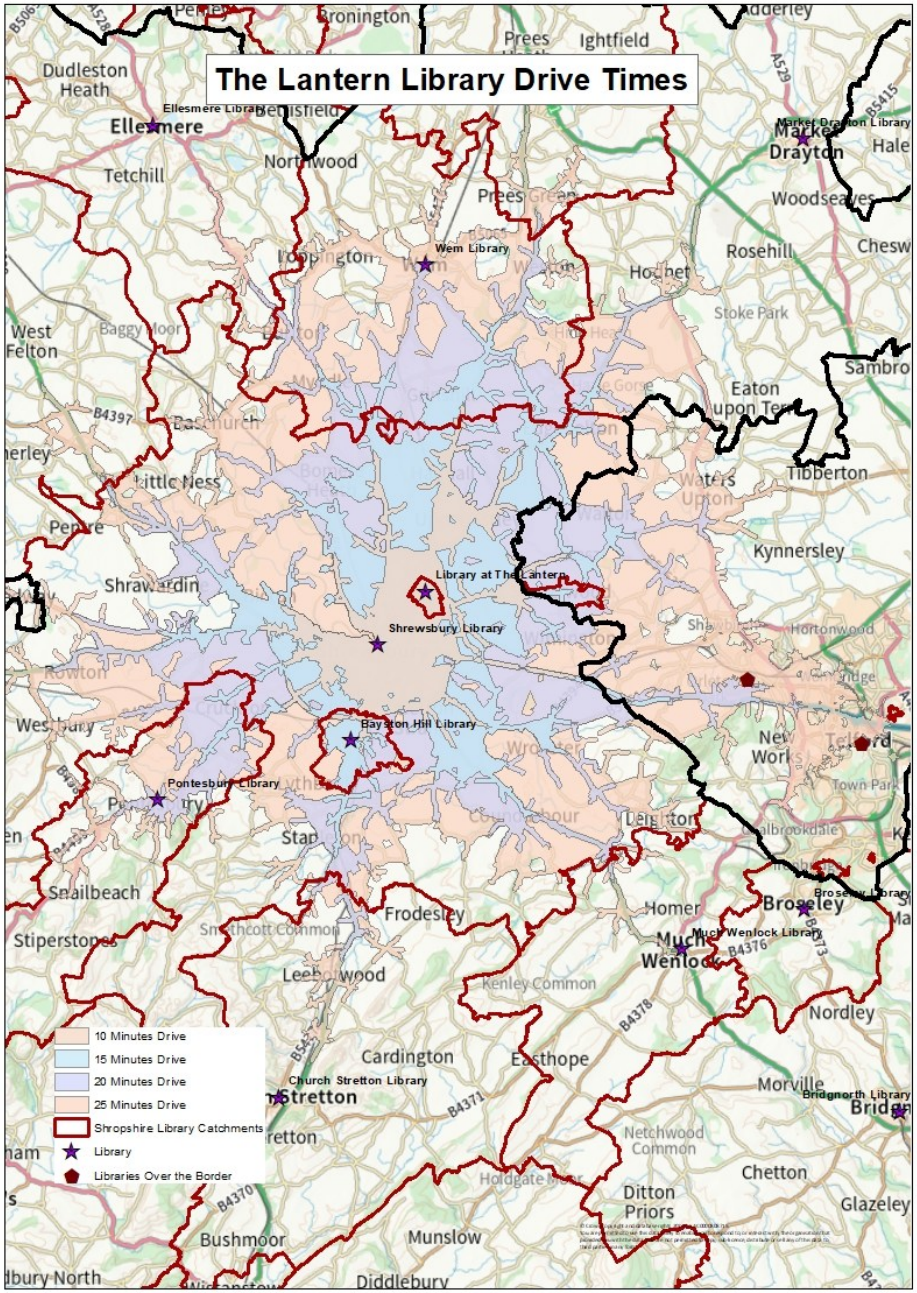
- The following table shows the proportion of active Lantern library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 37.5% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 55.4% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 83.1% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 91.2% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 93.4% |
| 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 £53,510 (2025/26).
- 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** | £42.00 | £78.80 | 14th |
| **Per Active User** | £66.80 | £81.29 | 12th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.29 | £4.23 | 14th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £2.23 | £5.07 | 16th |

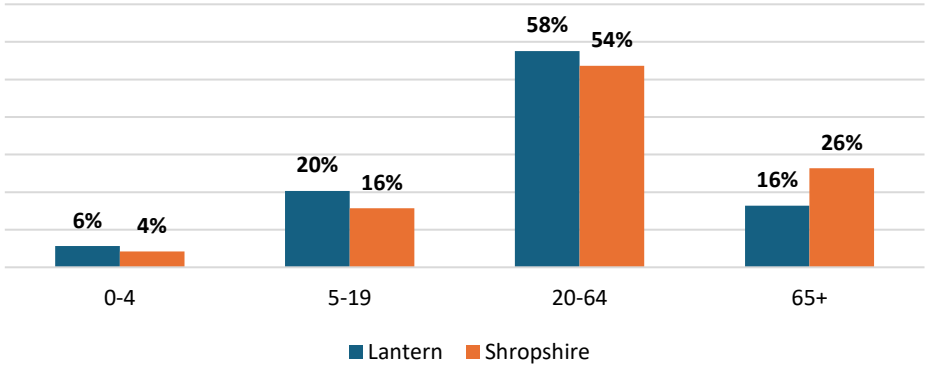
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Lantern Catchment Area

### Population

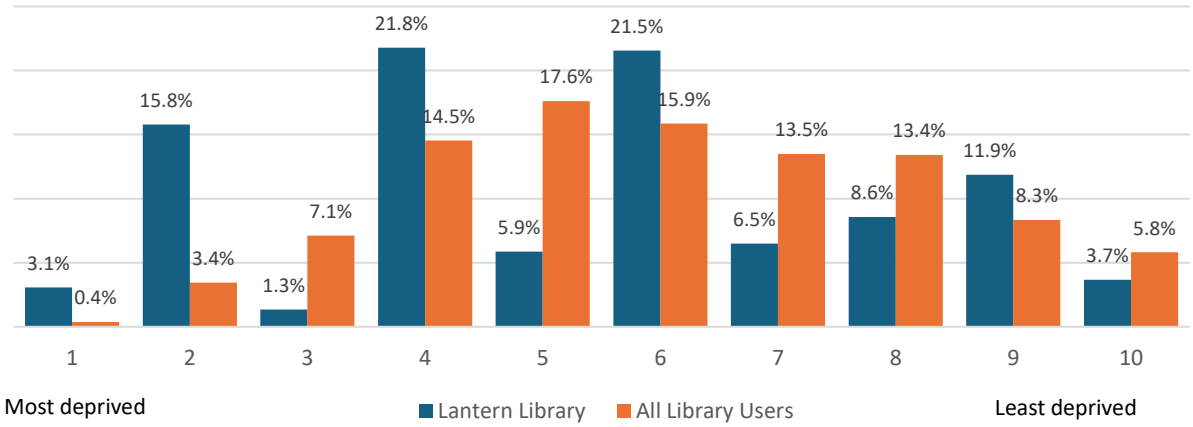
- The Lantern library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 4,642.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a higher proportion of children and young people and fewer adults over the age of 65.
- There are 1,845 households in 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 Lantern Library Users by IMD Decile



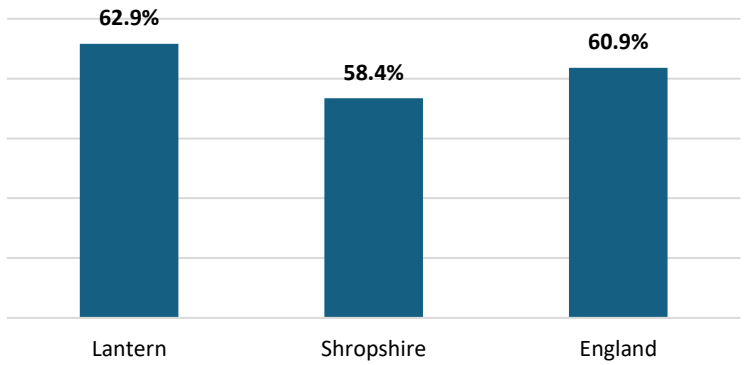

- The Lantern library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2025, which means it is one of only five Shropshire libraries located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a fifth live within the 20% most deprived areas nationally compared with 3.8% of all Shropshire library users.
- The library also attracts users from less deprived areas, with 15.6% 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.

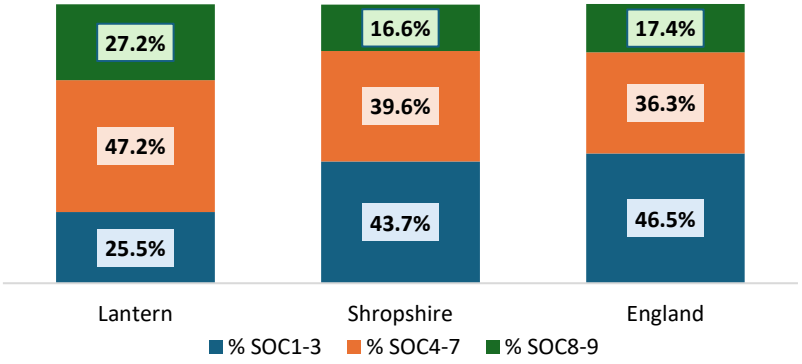
### Lantern: Economic Activity Rate



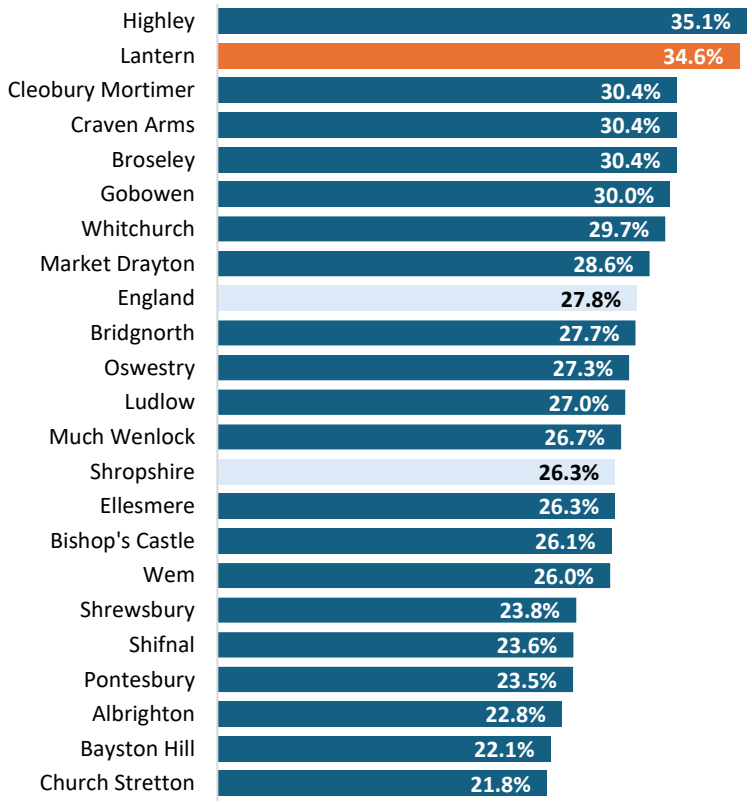

## Employment

- 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

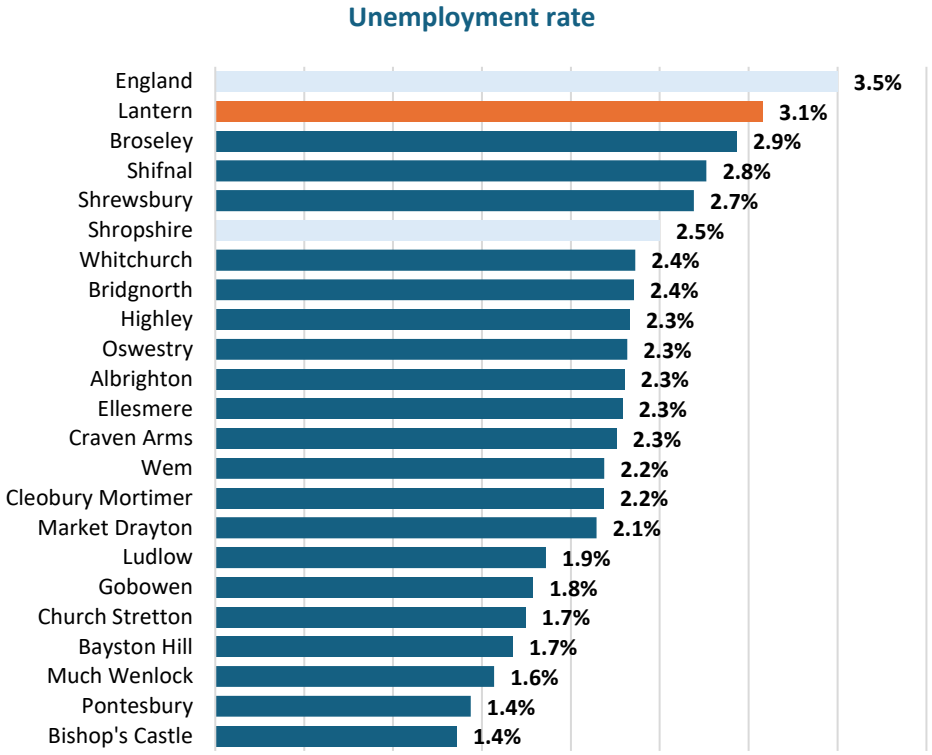



## Qualifications

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

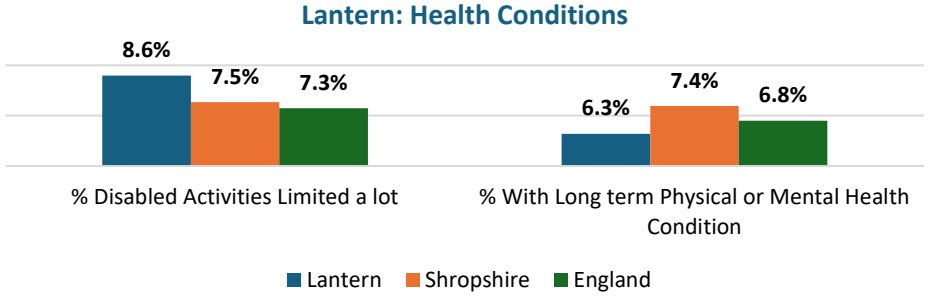
## Unemployment

- 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.



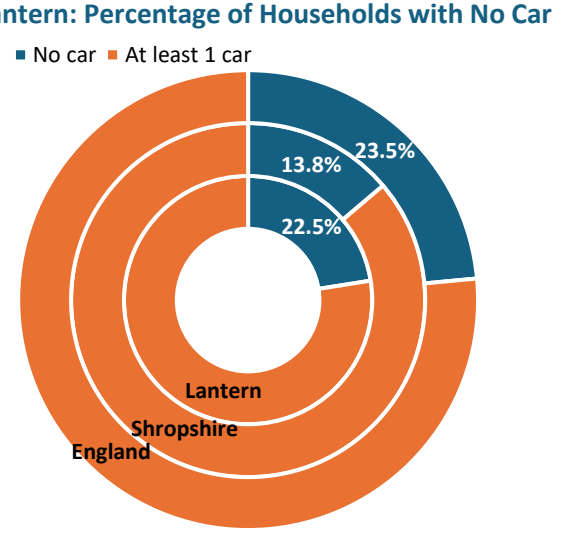

## Health Conditions

- 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.




## Car Ownership

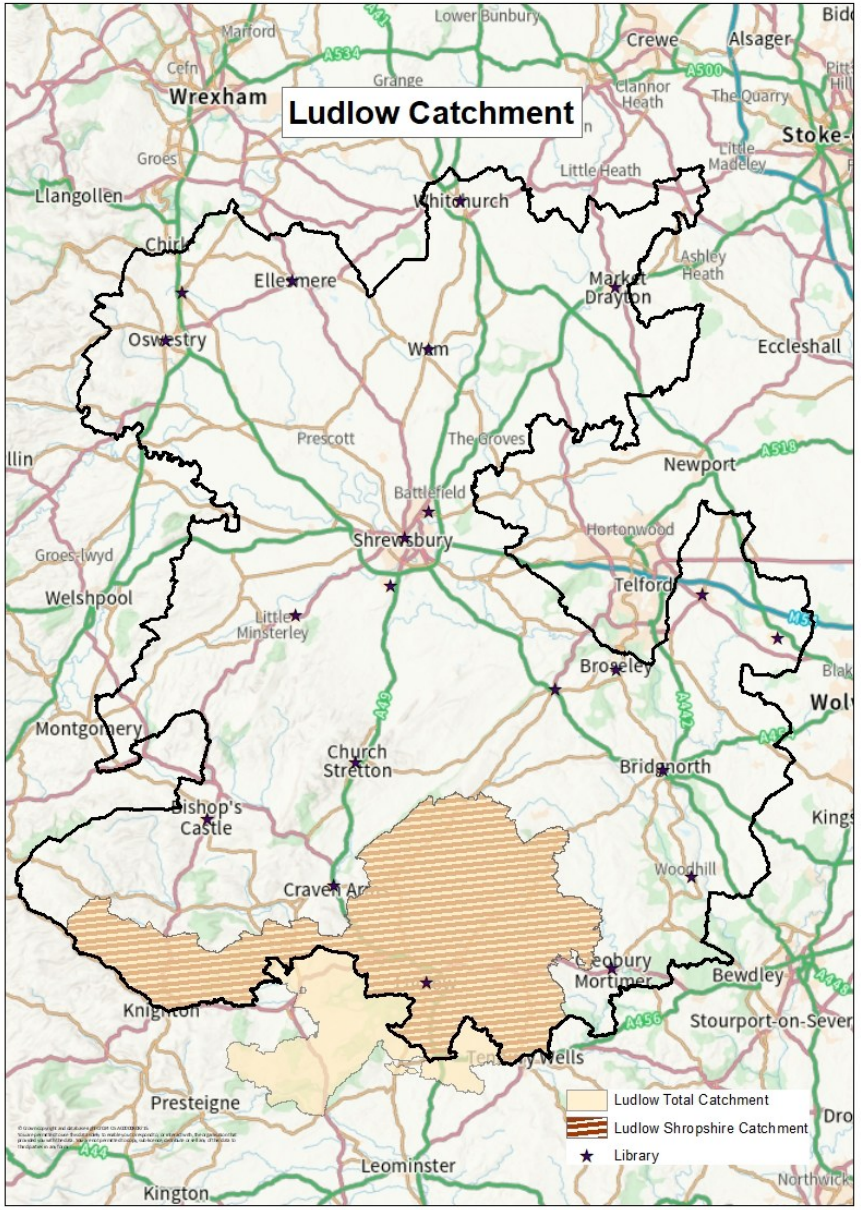
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access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



# 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 27,314 comprising 12,041 households. 84% of the catchment population – 22,939 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:

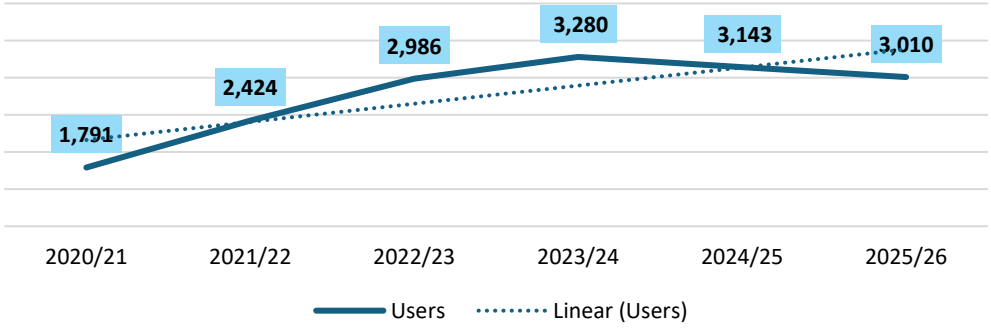
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 9.30am-18.00pm | 8.5 |
| Tuesday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Wednesday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Thursday | Closed | 0 |
| Friday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library employs 5.29 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 28 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 1,158 volunteer hours.

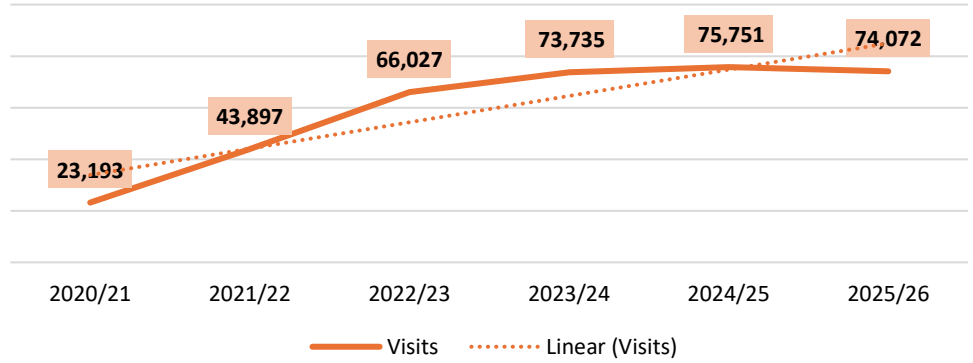
## Library Users

- Ludlow library had 3,010 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 9.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.7% of the Ludlow catchment population are active library users, which 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are comparable numbers of children and young people and more users aged 65 and above.

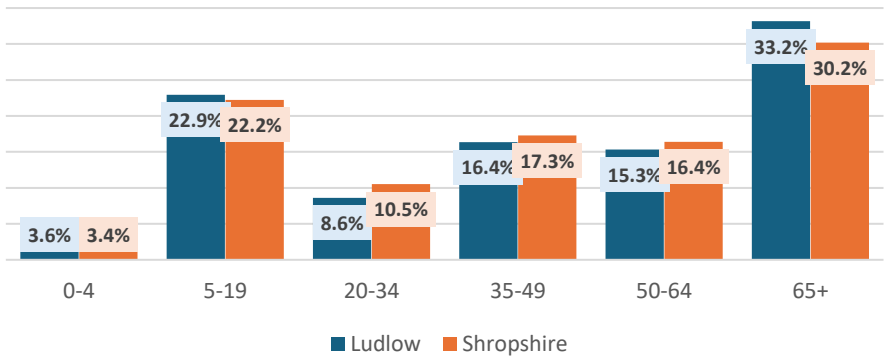
### Ludlow: Number of Active Users



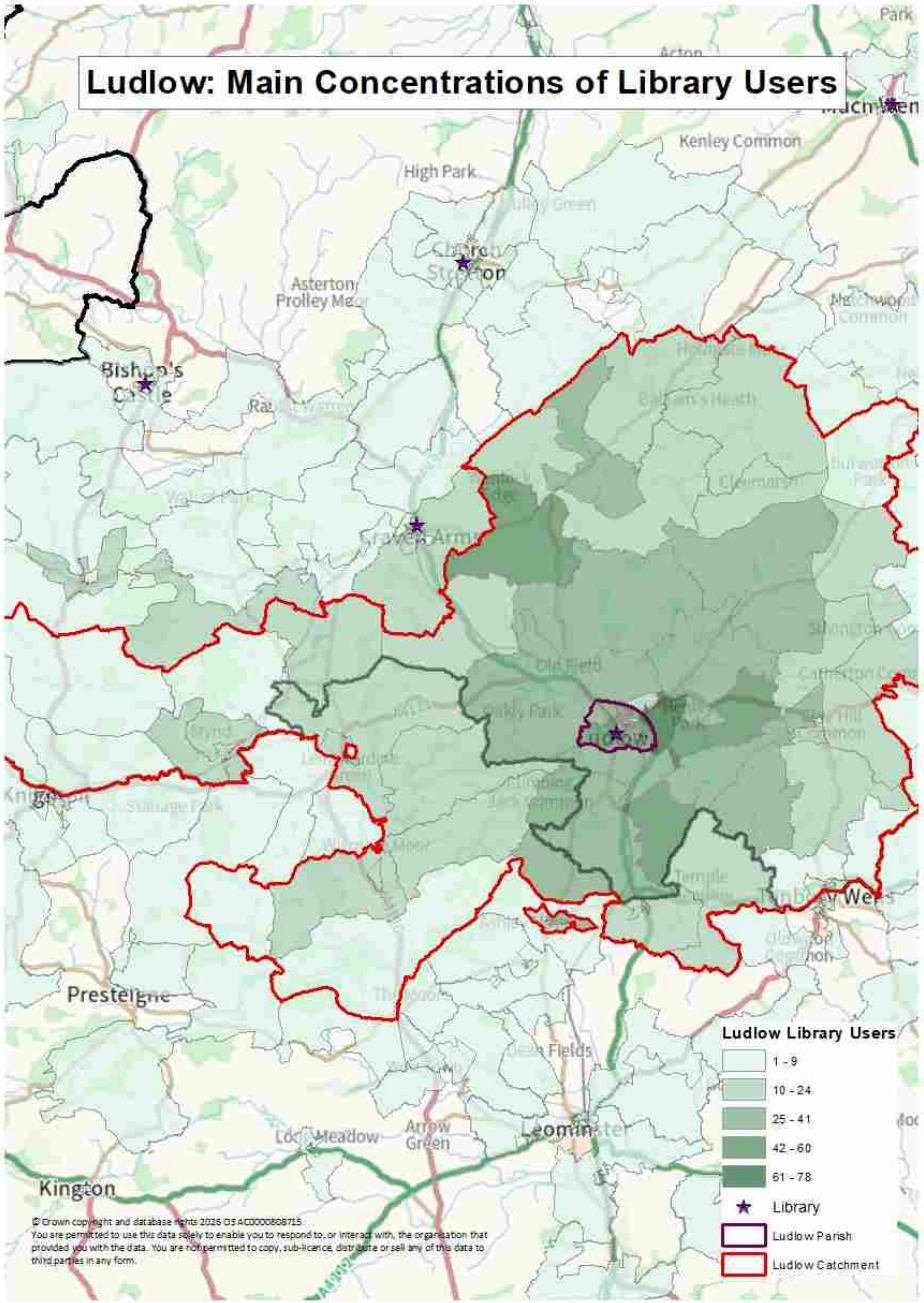

### Ludlow: Number of Visits




### 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 2023/24, user numbers have fallen by 270.
- The change in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 1,219 users (+68.1%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 74,072, which is the equivalent of about 25 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 three times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 53,495 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 18 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 5% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 8% over the last year.
- Computer time was down by 14%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.5% of all Ludlow library users live within the main catchment area.
- 50.9% live within the Ludlow town council area.
- 10.7% 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 24.9%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 12.5% 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 May 2026, 92.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Ludlow library were to Ludlow, and these accounted for 92.5% 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.

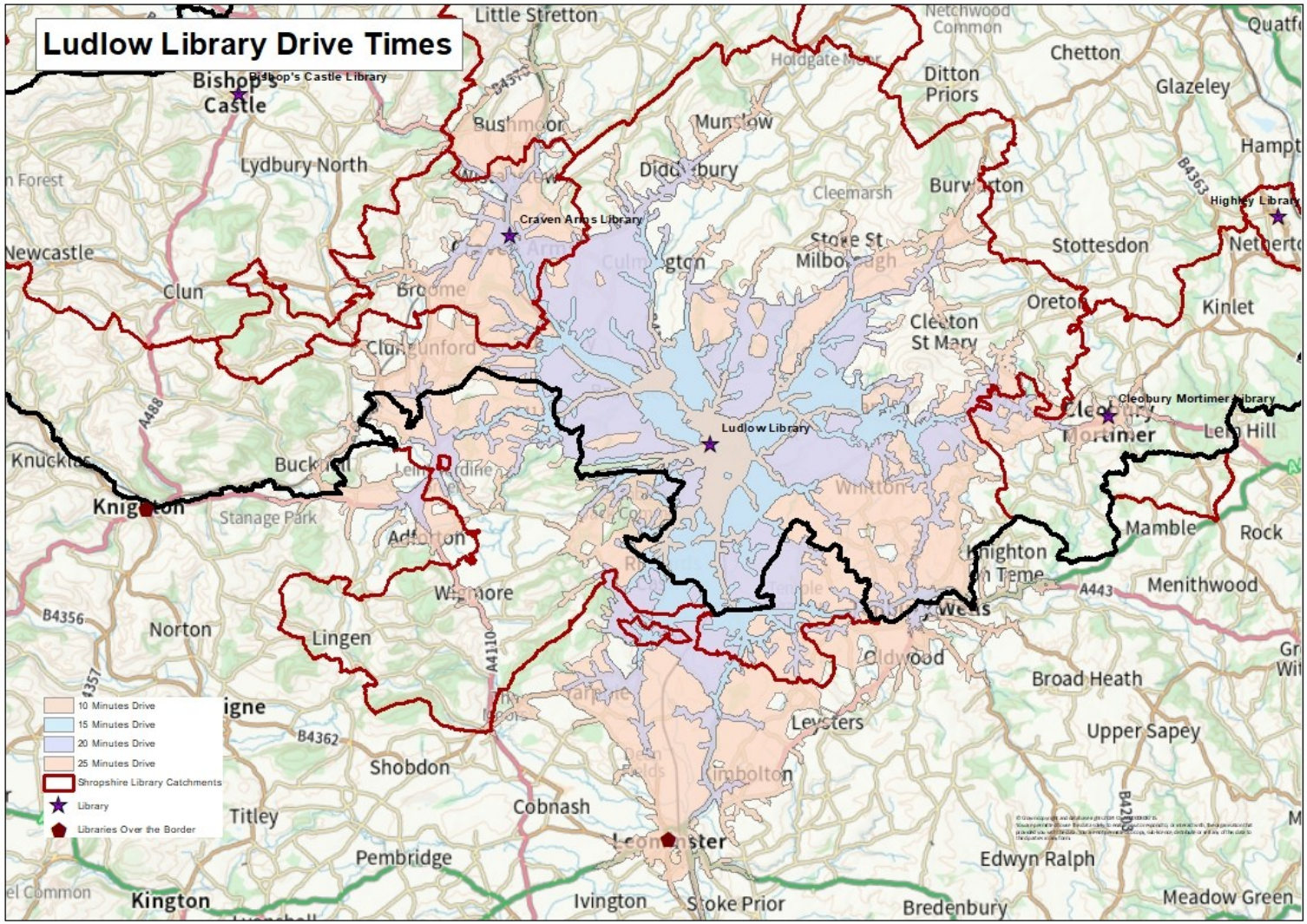
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 33.1% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 55.0% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 56.5% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 71.8% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 82.0% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 89.2% |

## 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 29 miles, or a 56-minute drive.



## Costs

- Ludlow is the second most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury.
- Annual running costs are £442,179 (2025/26)
- 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** | £246.47 | £78.80 | 1st |
| **Per Active User** | £146.90 | £81.29 | 2nd |
| **Per Visit** | £5.97 | £4.23 | 3rd |
| **Per Book Loan** | £8.27 | £5.07 | 3rd |

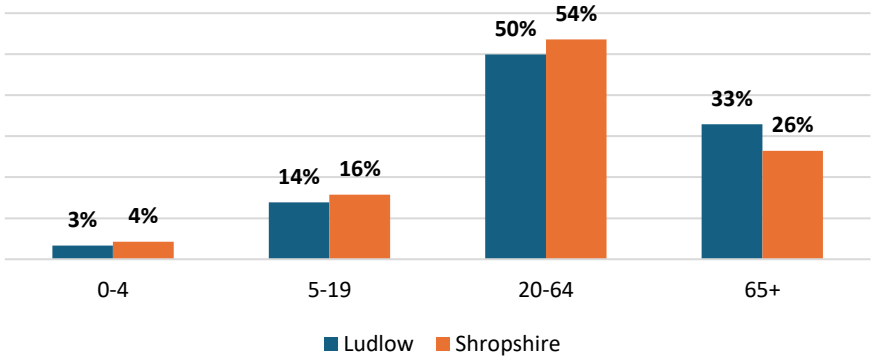
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath  1= most expensive*

## 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 22,939 and a total population of 27,314.
- 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.

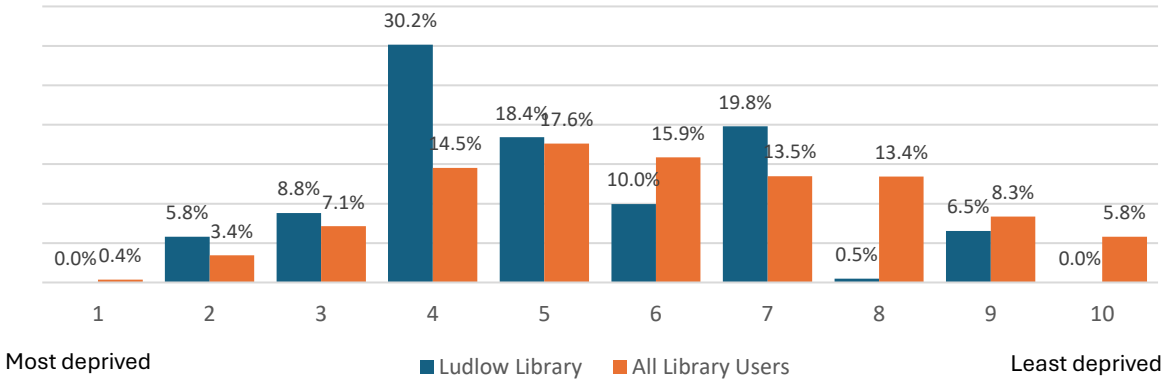
**Age Breakdown of Ludlow Catchment**




*Includes Non-Shropshire Population*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Ludlow Library Users by IMD Decile**



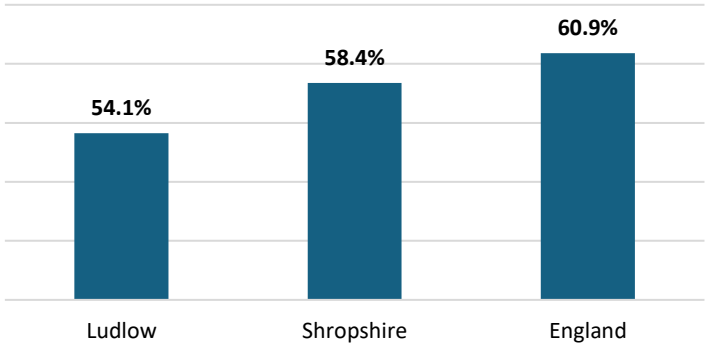

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Ludlow library is in decile three according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of 10 Shropshire libraries within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 14.6% of Ludlow library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.9% for all Shropshire library users).
- More than three-quarters of users are drawn from deciles four, five, six and seven, with 7.0% 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.

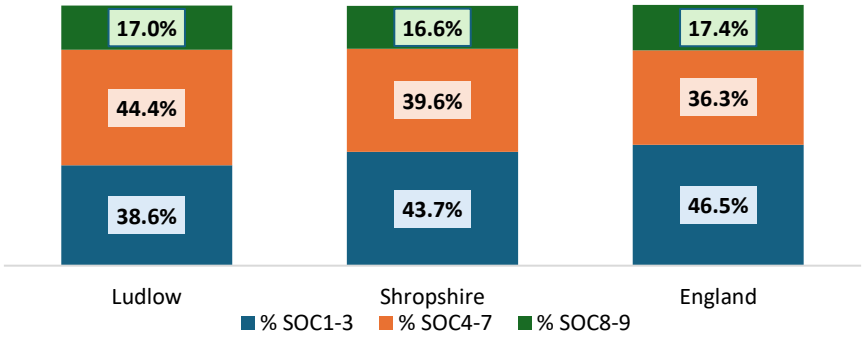
### Ludlow: Economic Activity Rate




## 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).

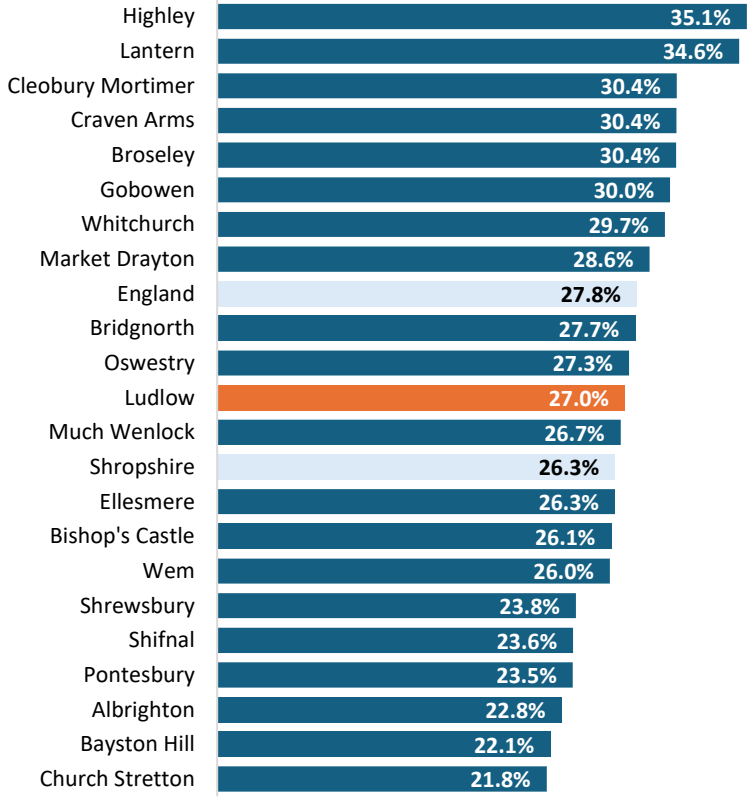
### Ludlow: Occupation Types




## Qualifications

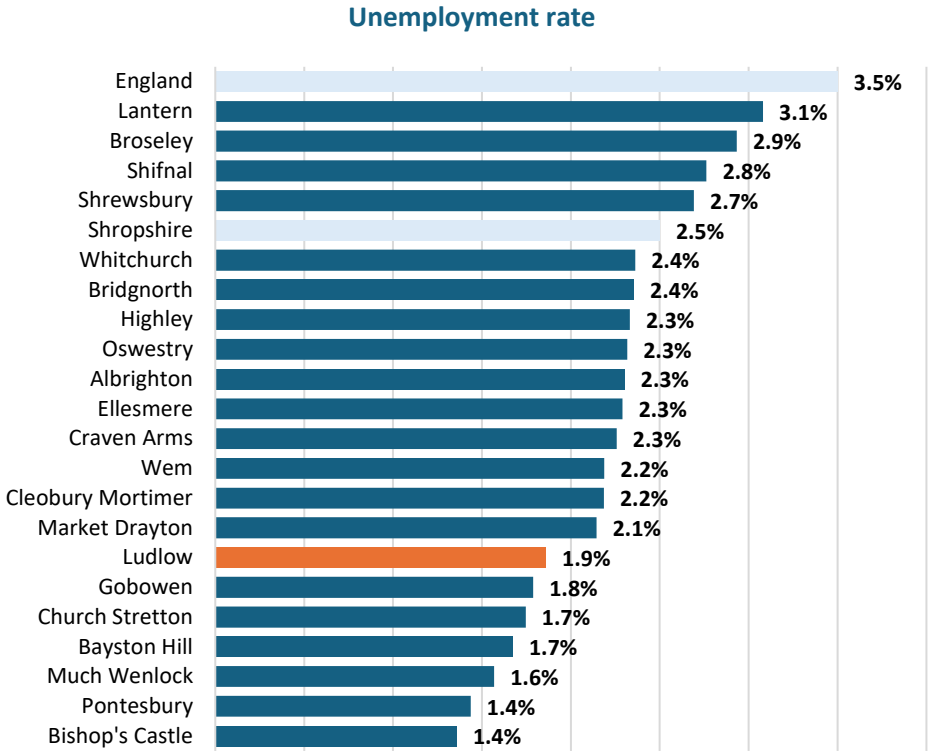
- A similar proportion of the Ludlow population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.0%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications



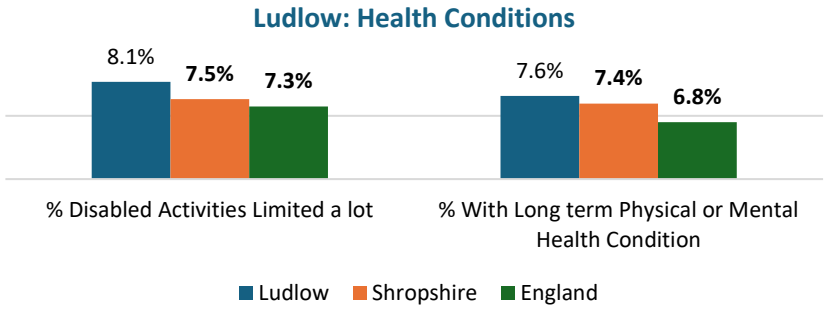
## Unemployment

- 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.



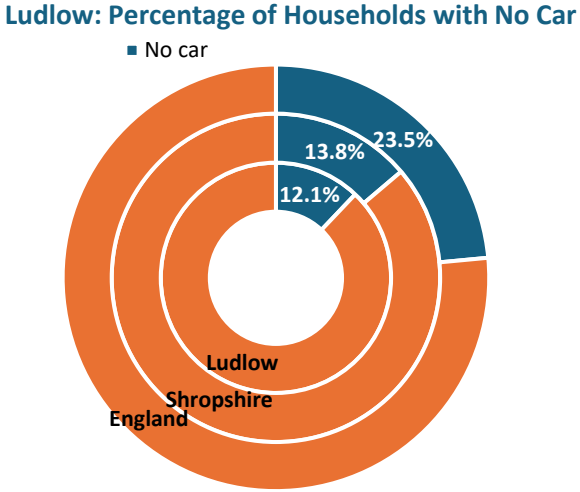

## Health Conditions

- 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

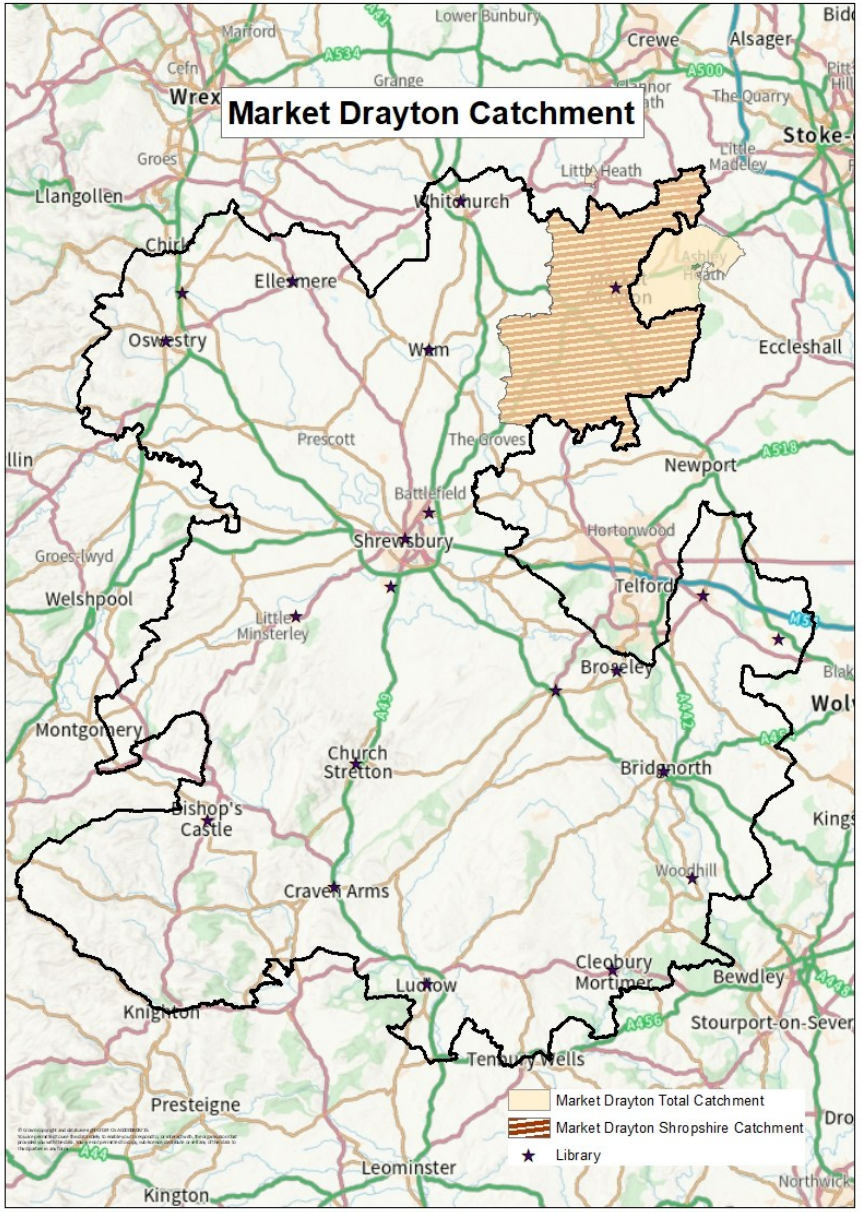
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Ludlow households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



# 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 28,237 comprising 11,294 households. 86% of the catchment population – 24,303 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:

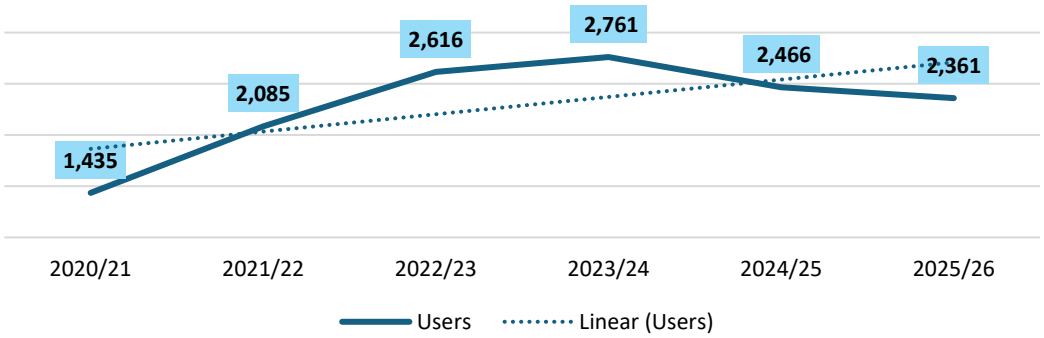
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 9.30am-18.00pm | 8.5 |
| Tuesday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Wednesday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Thursday | Closed | 0 |
| Friday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library employs 3.67 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 230 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 776 volunteer hours.

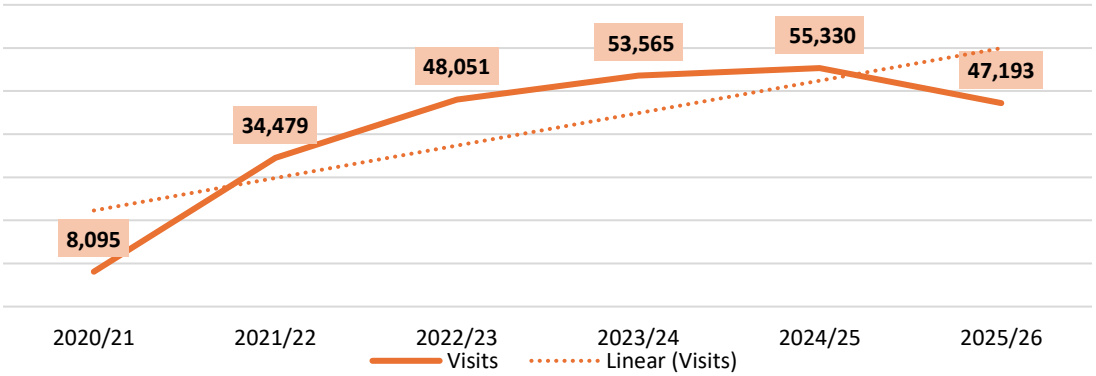
## Library Users

- Market Drayton library had 2,361 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 7.3% 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 (2025/26) 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 65 and above.

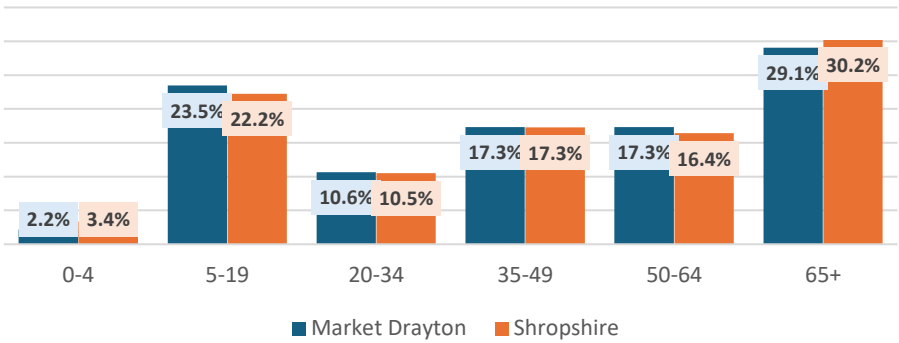
### Market Drayton: Number of Active Users



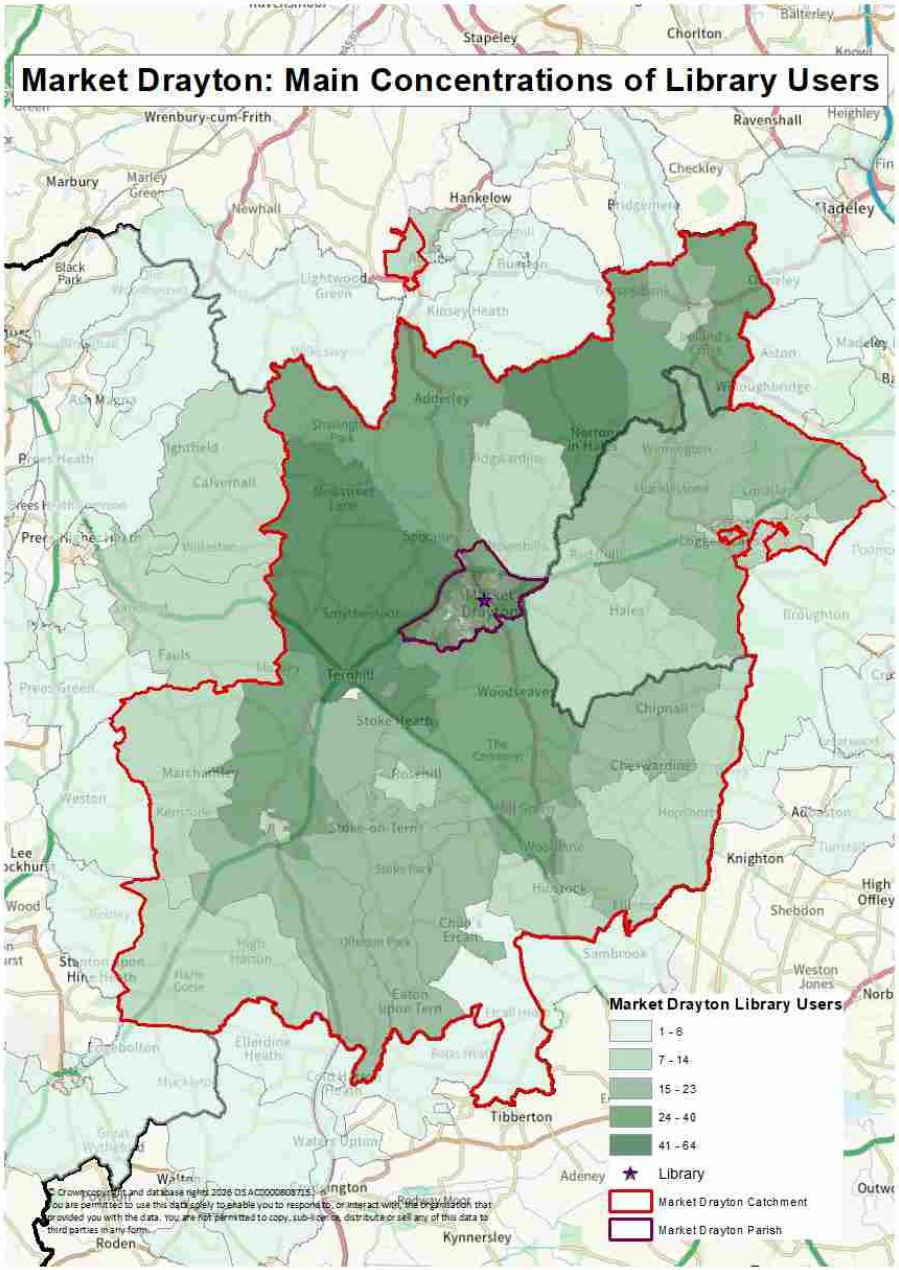

### Market Drayton: Number of Visits




### Breakdown of Market Drayton 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 until 2024/25, since when the number of users has reduced by 400.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 926 users (+64.5%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 47,193, 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 pre-pandemic levels (20 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost six times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 36,898 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.9 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 4% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 16% over the last year.
- Computer time was down by 2%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 89.4% of all Market Drayton library users live within the main catchment area.
- 55.4% live within the Market Drayton town council area.
- 8.8% 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 2% to over 18%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 10.6% of Market Drayton library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in Whitchurch or Shrewsbury catchments or out-of-county.
- People that live in the Market Drayton catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library, the library at Stoke's Heath YOI or the Owen mobile service.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 93.4% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Market Drayton library were to Market Drayton, and these accounted for 93.6% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Market Drayton include Shrewsbury, Whitchurch, the Lantern, Oswestry and Wem as well as the Owen mobile service.

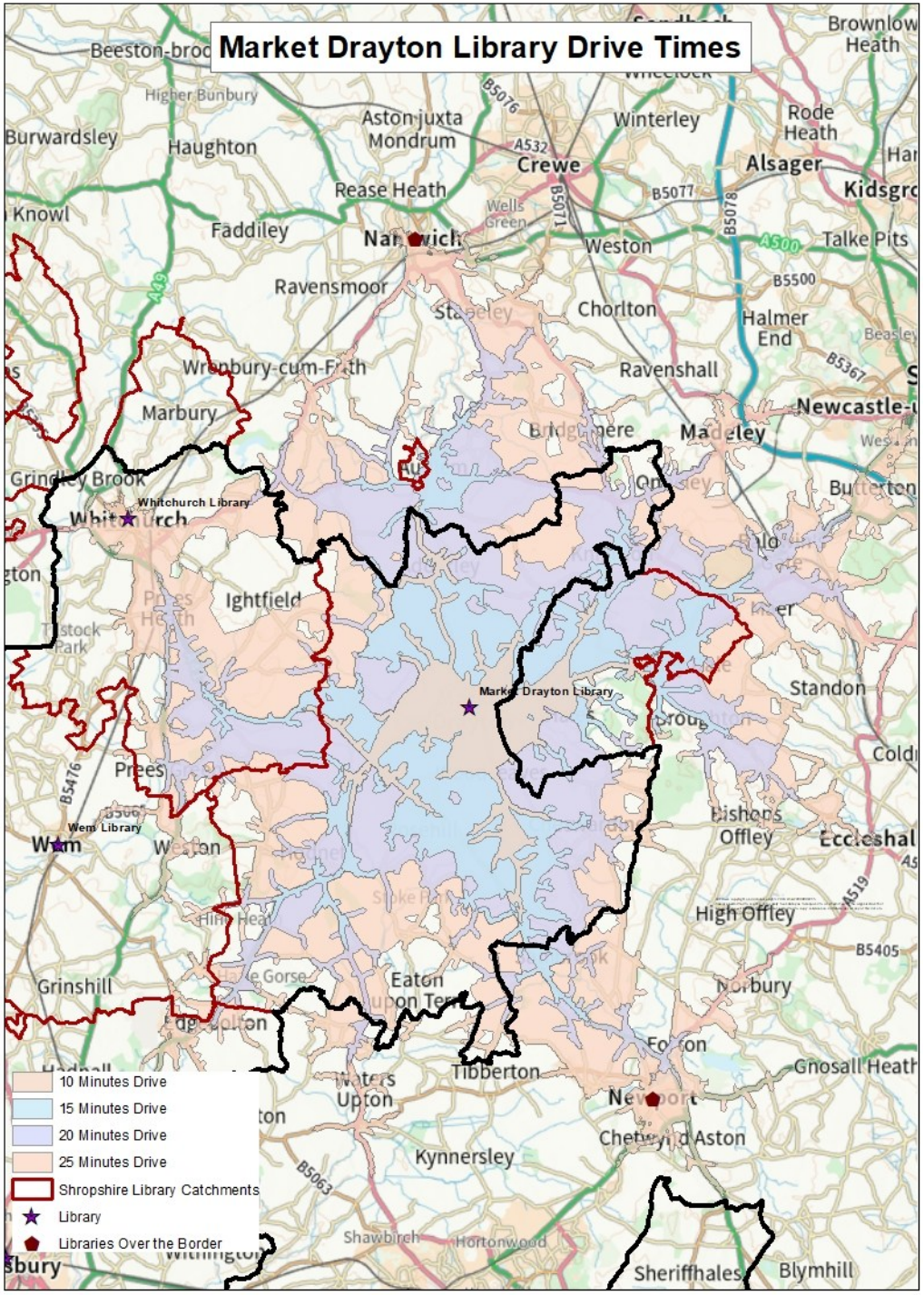
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 29.9% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 55.9% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 66.6% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 82.9% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 91.4% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 95.8% |

## 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 £185,130 (2025/26).
- Market Drayton library costs more than average per hour open but is less expensive than average per active user, per visit and per loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £103.19 | £78.80 | 7th |
| **Per Active User** | £78.41 | £81.29 | 10th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.92 | £4.23 | 8th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £5.02 | £5.07 | 9th |

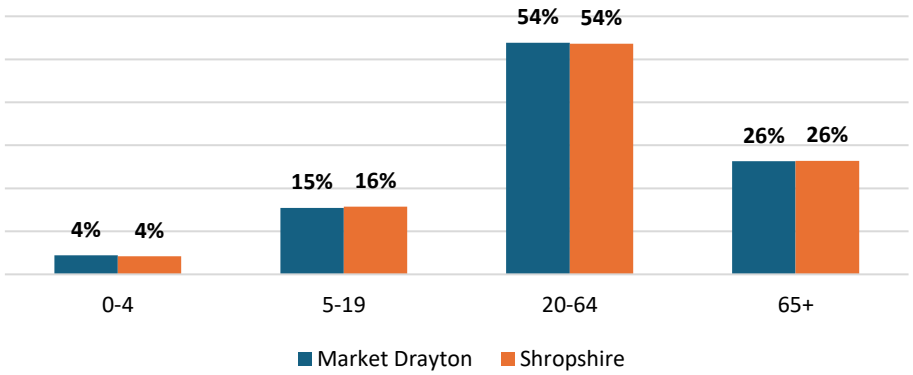
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath  1= most expensive*

## 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 24,303 and a total population of 28,237.
- 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.

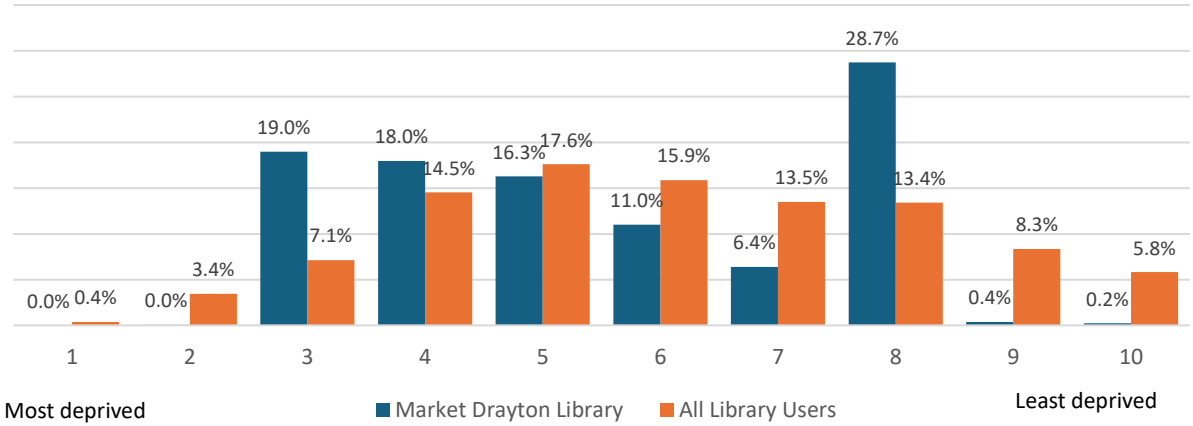
**Age Breakdown of Market Drayton Catchment**




*Market Drayton includes Non-Shropshire Population*

### Deprivation

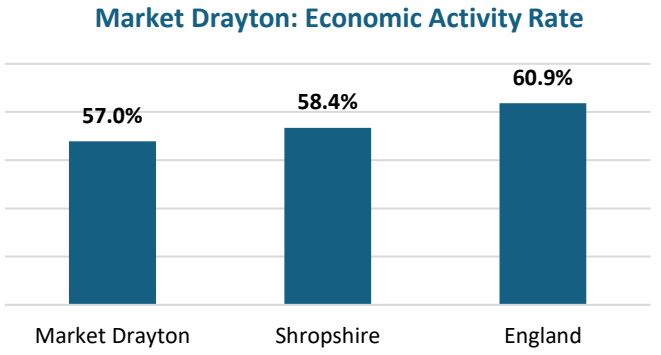
**Breakdown of Market Drayton Library Users by IMD Decile**




- Market Drayton library is in decile three according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of 10 Shropshire libraries within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 19% of Market Drayton library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.9% for all Shropshire library users)
- Around 45% of users are drawn from deciles four, five and six, with almost a third living in the least deprived 30% of England.

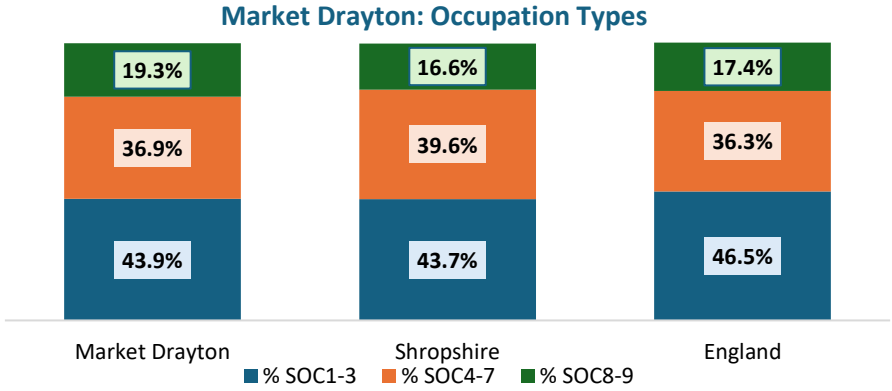
## Economic Activity

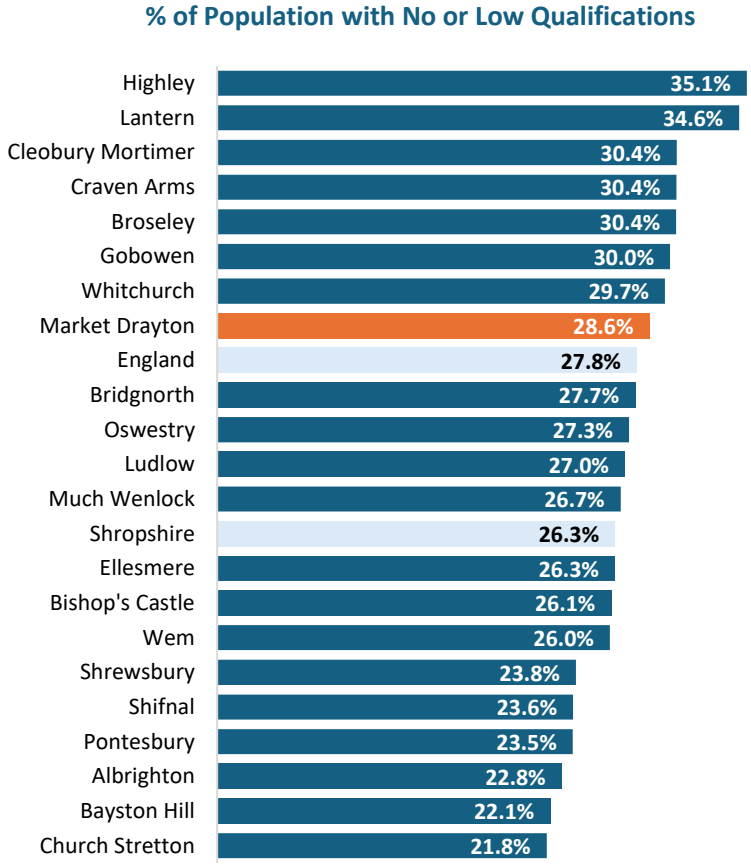
- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Market Drayton library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 57.0% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired,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




## 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).



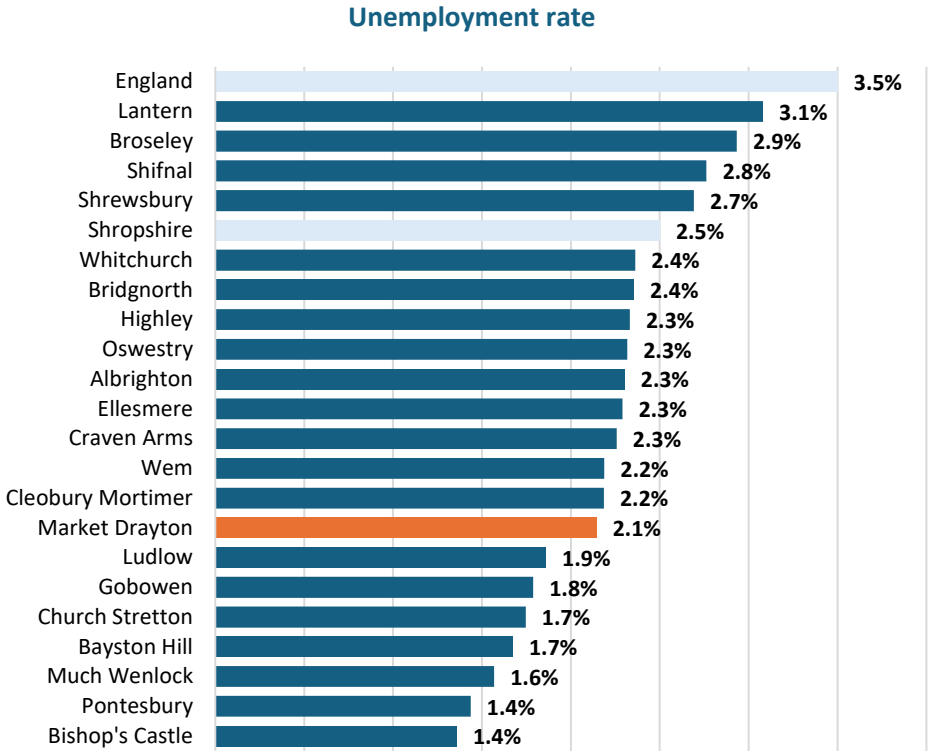




## Qualifications

- 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.

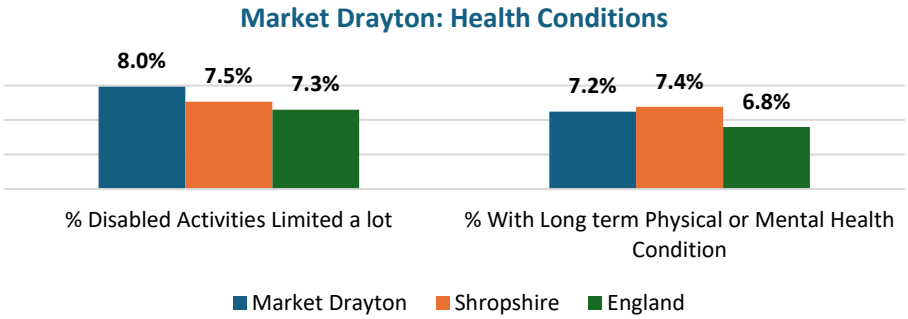
## Unemployment

- 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.



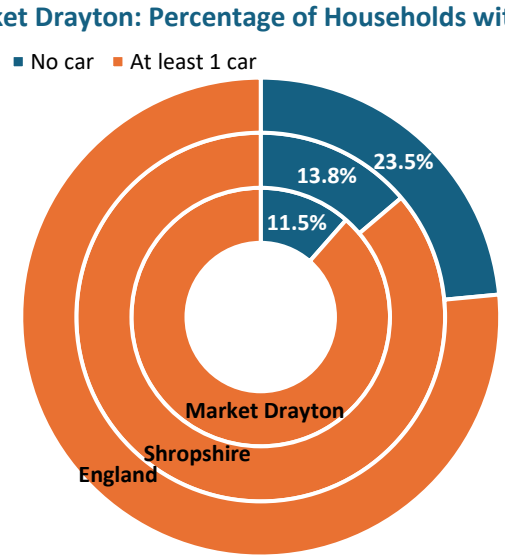

## Health Conditions

- 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%).




## 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%.



# Much Wenlock Library Profile

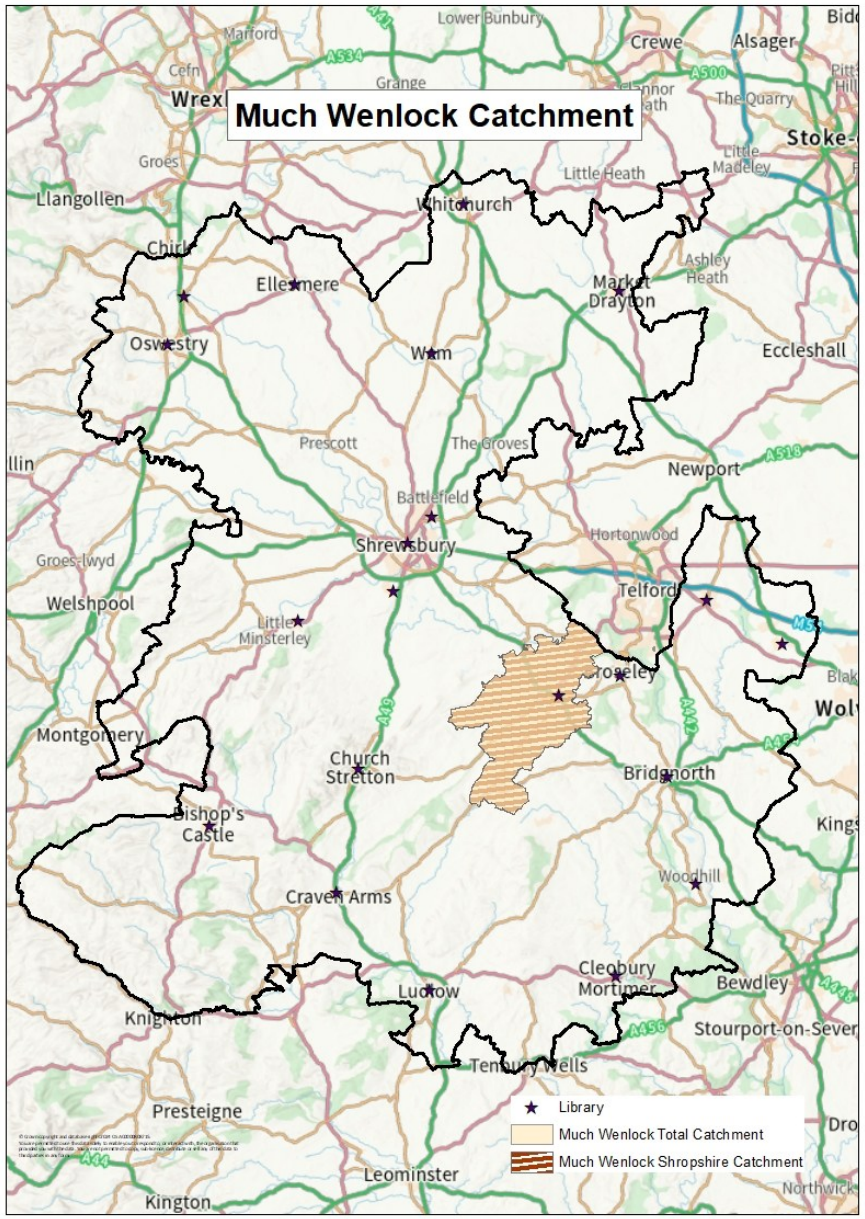
## Background

- 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 5,260 comprising 2,294 households. 91.9% of the population live in Shropshire – the equivalent of 4,834 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<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6.5 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 9.50am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm -17.00pm | 6.5 |
| Friday | Closed | 0 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

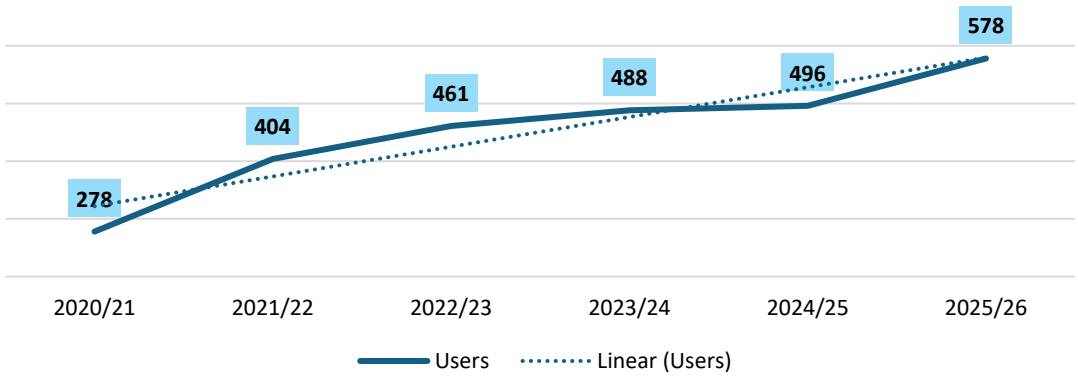



- The library has 0.5 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from 6 volunteers providing a total of 210 volunteer hours.

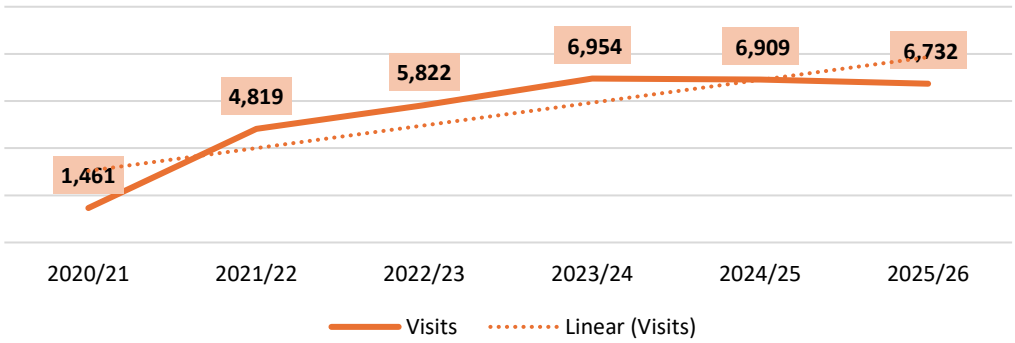
## Library Users

- Much Wenlock library had 578 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.8% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 11.0% 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 (2025/26) 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.

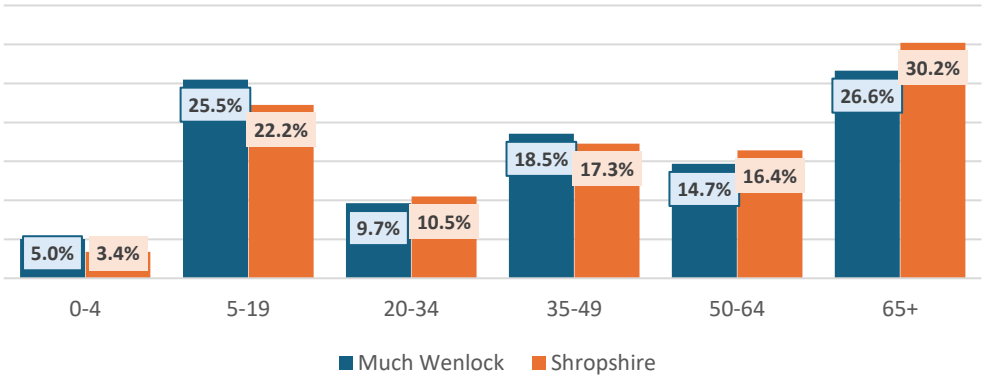
### Much Wenlock: Number of Active Users



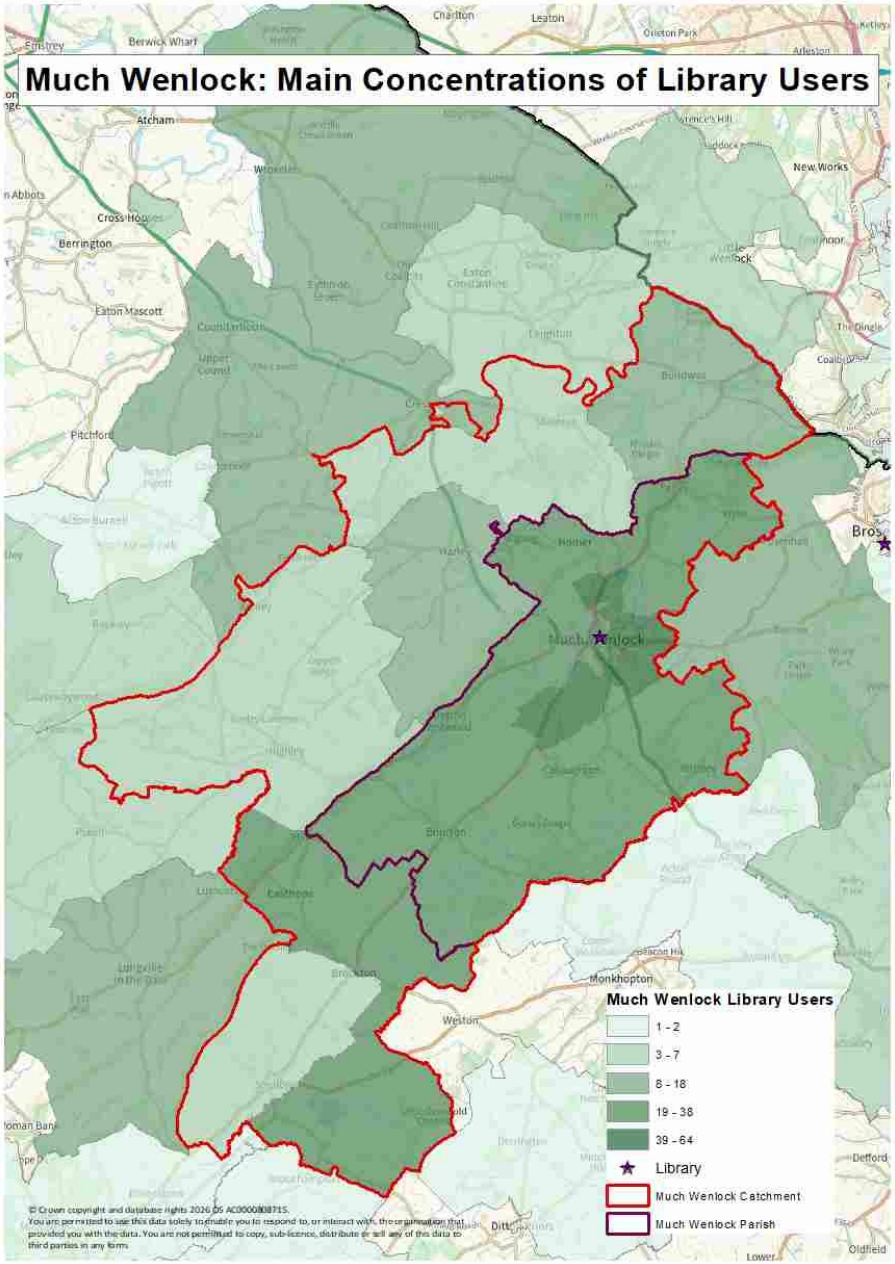

### Much Wenlock: Number of Visits




### Breakdown of Much Wenlock 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 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 300 users (+107.9%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 6,732, which is the equivalent of about 12 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with remains below the level seen pre-pandemic (15 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost five times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 8,810 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 15 per active user and 1.3 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 11% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 21%.
- Computer usage 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

- 72.2% of all Much Wenlock library users live within the main catchment area.
- 59.0% of users live within Much Wenlock parish boundary.
- 11.0% 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 1% to 20%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 27.8% of Much Wenlock library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Broseley 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 May 2026, 85.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Much Wenlock library were to the Much Wenlock, and these accounted for 81.4% 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.

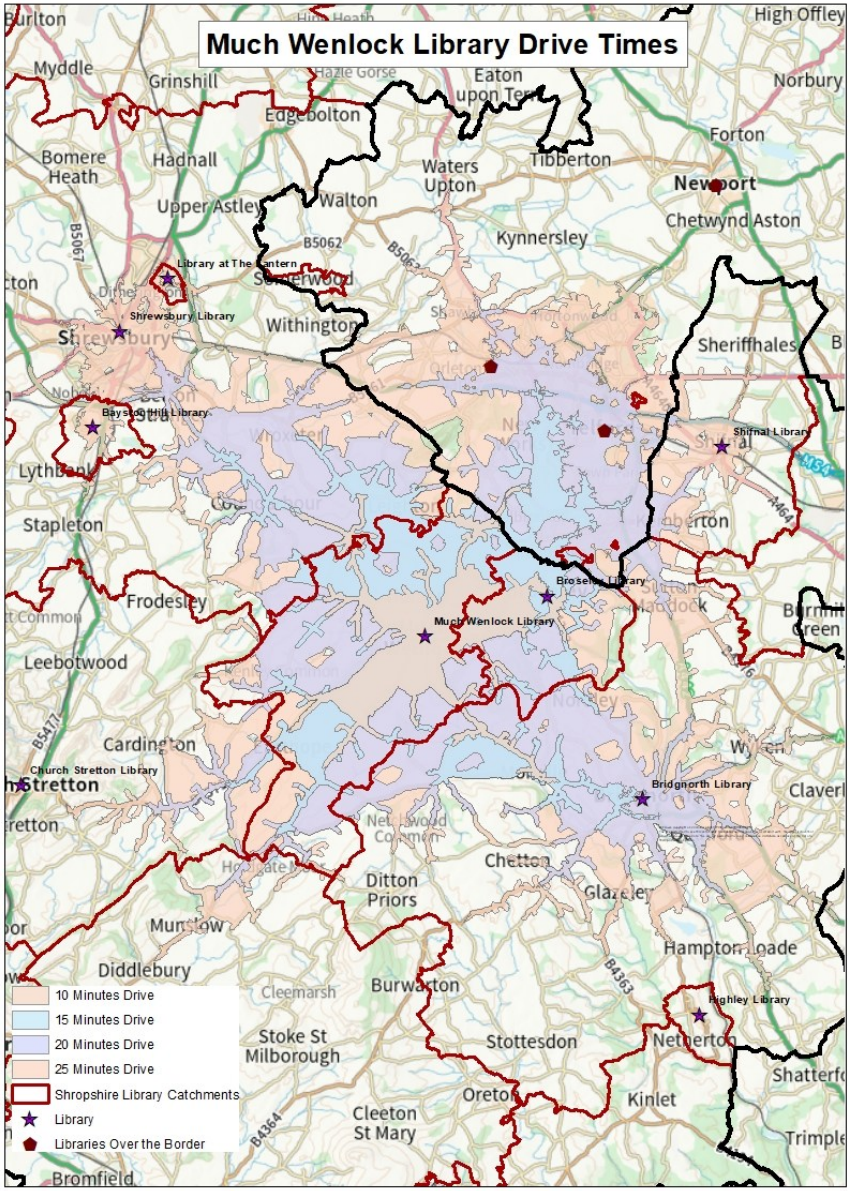
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 48.6% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 54.3% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 71.4% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 85.1% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 92.2% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 96.1% |

## 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 the two towns 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 £23,580 (2025/26).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £27.48 | £78.80 | 15th |
| **Per Active User** | £40.80 | £81.29 | 17th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.50 | £4.23 | 13th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £2.68 | £5.07 | 15th |

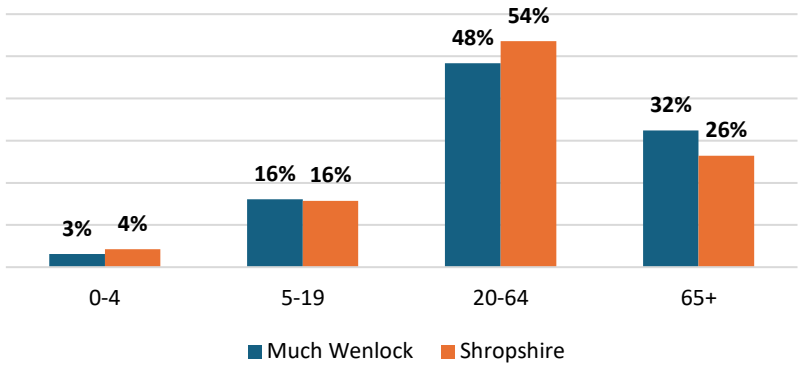
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## 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 5,260 (4,834 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.

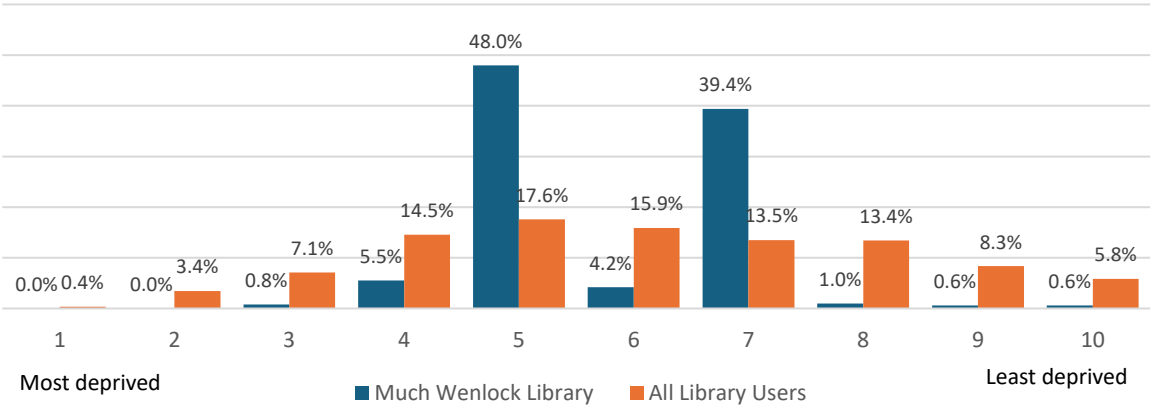
**Age Breakdown of Much Wenlock Catchment**




*Much Wenlock catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Much Wenlock Library Users by IMD Decile**



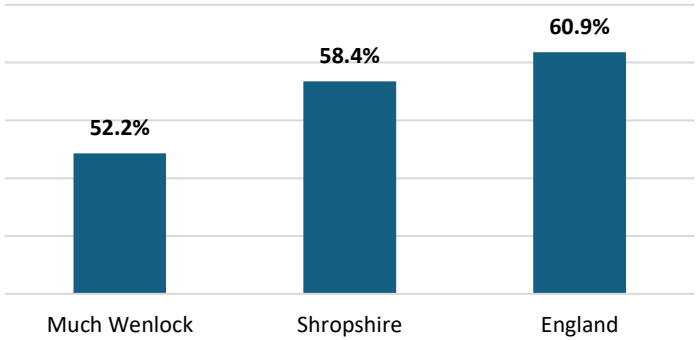

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- The Much Wenlock library is in the fifth decile according to the IMD 2025 and as such is located in an area with average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that more than 90% of all Much Wenlock library users are drawn from deciles five to seven compared with 47% of all Shropshire library users.
- Just 6.3% of users live within the least deprived 40% of areas in the country, and an even smaller proportion (0.8%) from the most deprived 30%.

## 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.

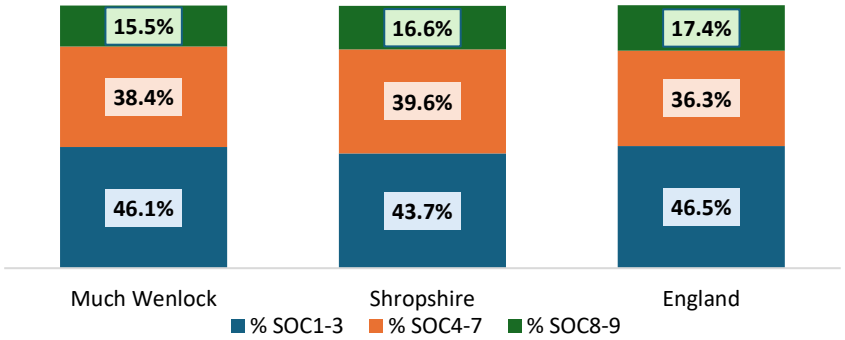
### Much Wenlock: Economic Activity Rate



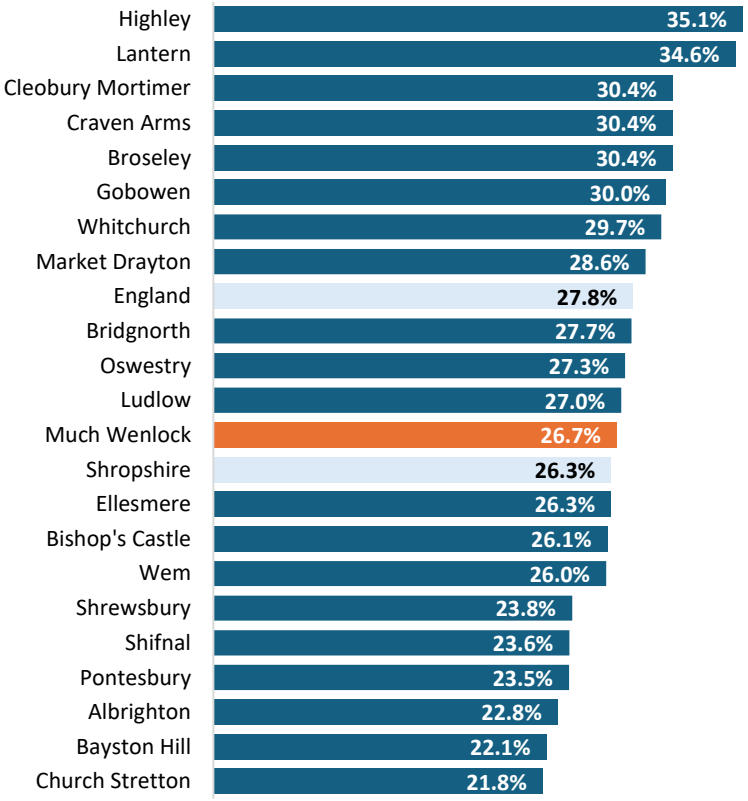

## Employment

- 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

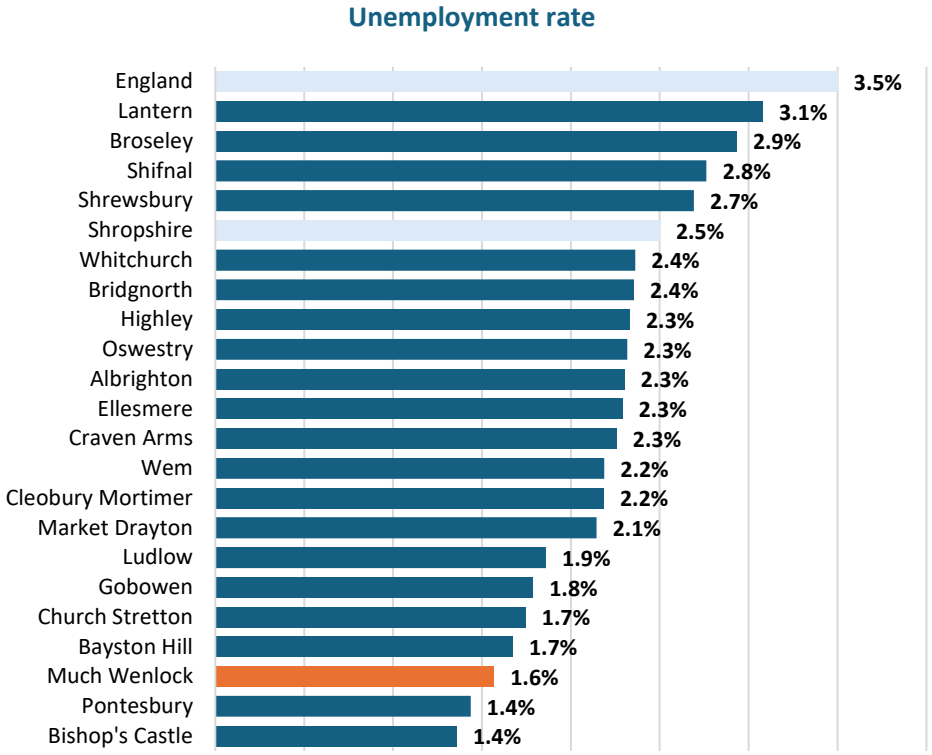



## Qualifications

- 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.

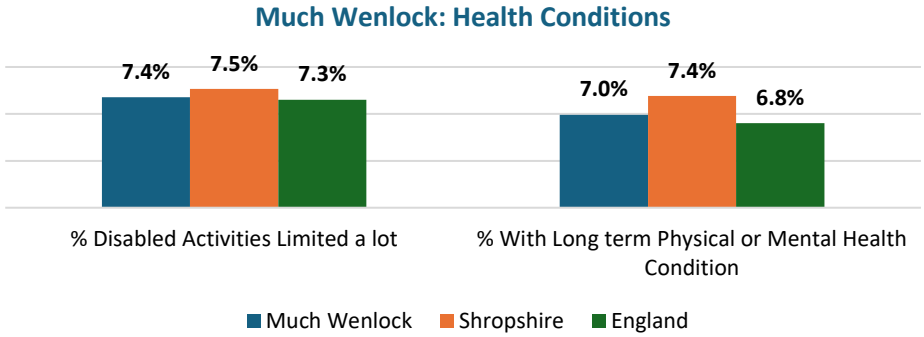
## Unemployment

- 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.



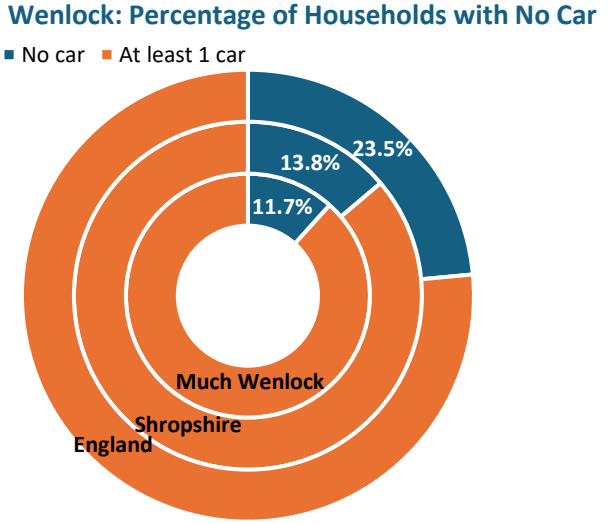

## Health Conditions

- 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.




## 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%.



# Oswestry Library Profile

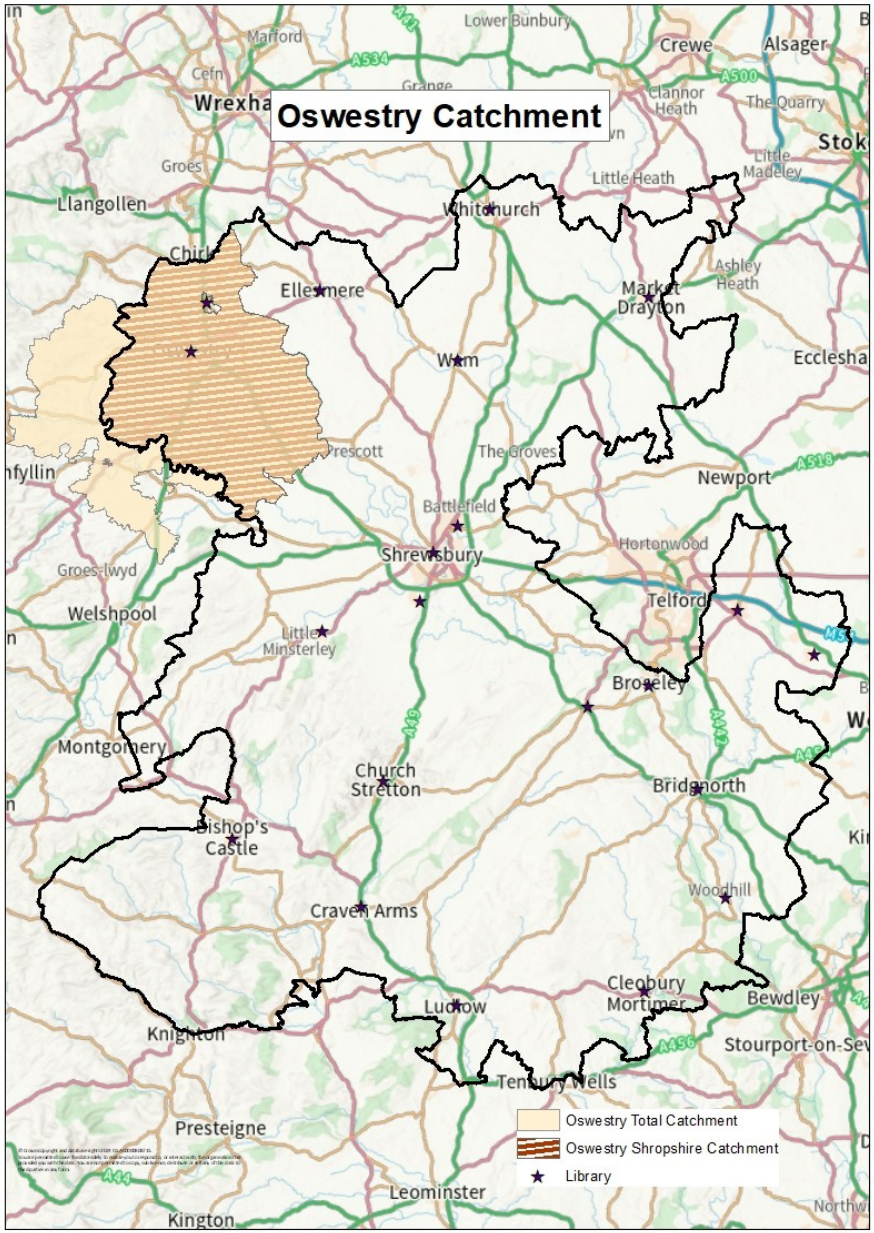
## Background

- 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 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 46,570 comprising 19,446 households. 88% of the catchment population – 41,162 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 |

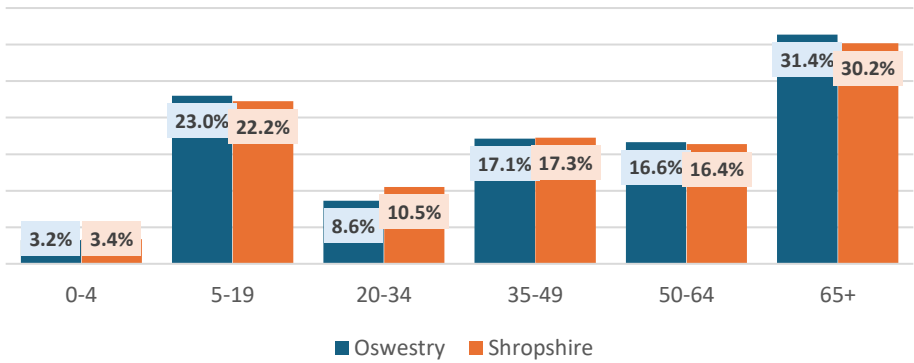



- The library employs 6.42 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 123 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 1,463 volunteer hours.

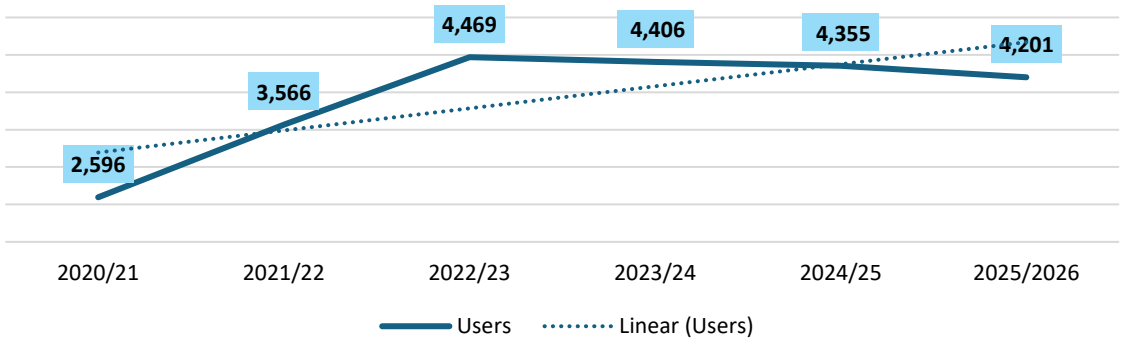
## Library Users

- Oswestry library had 4,201 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 13.0% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.2% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more children and users aged 65 and above but fewer adults aged 20 to 64.

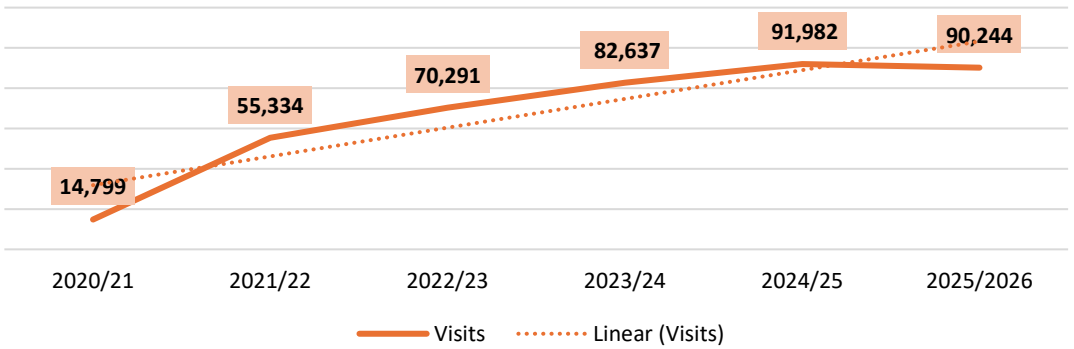
### Breakdown of Oswestry Library Users by Age



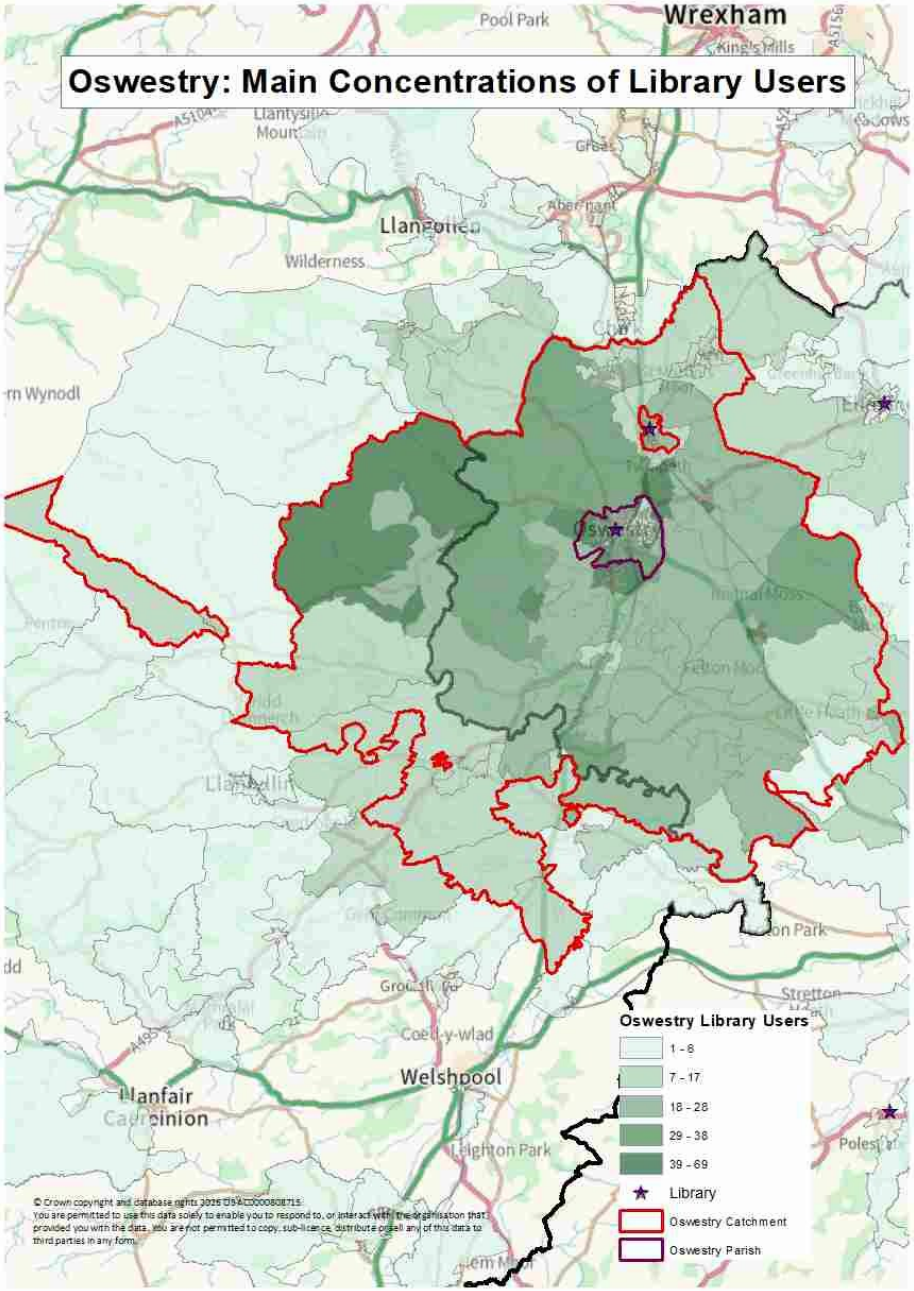

### Oswestry: Number of Active Users




### Oswestry: Number of Visits




- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although active user numbers have been in gradual decline since 2022/23.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 1,605 users (+61.8%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 90,244, 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 six times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 67,540 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 4% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 9%.
- Computer time was down by 13%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

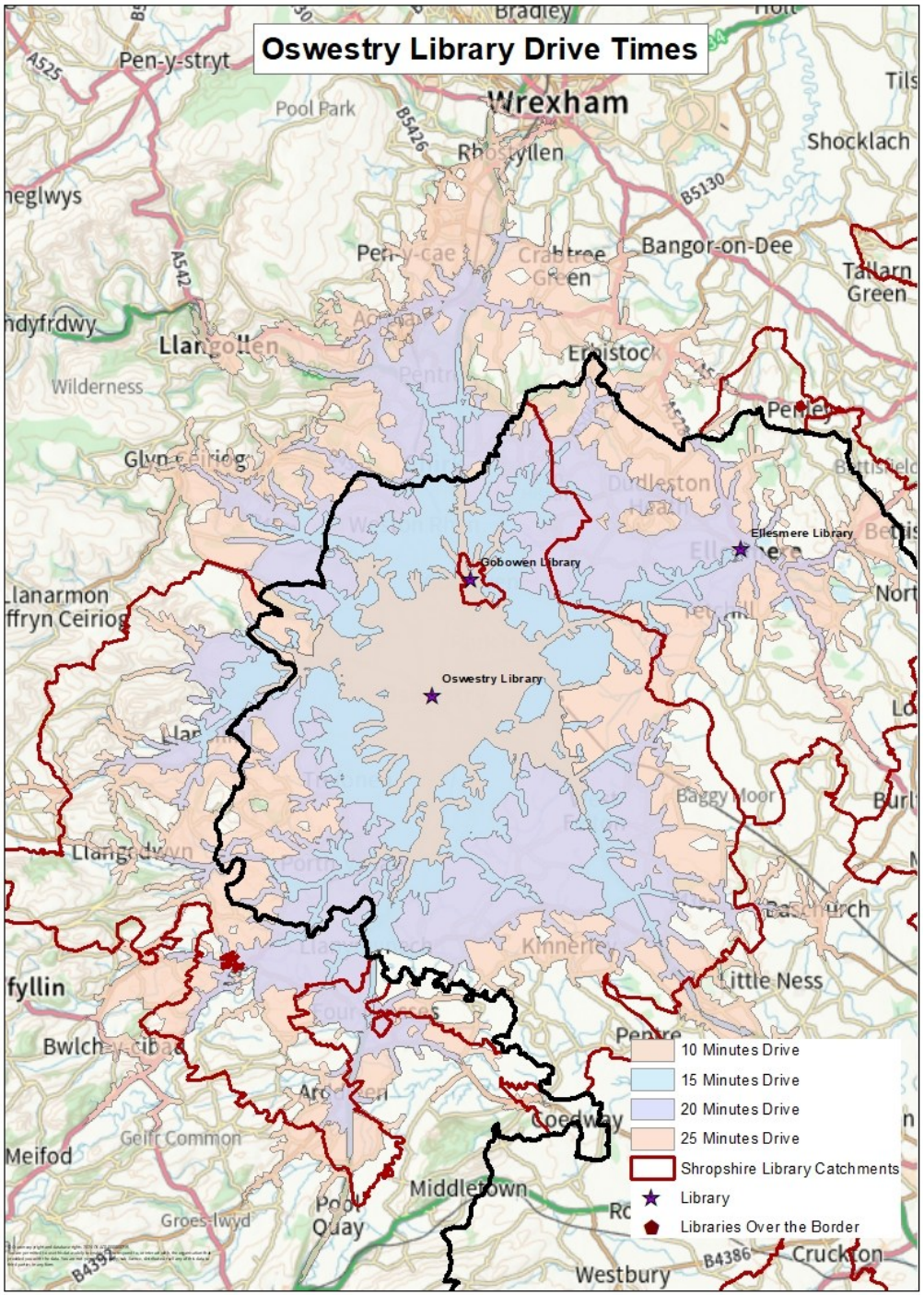
- 85.2% of all Oswestry library users live within the main catchment area.
- 40.8% live within the Oswestry town council area.
- 8.2% of the population in the catchment area are Oswestry active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1.8% to 19.2%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 14.8% of Oswestry library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in the Gobowen, Ellesmere or Shrewsbury catchments or libe out-of-county.
- People that live in the Oswestry catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury or Gobowen library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 90.7% 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 | 43.0% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 59.0% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 78.7% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 88.2% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 93.1% |

## 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 £431,280 (2025/26)
- Oswestry library costs more than average per active user, per book loan, per hour open and per visit.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £184.31 | £78.80 | 3rd |
| **Per Active User** | £102.66 | £81.29 | 7th |
| **Per Visit** | £4.78 | £4.23 | 6th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £6.39 | £5.07 | 7th |

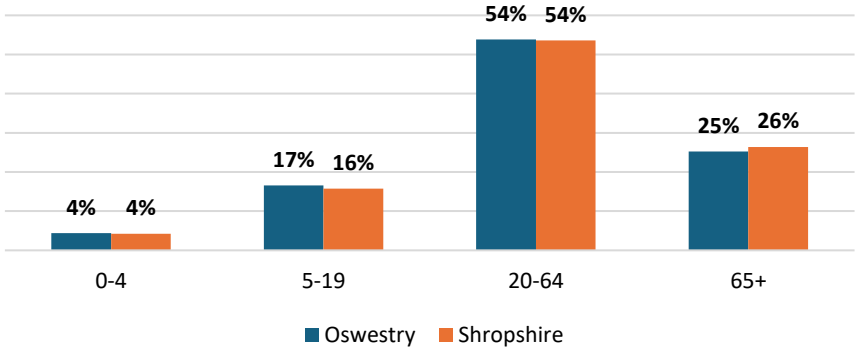
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath  1= most expensive*

## 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 41,162 and a total population of 46,570.
- 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.

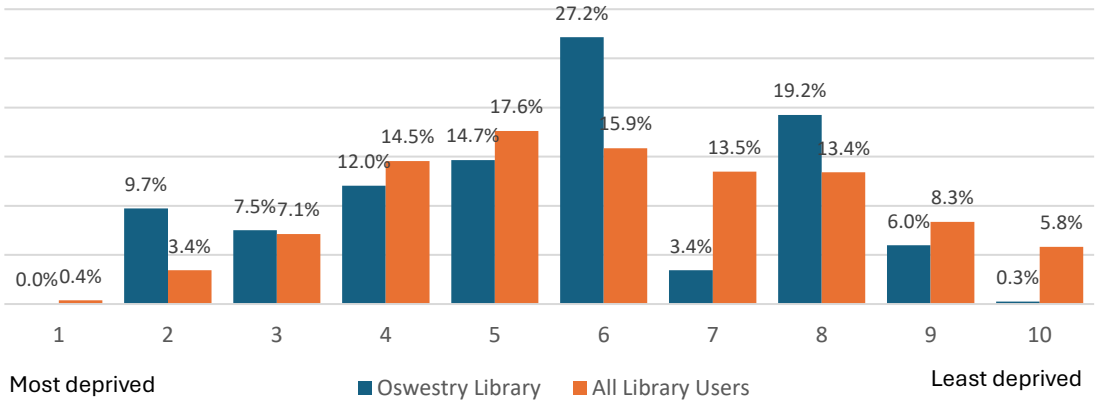
### Age Breakdown of Oswestry Catchment




*Oswestry catchment includes non-Shropshire population*

### Deprivation

### Breakdown of Oswestry Library Users by IMD Decile



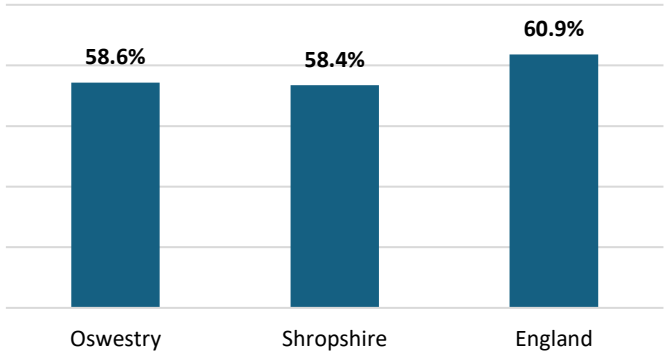

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Oswestry library is in decile two according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of five Shropshire libraries within the 20% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 17.2% of Oswestry library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.9% for all Shropshire library users)
- Over half of users are drawn from deciles four, five, six and seven, with 25.5% 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.

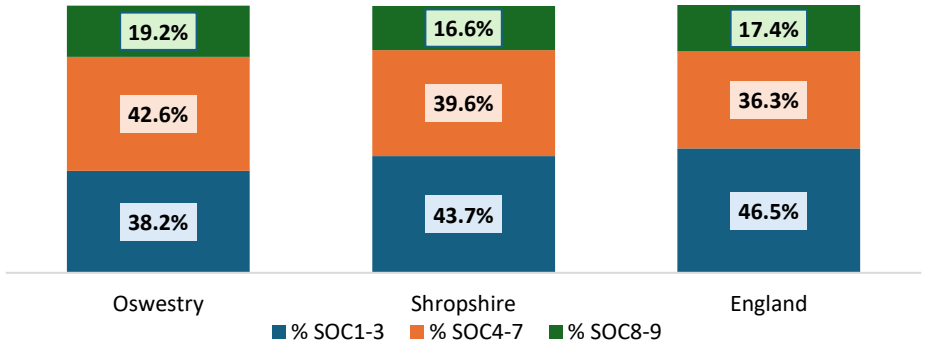
### Oswestry: Economic Activity Rate



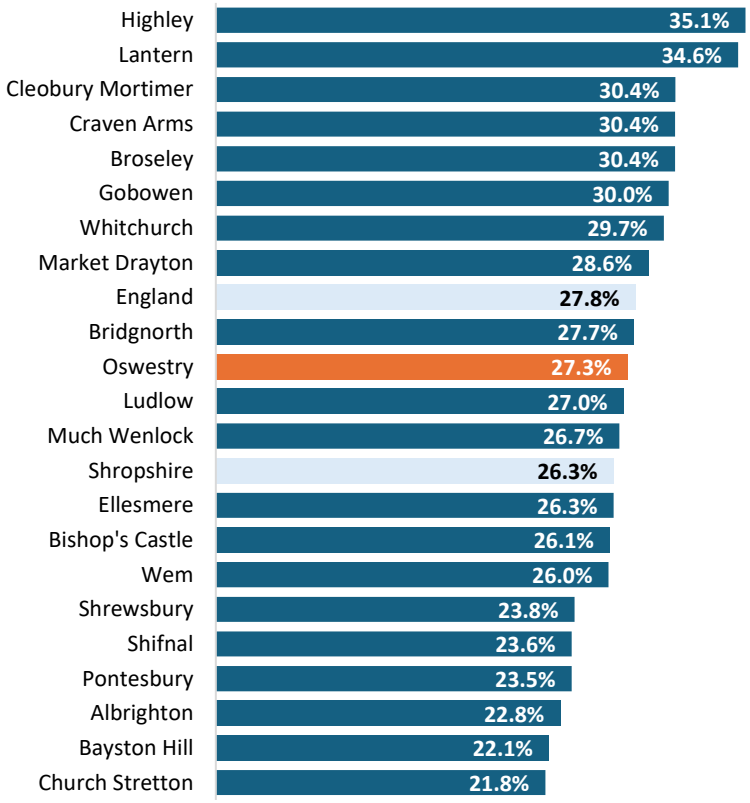

## Employment

- 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




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications

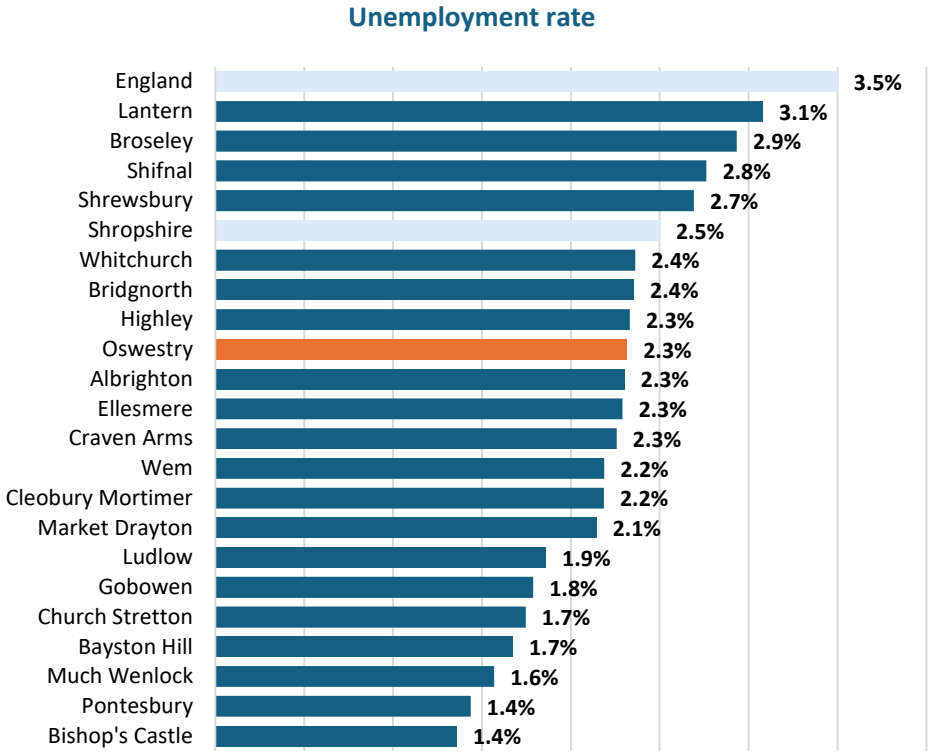



## Qualifications

- 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.

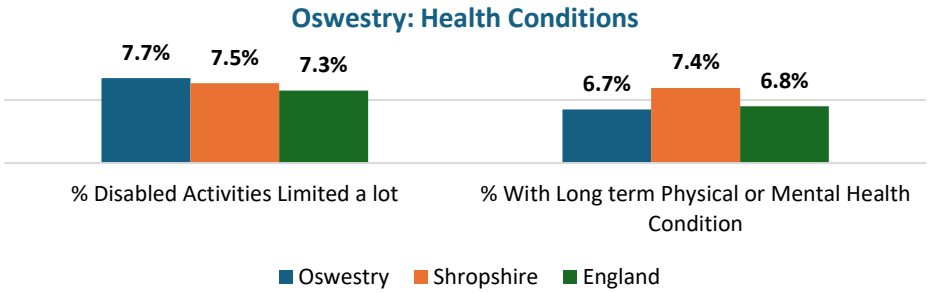
## Unemployment

- 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.



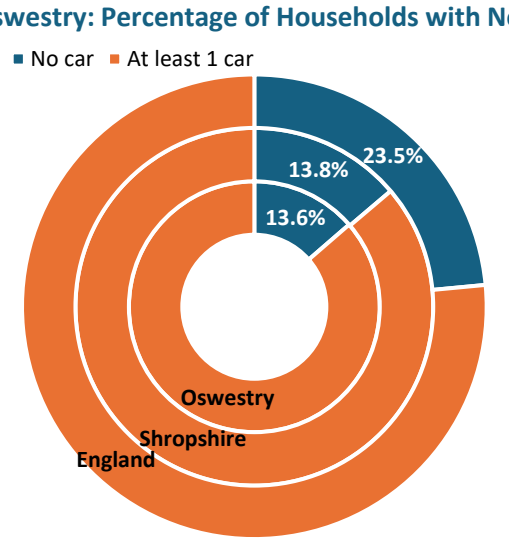

## Health Conditions

- 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

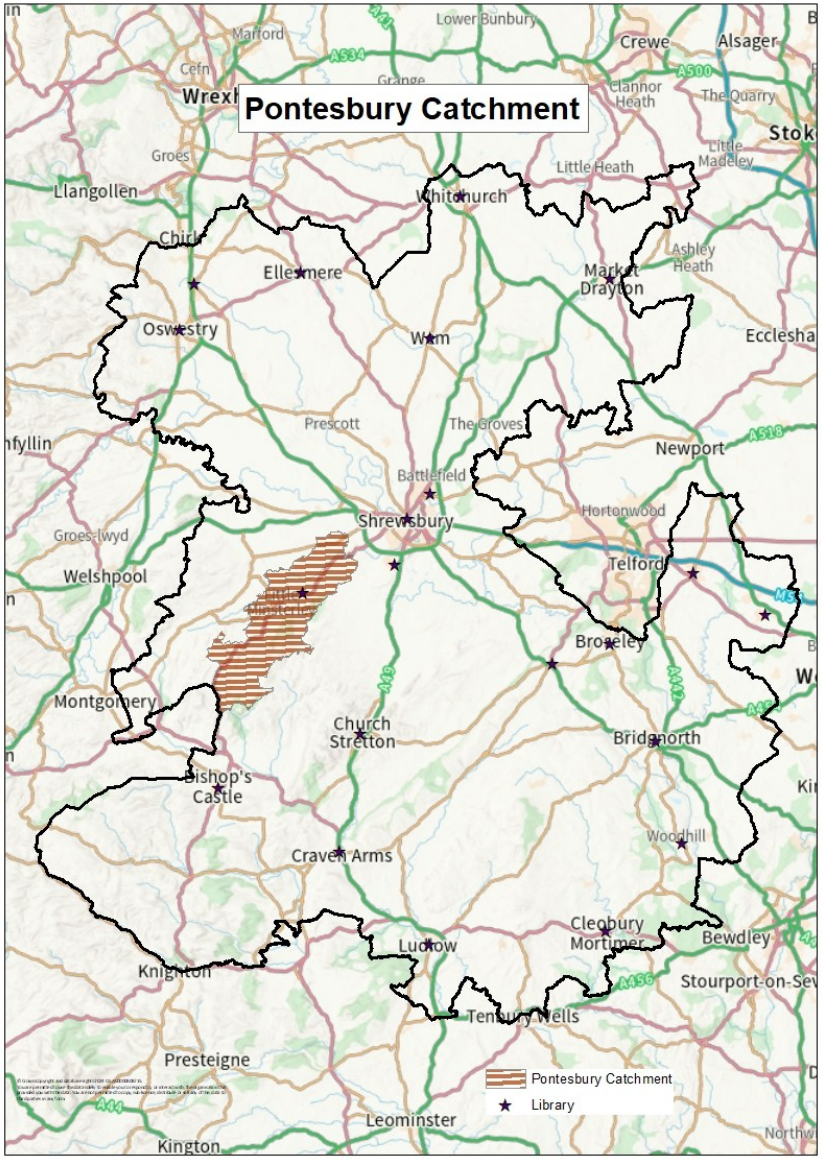
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Oswestry households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



# 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 6,718 comprising 2,819 households.




## Opening Hours

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

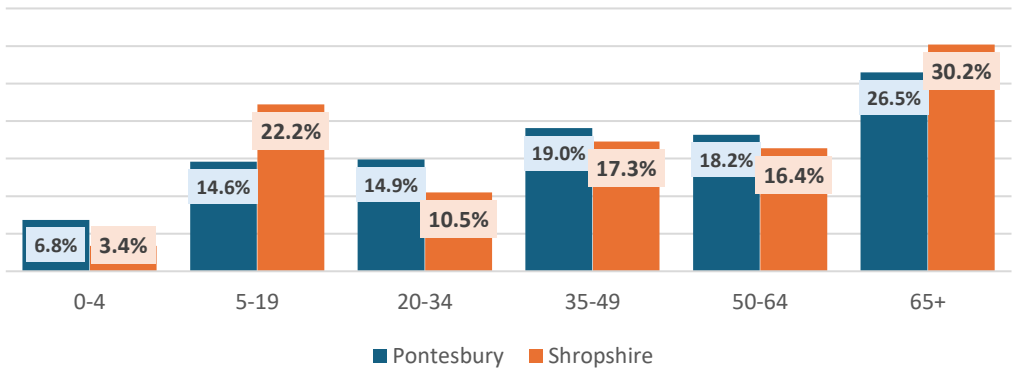
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 10.00am-13.00pm | 3 |
| Tuesday | 10.00am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 14.00pm -17.00pm | 3 |
| Friday | Closed | 0 |
| Saturday | 10.00am-13.00pm | 3 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library has 0.46 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from 18 volunteers providing a total of 254 volunteer hours.

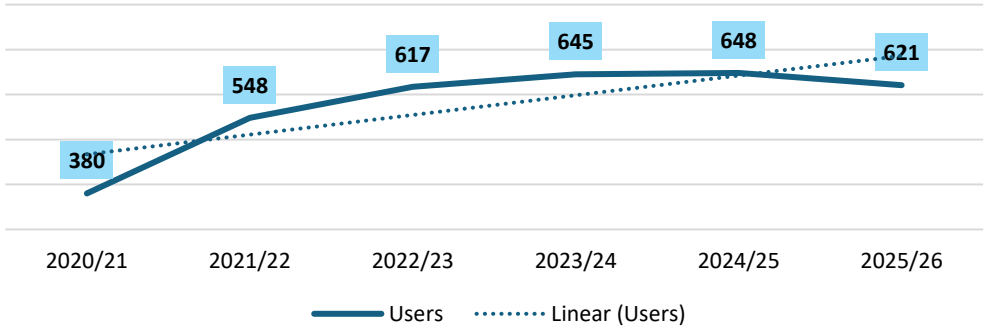
## Library Users

- Pontesbury library had 621 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.9% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 11.1% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and older adults (65+) and more users of working age.

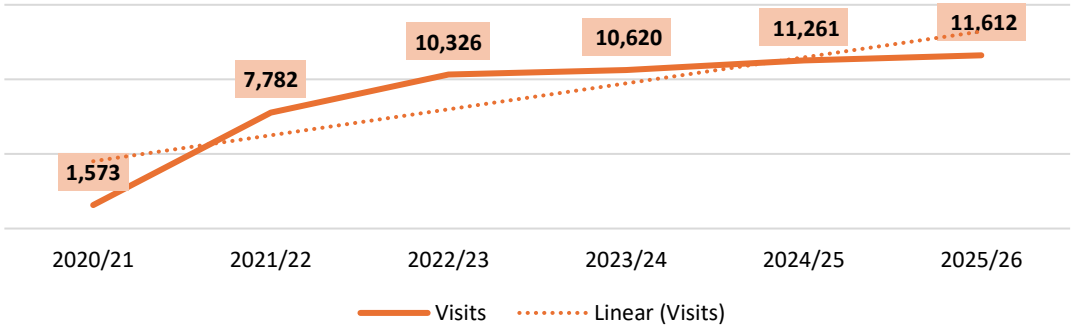
### Breakdown of Pontesbury Library Users by Age



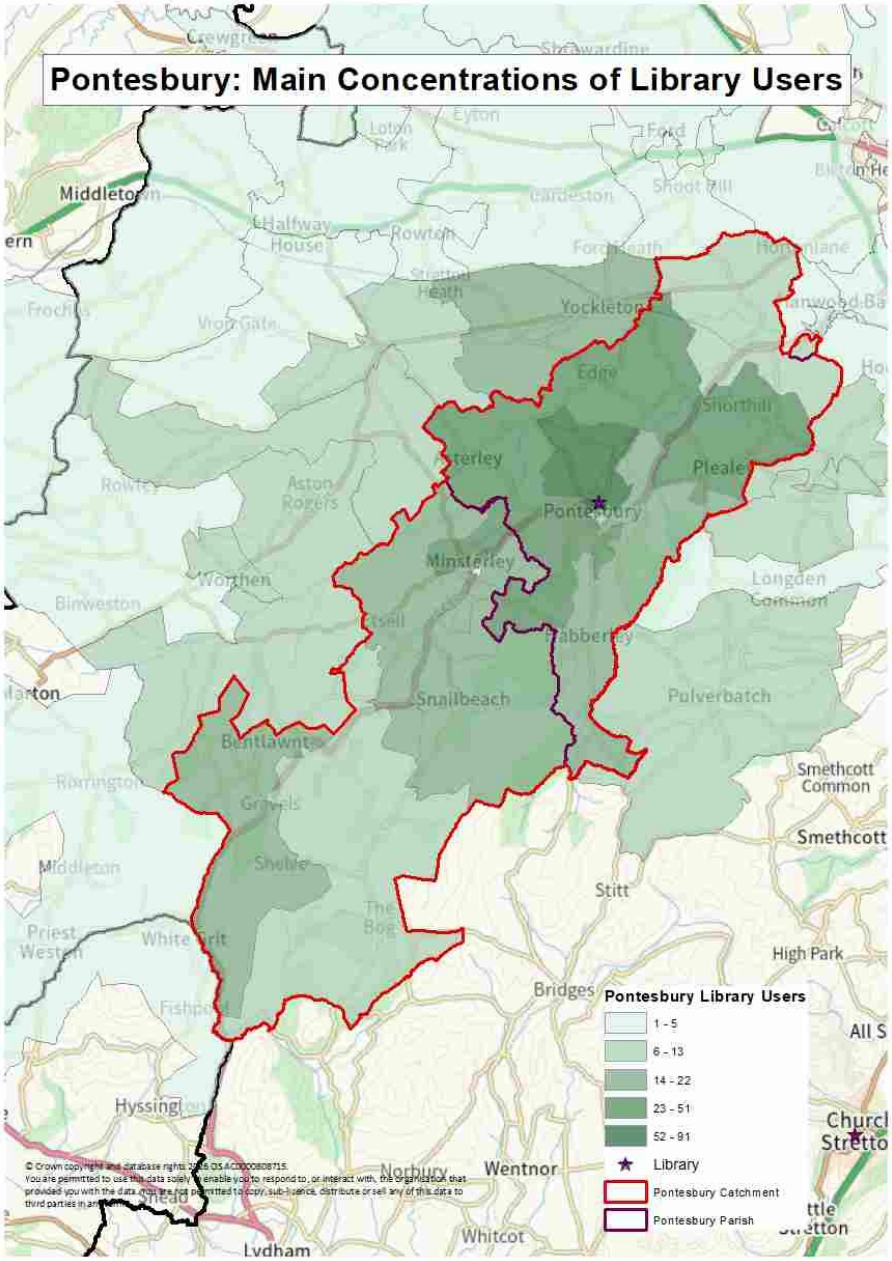

### Pontesbury: Number of Active Users




### Pontesbury: Number of Visits




- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year (until 2025/26 when there was a small downturn) and numbers are now higher than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 241 users (+63.4%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 11,612, which is the equivalent of about 19 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 now surpasses the level seen pre-pandemic (12 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was more than seven times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 12,897 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 21 per active user and 1.1 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 7%.
- Computer usage was down by 4%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 76.7% of all Pontesbury library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is around average for Shropshire.
- 53.2% of users live within Pontesbury parish boundary.
- 11.1% 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 5% to over 19%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 23.3% 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 May 2026, 82.1% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Pontesbury library were to Pontesbury, and these accounted for 81.9% 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.

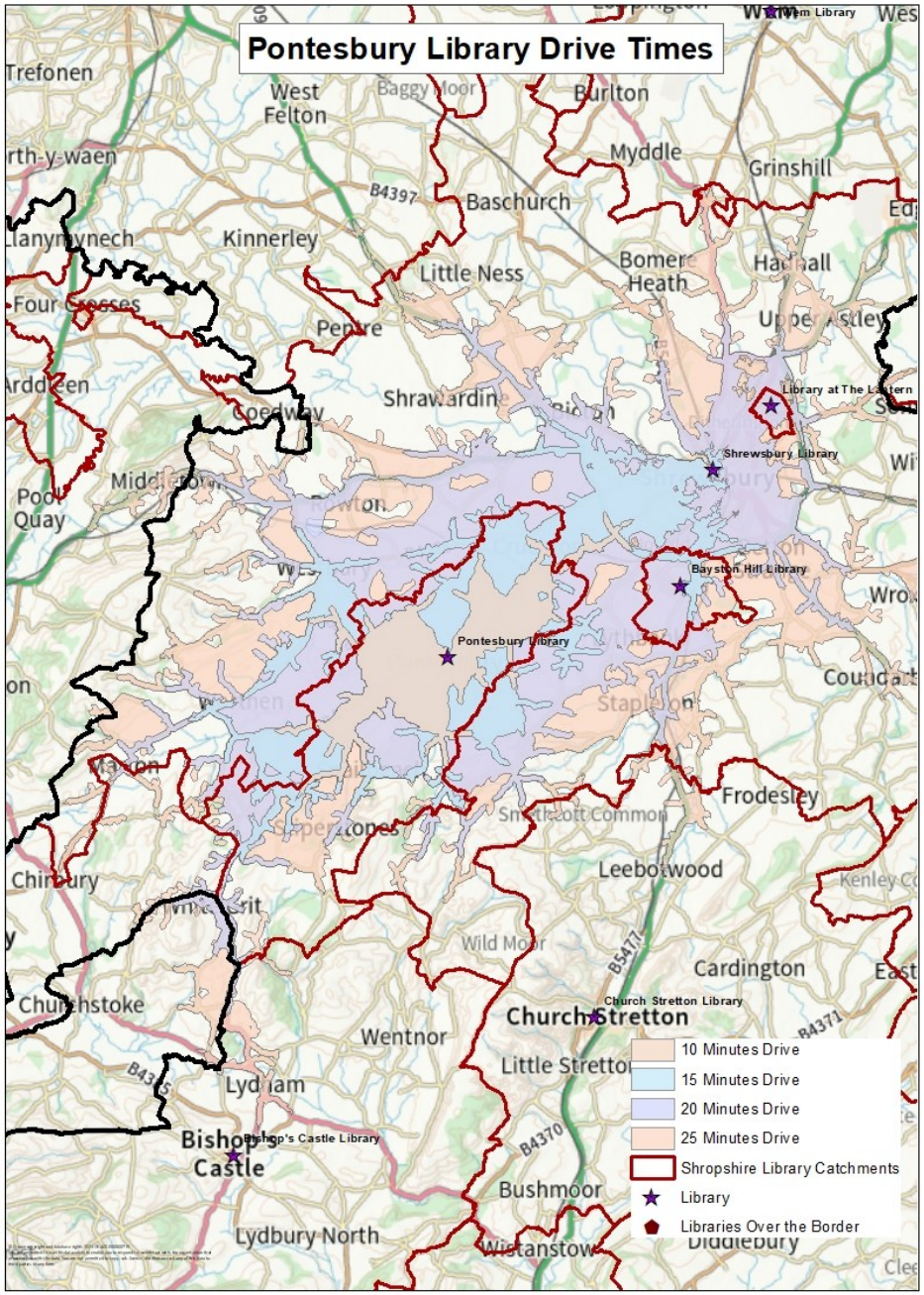
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 34.6% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 42.3% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 70.6% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 85.3% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 95.7% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 97.8% |

## 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 9th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £43,260 (2025/26).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £55.46 | £78.80 | 9th |
| **Per Active User** | £69.66 | £81.29 | 11th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.73 | £4.23 | 11th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £3.35 | £5.07 | 13th |

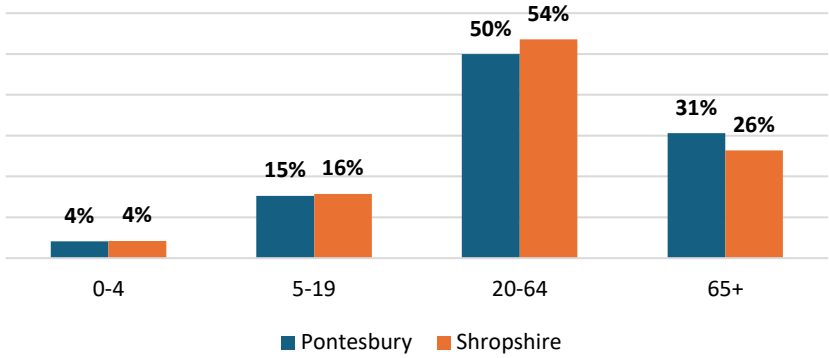
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Pontesbury Catchment Area

### Population

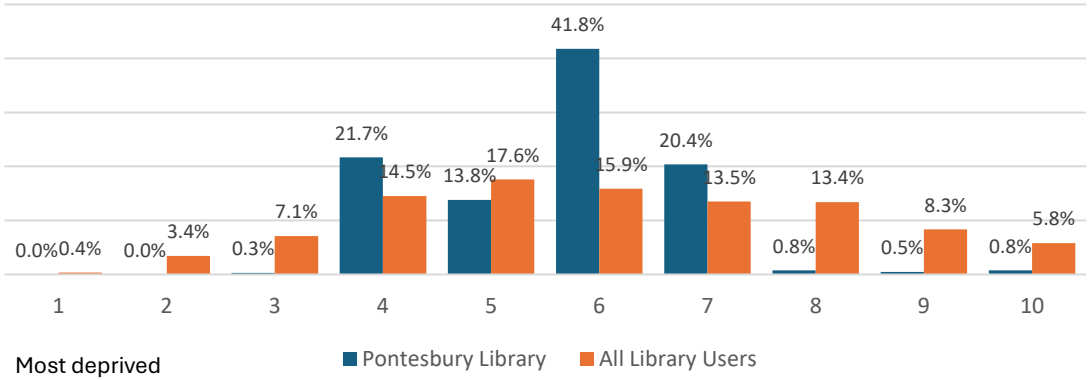
- The Pontesbury library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 6,718.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of people age 65+ and slightly fewer aged 20-64.
- There are 2,819 households in the catchment, 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**



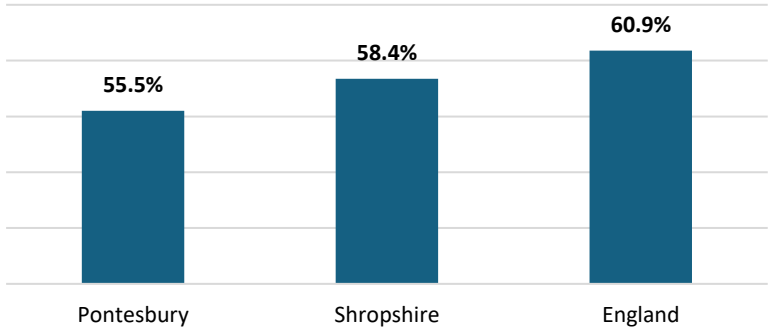

- The Pontesbury library is in the sixth decile according to the IMD 2025 which means the library location has average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that a high proportion of Pontesbury library users are drawn from this decile 41.8% compared with 15.9% for Shropshire).
- Less than 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.

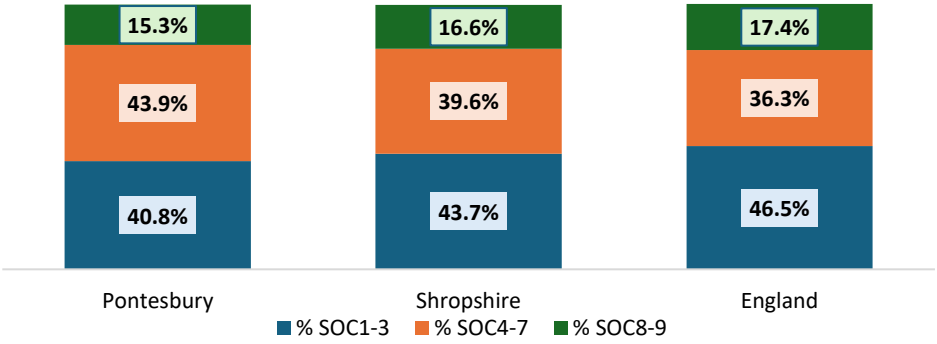
### Pontesbury: Economic Activity Rate



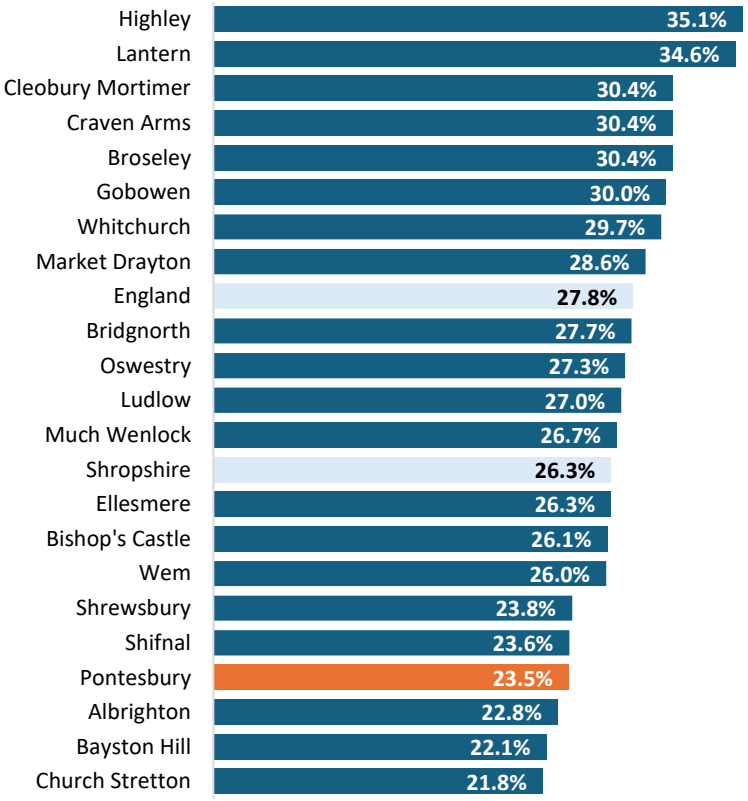

## Employment

- 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




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications




## Qualifications

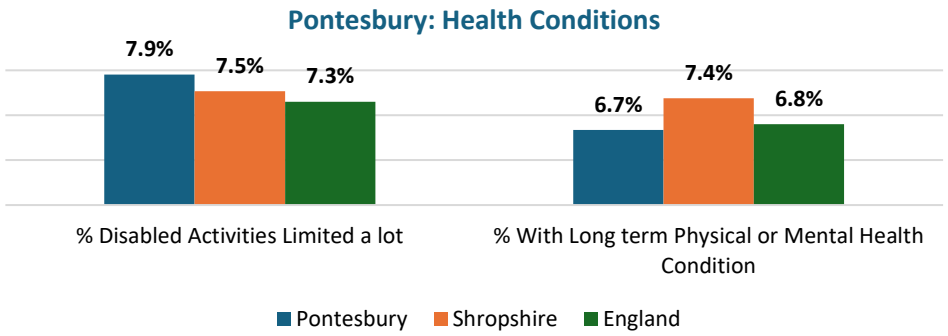
- The proportion of the Pontesbury population with no or low qualifications is below the Shropshire average at 23.5% of the 16+ population.

## 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.

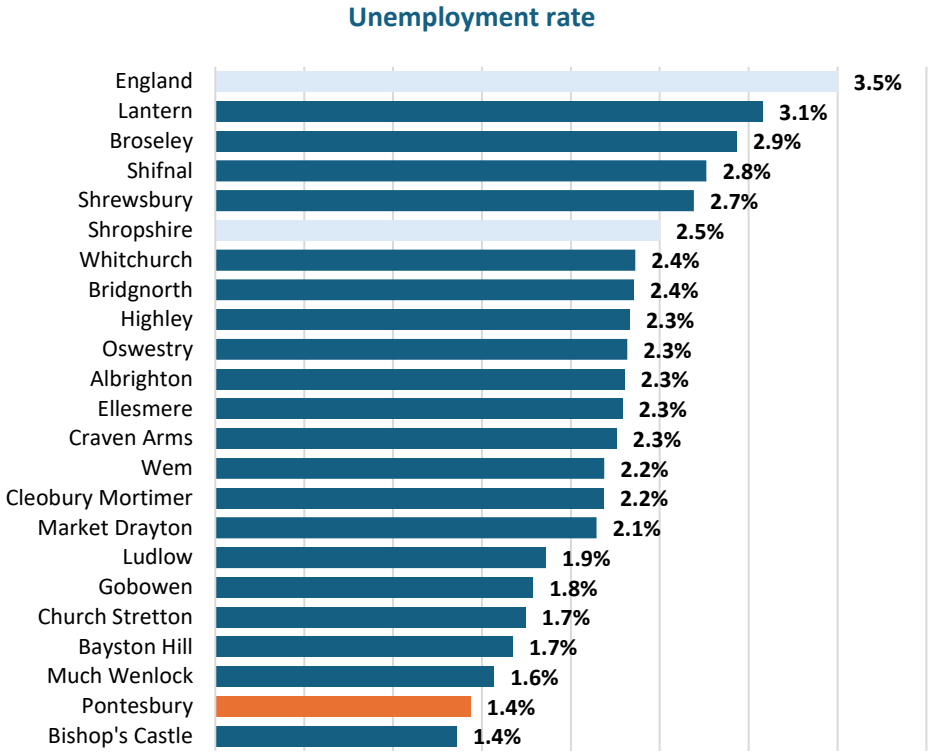
## Health Conditions

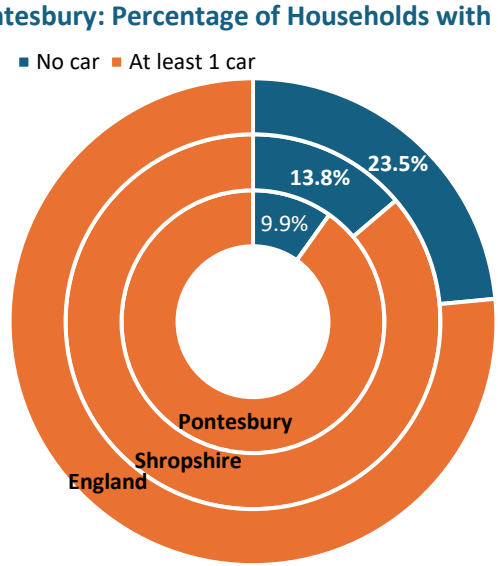
- 7.9% of residents in the Pontesbury library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable to Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.7% of the population say that they have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

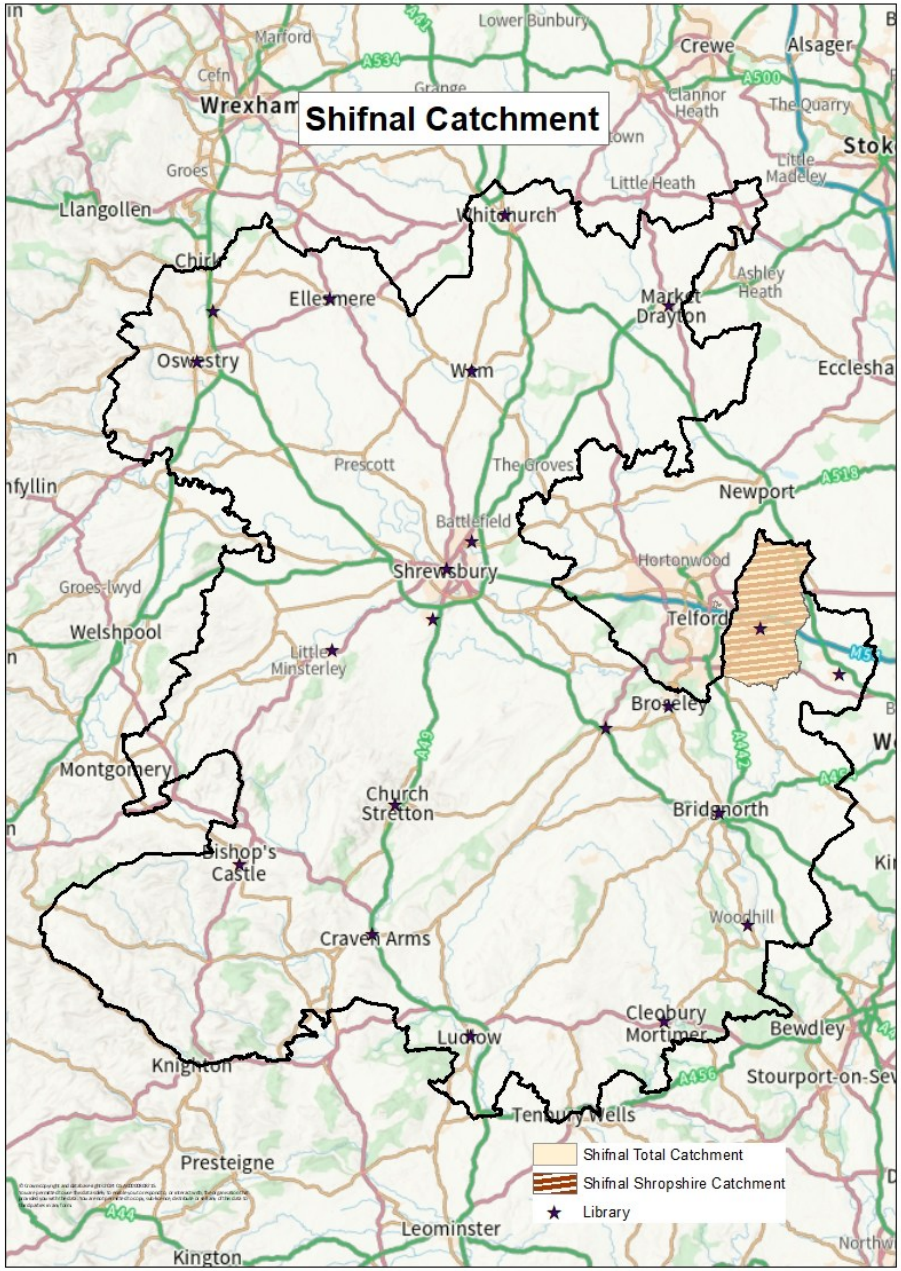


# Shifnal Library Profile

## 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 11,773 comprising 4,742 households. 97.4% of the catchment population (11,471 people) are Shropshire residents.




## Opening Hours

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

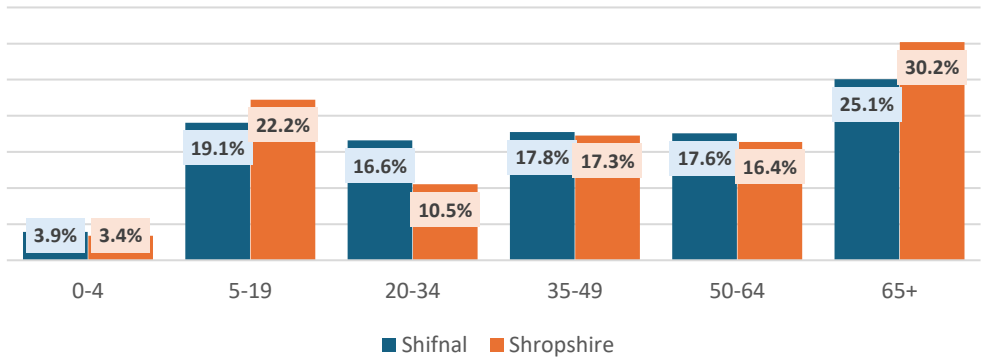
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 13.00pm-17.00pm | 4 |
| Tuesday | Closed | 0 |
| Wednesday | 10.00am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Thursday | Closed | 0 |
| Friday | 10.00am-13.00pm<br>14.00pm-17.00pm | 6 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0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

- The library has 0.74 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from one volunteer providing a total of 14 volunteer hours.

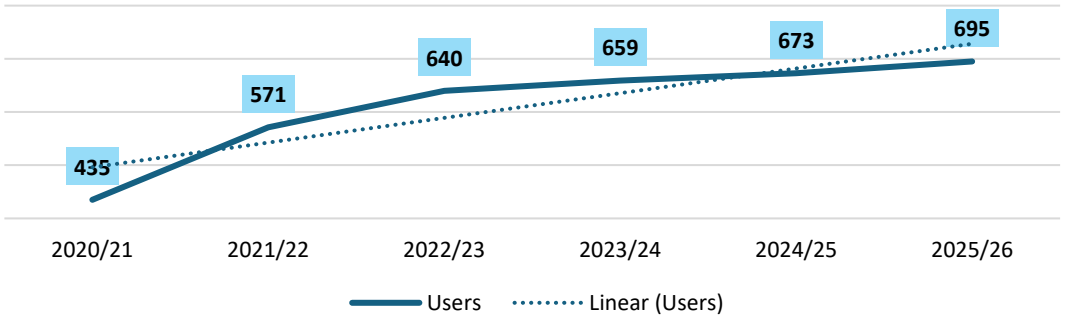
## Library Users

- Shifnal library had 695 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 6.0% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and older adults (65+) and more users of working age.

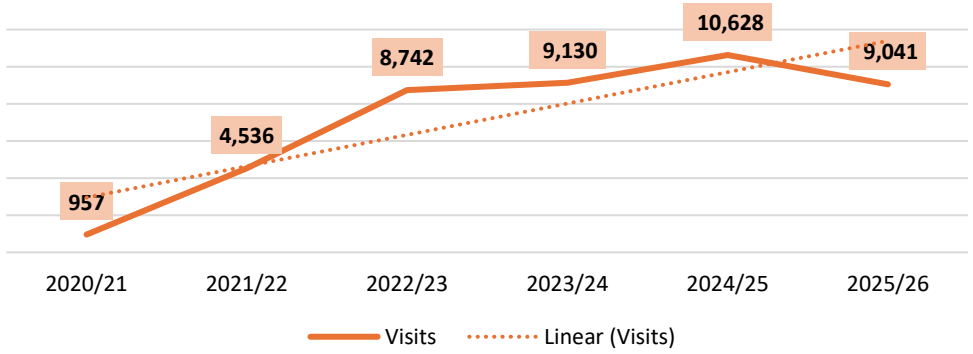
### Breakdown of Shifnal Library Users by Age



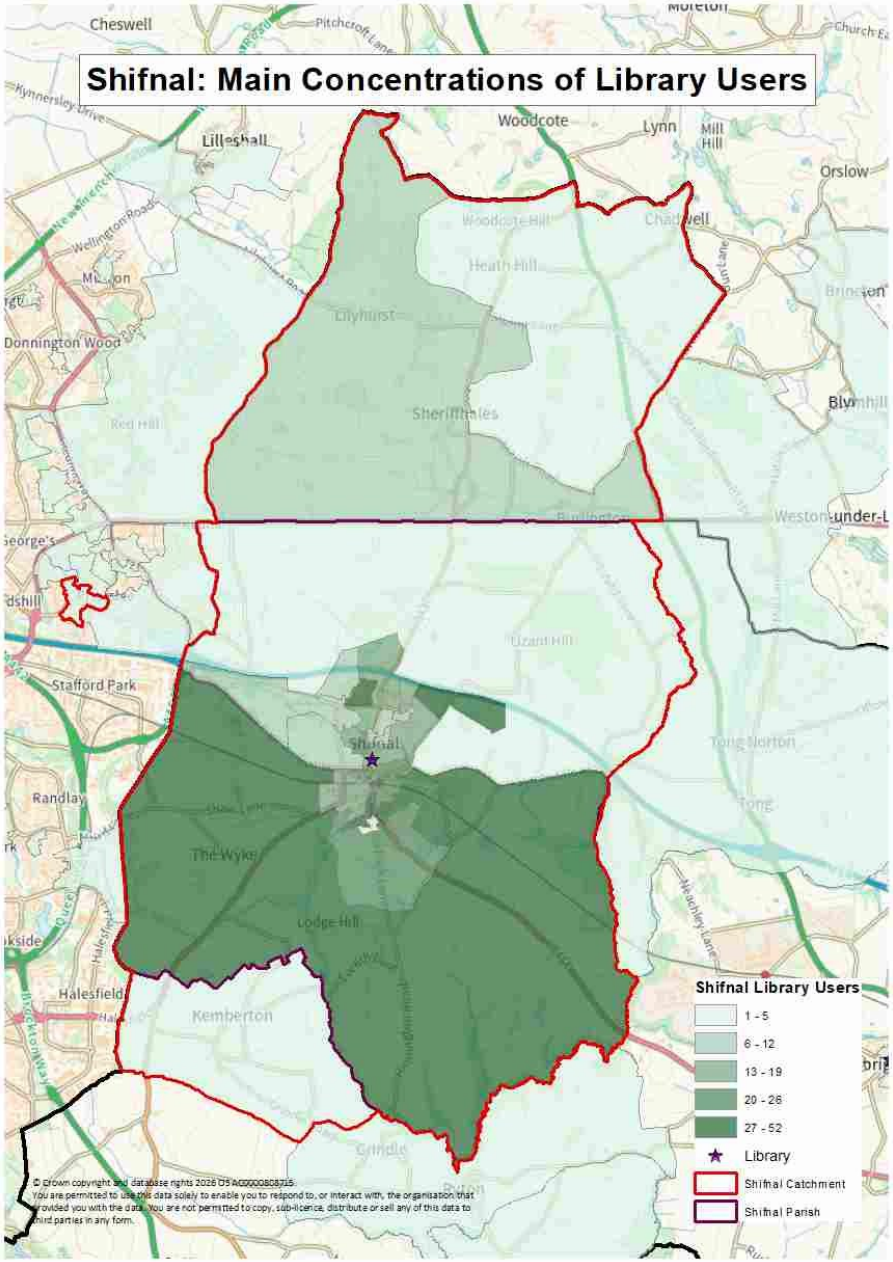

### Shifnal: Number of Active Users




### Shifnal: Number of Visits




- 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 increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 260 users (+59.8%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 9,041, 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 and the frequency with which users visit yet to recover to the level seen pre-pandemic (17 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost 10 times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 12,565 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 18 per active user and 1.4 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 9% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 2%.
- Computer usage was down by 24%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.3% of all Shifnal library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is slightly above average for Shropshire.
- 84.8% of users live within Shifnal parish boundary.
- 6.0% 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 1.3% to 14.0%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 12.7% 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, Broseley or Shrewsbury libraries or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 92.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Shifnal library were to the Shifnal library, and these accounted for 93.0% of all issues.
- Albrighton was the most frequently visited alternative library.

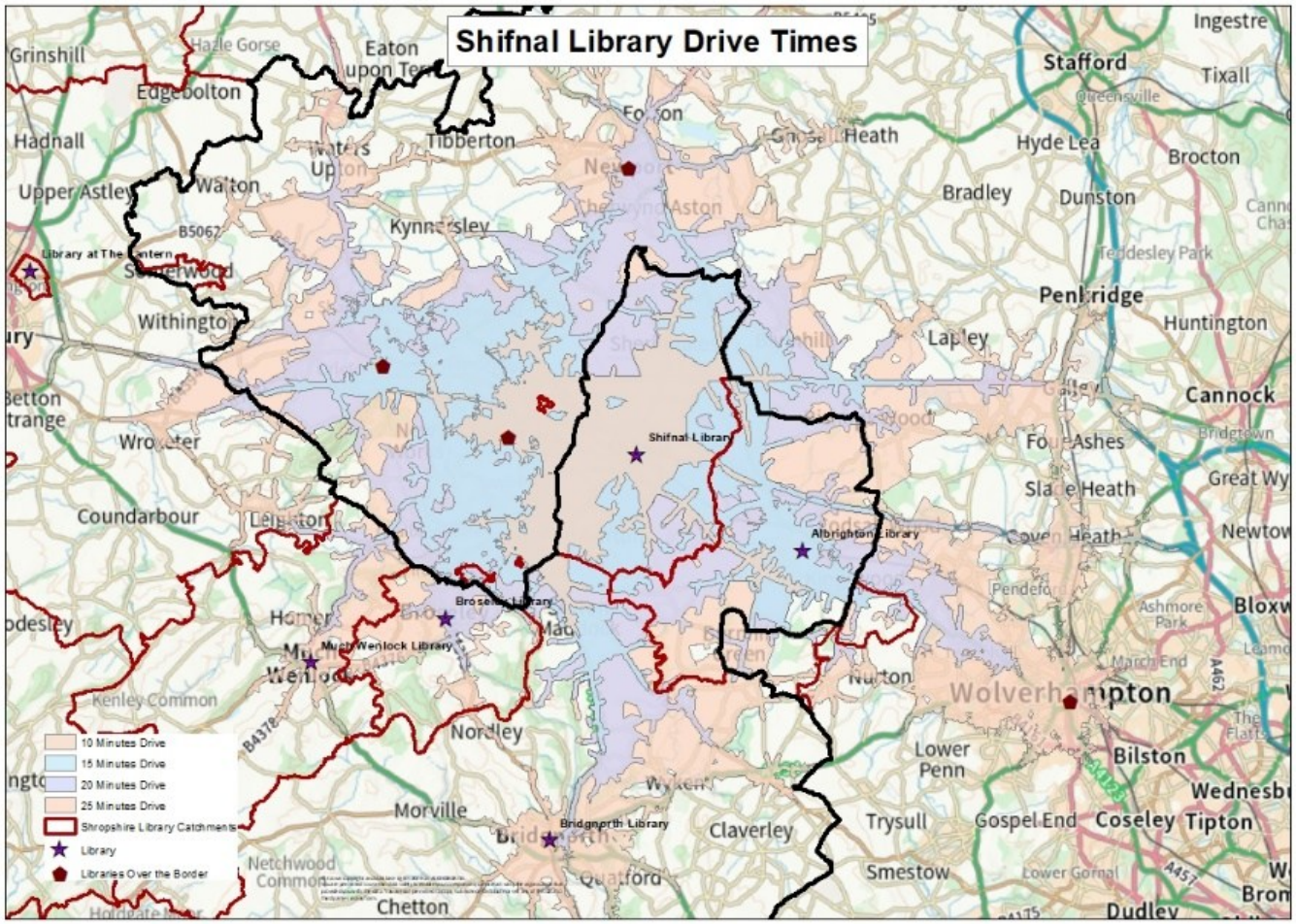
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 68.9% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 83.8% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 89.8% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 94.6% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 97.5% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 98.5% |

## 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 library 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 least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual costs to the Council are £5,790 (2025/26).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan ranking as the first, second or third cheapest in each case.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £5.71 | £78.80 | 18th |
| **Per Active User** | £8.33 | £81.29 | 21st |
| **Per Visit** | £0.64 | £4.23 | 19th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £0.46 | £5.07 | 21st |

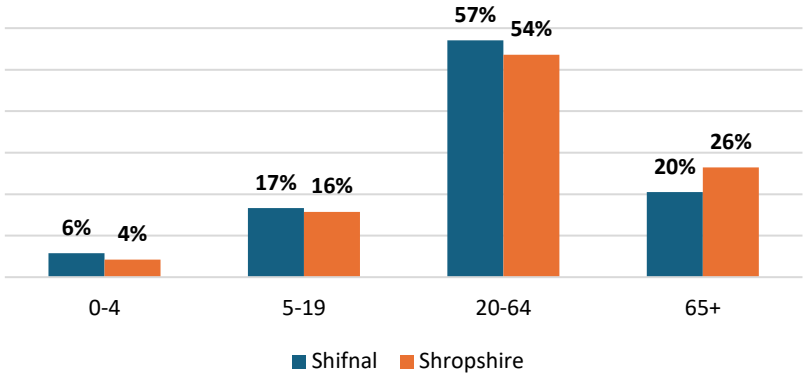
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## 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 11,773 (Shropshire population 11,471).
- 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.

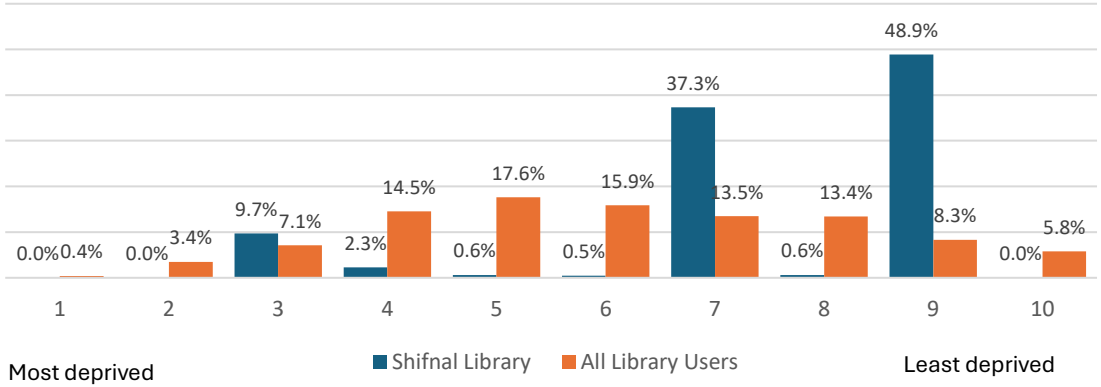
**Age Breakdown of Shifnal Catchment**




*Shifnal catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Shifnal Library Users by IMD Decile**



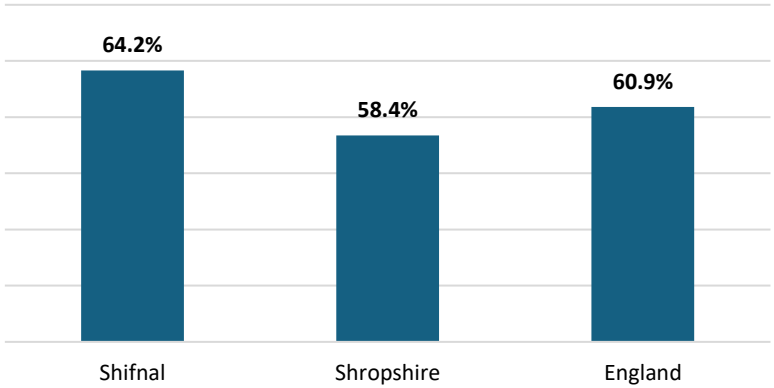

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Shifnal library is in the seventh decile according to the IMD 2025 which means the library's location is within the 40% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that a high proportion of Shifnal library users are drawn from the 20% least deprived areas of the country (48.9% compared with 14.1% of all Shropshire library users).
- Around a tenth of users live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

## 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.

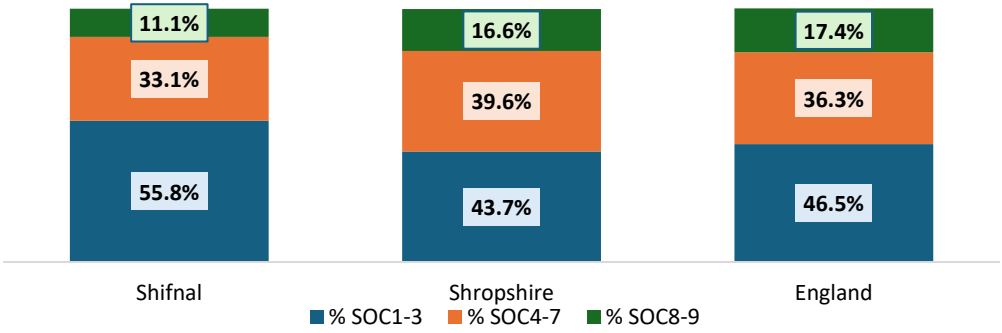
### Shifnal: Economic Activity Rate



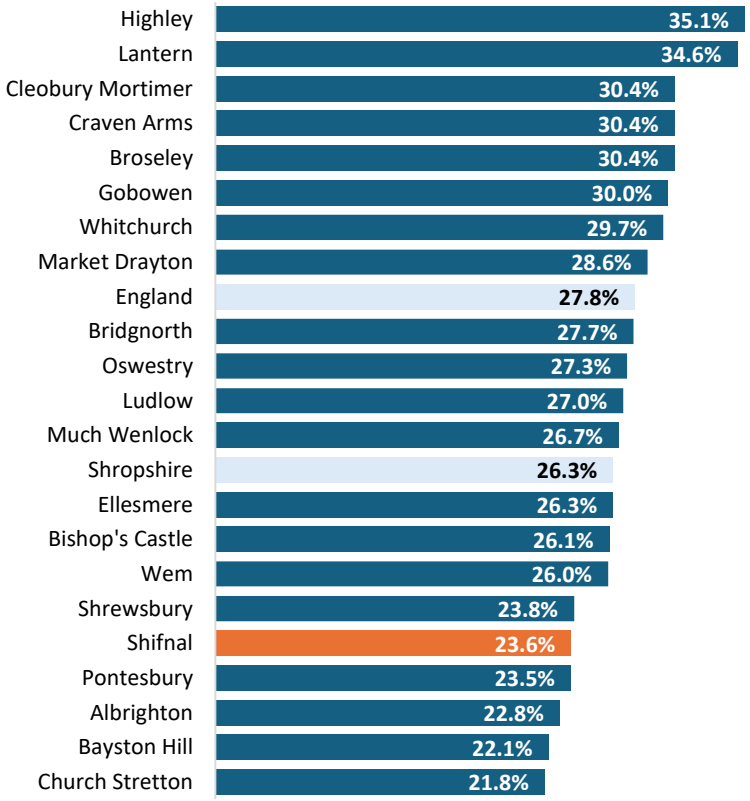

## Employment

- 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




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications

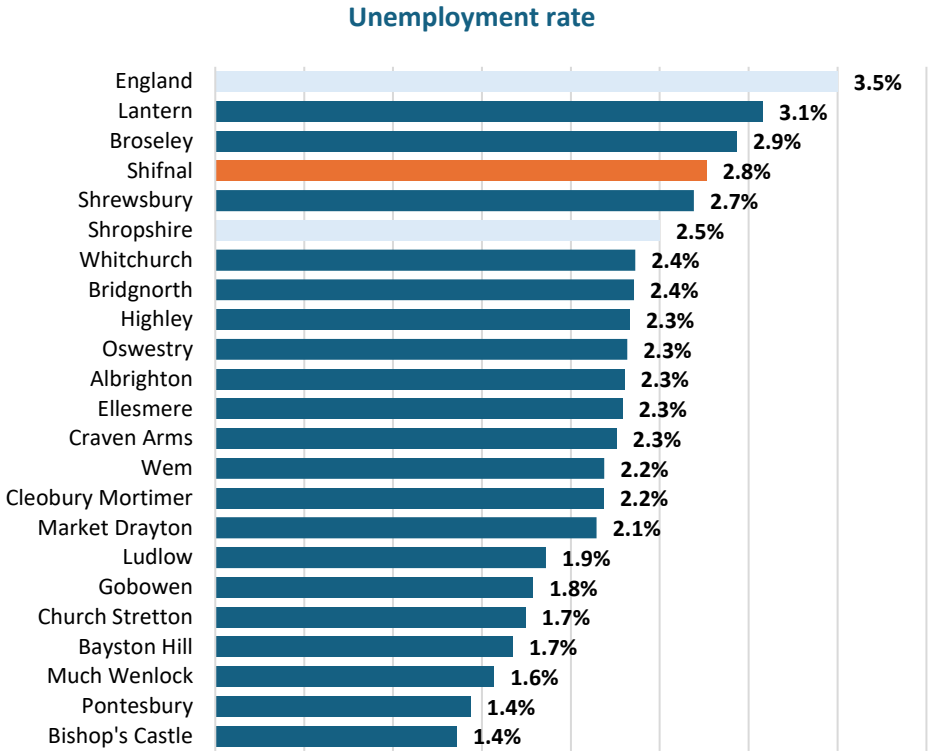



## Qualifications

- 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.

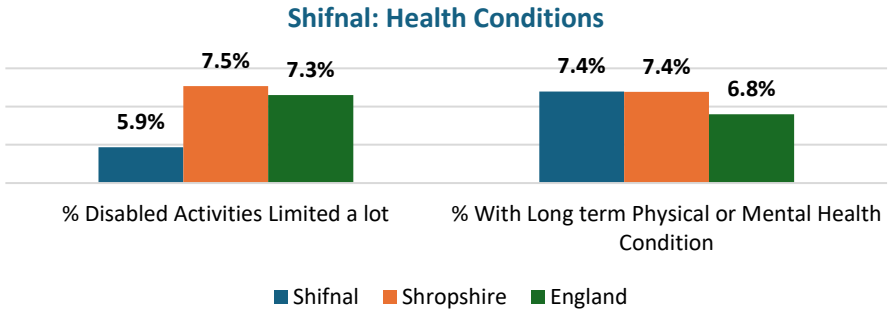
## Unemployment

- 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.



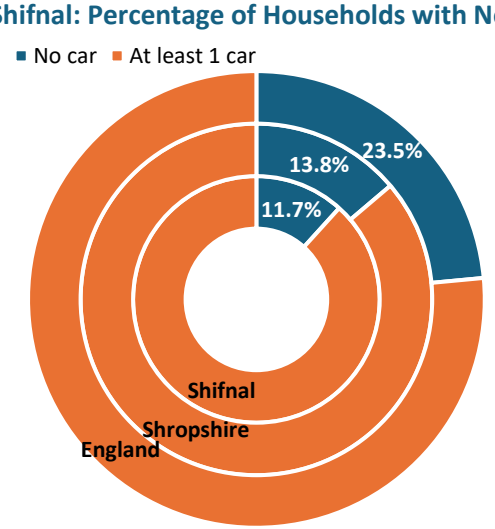

## Health Conditions

- 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

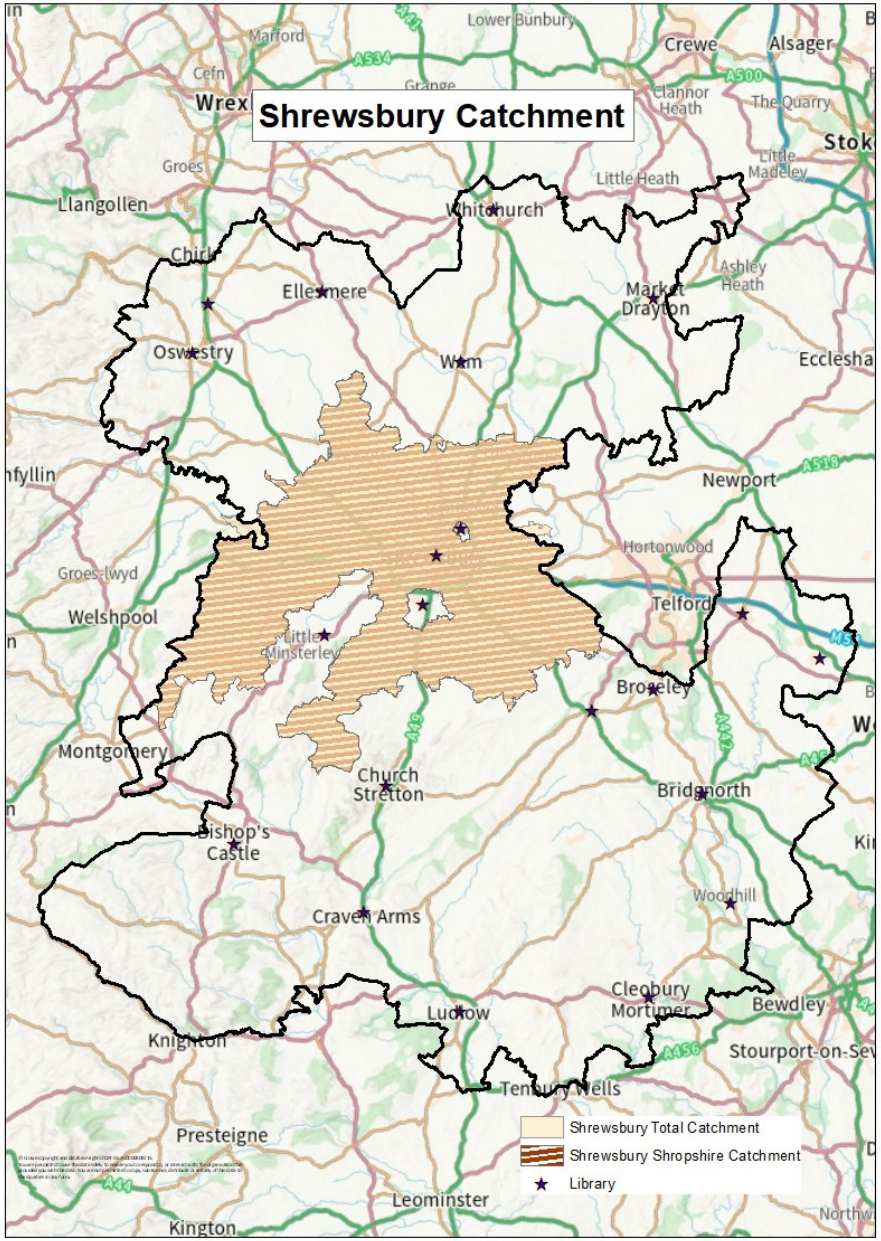
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access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



# 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 104,406 comprising 43,329 households. 99% of the catchment population – 103,705 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:

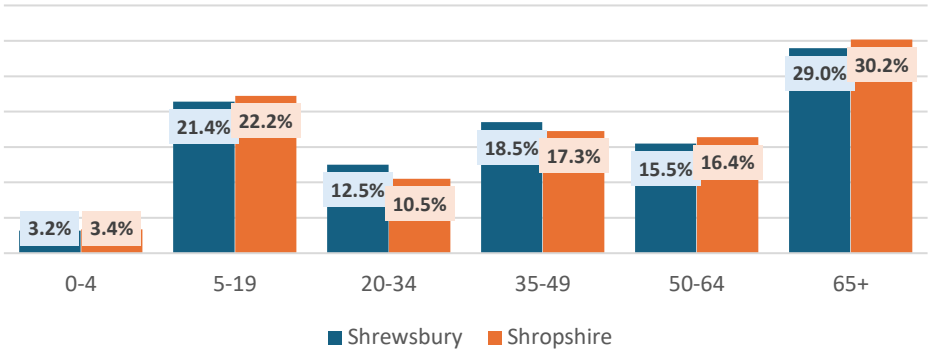
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Tuesday | 9.30am-19.00pm | 9.5 |
| Wednesday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Thursday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Friday | 9.30am-17.00pm | 7.5 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-16.00pm | 6.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library employs 9 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 124 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 809 volunteer hours.

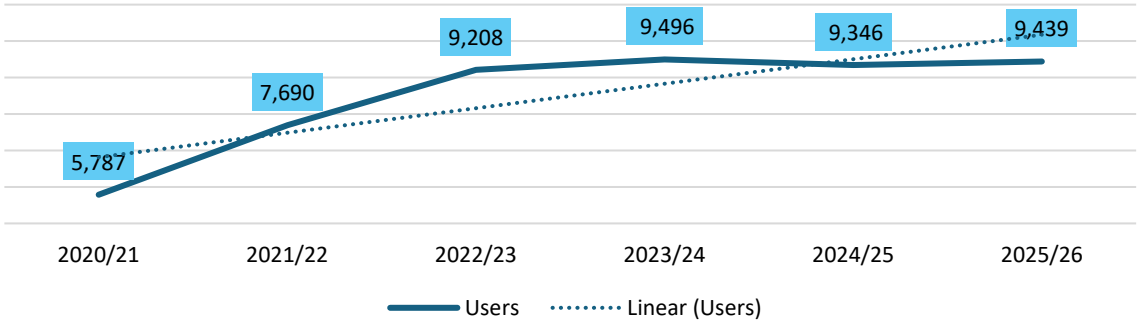
## Library Users

- Shrewsbury library had 9,439 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 29.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.4% 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 (2025/26) 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.

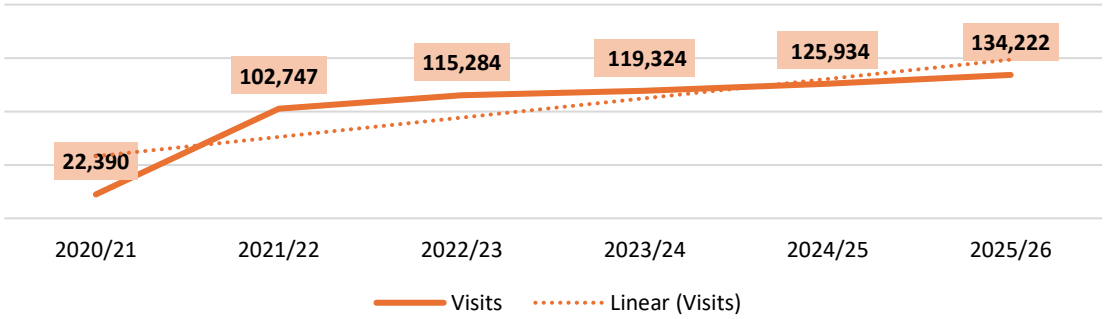
### Breakdown of Shrewsbury Library Users by Age



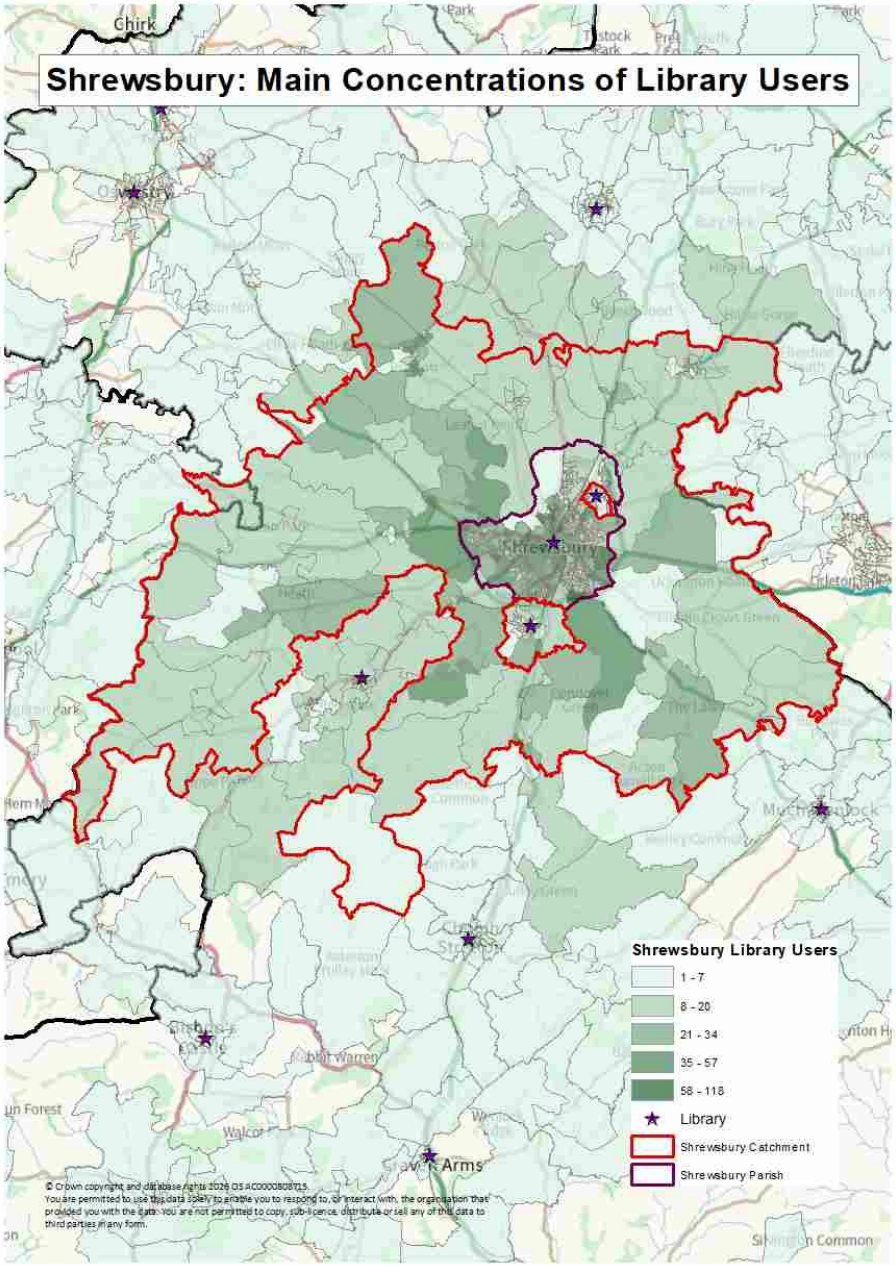

### Shrewsbury: Number of Active Users




### Shrewsbury: Number of Visits




- 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, and number remain below pre-pandemic levels.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 3,652 users (+63.1%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 134,222, 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 recovered to pre-pandemic levels (14 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was six times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 109,385 loans were made in 2025/26 which equates with 12 per active user and 0.8 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 7% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 1% in 2025/26 compared with 2024/25.
- Computer time was up by 2%.




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

## Geographic Location of Library Users

- 83.5% of all Shrewsbury library users live within the main catchment area.
- 71.1% live within the Shrewsbury town council area.
- 9.4% 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 2% to over a quarter. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 16.5% 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 May 2026, 82.0% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Shrewsbury library were to Shrewsbury, and these accounted for 79.5% 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.

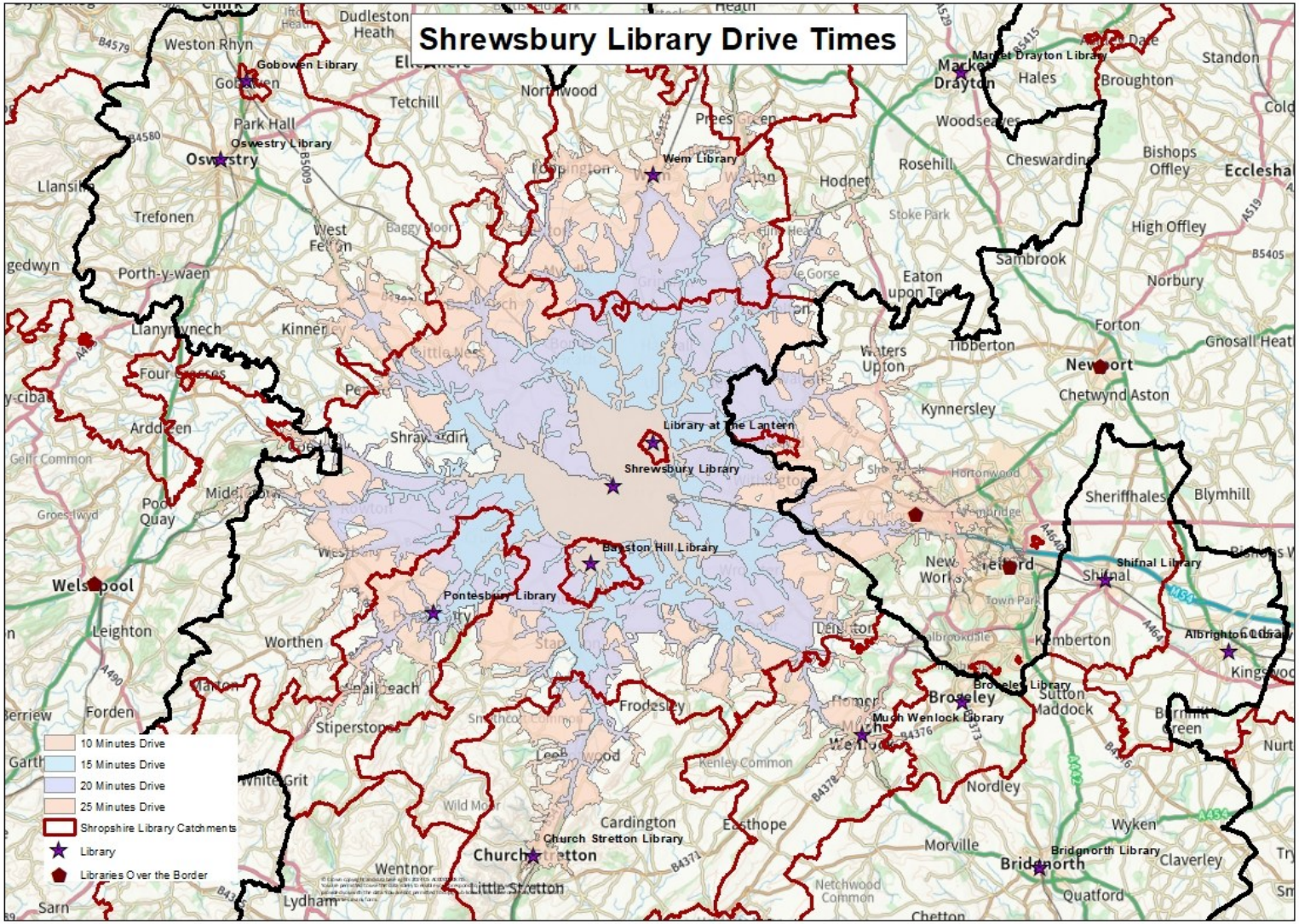
## Walk/Drive Times

- 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 | 10.5% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 38.8% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 75.9% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 81.2% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 87.8% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 92.2% |

## 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 £507,370 (2025/26).
- 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** | £212.11 | £78.80 | 2nd |
| **Per Active User** | £53.75 | £81.29 | 16th |
| **Per Visit** | £3.78 | £4.23 | 10th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £4.64 | £5.07 | 10th |

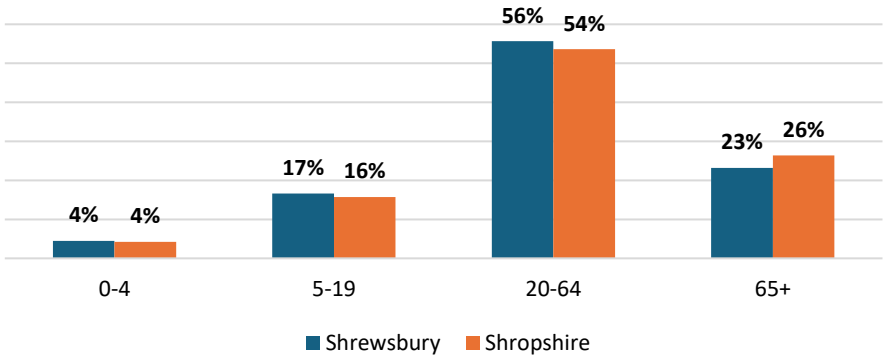
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath  1= most expensive*

## 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 103,705 and a total population of 104,406.
- 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.

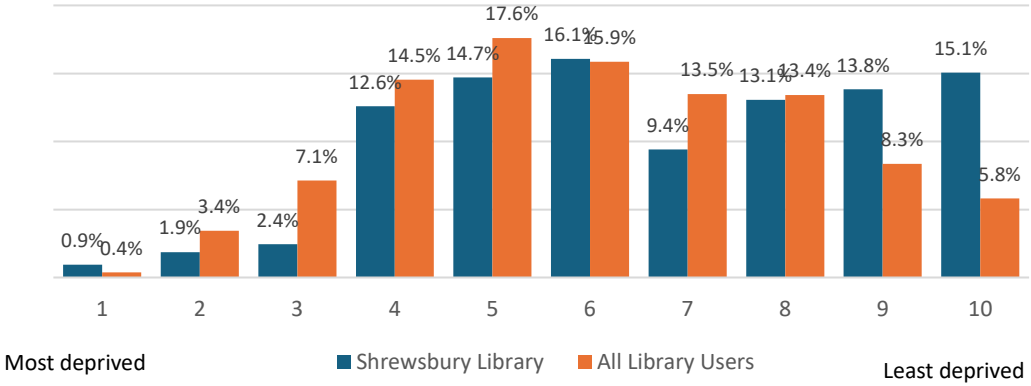
**Age Breakdown of Shrewsbury Catchment**




*Shrewsbury catchment includes non-Shropshire population*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Shrewsbury Library Users by IMD Decile**



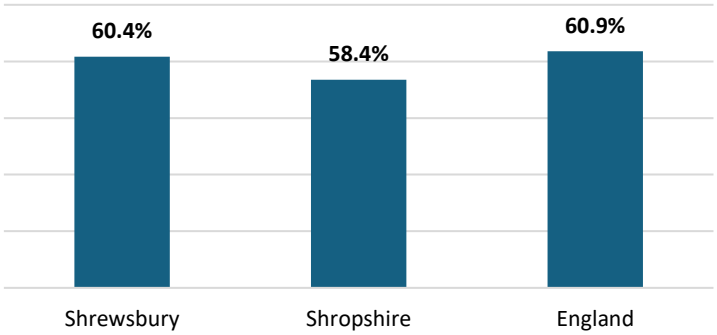

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Shrewsbury library is in decile five according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it has average levels of deprivation.
- There is a stronger bias towards users living in less deprived areas, with 28.9% living in the least deprived 20% of the country (14.1% for all library users).
- Less than 6% 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.

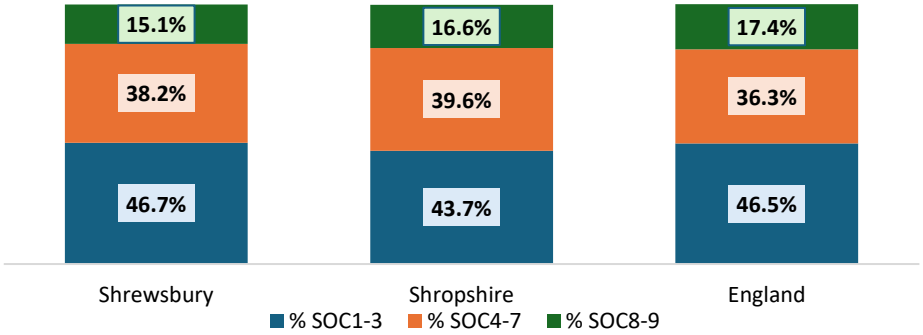
### Shrewsbury: Economic Activity Rate



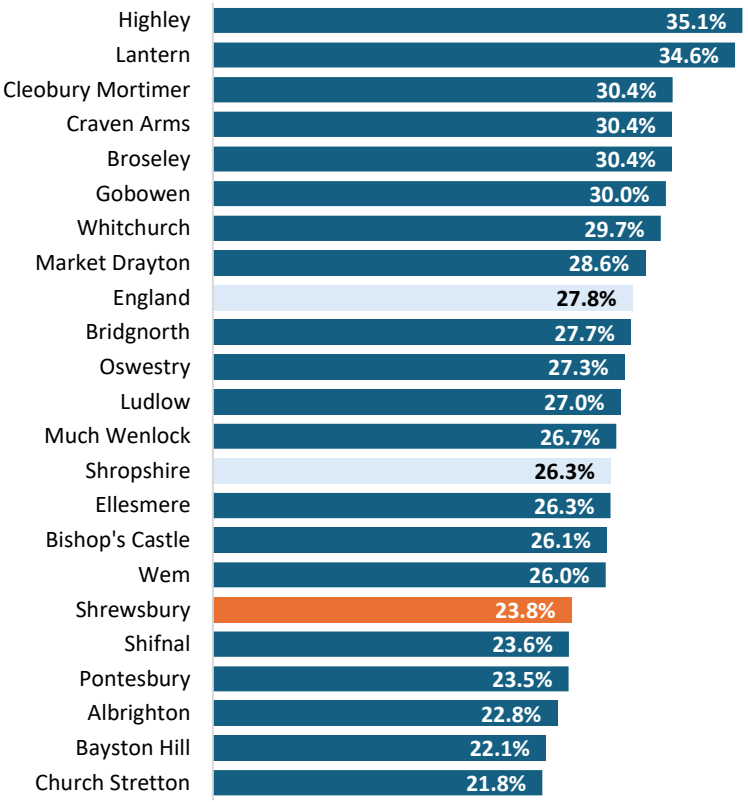

## Employment

- 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: Occupation Types




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications




## Qualifications

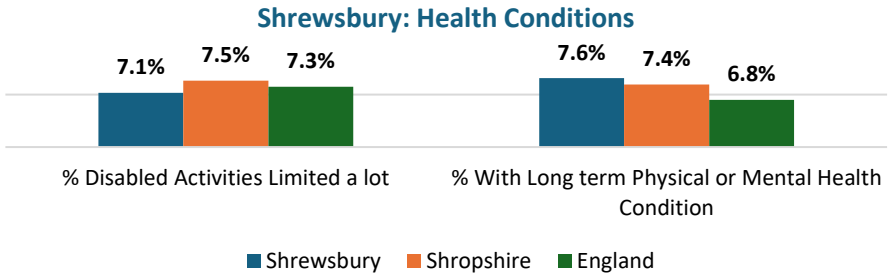
- A lower proportion of the Shrewsbury population have no or low qualifications compared to the England average at 23.8%. This is also lower than the Shropshire average.

## 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.

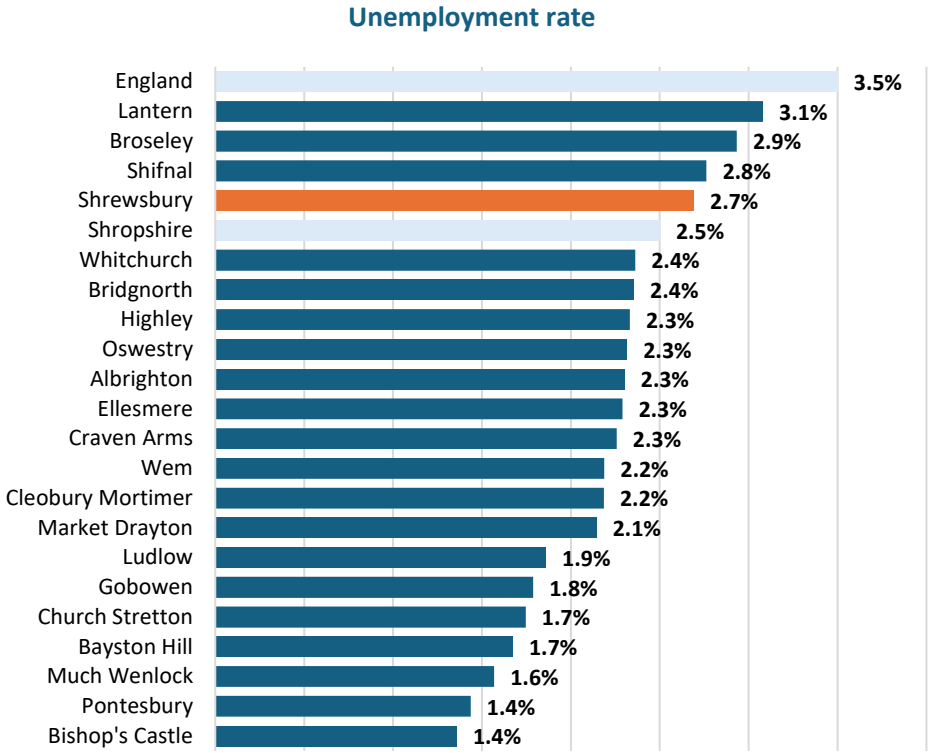
## Health Conditions

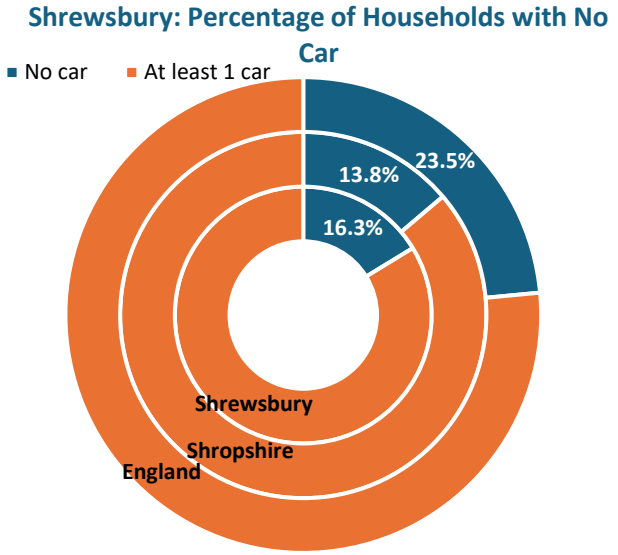
- 7.1% of residents in the Shrewsbury library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that 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%.

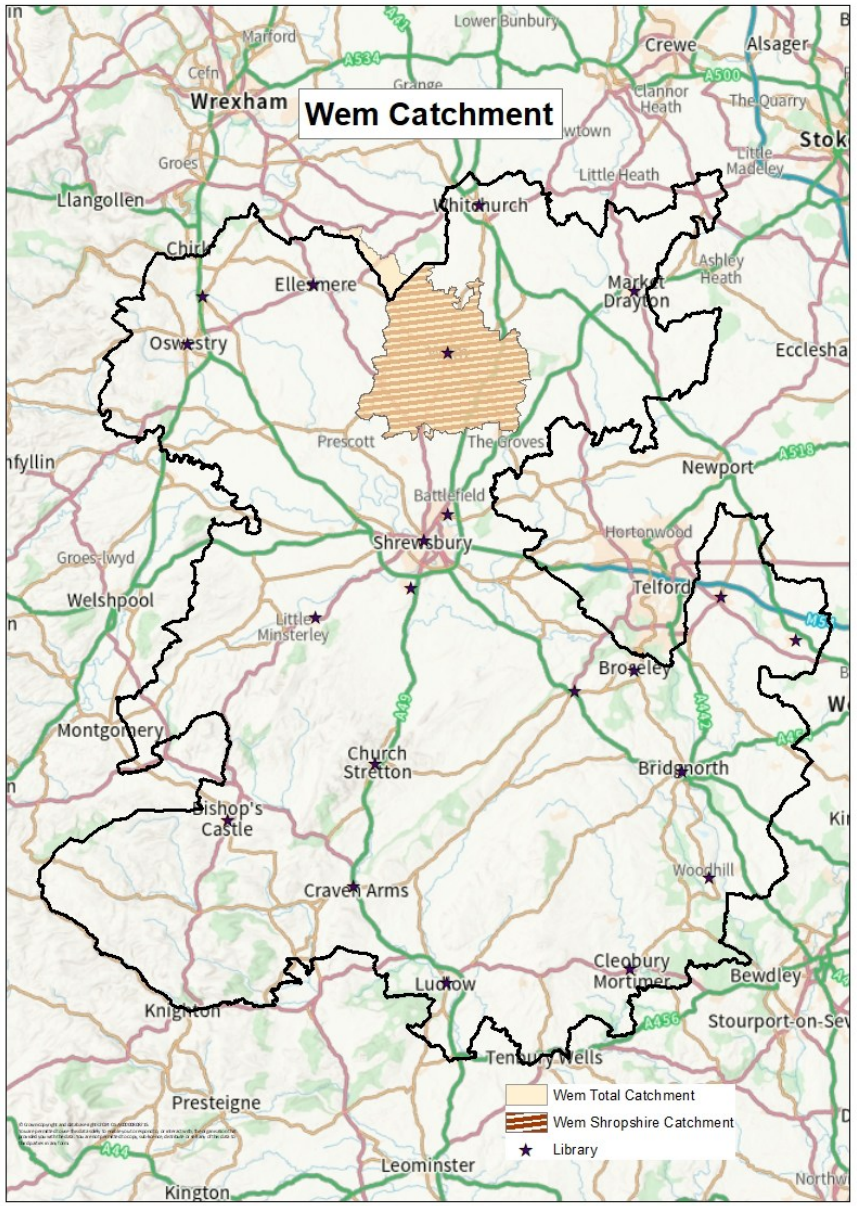


# Wem Library Profile

## 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 11,954 comprising 5,117 households. 96.8% of the catchment population (11,573 people) are Shropshire residents.




## Opening Hours

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

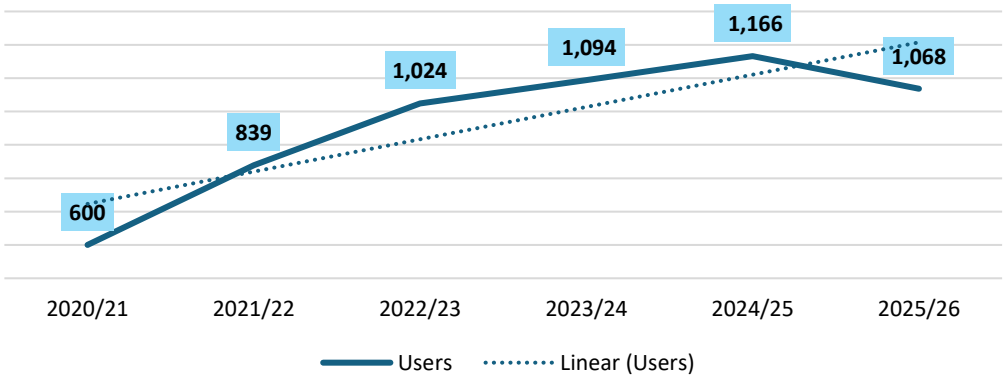
| | Opening Hours | Number of Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Monday | Closed | 0 |
| Tuesday | 10.00am-17.00pm | 7 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 10.00am-17.00pm | 7 |
| Friday | 14.00pm-17.00pm | 3 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

- The library has 1.116 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from 18 volunteers providing a total of 550 volunteer hours.

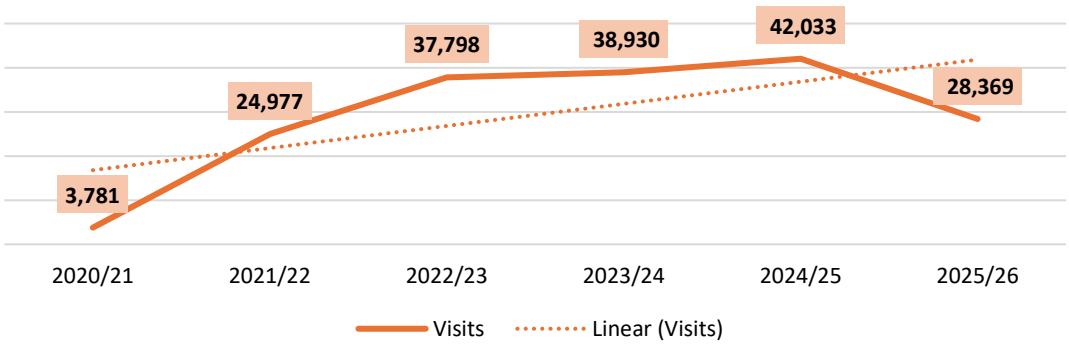
## Library Users

- Wem library had 1,068 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 3.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.6% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and older adults (65+) and more users aged 20- 50.

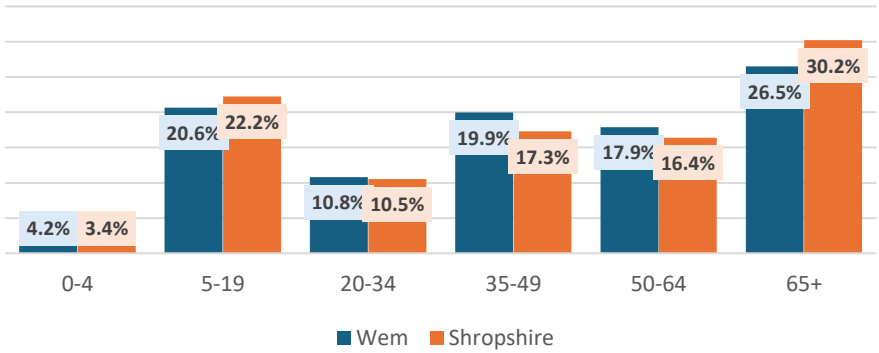
### Wem: Number of Active Users



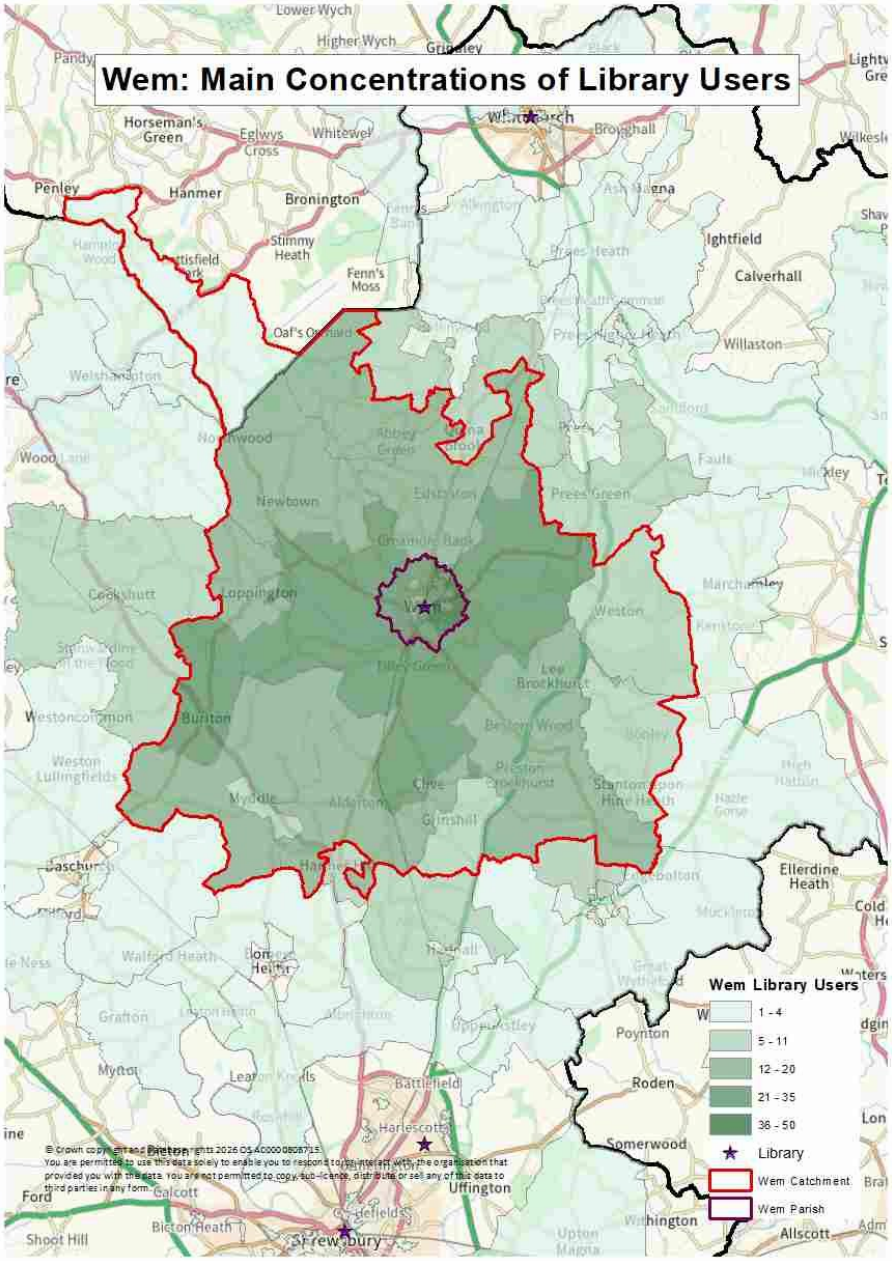

### Wem: Number of Visits




### 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 until 2025/26 when user numbers dipped. Numbers remain lower than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 468 users (+78.0%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 28,369, which is the equivalent of about 27 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business, but the number of visits recovered rapidly after 202o/21 until 2024/25. In 2025/26the number of visits fell by a third.
- 19,299 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 18 per active user and 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 21% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 2%.
- Computer usage declined by 32%.




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 Wem library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is similar to the average for Shropshire.
- 56.1% of users live within Wem urban parish boundary with an additional 8.7% in Wem Rural.
- 9.6% 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 3.4% to 17.2%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 19.8% 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 May 2026, 78.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Wem library were to Wem library, and these accounted for 72.9% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

## Walk/Drive Times

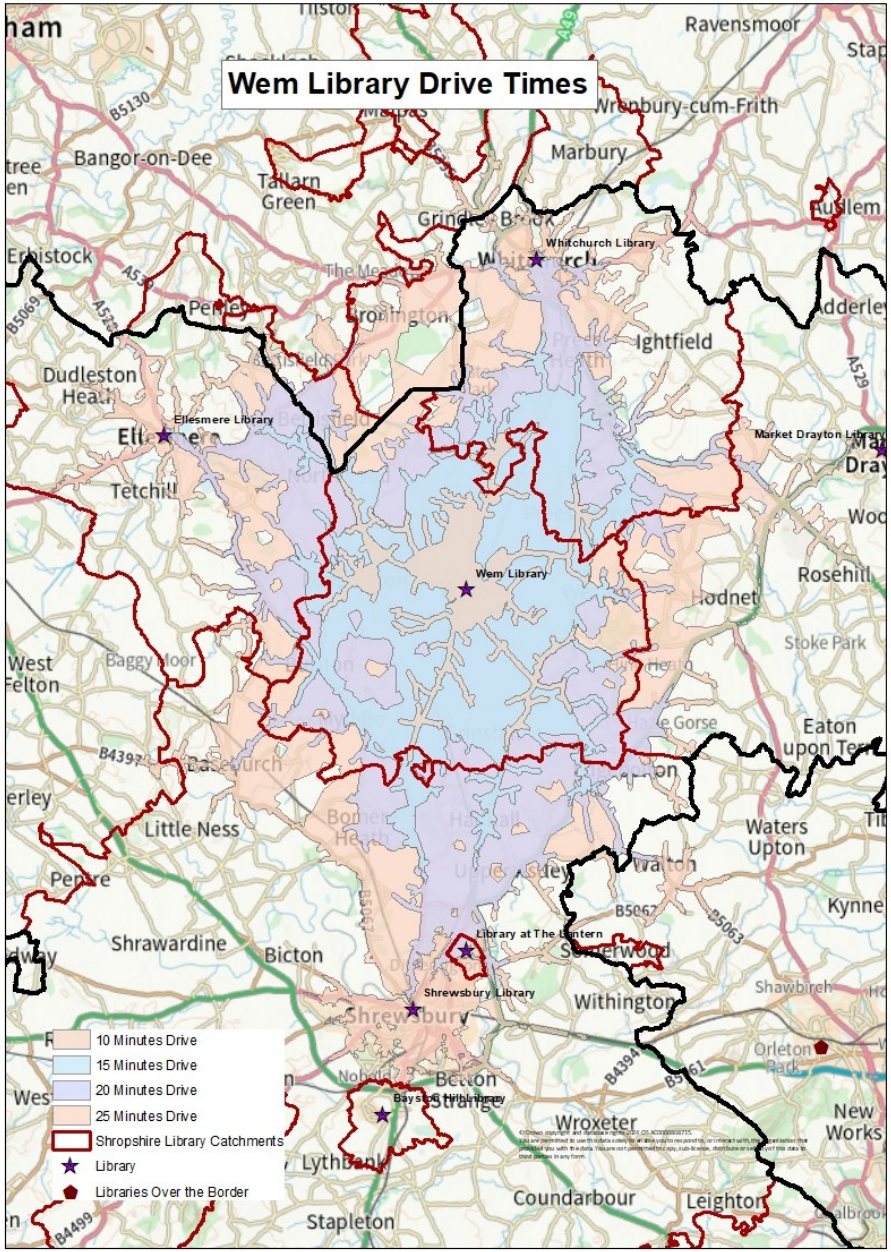
- The following table shows the proportion of active Wem library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 54.8% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 59.0% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 69.0% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 85.1% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 91.6% |
| 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 £135,910 (2025/26).
- The library has above average costs per visit, per hour open, per user and per book loan.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £127.50 | £78.80 | 4th |
| **Per Active User** | £127.26 | £81.29 | 5th |
| **Per Visit** | £4.79 | £4.23 | 5th |
| **Per Book Loan** | £7.04 | £5.07 | 5th |

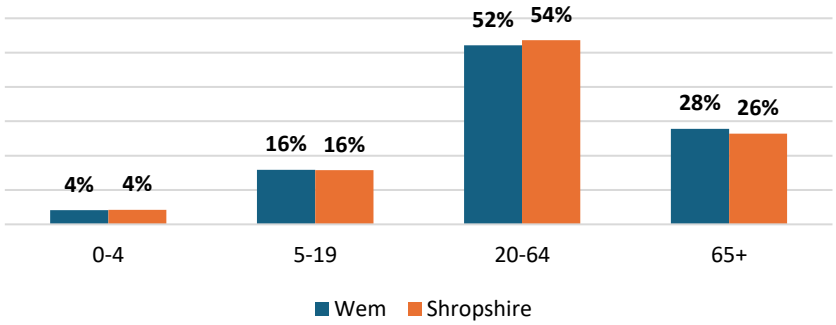
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison  1= most expensive*

## 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 11,954 (11,573 Shropshire residents).
- 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.

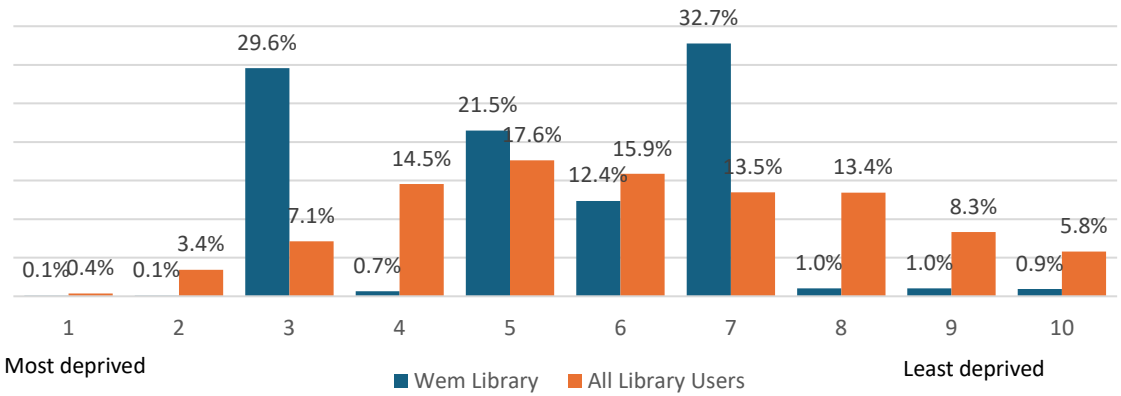
**Age Breakdown of Wem Catchment**




*Wem catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Wem Library Users by IMD Decile**



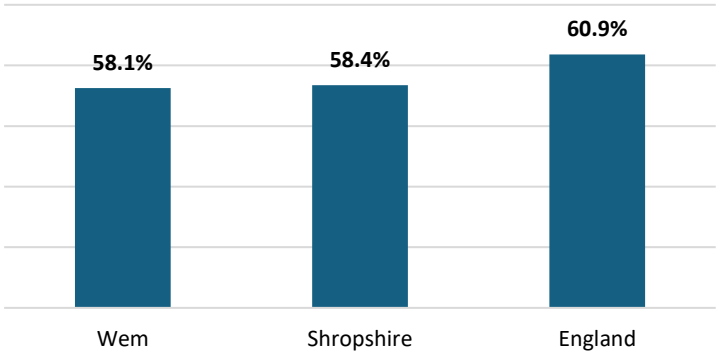

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Wem library is in the third decile according to the IMD 2025 which means the library is one of 10 in Shropshire in the 30% most deprived areas nationally.
- The adjacent chart shows that a low proportion of Wem library users are drawn from the 20% least deprived areas of the country (1.9% compared with 14.1% 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.

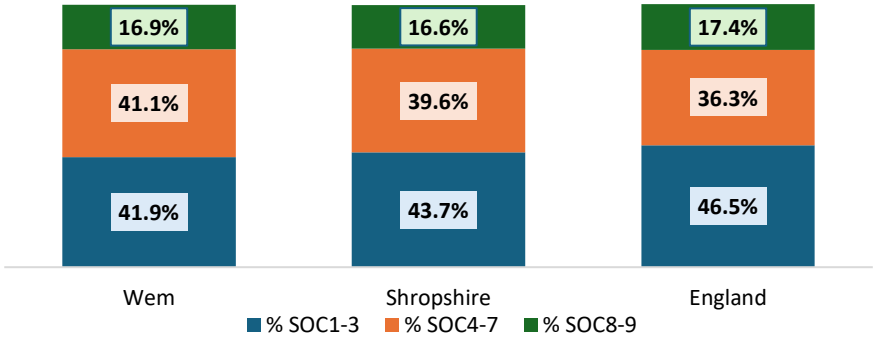
### Wem: Economic Activity Rate



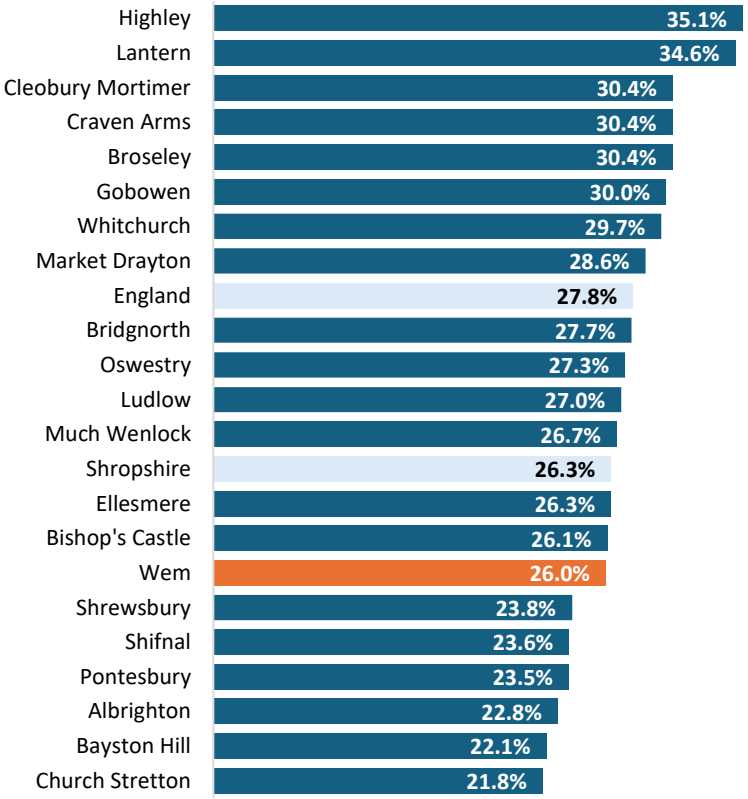

## Employment

- 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




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications

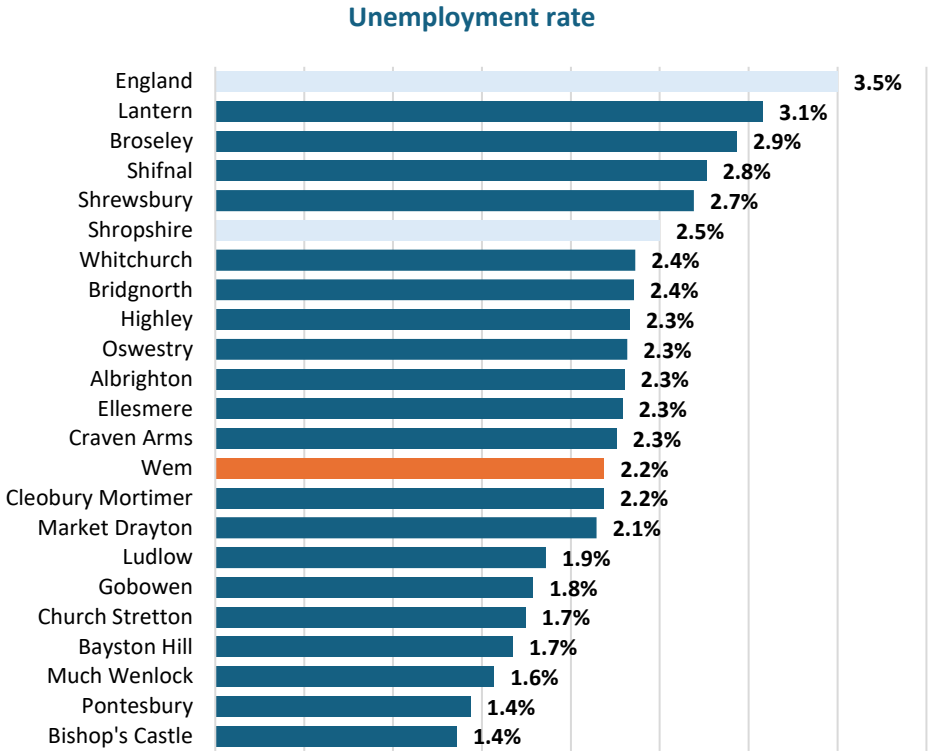



## Qualifications

- 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.

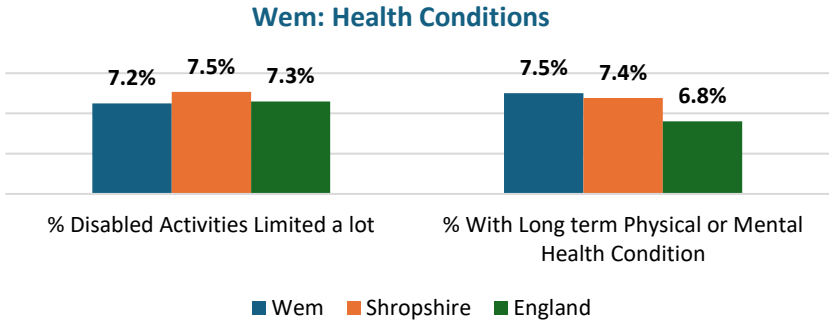
## Unemployment

- 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.



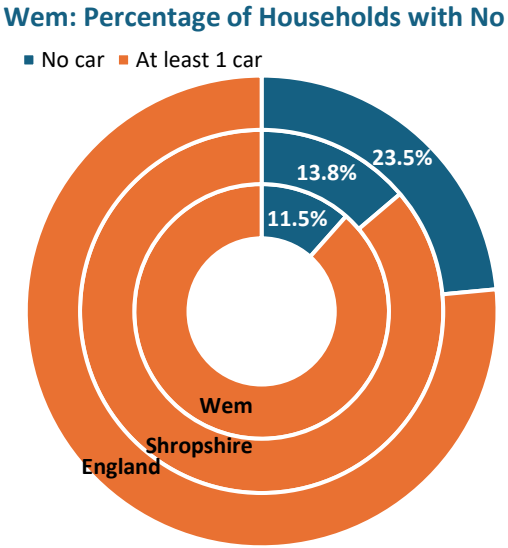

## Health Conditions

- 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.




## Car Ownership

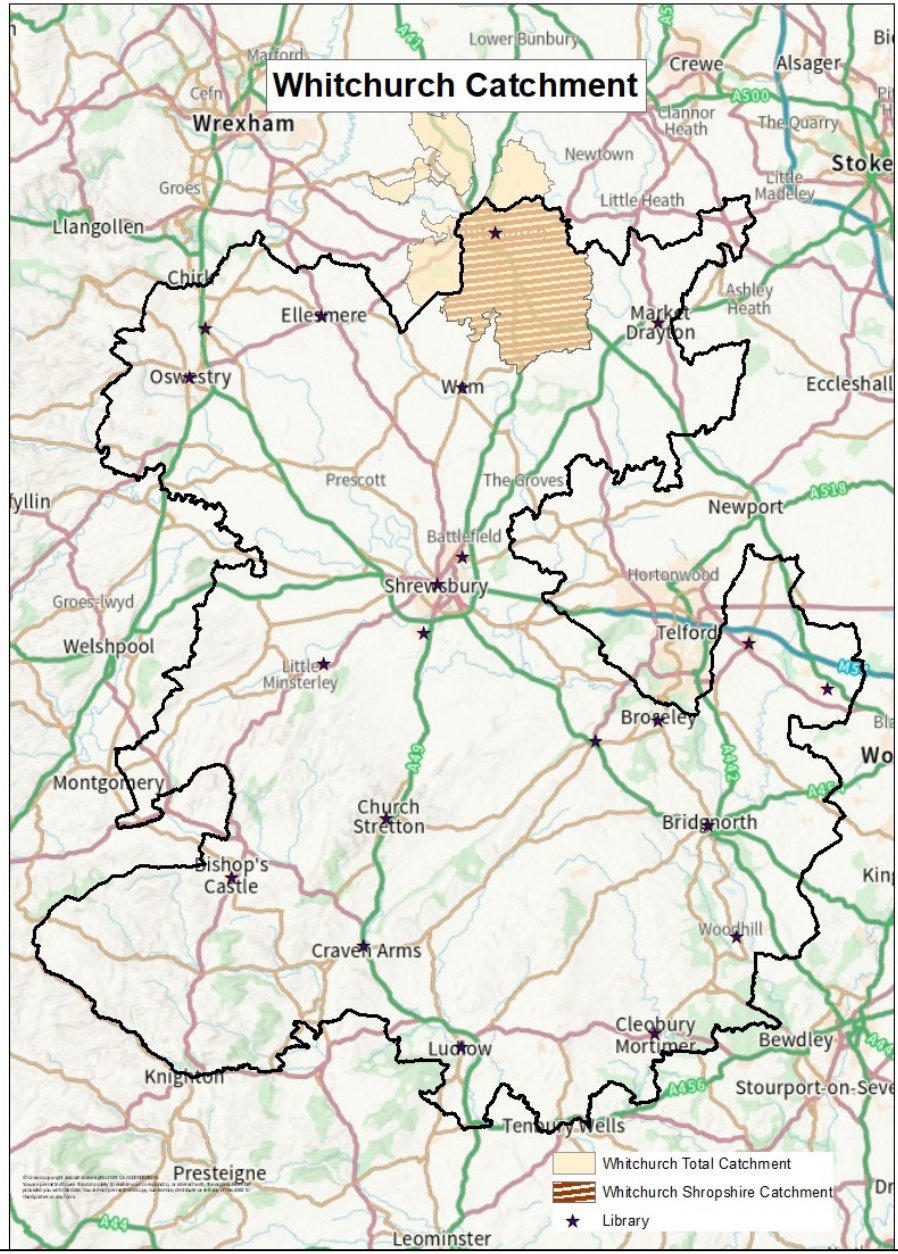
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access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



# 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 20,209 comprising 8,560 households. 82.0% of the catchment population – 16,566 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<br>13.30pm-17.00pm | 6.5 |
| Tuesday | 9.30am-12.30pm<br>13.30pm-18.00pm | 7.5 |
| Wednesday | Closed | 0 |
| Thursday | 9.30am-12.30pm<br>13.30pm-17.00pm | 6.5 |
| Friday | 9.30am-12.30pm<br>13.30pm-17.00pm | 6.5 |
| Saturday | 9.30am-13.00pm | 3.5 |
| Sunday | Closed | 0 |

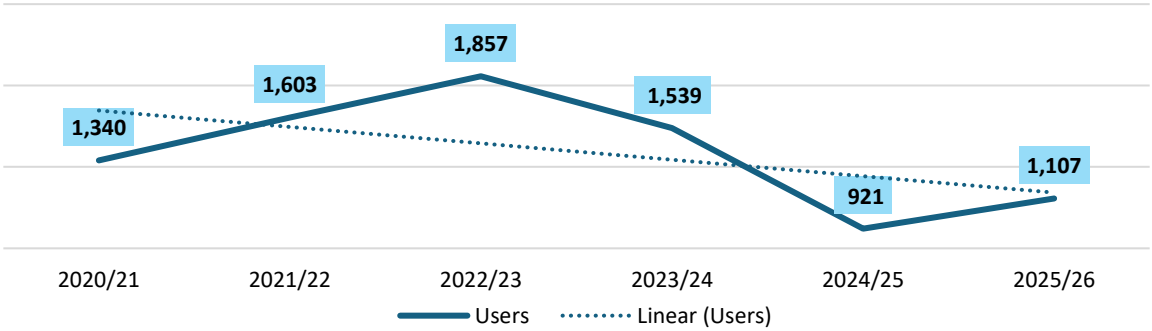
- The library employs 3.82 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from four volunteers throughout the year, contributing 40 volunteer hours.

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

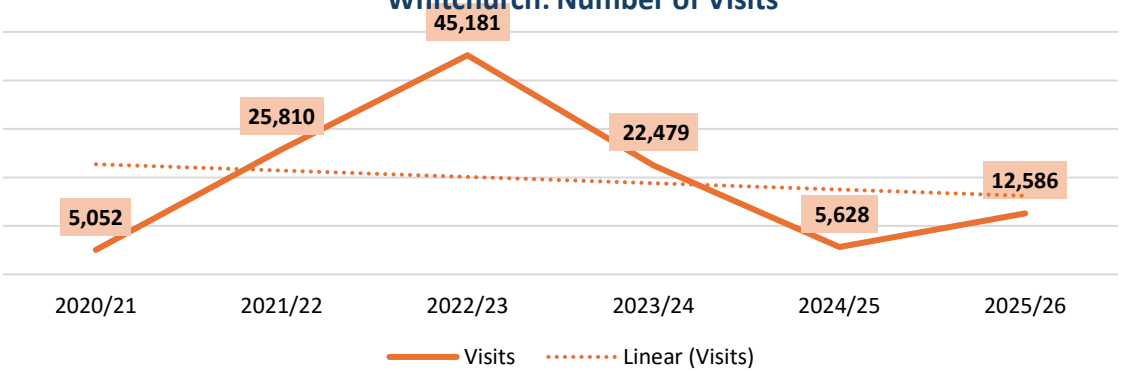
## Library Users

- Whitchurch library had 1,107 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 3.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 5.9% 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 (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more children and young people but fewer users aged 65 and above.

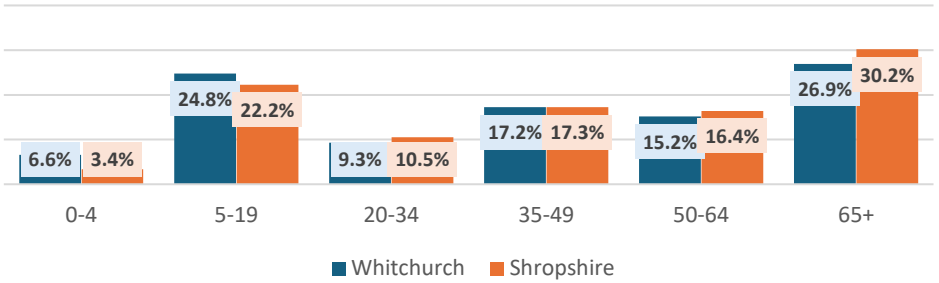
### Whitchurch: Number of Active Users




### Whitchurch: Number of Visits

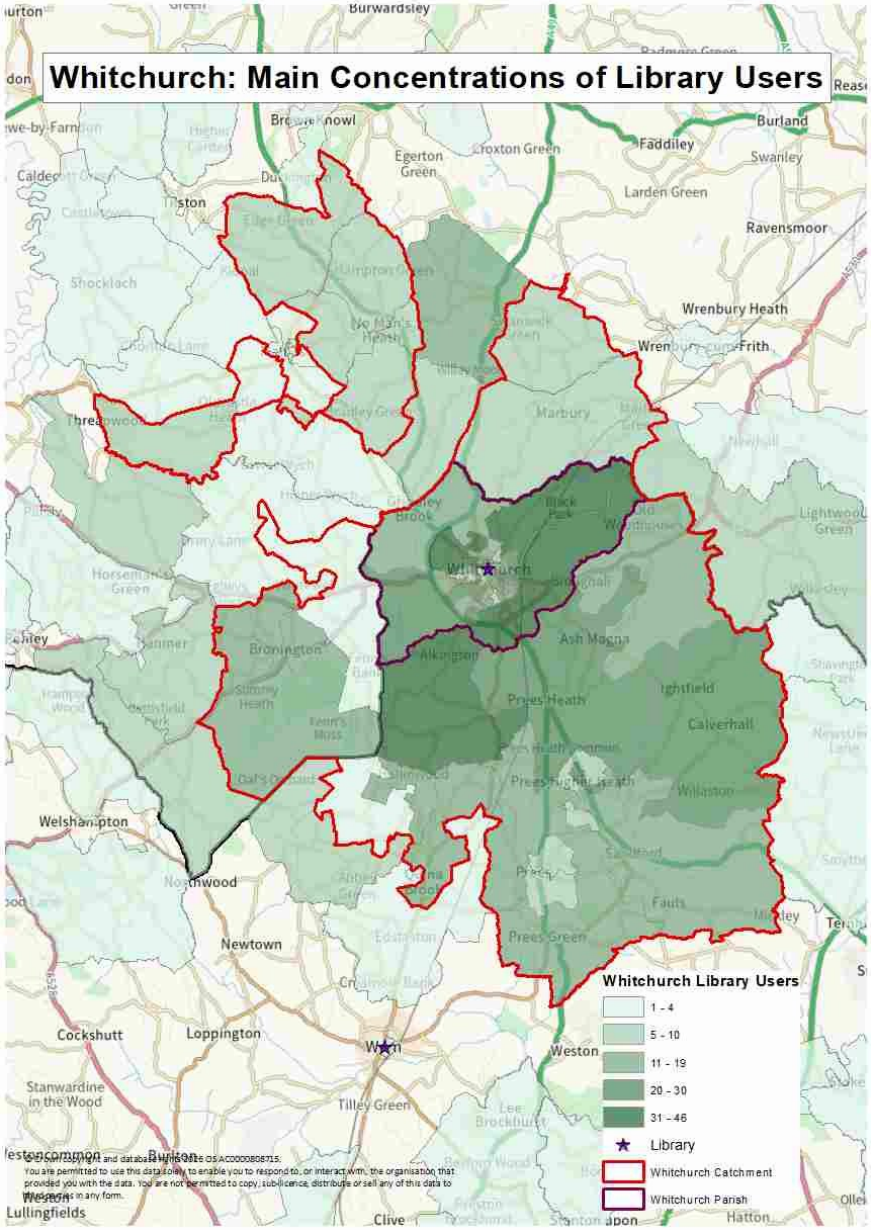



### Breakdown of Whitchurch Library Users by Age




- 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 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 233 users (-17.4%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 12,586, which is the equivalent of about 11 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).
- Although the overall number of visits was more than twice as high in 2025/26 than in 2020/21. The number of visits has fallen from over 45,000 in 2022/23.
- 17,613 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 16 per active user and 1.4 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 92% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 16% in 2025/26 compared with 2024/25.

**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

- 83.6% of all Whitchurch library users live within the main catchment area.
- 54.7% live within the Whitchurch town council area.
- 5.9% 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 12.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 16.4% 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 May 2026, 88.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Whitchurch library were to Whitchurch, and these accounted for 85.9% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Whitchurch include Market Drayton, Wem, Oswestry, Ellesmere 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.

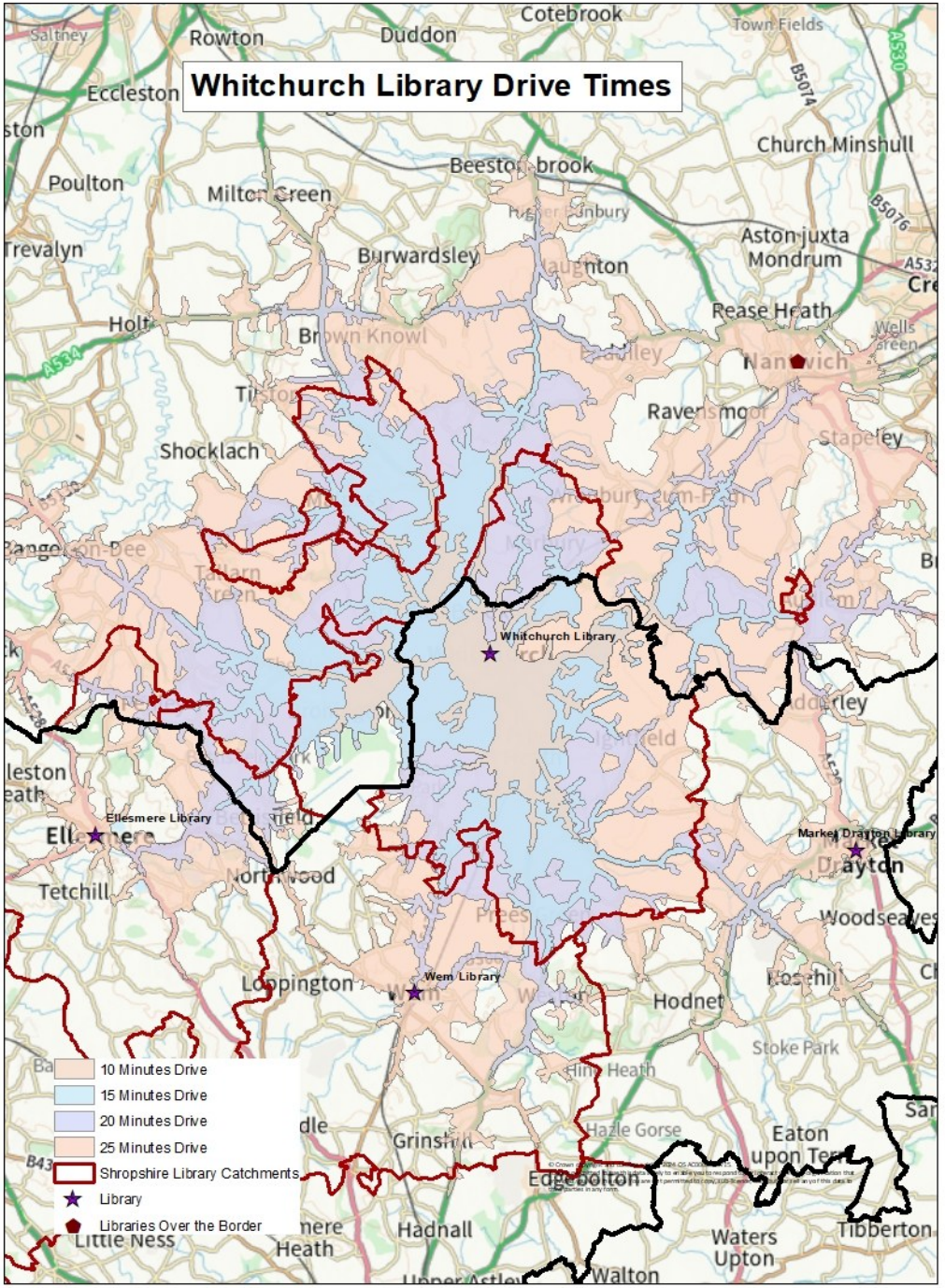
| Walk/Drive Time | Proportion of Active Users |
|---|---|
| 15 Minute Walk | 40.2% |
| 30 Minute Walk | 54.7% |
| 10 Minute Drive | 68.4% |
| 15 Minute Drive | 82.8% |
| 20 Minute Drive | 90.7% |
| 25 Minute Drive | 94.3% |

**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 £177,810 (2025/26).
- Whitchurch library is the most expensive Shropshire library per active user and per visit and ranks second per book loan. These figures have been impacted by the library's enforced relocation.

| | Cost | Average | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Per Hour Open** | £112.11 | £78.80 | 6th |
| **Per Active User** | £160.62 | £81.29 | 1st |
| **Per Visit** | £14.13 | £4.23 | 1st |
| **Per Book Loan** | £10.10 | £5.07 | 2nd |

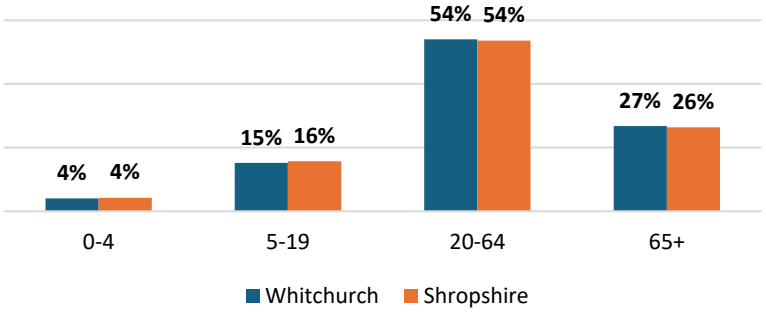
*Excludes HMP Stoke Heath  1= most expensive*

## 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 16,556 and a total population of 20,209.
- 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.

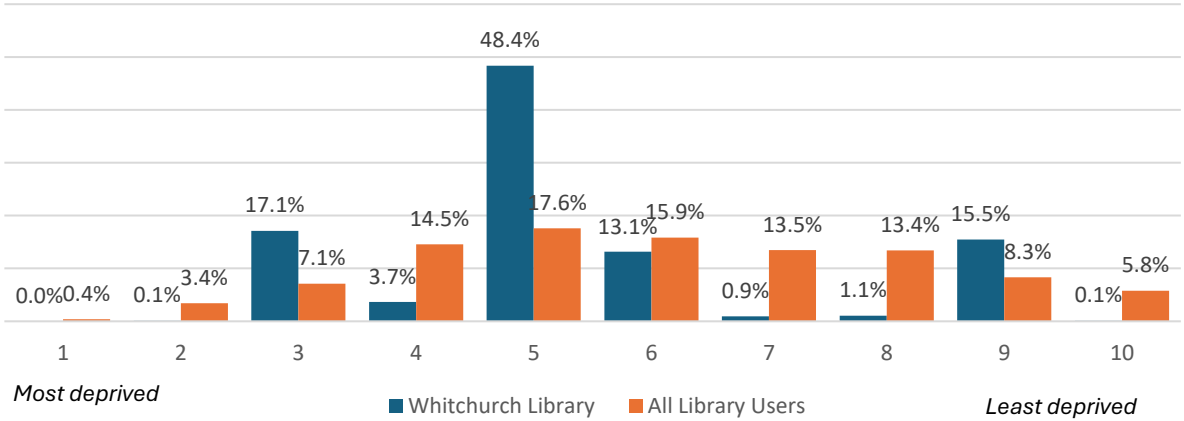
**Age Breakdown of Whitchurch Catchment**




*Whitchurch catchment includes non-Shropshire population*

### Deprivation

**Breakdown of Whitchurch Library Users by IMD Decile**



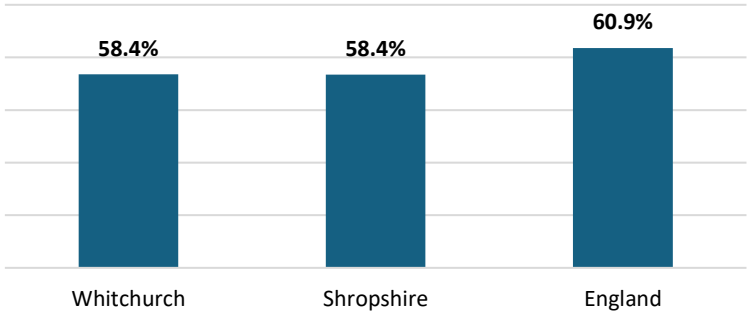

*Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire*

- Whitchurch library is in decile three according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of 10 libraries located within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- 17.1% of users are drawn from the most deprived 30% of England, while 16.7% are from the least deprived 30%. The highest proportion of users are from decile five (48.4%).

## 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.

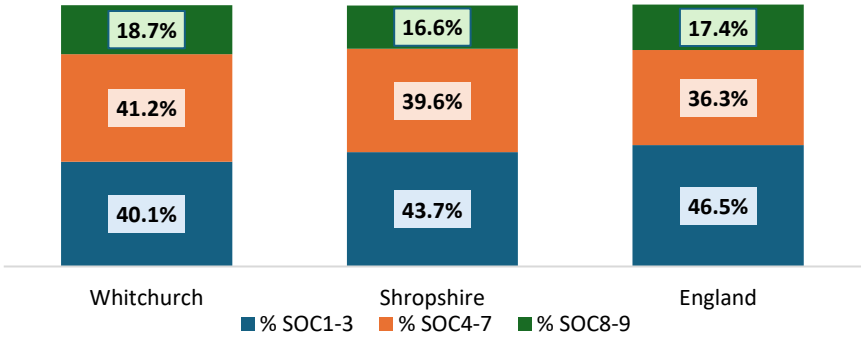
### Whitchurch: Economic Activity Rate



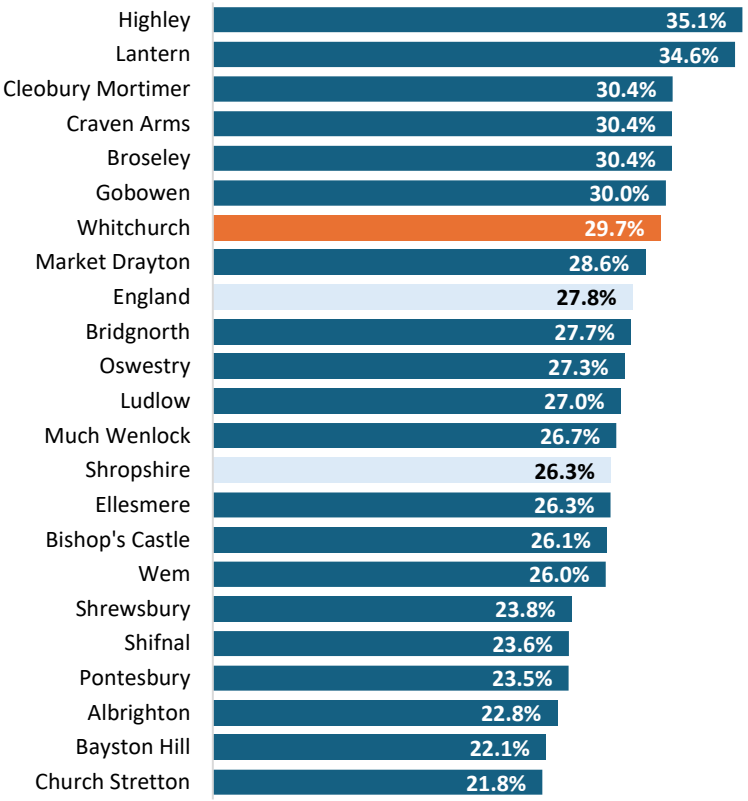

## Employment

- 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




### % of Population with No or Low Qualifications

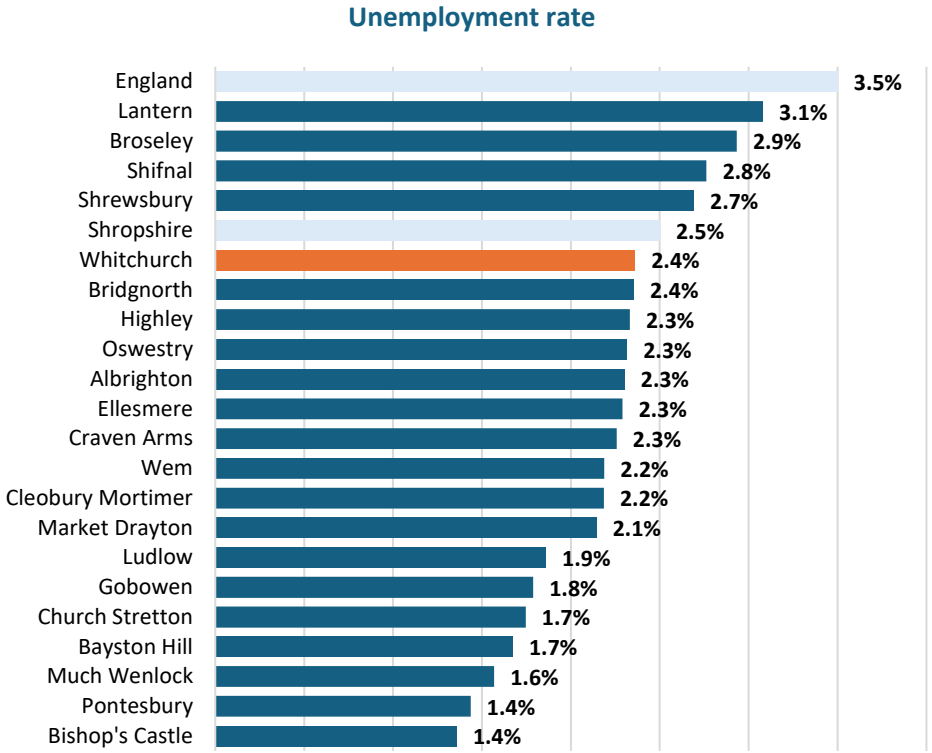



## Qualifications

- 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%).

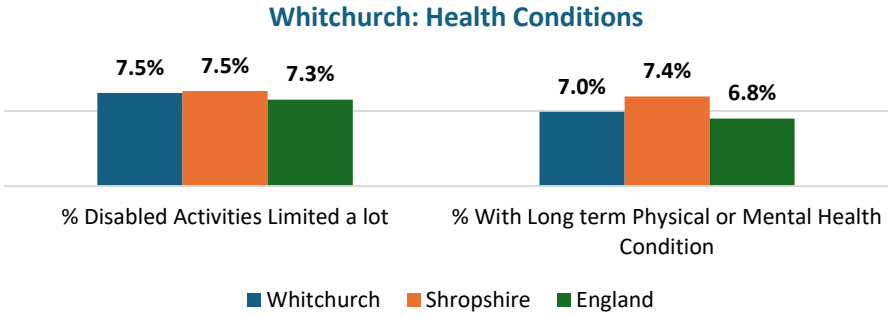
## Unemployment

- 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%).




## 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%.

