



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment Chester Lane Library

To inform the development of policy
or service decisions

This form is to be used for recording the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of Council activities. EIA is particularly important in supporting the Council to make fair decisions. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Using this form will help Council officers to carry out EIA in an effective and transparent way and provide decision-makers with full information on the potential impact of their decisions. The purpose is to avoid inadvertent disadvantage or discrimination resulting from decisions.

EIA is not a fixed process – it will vary according to the scale and type of activity. The form and guidance are designed to cover all eventualities. Officers should not be discouraged by the form but should use their discretion in using it flexibly according to the activity they are assessing.

EIA does not happen at a single point in time. It is an ongoing and integral part of the development of the activity or proposal. This EIA template should be kept open and live as a planning document and updated as the activity or proposal progresses.

Section 149 of the Equality Act states:

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

(3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

(a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

(b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

(c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

(4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

(a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

(6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

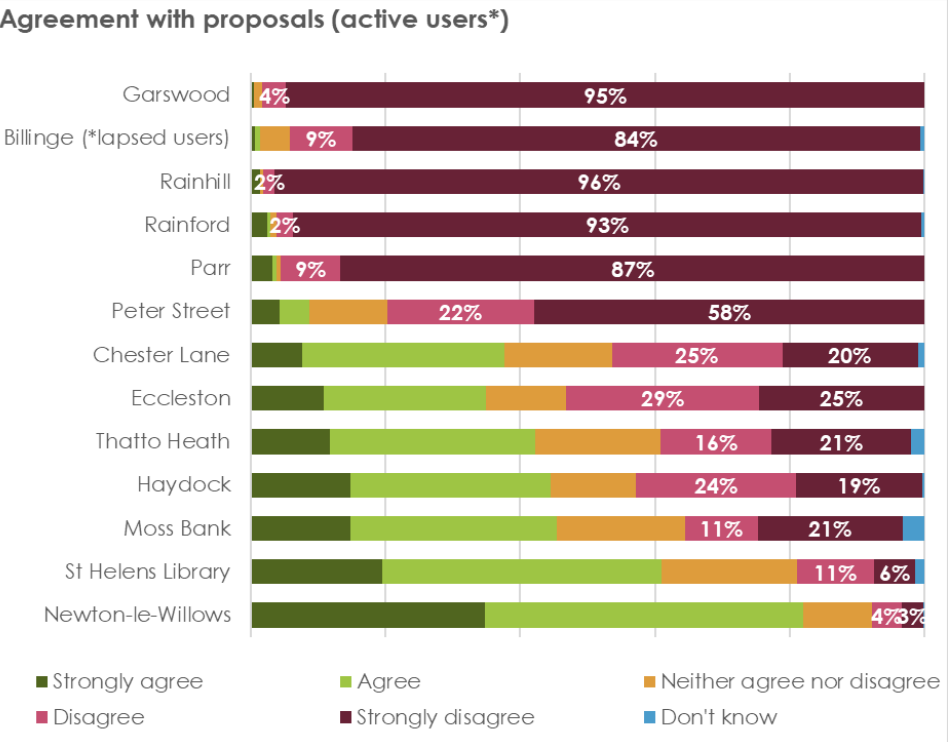
(7) The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

(8) A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:

(a) a breach of an equality clause or rule; (b) a breach of a non-discrimination rule.

Section 1 – Service Details and Summary of EIA Activity

Title of activity:	Library Strategy – Chester Lane Library	
Lead Officer:	William Renshaw	
Directorate:	Place Directorate Communities Department	
Service or Team:	Library Service	
Head of Service	David Boocock	
Director:	Tanya Wilcock	
Executive Director:	Lisa Harris	
<p>What stage has the EIA reached? This table provides a ‘cover note’ of progress to be maintained as the EIA is developed over time. Note the stage reached and any consultation or engagement carried out. Simple activities may not need all these stages. Provide details of population/individuals affected in Section 2</p>		
Stage	Date	Summary of position
Stage 1: Initial Officer Assessment. Whole Population likely to be affected identified	March 2023	<p>The draft Library Strategy proposes that Chester Lane Library will remain open as the library serving the Rainhill and Bold locality, however the opening hours for this library are proposed to reduce and this will form part of the consultation process.</p> <p>The reduction in opening hours is likely to impact on all current and future users and any person who wishes to access its library provision, whether they live in the community or elsewhere within the Borough.</p> <p>Alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/audio/newspapers/magazines.</p>
Stage 2: Further Assessment. Target Population likely to be affected identified	March 2023	<p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people with protected characteristics. There are no groups with protected characteristics meeting at the times the opening hours are proposed to reduce.</p> <p>There is an acknowledgement that the reduction in opening hours will inconvenience users, both those with protected characteristics and those without.</p> <p>Alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/audio/newspapers/magazines.</p>

<p>Stage 3: Further Assessment. Individuals likely to be affected identified</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>Performance information indicates low usage during the affected opening hours; however, consultation has identified there will be a detrimental impact on individuals who share these protected characteristics:</p> <p>Respondents to the consultation survey of working age (25 to 44 from the on-street survey and 25 to 54 from the open survey) disagreed most with the proposals to change opening hours.¹</p> <p>The general outcome of the consultation states for those who disagree to the proposed changes... “many also refer to how losing access to Read & Rhyme sessions, school activities and after school and weekend opening times will be detrimental to their children’s development.”²</p> <p>As a mitigation, alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/audio/newspapers/magazines.</p>																																																																																																		
<p>Stage 4: Analysis of Findings</p>		<p>45% of respondents to the consultation survey who are active users of Chester Lane disagree with the proposals to reduce opening hours.</p> <p>Agreement with proposals (active users*)</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Strongly agree</th> <th>Agree</th> <th>Neither agree nor disagree</th> <th>Disagree</th> <th>Strongly disagree</th> <th>Don't know</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Garswood</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>95%</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Billinge (*lapsed users)</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>84%</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rainhill</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rainford</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>93%</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parr</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>87%</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peter Street</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>58%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chester Lane</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>25%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eccleston</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>29%</td> <td>25%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thatto Heath</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>16%</td> <td>21%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Haydock</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>24%</td> <td>19%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moss Bank</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>21%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Helens Library</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>6%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newton-le-Willows</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>4%</td> <td>3%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Location	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Garswood	0%	0%	0%	0%	95%	4%	Billinge (*lapsed users)	0%	0%	0%	0%	84%	9%	Rainhill	0%	0%	0%	0%	96%	2%	Rainford	0%	0%	0%	0%	93%	2%	Parr	0%	0%	0%	0%	87%	9%	Peter Street	0%	0%	0%	22%	58%	0%	Chester Lane	0%	0%	0%	25%	20%	0%	Eccleston	0%	0%	0%	29%	25%	0%	Thatto Heath	0%	0%	0%	16%	21%	0%	Haydock	0%	0%	0%	24%	19%	0%	Moss Bank	0%	0%	0%	11%	21%	0%	St Helens Library	0%	0%	0%	11%	6%	0%	Newton-le-Willows	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%	0%
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<p>Stage 5: Reporting and Action Planning</p>		<p>Section 6 holds the details of the action plan of the mitigations identified in the Equality Impact Assessment. This has been informed by the consultation.</p>																																																																																																		
<p>Stage 6: Sign-Off</p>		<p>To be completed following all other stages</p>																																																																																																		

¹ Consultation Key Findings, p. 11

² Consultation key findings, p. 29

What Council proposal is being assessed? (Including the main purpose and aims)

St Helens Borough Council’s statutory Library Service currently operates 13 libraries, as well as the Archive Service, Home Delivery and Schools Library Services.

At present only 11 libraries are accessible by the public as Billinge Library has been closed since 2020 due to the condition of the building and the landlord of Peter Street Library terminated the lease as of 31st March 2023. Library buildings are geographically spread across the borough with opening hours ranging between 8 to 36 hours per week. Performance data demonstrates that there are certain times in the day and certain days of the week when visitor numbers are low. The library buildings themselves range in quality, many fail to meet customer expectations and the standards expected of a modern service.

The draft Library Strategy and Delivery Plan outlines how the service is expected to transform over the next five years, with outcomes focussed on increasing access to digital services, expanding outreach activity in partnership and offering the Home Delivery Library Service to children and adults with medical issues preventing them from using a library. The strategy also outlines a reduction in the number of library buildings and changes to library opening hours. Although Chester Lane Library is proposed to stay open, its opening hours are proposed to reduce (highlighted in orange):

Chester Lane Library	Current: 33 hours per week	Proposed: 28 hours per week
Monday	10am – 7pm	10am – 5pm
Tuesday	10am – 5pm	10am – 5pm
Wednesday	Closed all day	Closed all day
Thursday	10am – 5pm	10am – 5pm
Friday	10am – 5pm	10am – 5pm
Saturday	10am – 1pm	Closed all day
Sunday	Closed all day	Closed all day

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the impact the reduction in opening hours will have on those with protected characteristics. It will also consider how any identified impacts can be mitigated through the provision of alternative services or by helping those with protected characteristics to engage in alternative library venues.

In relation to the proposal being assessed, please set out the following.

- 1 What must the LA provide under statute?**
- 2 Any discretionary element of provision?**
- 3. What is currently provided under that discretion?**
- 4. What could change as a result of the proposal and how could it change?**
- 5. What is being consulted on?**

1. What must the LA provide under statute?

Local authorities (unitary, county or metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7). In providing this service Local Authorities must, among other things:

- encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8(3))

2. Any discretionary element of provision?

The statutory duty referred to above is not prescriptive in how local authorities should provide their library services or when they should be open, although library buildings in St Helens enable adults and children to access books and other resources free of charge. For this reason, the delivery mechanisms and geographical spread of service provision is discretionary in nature.

The St Helens Borough Library service offers several discretionary elements of provision outlined at point 3.

3. What is currently provided under that discretion?

The statutory Library Service in St Helens provides discretionary elements of provision these include events and activities such as Read and Rhyme times and Reading Groups, free access to Wi-Fi and computers, Digital Library Service, Home Delivery and Schools Library Services as well as the Cultural Hubs Arts in Libraries programme. This discretionary provision supports Borough priorities and tackles inequalities, for example developing speech, language and communication skills in young children.

Chester Lane Library	Current: 33 hours per week
Monday	10am – 7pm
Tuesday	10am – 5pm
Wednesday	Closed all day
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Sunday	Closed all day

4. What could change as a result of the proposal and how could it change?

The draft Library Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023-2028 sets out proposals to deliver a revised statutory library provision by retaining 7 libraries and closing 6, as well as changing opening hours. The proposed library closures have been chosen to reflect the Council's Locality model adopted in March 2021. Each locality will have statutory library provision focused in the area of greatest need. This need has been assessed and is based on a set of key indicators. If more than one library currently operates in the locality, then the library serving the greatest need will stay open, however its opening hours may change.

Chester Lane Library	Current: 33 hours per week	Proposed: 28 hours per week
Monday	10am – 7pm	10am – 5pm
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Need has been determined (see table below) through the assessment of:

- Educational Attainment
- Health Inequalities
- Deprivation
- Community Safety
- Population Demographics (high concentrations of young people or older people)

Ward	Library	Health	Community	Young	Older	Overall		
		Education Inequalities Deprivation	Safety	People	People			
		Ranking	Ranking	Ranking	Ranking	Ranking		
Parr	Parr Library	17	18	18	18	18	1	90
Peasley Cross & Fingerpost	N/A	17	16	17	15	17	2	84
Bold & Lea Green	Chester Lane Library	16	11	15	15	15	6	78
Thatto Heath	Thatto Heath Library	12	14	14	14	13	8	75
St Helens Town Centre	St Helens & Peter St Libraries	13	17	16	17	7	4	74
Newton-le-Willows West	Newton-le-Willows Library	14	12	12	10	16	3	67
Blackbrook	N/A	15	10	8	9	7	14	63
Sutton South East	N/A	10	15	11	10	5	10	61
Sutton North West	N/A	9	13	10	12	5	11	60
Haydock	Haydock Library	11	7	5	13	10	12	58
Moss Bank	Moss Bank Library	7	8	13	6	11	13	58
West Park	N/A	6	9	9	8	9	7	48
Newton-le-Willows East	N/A	8	6	7	7	13	5	46
Windle	N/A	4	5	6	5	12	9	41
Billinge & Seneley Green	Billinge & Garswood Libraries	2	4	4	3	1	17	31
Rainhill	Rainhill Library	2	3	3	4	2	16	30
Rainford	Rainford Library	5	1	2	1	2	18	29
Eccleston	Eccleston Library	1	2	1	2	4	15	25

Residents will be able to access library provision from any of the 7 remaining statutory libraries across the borough, or any library across the City Region through the Library Light scheme. The purpose of this methodology was to enable the Council to target its resources at those areas with greatest needs.

In addition, the strategy also adopts a desire to empower and enable residents to manage and deliver services in areas where there is capacity and community support to do so. A Community Managed Library model is therefore an option for some residents to consider.

5. What is being consulted on?

The draft Library Strategy which contains a proposal to close 6 libraries and change the opening hours of the libraries it continues to operate, as part of a move to a localities model of delivery.

Details of the activity (including the main purpose and aims)

To adopt the draft Library Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023-2028 that proposes to change the current delivery mechanism and current statutory provision by reducing the number of library buildings from 13 to 7, amend opening hours and developing the outreach and digital offer. In addition, the draft Library Strategy and Delivery Plan 2023-2028 supports the development of a Community Managed Library model to complement the revised statutory provision.

The approach of the draft Library Strategy aligns to the Council's Locality model that aims to establish the right service mix in each locality to suit local needs. A locality approach ensures that services are relevant, addresses local need by targeting resources to where they are needed most and offers the opportunity to collaborate with partners at a local level to explore alternative delivery methods.

Where there is more than one statutory library in a locality the service has analysed socioeconomic data to identify the location in the area of greatest need. The socioeconomic data included the consideration of health inequality, equality, diversity and inclusion.

At present, operating hours in some libraries are limited therefore in addition to the location choice, the opening times have also been reviewed using library performance data, to ensure the proposed 7 statutory libraries are open at optimal times.

The public consultation planned for 2023 will enable residents to feedback about both the proposed library closures and the revised opening times and will enable individuals and groups to outline the impact this will have on them.

Who will be affected by the activity?

Provide details of the groups and numbers of people affected below, updating the table as the EIA develops and the understanding of who will be affected emerges in more detail.

Whole population

Chester Lane Library is a universal service available for anyone to use with or without library membership. Although the proposal is to keep this library open, its opening hours are proposed to reduce.

The proposals will result in a reduction in the number of posts in the library staffing structure and therefore, potential redundancies. Library staff and trade unions are being fully consulted on the proposals and dealt with/supported in accordance with the Council's Policies and Procedures. Every effort will be made to avoid compulsory redundancies.

As the number of library buildings will be reduced, a small number of facilities management staff including cleaners, may be affected by the proposals. Given demands within the council, it is anticipated that redeployment opportunities will be offered to all staff involved.

Under St Helens Borough Council's Redundancy Policy

- Selection for redundancy is based on clear, fair, and justifiable criteria set out within, selection is not based on age related criteria.
- Members and Officers making decisions on redundancy must ensure that their decisions are free from the influence of discrimination or

prejudicial bias because of protected characteristics.

- St Helens Borough Council's redundancy payments are based on age and length of service criteria. This is not 'unlawful' as the criteria mirror the payments that are set out in a statutory scheme and are therefore exempt from age discrimination legislation.

Library performance

Chester Lane Library was opened in 1990 on the site of the former Four Acre Lane Library; the Chester Lane Community Centre was purpose-built to serve a growing local population. Part of the building was used during the COVID-19 pandemic as a Testing Centre from 9th December 2020 – 25th October 2021.

St Helens Borough population: 183,200

Local ward population: 11,989

Source: Census 2021

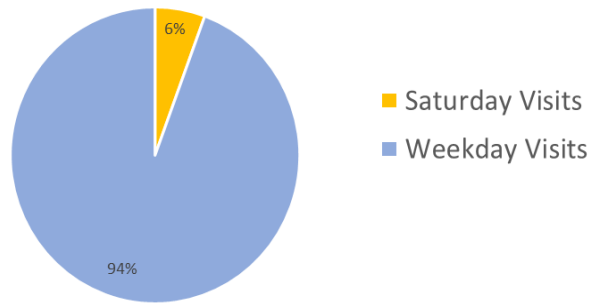
Total visits to Chester Lane Library between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023:

Chester Lane Library	Visits	% Total Visits
Saturday Visits	1,476	6%
Weekday Visits	24,950	94%
Total Visits	26,426	100%

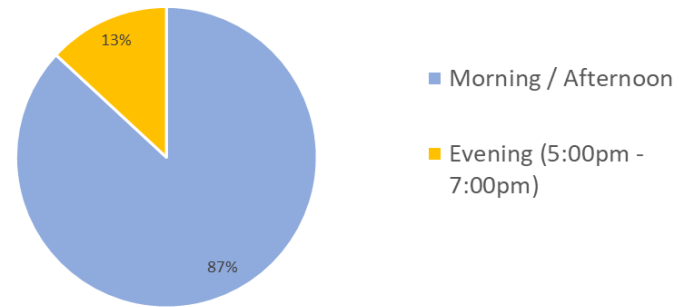
Monday visits between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023:

Chester Lane Library (Monday)	Visits	% Total Monday Visits
Morning / Afternoon	6,086	87%
Evening (5:00pm - 7:00pm)	918	13%
Total Monday Visits	7,004	100%

Visits to Chester Lane Library
(April 2022 - March 2023)



Visits to Chester Lane Library on Monday
(April 2022 - March 2023)

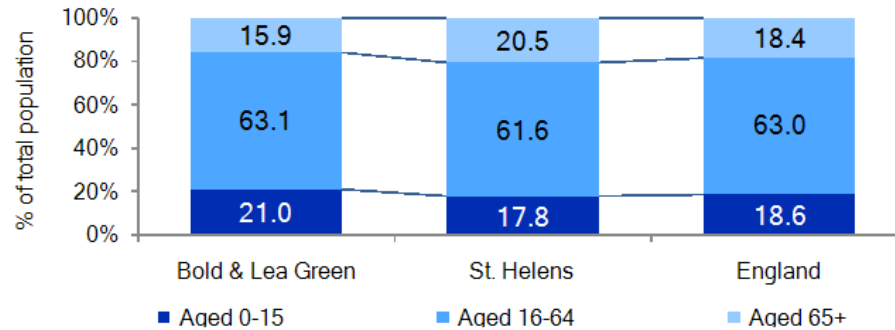


The impact of reducing opening hours on both Monday evenings and on Saturdays is low, given the performance information above demonstrates that the majority of visits to Chester Lane library are between the hours of 10am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Protected Characteristics

Age

Figure: Population by age
Source: Census 2021



Age breakdown for Bold & Lea Green ward:

0-15: 21.0%

16-65: 63.1%

65+: 15.9%

Age breakdown for St Helens Borough:

0-15: 17.8%

16-65: 61.6%

65+: 20.5%

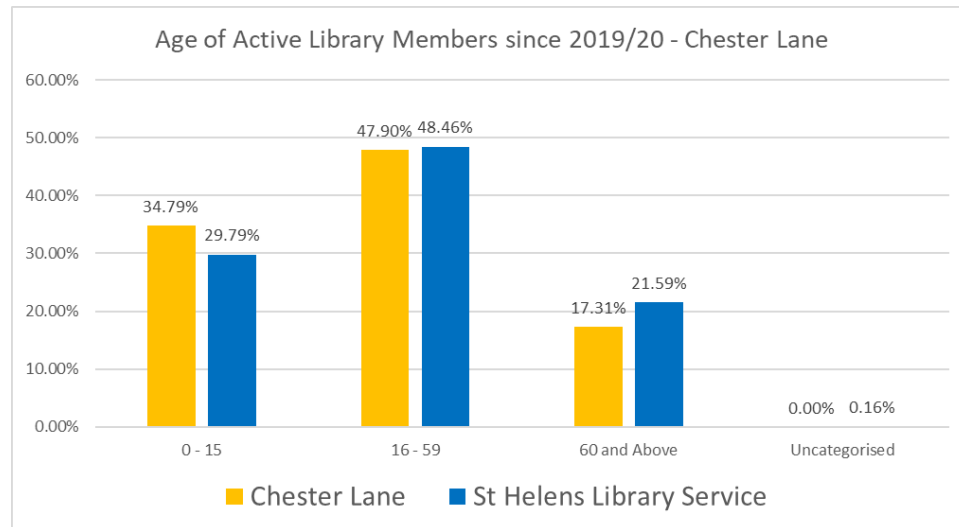
Age breakdown for England:

0-15: 18.6%

16-65: 63.0%

65+: 18.4%

Source: Census 2021

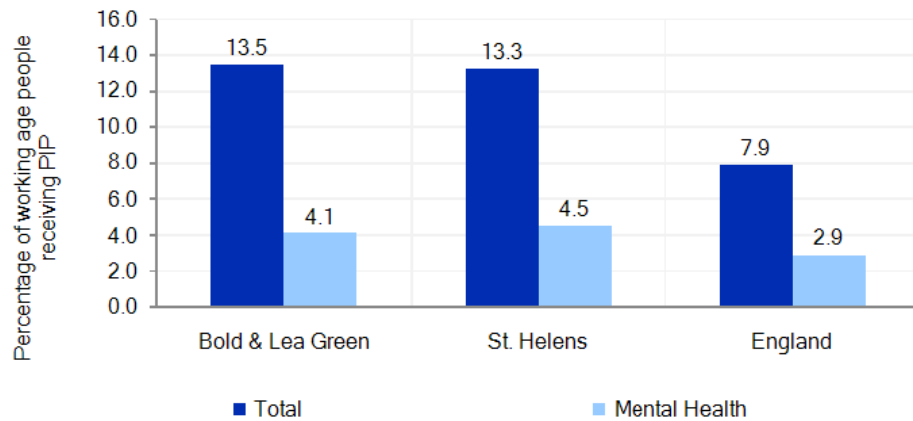


Disability

The Library Service does not hold full and comprehensive data on the disability needs of its members and wider customer base. The Library Membership form asks residents to provide this information, however there is no obligation to disclose this. Therefore, we will use the most recent ward statistics as a proxy to better reflect the current and potential users of the service that may hold this protected characteristic.

The graph below shows the percentage of working age people receiving Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in the Bold & Lea Green ward. (Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Apr-23):

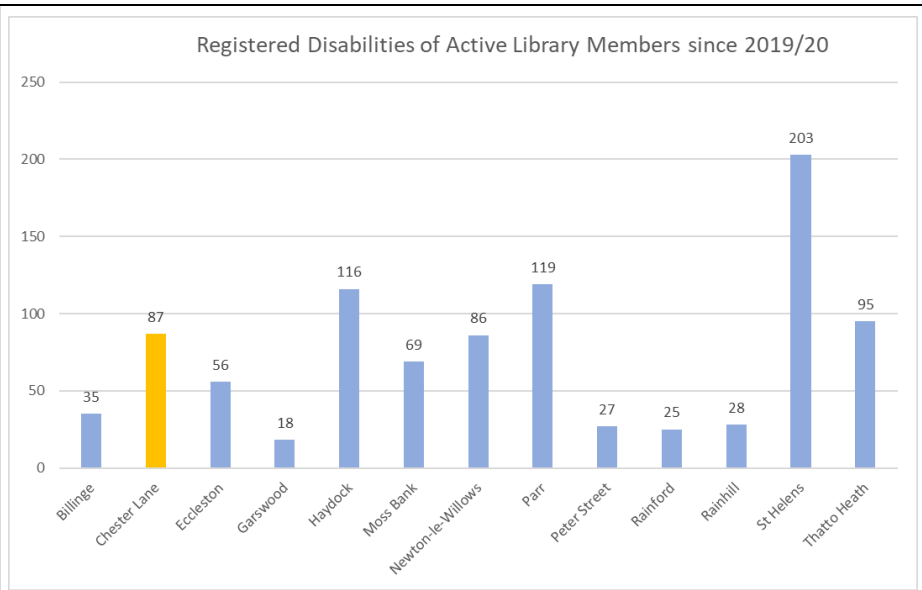
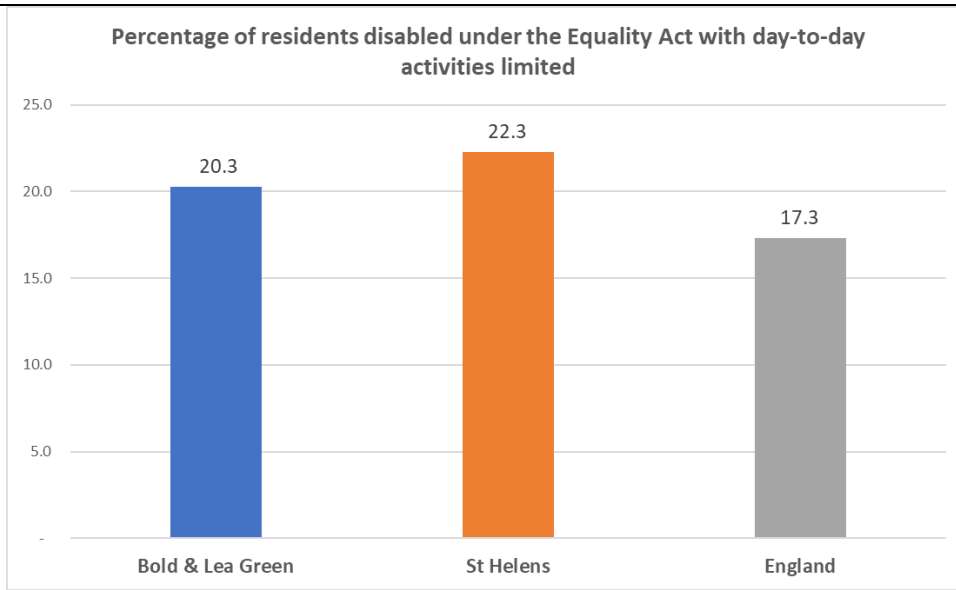
Figure: Personal Independence Payment (PIP) recipients
Source: Department for Work and Pensions (Apr-23)



Percentage of people disabled under the Equality Act with day-to-day activities limited:

- Bold & Lea Green = 20.3%
- St Helens = 22.3%
- England = 17.3%

Source: Census 2021



Gender reassignment

The Library Service does not collect Gender Reassignment membership data. Therefore, we will use the most recent population statistics as a proxy to better reflect the current and potential users of the service that may hold this protected characteristic.

The 2021 Census shows that 0.36% of people aged 16 and over in St Helens Borough had a gender identity different to the sex registered for them at birth. This compares to 0.54% for England and Wales. The table below shows a breakdown of the answers to the Census 2021 Gender Identity question for the St Helens Population aged 16 years and over.

Census 2021 St Helens Population Gender Identity Data	Percentage
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	95.48%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth, but no specific identity given	0.17%
Trans woman	0.06%
Trans man	0.08%
Non-binary	0.03%
All other gender identities	0.02%
Gender identity not answered	4.15%

Marriage and civil partnership

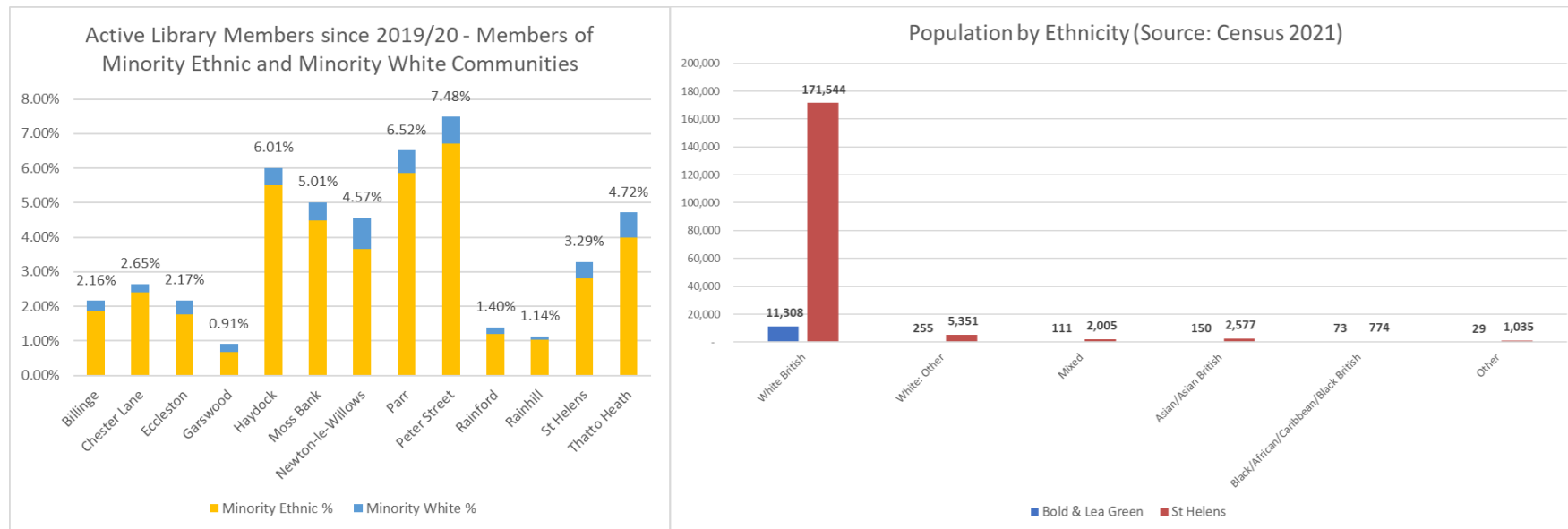
The Library Service does not collect Marriage and civil partnership membership data.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Library Service does not collect pregnancy membership data.

Race

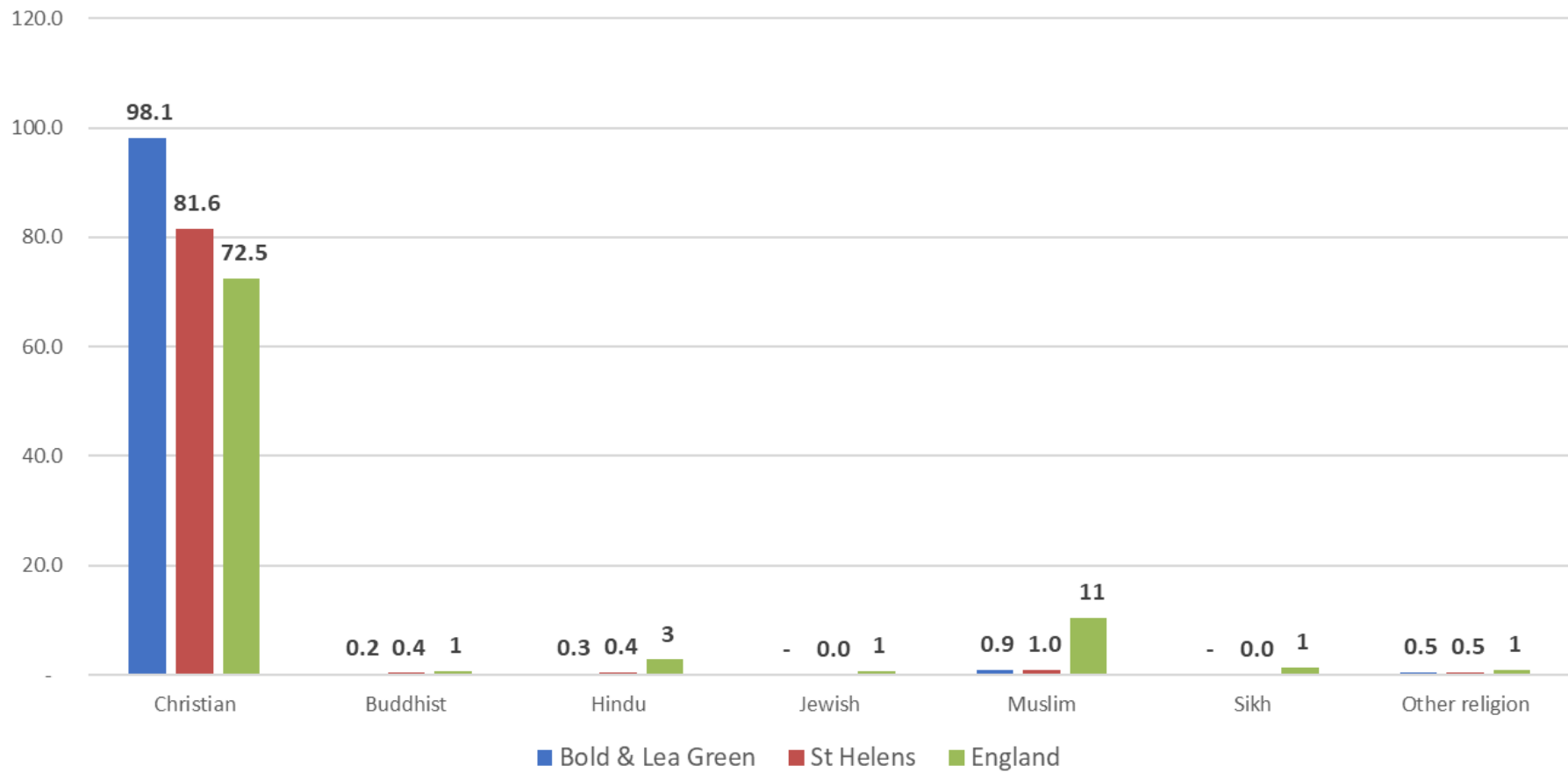
The Library Service does not hold full and comprehensive data on the race of its members and wider customer base. The Library Membership form asks residents to provide this information, however there is no obligation to disclose this. Therefore, we will use the most recent ward statistics as a proxy to better reflect the current and potential users of the service that may hold this protected characteristic.



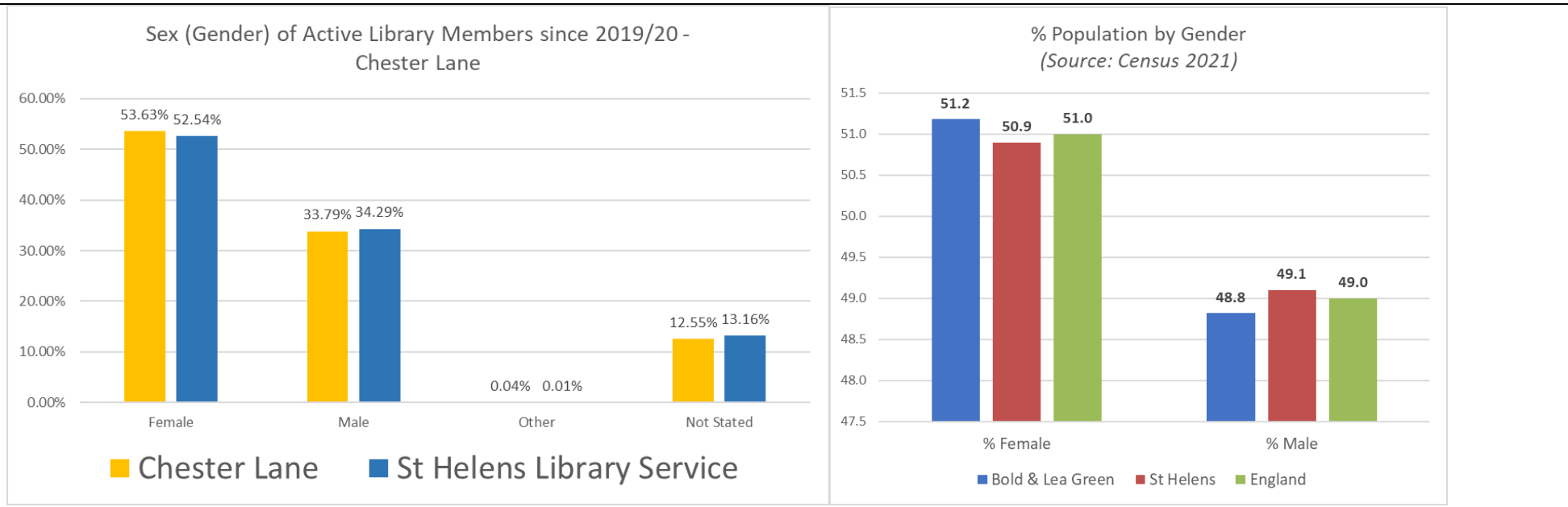
Religion and Belief

The Library Service does not collect religion membership data.

Percentage Stated Religion by Geography (*Source: Census 2021*)



Sex (sometimes referred to as gender)



Sex breakdown in Bold & Lea Green:
 Female: 51.2%
 Male: 48.8%

Sex breakdown in St Helens borough:
 Female: 50.9%
 Male: 49.1%

Sex breakdown in England:
 Female: 51%
 Male: 49%

Source: Census 2021

Sexual Orientation

The Library Service does not collect sexual orientation membership data. Therefore, we will use the most recent Census statistics as a proxy to better reflect the current and potential users of the service that may hold this protected characteristic. The 2021 Census shows that 2.7% of the Borough population aged 16 years and over recorded an LGB+ orientation (“gay or lesbian”, “bisexual”, or other sexual orientation). This compares to 3.16% for England and Wales. The table below shows a breakdown of the answers to the Census 2021 Sexual Orientation question for the St

Helens Population aged 16 years and over.

Census 2021 St Helens Population Sexual Orientation Data	Percentage
Straight or Heterosexual	91.84%
Gay or Lesbian	1.60%
Bisexual	0.89%
Pansexual	0.15%
Asexual	0.05%
All other sexual orientations	0.01%
Gender identity not answered	5.46%

At this initial stage of the equality impact assessment, affected individuals cannot be identified beyond the broad groups summarised in this document. This is due to the equality impact section of library membership forms not always completed fully as residents choose not to disclose this information.

Should any individual specifically affected by the proposal to reduce the opening hours at Chester Lane Library come forward following public consultation, further work would be undertaken to identify the impact and to consider action and mitigation.

What data, research and other evidence or information is available which is relevant to the EIA?

The key information for this activity is:

- Census 2021
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2020
- Library Service performance data 2022/23
- Library membership data
- Locality Profiles

Section 3: EIA Lead Officer Assessment: Chester Lane Library

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
Age	Negative	Medium	<p>Children and young people (CYP) The groups that use the library with this protected characteristic, facilitated by library staff are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baby Rhyme Time 2. Read and Rhyme Time 3. Regular visits from nurseries and schools <p>Older People The groups that use the library with this protected characteristic are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. U3A Reading group. 2. Jigsaw group. <p>These groups will continue to be accommodated as they operate during times which are unaffected by the proposed reduction in opening hours.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement Plan: A 12-week consultation has taken place in 2023 with residents, communities and key stakeholders to enable the impact of the proposed library closures and the changes to</p>	As a mitigation to age impact, alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/ audio/ newspapers/ magazines.

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
			<p>library opening hours to be considered. This included engagement with groups who use Chester Lane Library that will potentially be impacted by the reduction in opening hours. The questions within the consultation have helped to identify the following:</p> <p>No impact identified on the following groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read & Rhyme time (operates twice weekly) 2. U3A Reading Group (meet monthly). 3. Jigsaw group (meet weekly) <p>Working Age The general outcome of the consultation across the library service indicates that...</p> <p>“Those respondents of working age (25 to 44 from the on-street survey and 25 to 54 from the open survey) disagreed most with the opening hours. ”³</p>	

³ Library Strategy Consultation Summary, p. 11

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
			<p>Children and Young People</p> <p>The general outcome of the consultation states for those who disagree to the proposed changes show many feel the loss of “after school and weekend opening times will be detrimental to their children’s development.”</p>	
Disability	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>The Library Service does not hold full and comprehensive data on the disability needs of its members and wider customer base. The Library Membership form asks residents to provide this information, however there is no obligation to disclose this.</p> <p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.</p>	N/A
Gender reassignment	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>The Library Service does not currently collect gender reassignment data. National data indicates numbers are low as a proportion of the population, however there may be individuals that are in this</p>	N/A

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
			protected characteristic using Chester Lane Library. There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.	
Marriage and civil partnership	Not applicable	Not applicable	The Library Service does not currently collect marriage and civil partnership data, however by observation and building relationships with customers, we know that there are individuals with this protected characteristic using Chester Lane Library. There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Not applicable	Not applicable	The Library Service does not collect pregnancy and maternity data, however by observation and building relationships with customers, we know that there are individuals with this protected characteristic using Chester Lane Library.	N/A

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
			<p>Part of the discretionary library offer are Read and rhyme times, which operate twice weekly in Chester Lane Library and are attended by babies and young children. Pregnant women do attend, usually with their older child(ren) and then will attend sessions with their new baby. In addition, read and rhyme times aimed at young babies (less than 1 year) and pregnant women are also offered.</p> <p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.</p>	
Race	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>The Library Service does not hold full and comprehensive data on race details of its members and wider customer base. The Library Membership form asks residents to provide this information, however there is no obligation to disclose this.</p> <p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.</p>	N/A

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
Religion and Belief	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>The Library Service does not currently collect religion and belief data, however there may be people that are in this protected characteristic using Chester Lane Library.</p> <p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.</p>	N/A
Sex (gender)	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>More females than males currently use Chester Lane Library as evidenced by membership statistics.</p> <p>The groups that use Chester Lane Library, Reading Group, Read & Rhyme time are predominantly female in membership.</p> <p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement Plan: A 12-week consultation has taken place in 2023 with residents,</p>	N/A

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
			<p>communities and key stakeholders to enable the impact of the proposed library closures and the changes to library opening hours to be considered. This included engagement with groups who use Chester Lane Library that will potentially be impacted by the reduction in opening hours.</p> <p>Consultation has been carried out with the following groups who have this protected characteristic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read & Rhyme time (operates twice weekly) 2. Reading Group (meet monthly). <p>There is no evidence from the consultation that the proposed changes will impact on these groups.</p>	
Sexual orientation	Not applicable	Not applicable	<p>The Library Service does not currently collect sexual orientation data, however there may be people that are in this protected characteristic using Chester Lane Library.</p> <p>There is no evidence that there will be a detrimental impact of the</p>	We are not aware of any identifiable impact on this protected characteristic however the public consultation will be available for anyone from the protected characteristic to complete.

Use this table to record your views on the potential impact on **Protected Characteristics**. As the activity and the assessment develop your views may change – record them here.

Protected Characteristics	Potential Impact Positive/Negative/ Not Applicable	Potential level of impact	Summary of impact	Action and mitigation
			reduction in opening hours for people who share this protected characteristic.	
Employees	Risk of Redundancy	Low	<p>If staff are at risk of redundancy, then the Council will manage this in accordance with its Redundancy Policy. Selection for redundancy is based on clear, fair and justifiable criteria set out within. Selection is not based on age related criteria.</p> <p>Members and Officers making decisions on redundancy must ensure that their decisions are free from the influence of discrimination or prejudicial bias because of protected characteristics.</p> <p>St Helens Borough Council's redundancy payments are based on age and length of service criteria. This is not 'unlawful' as the criteria mirror the payments that are set out in a statutory scheme and are therefore exempt from age discrimination legislation.</p> <p>Any changes to staff hours will follow HR procedures and consultation with affected staff.</p>	Not applicable

Section 4: Engagement Decision

The decision about who to engage with, and how and when to engage, is the key to effective EIA.

Is engagement with affected people with Protected Characteristics required, now or during the further development of the activity?	Yes
If YES, proceed to the next section. If NO, briefly summarise below the reasons why you have reached this conclusion.	
Consultation and engagement Plan: A 12-week consultation has taken place in 2023 with residents, communities and key stakeholders to enable the impact of the proposed library closures and the changes to library opening hours to be considered. This included engagement with groups who use Chester Lane Library that will potentially be impacted by the reduction in opening hours.	

Any reports to decision-makers during the development of the activity, for example feasibility or options appraisal reports, should include content on the latest thinking and findings of the EIA even though, like the activity, further development of the EIA may be required before final reporting.

The findings of the officer assessment should be included in any reports to decision-makers. These may be feasibility or options appraisal reports where the activity is at an early stage of development, but it is essential that any equality findings are considered in formal decisions at all stages of development of the activity.

Section 5 – Involvement and Engagement Planning

Has the assessment shown that the activity will treat any groups of people with Protected Characteristics differently from other people?

Yes

Working Age

The general outcome of the consultation across the library service indicates that...

“Those respondents of working age (25 to 44 from the on-street survey and 25 to 54 from the open survey) disagreed most with the opening hours.”⁴

Children and Young People

The general outcome of the consultation states for those who disagree to the proposed changes show many feel the loss of “after school and weekend opening times will be detrimental to their children’s development.”⁵

Will the differential treatment advance equality for people with Protected Characteristics?

No

Will the differential treatment cause or increase disadvantage for people with Protected Characteristics?

If yes, please state which groups and how.

Working Age

The general outcome of the consultation across the library service indicates that...

“Those respondents of working age (25 to 44 from the on-street survey and 25 to 54 from the open survey) disagreed most with the opening hours.”⁶

Children and Young People

The general outcome of the consultation states for those who disagree to the proposed changes show many feel the loss of “after school and weekend opening times will be detrimental to their children’s development.”⁷

⁴ Library Strategy Consultation Summary, p. 11

⁵ Consultation key findings, p. 29

⁶ Library Strategy Consultation Summary, p. 11

⁷ Consultation key findings, p. 29

Section 6: Consultation and Engagement Findings from the 2023 public consultation

	Date/summary of engagement carried out	Summary of impacts identified
Age	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>Working Age The general outcome of the consultation across the library service indicates that...</p> <p>“Those respondents of working age (25 to 44 from the on-street survey and 25 to 54 from the open survey) disagreed most with the opening hours.”⁸</p> <p>Children and Young People The general outcome of the consultation states for those who disagree to the proposed changes show many feel the loss of “after school and weekend opening times will be detrimental to their children’s development.”⁹</p>
Disability	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours</p>

⁸ Library Strategy Consultation Summary, p. 11

⁹ Consultation key findings, p. 29

	<p>6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>
Race	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>
Religion and belief	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>
Sex (gender)	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea</p>	<p>The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.</p>

	Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.	
Sexual orientation	<p>Public consultation was undertaken from Monday 1st May to 31st July 2023. Over 6,000 people in total were consulted using a mix of methods.</p> <p>Street-based representative survey included Bold and Lea Green ward. 2,003 respondents, gender, age, ethnicity and location all reflect the Borough's population.</p>	The findings of the Consultation on the proposed change to the opening hours at Chester Lane Library did not identify any detrimental impact to those with this protected characteristic.

Section 6: Engagement Findings – Continued

Drawing on the engagement findings and your understanding of the effects of the activity, indicate how it will contribute, if at all, to the three strands of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

a) How will the proposal help to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation?

The process has highlighted that people who share the protected characteristic: age (younger and working aged people) will be negatively impacted upon by this proposal.

However, the strategy will seek to address inequalities by distributing provision across the borough where possible locating where it is best placed to serve areas of greatest need within borough and so seek to tackle and eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. We will also mitigate any negative impact for those community members who share protected characteristics, as detailed within the assessment.

b) How will the proposal help to advance equality of opportunity?

The process has highlighted that people who share the protected characteristic: age (younger and working aged people) will be negatively impacted upon by this proposal.

However, the strategy will seek to address inequalities by distributing provision across the borough where possible, locating where it is best placed to serve areas of greatest need within borough and so help to advance equality of opportunity. We will promote detailed information on how to access Library Services, both digital and physical.

c) How will the proposal help to foster good relations?

The process has highlighted that people who share the protected characteristic: age (younger and working aged people) will be negatively impacted upon by this proposal.

However, the strategy will seek to address inequalities by distributing provision across the borough where possible, locating where it is best placed to serve areas of greatest need within borough and help to foster good relations.

During the engagement process were there any suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative impacts? If so, please give details.

Suggested mitigations from the consultation



Charging for Services / activities and hires

- The Library Service already charges for some services. Chester Lane has a community room and opportunity for hiring space within the building.

Improved Home Delivery Library Service

- Following public consultation, the strategy is being updated to increase capacity within the Home Delivery Library service.
- Explore the viability of delivering a book loan service to care settings within the borough.

Sharing buildings/ facilities with other users / purposes

- The Library Strategy contains a stated aim to relocate libraries to buildings where they are collocated with both other Council Services and those of partners.

Improved parking (particularly at TWOG)

- The concerns of respondents regarding the car parking arrangement at the World of Glass will be fed back to the buildings managers as this is not within the gift of the Council.
- The importance of car parking facilities is defined within the strategy and will be addressed as opportunities arise at those sites to be retained.

Improved Public Transport

- The finding of this consultation will be shared with the Merseyside Transport Authority to help shape their Public Transport Strategy
- Provide detailed advice on Public Transport Routes and availability to customers of Libraries that will close to help them access other libraries

Better Digital Services

- Review the digital offer to improve accessibility and focus on demand.
- Upgrade Wi-fi and public access computers at the libraries being retained.
- Seek to identify community locations in communities served by libraries that will close where the service can deliver Digital and Information Literacy
- To increase the range of IT devices, particularly touch screen, available to the public within Libraries
- Work with city region partners to deliver the LCR Digital Inclusion Plan

Section 7 – Reporting of Findings and Recommendations to Decision Makers

The findings of the EIA may be reported to decision-makers at several stages during the development of an activity. For example, the initial officer assessment findings may be included in a feasibility report or options appraisal to be considered by the Transformation Board or Chief Officers' Executive.

Any report on formal decisions by the Cabinet or Council should include the latest findings of the EIA, even if these are at a relatively early stage. The report recommending final approval of the activity should await and include the findings of the completed EIA. The report should clearly present the impacts that have been identified through the engagement process, including potential cumulative impacts.

The report may include recommendations based on the findings of the EIA, but these should be separate from the reporting of impacts. Recommendations will be developed separately from the EIA and arise from considering equalities impacts combined with other aspects of the activity such as finance, the benefits of the activity, and so on.

Based on the EIA findings, the report may consider the options in the table below, but the report must contain a clear statement of the impacts so that decision-makers can understand the effects of the decision that is being recommended.

What does the review of the information show?	
a)	No negative impact on people because of their Protected Characteristics – continue with the activity and monitor progress on implementation
b)	Negative impact identified – recommend continuing with the activity; clearly specify the people affected and the impacts, and providing reasons and supporting evidence for the decision to continue
c)	Negative impact identified – adjust the activity in light of the identified impact to avoid, minimise or mitigate the impact
d)	Negative impact identified – stop activity and provide an explanation why

Section 8 – Action Plan and Performance Management

The report to decision-makers, and the decision made may require actions to be taken to avoid, minimise or mitigate the negative impacts of the activity.

Any actions to address equalities impacts should be listed below, with performance management review proposals, to complete the full EIA.

What is the negative impact?	Actions required to reduce/eliminate the negative impact (if applicable)	Who will lead on action	Target completion date
<p>Working Age</p> <p>The general outcome of the consultation across the library service indicates that...</p> <p>“Those respondents of working age (25 to 44 from the on-street survey and 25 to 54 from the open survey) disagreed most with the opening hours. ”</p>	<p>As a mitigation to age impact, alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/ audio/ newspapers/ magazines.</p>	<p>Head of Culture and Wellbeing</p>	<p>December 2023</p>
<p>Children and Young People</p> <p>The general outcome of the consultation states for those who disagree to the proposed changes show many feel the loss of “after school and weekend opening times will be detrimental to their children’s development.”¹⁰</p>	<p>As a mitigation to age impact, alternative library provision will be signposted to service users to inform them that both St Helens and Newton Libraries will be open 10am to 7pm on Mondays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and that library provision is available after school/work and at weekends. The digital library service is also available 24/7, with access to e-books/audio/newspapers/magazines</p>	<p>Head of Culture and Wellbeing</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

Performance Management	
Date of the next review of the EIA	December 2023
How often will the EIA action plan be reviewed?	Mitigation actions from this EIA will be included within the Library Service Business Plan and reviewed Quarterly until all actions are complete
Who will carry out this review?	Library Service Management Team

¹⁰ Consultation key findings, p. 29