

Library Services in Suffolk

Needs Assessment

October 2023



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Executive Summary

- The provision of library services in Suffolk is required by statute and must cater for Suffolk's residents; individuals who work in the county; and those who are engaged in full-time education within Suffolk.
- There is clear national and local evidence that reading, and the wider services offered by libraries, enhance community cohesion, provide wellbeing benefits to adults and children, enhance communication skills, and help to raise levels of literacy in the population, a key determinant of socioeconomic outcomes.
- Suffolk is a county of great contrasts. Much of Suffolk is relatively affluent, but around 80,000 people live in neighbourhoods ranked among the 20% most deprived in England. While the county remains less ethnically diverse than the England average, ethnic diversity is increasing and people from non-White British ethnic backgrounds make up a quarter of the population in Ipswich.
- The ageing population and associated increases in health risks, and rural deprivation will affect Suffolk more acutely than many parts of the country.
- Educational attainment levels, including reading levels, vary within Suffolk, and are low in some areas, particularly for children in Early Years and Key Stage 2. The local economy is characterised by low unemployment but below average pay, particularly for those who work in the county. House prices are relatively high away from more deprived areas.
- The coastal communities and north-west Suffolk (home to a large population of RAF and USAF servicemen) also possess their own set of unique characteristics and challenges.
- Library provision must therefore take into account the different demographics, population characteristics, levels of affluence and accessibility needs of the local population both now and in the future.
- The information within this Needs Assessment should be used when considering the library service specification and the future contract of the library services across Suffolk; to support the development of infrastructure funding bids; and to inform an ongoing, evidenced-based approach when developing library services in Suffolk.

Introduction

This needs assessment sets out the context within which the library service is delivered in Suffolk, including its statutory duty. It evaluates the needs for library services of Suffolk's residents; individuals who work in the county; and those who are engaged in full-time education within Suffolk. It provides data which can be used to ensure that the library service is relevant, sustainable, and fit for the future.

As community needs change and trends in usage evolve, libraries need to be flexible, responsive and fit for the new landscape post-Covid, and for the long-term. The service(s) libraries provide should meet the needs of Suffolk residents and their stakeholders while being as efficient and comprehensive as possible and meeting statutory duties.

Structure of this Needs Assessment

This Needs Assessment has been divided into 5 sections:

Section 1: Context and shape of the current service

This section describes the context in which Suffolk County Council provides a Library Service. It includes:

- A review of research into the impact of library services nationally;
- Locally commissioned research into the impact of the current Library Service in Suffolk;
- The national and local parameters related to library provision, including the statutory duties of a Local Authority as defined by The Libraries and Museums Act (1964)¹;
- The standards, outcomes and recommendations of key national bodies in relation to library services, including the 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition' vision;
- Details of current library provision in Suffolk including assets, support and funding.

Section 2: Population Needs

Population needs are presented at county level, showing how diverse the geography and population needs are across the county.

The whole county is then divided into catchment areas for each current library. Population data divided by library catchment provides a lens through which local need can be viewed, and later can be matched to actual provision delivered by libraries. In this section, the needs of each catchment area are presented, including protected characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and religion as well as other population variables such as deprivation, carers, veterans, children in care, health, and disability. In addition, educational attainment is mapped, highlighting areas of need.

Section 3: Provision and performance of existing services/offer

This section describes the current library offer. Provision includes static library distribution and travel distances, the mobile library service coverage and availability, and other rural outreach, as well as opening hours. Data from [CILIP](#) enables Suffolk to be compared with statistical near neighbours.

Section 4: Recommendations

The information presented in this Needs Assessment can be used to provide an evidence base to inform decisions around strategy, service provision, funding and future contracts. Recommendations include the need to update this document as new data becomes available, so that it remains relevant.

Section 5: References

References are denoted by numbers in superscript throughout this Needs Assessment. Each is listed in the reference section.

Purpose of this Needs Assessment

- To summarise the context within which library services are operating, including the future needs of people who live, work, or are in full-time education in Suffolk.
- To identify areas of need within the county's population, with further analysis of needs within each library catchment area.
- To make recommendations to support the development of a strategic vision for library provision in Suffolk.
- To inform the future commissioning of library services in Suffolk ensuring a strong alignment with Suffolk County Council's vision and priorities, including carbon reduction and social value.
- To support provision of a library service which meets its equality duties.

Methodology

The DCMS Planning Toolkit² has been referred to in producing this Needs Assessment. Central to this is the provision of a library service/s e that meets the needs of those who live, work, and are in full-time education within the county.

This Planning Toolkit suggests that the following design principles, identified to develop Library Services, are met:

- Meet legal requirements.
- Are shaped by local needs.
- Focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience.
- Make decisions informed by evidence.
- Support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers.
- Promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise.

- Use public funds effectively and efficiently.

This Needs Assessment is based predominantly on desktop research. In mapping the needs of Suffolk, various sources were used, including data from Suffolk Libraries' quarterly contract reports, Suffolk Libraries' board meetings, their website, strategy, and project documents, the Suffolk Observatory, Suffolk's Joint Strategic Need Assessment, NOMIS (the National Online Manpower Information System, provided by the Office for National Statistics) and GOV.UK. Senior staff at Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society Limited also assisted in providing additional information.

This Needs Assessment is a dynamic document which can be periodically reviewed to include feedback from stakeholders and public input, new data, and new policy information, such as the 'New Public Libraries Strategy for England' which is anticipated in the Spring of 2024.

Section 1 - Context and shape of the current service

Impact of Library Services

National Findings

'Libraries are vital community hubs – bringing people together and giving them access to the services and support they need to help them live better.' Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021 (Sept 2018)

'...evidence is already sufficient to conclude that public libraries provide positive outcomes for people and communities in many areas – far exceeding the traditional perception of libraries as just places from which to borrow books. What the available evidence shows is that public libraries, first and foremost, contribute to long term processes of human capital formation, the maintenance of mental and physical wellbeing, social inclusivity and the cohesion of communities. This is the real economic contribution that public libraries make to the UK.' Evidence review of the economic contribution of libraries, Arts Council England (June 2014)³

Reading

The Reading Agency conducted a literature review published in 2015⁴.

They found that reading has benefits for general adult populations including:

- enjoyment, relaxation, and escapism
- increasing understanding of self and social identities, empathy, knowledge of other cultures, relatedness, community cohesion and increasing social capital.

Similarly, for children and young people benefits included:

- enjoyment,
- knowledge of the self and other people,
- social interaction,
- social and cultural capital,
- imagination,
- focus and flow,
- relaxation and mood regulation

In addition, improvements in young children's communication abilities, and longer-term education outcomes, were reported for early years children. For parents and carers reading was found to have the following benefits;

- links between reading for pleasure and improvements in parent-child communication and understanding
- improving parenting knowledge

For adults with health needs they found substantial links between recreational reading and health:

- changes in stress levels and relaxation
- greater health literacy

- improvements in depression and dementia symptoms

Adults with additional needs

These studies tended to focus on adults with below-average levels of literacy, but reported benefits relating to communication, self-efficacy, learning motivation, and relatedness.

Adult Learning

Libraries provide a range of leisure learning, semi-structured courses, and more formal training, all of which contribute to wider community adult learning.

Research by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in 2000 found clear evidence that people involved in adult learning identified real benefits in terms of better employment opportunities⁵, including increases in confidence, skills, and self-esteem among respondents. This is further supported by research carried out by the Centre for the Economics of Education which concluded that both literacy and numeracy are important determinants of economic outcomes⁶.

‘NIACE promotes the importance of the social and economic value of adult learning as an integral part to the national policy debate across government departments and as a key role in local strategic agendas. The evidence gathered from this research illustrates we are talking about much more than just delivering courses: adult learning provides wider outcomes that are fundamental building blocks to working with communities and enabling them to access other services and build autonomy, resilience and self-reliance – a starting place for further learning, gaining new skills, routes out of poverty and creating a culture of learning in communities. We support local decision makers to consider adult learning as part of a package of interventions to achieve their objectives at a time of change.’

Social value of adult learning for community empowerment, NIACE (2011)⁵

Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge is open to all children aged 4-11 years, who are challenged to read 6 books during the summer holidays.

‘Analysis of the children who participated in the Challenge versus those who did not, found statistically significant increases in reading frequency, reading enjoyment and reading confidence for those who took part. There were also positive impacts on children's wellbeing: many children reported feeling happier and calmer when reading over the summer and feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment in completing the Challenge.’ The Reading Agency ⁸

Summer Reading Challenge family impact evaluation⁹:

‘We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge and the results were very

positive. Respondents were most likely to report that the Challenge has strong positive impacts in the following areas:

- ☐ *89% felt the Challenge helped their child enjoy reading*
- ☐ *84% reported that it increased conversation about books*
- ☐ *82% believed that it encouraged children to read more over the summer*
- ☐ *77% felt that taking part increased library usage'*

Bookstart

The national free book scheme administered by the Book Trust and including 'Bookstart+' and 'My Bookstart Treasure Box' was introduced in 2005/6. Children who are introduced to books at an early age through the Bookstart scheme are further ahead in both literacy and numeracy on starting school. This head start is maintained through Key Stage 1. Bookstart families share more books, and the quality of the interaction is enhanced. Parental involvement is the most important factor associated with educational achievement.

'The final stage of Bookstart longitudinal studies takes a random sample of 43 pupils who had been given Bookstart packs at the age of nine months. This group is matched with a comparison [peer] group, selected on strict criteria, and the performances of both groups in their Key Stage 1 SATS is compared. On both teacher assessment measures and test results the Bookstart group are ahead of the comparison group to a significant degree. Thus, the research corroborates previous Bookstart studies and those which show that children who have a head start at school age remain ahead as their primary education continues. The implication is that book-gifting and advice to parents, when babies are about nine months of age, is a cost effective way of raising standards.'

A Sure Start with Books, Barrie Wade & Maggie Moore (2006)¹⁰

Suffolk Findings

A number of studies of the impact of the library service in Suffolk have been conducted in recent years. These include the following:

Suffolk University undertook research into Suffolk Libraries' impact on wellbeing and found that regular visits to the library and engagement with library activities increase people's feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction, and their sense of community and connectedness.

"Libraries provide neutral, non-stigmatised, non-clinical community spaces, making the public library a good place to offer social and health activities aimed at promoting and enhancing wellbeing.

Libraries are an important community-based resource and provide a means for

improving personal subjective well-being, life satisfaction, social inclusion, and community.”

A summary of research undertaken by the University of Suffolk, 2012 -2022¹¹

Moore Kingston Smith were commissioned by Suffolk's Libraries IPS Ltd (Industrial Provident Society) to conduct an impact analysis of the services of Suffolk Libraries (2023)¹². It calculated that libraries in Suffolk create £41 million of social value every year with a return on investment of £6.07 for every £1 spent; and save the local NHS at least £542k a year.

‘Service users greatly value libraries as a space to spend time with other people without an explicit agenda, means or purpose. Relationships are often forged on a more casual basis without there being very close ties but are nevertheless very important for wellbeing. During the course of this social value analysis, the sense of wellbeing that stakeholders experience due to knowing librarians, meeting library regulars and others who live locally was profound and contributes a further explanation as to why libraries are so important for wellbeing.’

‘It is therefore with a good level of confidence that the SROI ratio of all combined Suffolk Libraries activities under study here is £1: £6.07. That is to say that for every £1 invested there is £6.07 in social value returned and in fact this is a net return after the investment amount is taken out of the return figures.’

The Audience Agency Report (2023) stated:

*“Libraries reach a significant cross-section of England’s population
In 2015/16 a third of the population in England had used a library at one point during the past 12 months. The Audience Spectrum and Mosaic profiles of library users generated through this piece of research supports the Taking Part picture of library users being largely representative of the overall population; certainly, more so than the audience profile of other art and cultural attendance.” ‘Suffolk Libraries Understanding Audiences Membership analysis and current users research report’
The Audience Agency, Fortnum, Lugli, Beckett, February 2023¹³*

A University of East Anglia (UEA) study, ‘Libraries for living, and for living better: The value and impact of public libraries in the East of England’ focussed on 3 core areas of library delivery: digital inclusion; health, wellbeing and independent living; and children’s literacy and associated outcomes. The study concluded that every library site generates an average of £1 million of social value every year¹⁴.

‘Library services in England can generate social benefits to their communities to a value of at least £3.4bn per year in relation to the three value dimensions we investigated. This is based on a conservative estimate of 50% of libraries offering the services in the way that aligns with the methodology we have used. The return on

investment calculated from the benefit modelling suggests a conservative figure of at least six times the known annual cost of running libraries nationally. A typical library might be expected to produce around £1m worth of value per year but this may vary, depending on volumes and activities undertaken, from £600,000 to £1.5m. These figures are gross, before operating costs, and include only the domains identified by this report.'

Libraries for Living, and for Living Better¹⁴

Separate studies, which have included libraries in Suffolk, have arrived at similar impact values, despite using different methodologies to reach their conclusions. This triangulation is reassuring and increases confidence in their findings.

National Parameters

Legal Context

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 states that there is a statutory obligation (statutory duty) to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library service¹ In addition, the service should be tailored to the community, in that it focuses on their needs and is delivered within the budget available.

Public library services are funded and either run, or commissioned by, local government. Library 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 who wish to use it' and to ensure that facilities for borrowing books and other materials are available to all persons who live, work or receive full-time education in the area (s7). The DCMS document 'Libraries as a Statutory Service: Guidance' is a document which helps councils in England in considering library service provision as a statutory service¹⁵.

The authority is given wide discretion as to how to do this: it is stated that in doing so it should 'have regard to the desirability' of securing the facility to borrow books and other materials of a range and quality sufficient to meet the needs of adults and children; of encouraging people to make full use the service and advising them how to do so; and of cooperating with other public authorities (s.7(2)).

The courts have determined that the design of the service must be based on an assessment of local needs. In *Draper v Lincolnshire* the High Court said in 2014: "A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the service must be embedded

within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough."

One example of access by digital technology could involve the identification and reservation of a book followed by delivery through a mobile library.

The key is a reasonable ability to access the service by all residents of the county. This means that distances and time taken to reach a library must be reasonable and any particular barriers to access, which may be due to physical disabilities, age, or family considerations, must be capable of being addressed. Furthermore, budgetary constraints can properly be taken into account in deciding the nature of the service e, provided that it meets the requirements of s.7 of the 1964 Act." (R. (on the application of Draper) v Lincolnshire CC [2014] EWHC 2388 (Admin).)

There is therefore no specific guidance on distances which people may be expected to travel, for example. Provided that the Council complies with its obligations under the Equality Act (2010)¹⁶ and acts fairly, transparently, and by reference to the needs assessment, it has considerable discretion on how to proceed.

The Act allows for joint working between library authorities and councils which may lead to the provision of wider library services (for example, loaning devices, running activities, or providing access to Wi-Fi and computers).

In providing this service, councils 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)).

Other legal obligations

In drawing up and delivering library strategies and plans, councils should consider a number of legal obligations, including obligations under:

- the Equality Act 2010¹⁶ including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Best Value Duty 2011 guidance¹⁷
- Localism Act 2011¹⁸
- the Human Rights Act 1998¹⁹

Decisions made by councils about library services may be subject to legal challenge by way of judicial review.

More information on these can be found in 'Guidance on Libraries as a Statutory Service'²⁰ [Annex A: Equalities](#) and [Annex B: Judicial Reviews](#).

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021

'Libraries Deliver: Ambition' set out the government and Taskforce vision for, and

commitment to, public libraries in England, providing a focus for joint action²².

Figure 1: Library services deliver against 7 Outcomes

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021²²



Figure 2: Targeted Services for Acute Needs

'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021'²² created by CILIP, based on research done by Cassie Robinson



Figure 3: People's needs during a lifetime

'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021'²² created by CILIP, based on research done by Cassie Robinson

	 Early years	 Active learners	 Active citizens	 Active ageing
Users need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Digital literacy Family activities Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study space Connectivity Careers Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Business support Family activities Learning Health & wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Digital literacy Family activities Health & wellbeing Social activities
Libraries deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bookstart Rhymetime Summer Reading Challenge Code clubs Volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Wi-Fi & computers Free study space Books & e-resources Homework clubs Social spaces Reading Ahead & Quick Reads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Wi-Fi & computers Local information Business & IP Centres Books & e-resources Job clubs Health advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Wi-Fi & computers Health information Books & e-resources Events & activities Social spaces Home library service

Delivery against the Universal Offers Framework – Libraries Connected

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers>

Libraries Connected is a charity, partly funded by Arts Council England, and is the Investment Principles Support Organisation (IPSO) for libraries. It is a membership organisation, made up of every library service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Universal Library Offers (2013) aimed to demonstrate the power of public libraries to enrich the lives of individuals and their communities, and to ensure that all aspects of public library provision are accessible.

The offers were reviewed in 2019 and relaunched to create a new streamlined and consistent framework²¹. This new Universal Library Offers aims to connect communities, improve wellbeing, and promote equality through learning, literacy, and cultural activity. There is a lot of overlap with its objectives and those in 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition'²².

Its core strands are:

- Culture and Creativity
- Health and Wellbeing
- Information and Digital
- Reading

Each of these has a close match to 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition' outcomes²².

Figure 4: Universal Library Offer Framework



Universal Library Offer Framework | Libraries Connected²¹

New Public Libraries Strategy for England in 2024

A refreshed public library strategy is being prepared by DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) and is due to be published in Spring 2024. This has been informed by the independent review conducted by Baroness Sanderson. The review looked at the successes of the sector as well as the challenges confronting it and possibilities for the future, focusing on the 7 strategic outcomes in 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021'²².

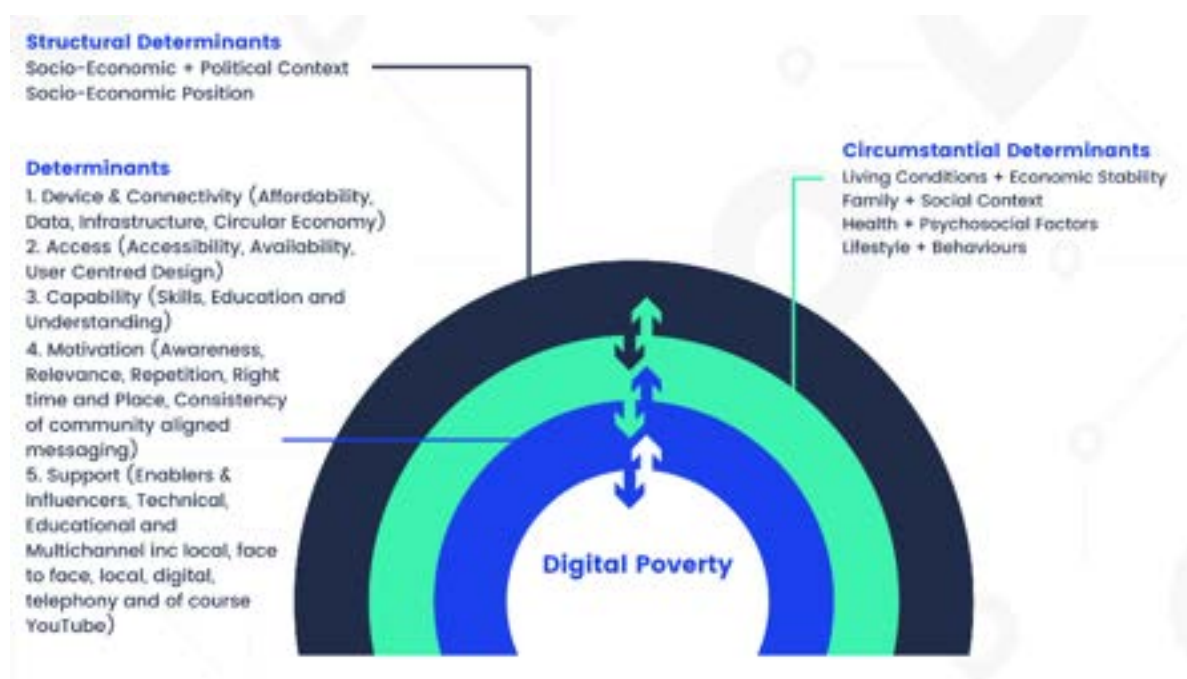
Arts Council England (ACE)

[Arts Council England](#) are the national development body for libraries. Their focus is on public libraries, which operate within a wider framework of provision and local and national government service. In addition to national development work, Arts Council England provide different funding streams for public libraries to access to bolster their local offer including National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status, National Lottery funded grants, and grants which support the Universal Offers. The current libraries service provider holds Arts Council NPO status.

National Digital Inclusion Model

The National Digital Inclusion Model has been developed by the [Digital Poverty Alliance](#):

Figure 5: National Digital Inclusion Model



Model from UK Digital Poverty Alliance Evidence Review 2022²³

Suffolk specific parameters

Suffolk County Council's Corporate objectives (2022-26)²⁴

1. Promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk
2. Strengthening our local economy

3. Protecting and enhancing our environment (including carbon reduction)
4. Providing value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer

Public Health and Communities Strategy

Public Health and Communities recently developed and set out their strategy, identifying their vision for Suffolk²⁵:

'To enable everyone in Suffolk to live healthier lives, in healthier places, and to enjoy healthier futures'.

The new five-year strategy will:

- Support people to live healthier lives
- Ensure those lives are lived in healthier places,
- Work to enable healthier futures.

Table 1: The 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition' outcomes and targeted service areas correlate to Suffolk County Council's corporate objectives and Public Health & Communities' Aims in the following way:

	SCC Corporate Objectives				SCC Public Health & Communities Strategy		
Libraries Deliver: 7 outcomes	Promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk.	Strengthening our local economy.	Providing value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer.	Protecting and enhancing our environment (including carbon reduction).	Support people to live healthier lives	Working to enable healthier futures.	Ensure those lives are lived in healthier places
Cultural and Creative Enrichment	X		X		X	X	X
Increased Reading and Literacy	X	X	X		X	X	
Increased Digital Access and Literacy	X	X	X		X	X	
Helping Everyone Achieve their Full Potential	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Healthier and Happier Lives	X		X		X	X	X
Greater Prosperity		X	X		X	X	X
Stronger More Resilient Communities	X		X		X	X	X
Libraries Deliver: Services for Acute Need							

Health – Long-term Health Issues	X		X		X	X	X
Health – Mental Health Issues	X		X		X	X	X
Health – Disability Support	X		X		X	X	X
Services – Arriving in the Country	X	X	X		X	X	X
Services – Urgent Needs	X		X		X	X	X
Skills – Looking for Work	X	X	X		X	X	
Skills –lack of digital skills	X	X	X		X	X	
Libraries Deliver: People's needs during a lifetime							
Early Years -Reading, Digital Literacy, Family Activities, Life Skills	X	X	X		X	X	
Active Learners -Study Space, Connectivity, Careers, Information	X	X	X		X	X	X
Active Citizens -Community. Business Support, Family Activities, Learning, Health & Wellbeing	X	X	X		X	X	
Active Ageing -Reading, Digital Literacy, Family Activities, Health & Wellbeing, Social Activities	X		X		X	X	X

Links to other related strategies

In addition, there are links between library services and the successful delivery of other strategies. These include:

- [Tackling poverty in Suffolk 2022](#)
- [SNEE joint forward plan](#)
- [Public mental health in Suffolk 2021](#)

“Councils should work with stakeholders and local communities to consider the services currently offered by their library service. A number of library services are already developing innovative, needs-led and sustainable services that support a range of priorities and strategic Outcomes. We believe councils should view library services as an integral element of their corporate strategies, and think ‘libraries first’ when considering how to deliver services, and, most importantly positive outcomes to communities. If they do this, it will help achieve libraries’ sustainability and resilience, and promote innovation across the library sector and beyond.” Strategic planning of library services: longer-term, evidence-based sustainable planning toolkit².

Suffolk Inclusive Growth Framework

The Suffolk Inclusive Growth Framework (SIGF) has been supported by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders and has received funding to deliver various programmes of activity under the SIGF banner²⁶. There is work taking place for the County Deal, which may develop the growth strategy further. They recognise the role libraries play as key element of infrastructure in our communities.

Suffolk's Connections:

Secure investment in our economic & social infrastructure

'We need to invest in infrastructure that delivers for our businesses, our employees and our residents and enables future development of homes, communities, businesses and centres of employment. This includes building / maintaining roads; investing in our passenger and freight rail routes; delivering broadband to all areas of Suffolk; providing coastal protection and flood defences; and ensuring consistent, clean, and efficient power and water supplies.'

'We also need to invest in infrastructure that supports development, such as schools; health care facilities; green spaces and social facilities including libraries and community centres. We will continue to champion the protection and enhancement of Suffolk's natural and historic environment to ensure we maximise the benefits our environment will deliver to our economic growth and health and wellbeing for now and future generations, whilst recognising the challenges of climate change.'

'Local authorities also work together to provide social infrastructure –schools, medical & health facilities, community facilities (e.g. libraries) and green space. All Local Plans have Local Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) that set out the need and timescale for the delivery of this social infrastructure.'

Suffolk's Inclusive Growth Framework (November 2020)²⁶

Suffolk County Council's commitment to Digital Inclusion

Suffolk County Council's Public Health and Communities strategy makes a clear link between digital exclusion and increased health inequality.

Around 20% of residents across the East of England suffer from digital exclusion as defined by Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index²⁷.

Lack of internet access contributes to around 10% of Suffolk households suffering from digital exclusion.

Adopting a 'digital first' principle, in which the use of digital technology aids and broadens access to services, but with appropriate support in place for people who cannot access services in this way, is a key component of the future direction of Public Health and Communities, in line with the wider Suffolk system and national policy.

A Policy Development Panel (PDP) was convened in May 2022, to look at the priority area of Digital Inclusion. Over the course of 7 sessions the PDP looked specifically at what more the Council could do to increase levels of Digital Inclusion²⁸. The PDP reported to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on 11th October 2022.

As a result, a Digital Inclusion Fund has been launched with the aim of reducing digital poverty and increasing digital inclusion across Suffolk by identifying needs and supporting solutions.

Key areas of focus:

- Digital Skills (Capability)
- Device/Connectivity
- Accessibility

Digital Inclusion aims for 2022/23

- Develop the Digital Champion Programme to target other key demographics identified via Digital Exclusion data.
- Use data and evidence gathered to inform the development of targeted interventions via the Digital Champions Programme, the Digital Inclusion Network, and the Digital Inclusion Fund.
- Suffolk County Councillors have allocated £100k to the Digital Inclusion Fund being managed by Suffolk Community Foundation, and the aim is to bring together stakeholders with an interest in Digital Inclusion to increase and sustain the Fund over the next 3 years and into the future. The target demographics of the fund include those: aged 75+; in the lower socioeconomic groups; not working; living alone; with no formal education; or living with sensory impairments which affect their day-to-day lives.
- Co-ordinate the funding and provision of interventions to reduce the possibility of duplication of service and ensure gaps are identified and addressed.

Suffolk's Commitment to library services

'We are committed to supporting our libraries so that our residents continue to see the same high level of service in Suffolk. Our libraries strategy has resulted in a service that is nationally recognised and is seen as leading the way for other library services.'
'Our Libraries play a vital role in our local communities – they offer so much more than books; providing community spaces which bring people of all ages together, to learn, socialise, read and take part in activities. Promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk and strengthening our local economy, not just through the valued staff and volunteers.' Councillor Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, Suffolk County Council, Speech to Cabinet (July 2023)

In May 2023, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet made the decision to provide up to an additional £720k until the end of the contract to Suffolk's Libraries IPS Ltd to meet budgetary pressures due to rising costs to the service. In addition, cabinet agreed the future contract value should increase from £5.92m to £6.842m from 2025, to account for the transfer of responsibility for the outreach service to the provider in a new six-year contract, with the option to extend for additional six years.

This is an increase of £920k per year from the current contract value of £5.92m. This equates to £8.90 per head. Comparative figures available show we are not an outlier in our spending. The value of the libraries contract over 12 years is £82.1m.

Assets, support, and funding

Capital Investment in Libraries

Housing growth or regeneration may necessitate upgrades or replacements to existing library buildings. Where this is the case the options for funding are:

- Local authority capital budgets, Capital maintenance is finite across all Suffolk County Council properties. Generally, capital budget for development of properties requires a business plan which demonstrates that these funds will be recouped. This is difficult to achieve in a service building such as a library. This includes where the service will share occupancy of a building with other partners.
- Other funding such as Lottery or regeneration funds. In 2023, Suffolk County Council successfully bid for Arts Council funds for an online wellbeing support project but were unsuccessful in bidding to the Library Improvement Fund round 3 for improvements to County Library, Ipswich.
- Planning obligations. The statutory basis for contributions from development towards the provision of community infrastructure is set out in section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 106 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (2019).

These are the main forms of capital funding.

Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy

Capital investment for libraries is obtained from development of new properties through contributions from developers. These contributions are obtained through two types of legal agreements: [section 106²⁹](#) and [Community Infrastructure Levy³⁰](#) (CIL). At present SCC requests £216 per dwelling as the contribution towards libraries to support the additional demand that development will present.

Money obtained through section 106 agreements is transferred directly to Suffolk County Council for capital spending in accordance with the details of the agreement, for example to extend the services of the library that serves the development.

CIL money is paid to the District or Borough Council. To access the funds, a bidding process must be followed to justify the need for the proposed spend on the library. The authority is made aware of a potential figure that is available, but this is not certain until the council holding the funds agrees to its allocation. Preparation of strong bids and the bidding process, for each library development, is costly in terms of staff time.

Developers can challenge requests for a contribution to libraries. The case for the need to extend or enhance the library to meet the needs of the growing population is presented in support of a request and can be presented at appeal if it proceeds to this. Suffolk County Council also contribute to district, town, and neighbourhood plans. These plans demonstrate the value and importance of the library service and outline local ambitions for improvement.

A challenge of S106 funding is that it often comes in tranches throughout the build of the development, but also has strict deadlines within which it must be spent or returned. CIL decisions are made on an annual, or bi-annual basis depending on area. Projects need to be scheduled to ensure that the funding is used to achieve the

best outcomes. This can be complicated by limitations to the site such as space to extend, suitable re-location or co-location options, lack of funds to rebuild, changes to ongoing costs for shared services when sharing a site.

From financial year 2014/15 to 2022/23, £887,625.03 of section 106 funds have been spent to enhance local library provision. This includes £253,356.28 in 2022/23.

Changes in population size and best practice for service delivery can lead to a need for enlargement, enhancements, and development of library buildings, requiring capital investment. This is largely dependent on applying for S106 and CIL funding. CIL and S106 are not there to match existing community needs, but to support the impact that a growing community will have on the service. In areas where development is ongoing, developers only need to contribute towards the *additional service needed* to meet deficit caused by their development. Where development is limited or not happening, the option of bidding for these funds is not available, and an alternative source of funding needs to be found. Some library locations are in buildings which do not have scope for further increases in floorspace, nor are there suitable alternative buildings to move to. In these cases, investment needs to be used to maximise the efficiency and suitability of internal configuration and furnishings, enabling the spaces can be used in the most flexible and space-saving ways.

Charitable Status

The charitable status of the current library service provider in Suffolk maximises avenues for attracting additional income over the core contract budget. The charitable status makes it possible to apply for particular funding opportunities. With support from the statutory, business and voluntary sector, additional projects can be provided. Other funds require a joint bid to be made by the County Council and the library service, such as The Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Fund. In addition, the County Council can apply for government funding.

Income Generation

The County Council funding for libraries is described above. In addition to the annual contract, we also occasionally grant fund the provider to deliver new projects and activities. The provider is also in receipt of other grants, such as those provided by the Arts Council, which adds value to the library service.

Income generation for libraries also includes money associated with collection of fines and charges, fundraising, and income from commercial activity. This commercial activity can include hire of spaces, such as meeting rooms and venues, and other commercial enterprises. These can be used to support ongoing costs of delivering the service. The more commercially successful these elements of the library service are, the greater its ability to manage budgetary pressures.

Buildings

There are 45 library buildings in Suffolk. This comprises 27 libraries situated in Local Authority owned buildings and sublet to the library service; 14 libraries in buildings let

by SCC and then sublet or licensed to the library service; and 4 libraries whereby the library service has arranged a lease, or licence directly from the property owner.

Suffolk County Council leases library properties to Suffolk's Libraries IPS Ltd but retains responsibility for reactive repairs to the buildings, generally these being repairs of a structural nature, to keep the buildings wind and watertight, and to mechanical and electrical systems and plant. Such repairs are dealt with as and when they arise to ensure that the buildings remain open to deliver the library service. Suffolk County Council also retains responsibility for the completion of planned preventative maintenance, which includes the servicing of plant and equipment such as boilers, lifts, fire alarms, etc.

The cost of planned preventative maintenance and reactive repairs in library properties during the 2022/23 financial year amounted to £229,640.60.

SCC is also responsible for larger capital maintenance works and during 2022/23 spent £494,014.51 on projects in libraries.

Library services are determined by the library building capacity and through strategic decision making by the service provider and the Council. The prioritisation of services offered must consider the community needs, in the context of what is available across the community. Well planned use of space and moveable furnishings enables the most efficient use of the building for its diverse activities.

IT devices for Public Use

The table below gives the total number of IT devices available for public use in libraries, broken down by type of device and location.

The most relevant column here is 'Dell' as this relates to the public computers in each library. Chrome books are used less frequently and are being phased out. iPads and tablets have a limited amount of use. E-readers are rarely used.

Table 2: IT devices for Public Use

Location	Chrome-book	Dell	Chrome-touch	iPads / tablets	E-Readers	Total	Self-service machines
Aldeburgh	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Beccles	0	10	1	0	0	11	3
Brandon	3	5	1	2	0	11	1
Broomhill	0	4	0	0	0	4	1
Bungay	1	6	0	2	0	9	1
Bury St Edmunds	6	20	4	0	0	30	3
Capel St Mary	0	1	0	2	0	3	1
Chantry	2	4	1	0	0	7	1
Clare	1	2	0	2	0	5	1
Debenham	0	2	0	0	0	2	1
Elmswell	1	3	0	0	0	4	1
Eye	2	2	0	0	0	4	1

Location	Chrome-book	Dell	Chrome-touch	iPads / tablets	E-Readers	Total	Self-service machines
Felixstowe	2	8	1	0	0	11	3
Framlingham	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Gainsborough	0	8	1	0	4	13	1
Glemsford	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Great Cornard	1	6	0	0	0	7	1
Hadleigh	2	6	0	0	0	8	1
Halesworth	2	5	1	4	0	12	1
Haverhill	2	6	1	3	2	14	2
Ipswich	5	32	1	0	0	38	3
Ixworth	1	3	0	2	1	7	1
Kedington	0	2	1	0	0	3	1
Kesgrave	0	4	1	0	0	5	2
Kessingland	1	4	0	0	0	5	1
Lakenheath	1	2	0	2	0	5	1
Lavenham	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Leiston	1	3	0	4	0	8	1
Long Melford	1	1	0	4	0	6	1
Lowestoft	0	29	2	0	0	31	3
Mildenhall	4	4	1	6	0	15	2
Needham Market	0	4	0	0	0	4	1
Newmarket	2	11	1	0	0	14	2
Oulton Broad	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Rosehill	2	2	0	0	0	4	1
Saxmundham	2	2	0	1	0	5	1
Southwold	2	2	0	3	0	7	1
Stoke	1	5	0	0	0	6	1
Stowmarket	4	8	1	0	0	13	2
Stradbroke	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Sudbury	1	11	1	0	0	13	2
Thurston	1	3	0	0	5	9	1
Wickham Market	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Woodbridge	4	12	1	0	4	21	3
X Training	9	0	0	0	0	9	
Totals	73	255	21	37	16	402	62

In addition, there are 2 Dell computers in Woodbridge, Beccles, and Felixstowe, paid for by East Suffolk District Council, which are for council customers to use to process council related transactions.

Sudbury, Long Melford and Stowmarket Libraries, each have one Visitor Information Point (VIP) tablet device, provided by Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils, to deliver tourist information.

Hadleigh Library has a tablet device, provided by Babergh District Council, to enable customers to access council services online.

Mobile Library Fleet

There are four mobile library vehicles. All are over 13 years old and require replacement. The vehicles are owned by Suffolk County Council, who are currently responsible for their replacement, maintenance costs and insurance.

Section 2 - Population Needs

County Overview. Source: Suffolk JSNA

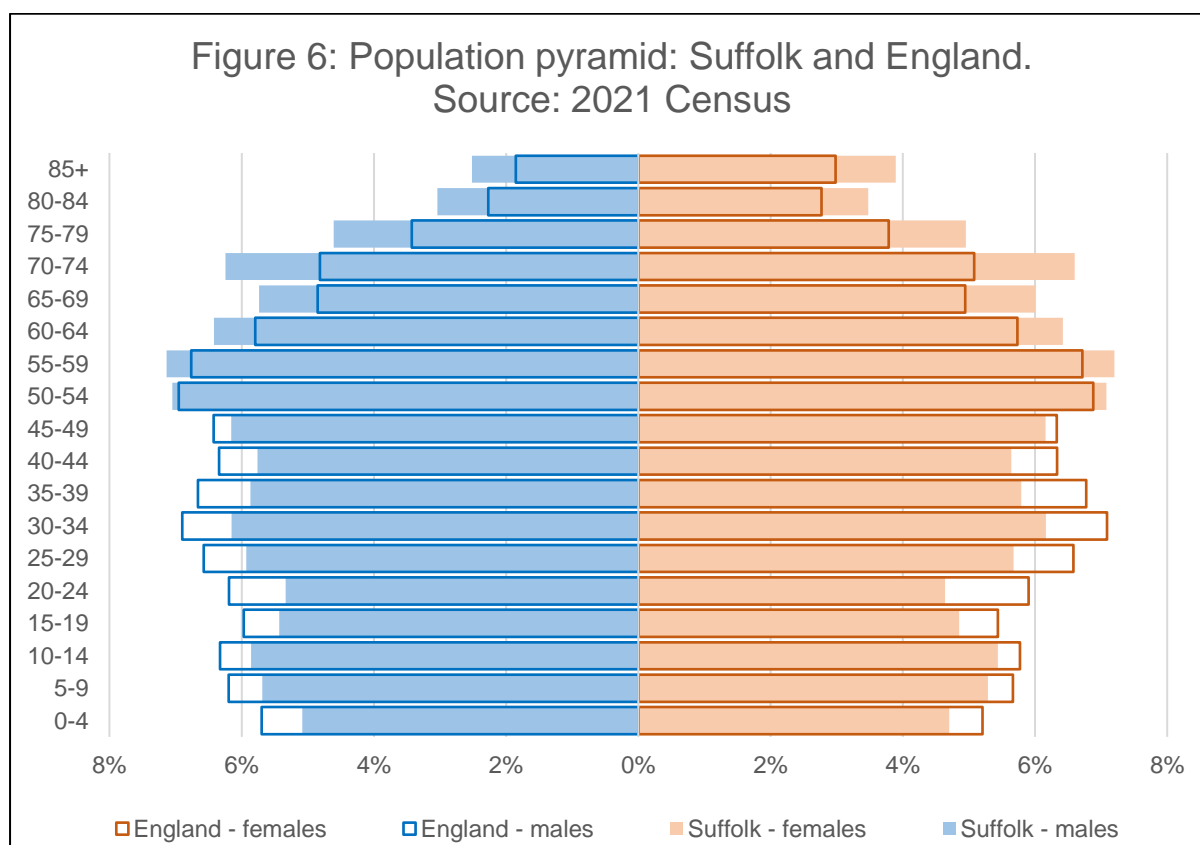
Geography

Suffolk covers approximately 1,466 square miles, mainly comprised of low-lying arable land with the wetlands of the Broads in the north-east, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the east, Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the south and the sandy heathlands of Breckland in the north-west.

Suffolk is a rural county with over 950 county wildlife sites, covering around 11,200 hectares or 3% of the county. The two areas of outstanding natural beauty: Dedham Vale, and Suffolk Coasts and Heaths, cover 10% of the county. There are also 50 miles of coastline running from Lowestoft in the north to Felixstowe in the south.

Current Population

Suffolk has an estimated population of 760,688 (2021 Census). The county's population is forecast to increase by 6.5% in the next 20 years.



Suffolk has a relatively elderly population. Every age group over the age of 50 accounts for a larger proportion of the population in Suffolk than in England, while the opposite is true of every age band below 50. Younger working age people (aged 20 to 39) are particularly underrepresented in the county.

In Suffolk approximately 24% of people are 65 or over compared to 19% nationally.

There is variation within Suffolk with East Suffolk having the largest proportion of the population aged 65 and over (28%). Ipswich has the youngest population. Approximately 20% of people in Suffolk are aged 0-15.

Population Growth

All of the projected population growth is forecast to occur in the over 65s age group. The population of older people will increase by almost a third; currently nearly 1 in 4 residents in Suffolk is over 65 and this is forecast to increase to 3 in 10 residents by 2043. There will be an increase in older people with comorbidities. Having access to local facilities to support an aging population will be key.

Housing and employment predicted growth

An indicator of expected growth in locations is new houses and employment opportunities. This map shows the largest employment and housing sites, as provided by local planning teams. The sites listed represent a total of over 800 hectares of employment land and housing sites for just over 28,000 homes. Those shown are strategically large sites (as identified by local planning teams) for homes that will be delivered over the next plan period (up to 2036).

Figure 7: Housing and employment land allocations in Suffolk. Source: Suffolk's Inclusive Growth Framework (2020)



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Table 3: Planned housing allocations in November 2020

Map #	District / Borough Council	Site address	Number of Homes
1	East Suffolk Council	Land West of St Johns Road, Bungay	400
2	Ipswich	Cranfields (Mill House)	364
3	Ipswich	Wine Rack Regatta Quay, Key St	274
4	Ipswich	Griffen Wharf	244
5	Ipswich	Tooks Bakery site/ King George V playing fields	200
6	West Suffolk Council	Station Hill (BSE)	300
7	West Suffolk Council	West Bury St Edmunds	450
8	West Suffolk Council	Land at Hatchfield Farm	400
9	West Suffolk Council	Land north of Station Road, Lakenheath	375
10	West Suffolk Council	Land east of Red Lodge (South)	374
11	West Suffolk	Land north of Acorn Way, Red Lodge	300
12	West Suffolk Council	Moreton Hall (Lark Grange)	500
13	Ipswich	Helena Road	540
14	East Suffolk Council	South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood	800
15	East Suffolk Council	Woods Meadow, Land south of Hall Lane Oulton	800
16	East Suffolk Council	Land South of The Street, Carlton Colville	900
17	West Suffolk Council	Fornham (Marham Park)	950
18	West Suffolk Council	North East Bury St Edmunds	1,250
19	West Suffolk Council	Land west of Mildenhall	1,300
20	Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils	Chilton Woods	1,150
21	West Suffolk Council	Haverhill (NW)	1,150
22	West Suffolk Council	Rougham Road SE (BSE)	1,250
23	East Suffolk Council	Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood	1,250
24	East Suffolk Council	North of Lowestoft Garden Village	1,300
25	East Suffolk Council	Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood	1,380
26	East Suffolk Council	North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood	2,000
27	East Suffolk Council	Brightwell Lakes	2,000
28	West Suffolk Council	Great Wilsey Park (NE Haverhill)	2,500
29	Ipswich	Ipswich Garden Suburb	3,500

The library catchments that will be most impacted by these developments are Ipswich, Haverhill, Kesgrave, Felixstowe, Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, Sudbury, Hadleigh, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Beccles, Saxmundham and Beccles.

Housing growth and new employment land will alter the scale and characteristics of these library catchment populations (both residential and workplace). The needs of new populations will need to be considered as these developments occur, to ensure local library offers remain appropriate to the requirements of the local population.

Health

Please note: The life expectancy estimates referred to pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic.

Life expectancy at birth gives the total number of years a person can expect to live from birth based on contemporary mortality rates. After decades of steady improvements in life expectancy in the UK, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported in 2018 on the slowdown in increases in life expectancy since 2011. This trend is continued in the most recent data.

Typically, Suffolk residents live longer than the England average and females live longer than males. Life expectancy at birth in 2018-20 was 84.1 for females and 80.7 years for males in Suffolk. Both figures are statistically significantly higher than the figures for England (83.1 for females and 79.4 for males). However, there is variation across Suffolk. Most districts and boroughs in Suffolk (including Suffolk as a whole) have a significantly higher life expectancy at birth for both males and females than England. However, life expectancies at birth for Ipswich males and females are statistically similar to life expectancy for England.

In Suffolk, people living in the most deprived areas on average live shorter lives than those living in the least deprived areas. For men and women, the difference is 7.4 and 5.0 years, respectively. Again, there is variation within LTLAs, with the largest inequality in males in Ipswich (8.8 years), and for females in Ipswich (6.5 years).

Healthy life expectancy for Suffolk females has decreased over the last 10 years and is currently statistically similar to England. In 2018-20, healthy life expectancy at birth for females was 64.4 years, compared to 68.1 years in 2009-11. Suffolk males can expect a healthy life expectancy of 67.0 years in 2018-20, statistically higher compared to England (63.1 years).

Emergency admissions for self-harm in Suffolk are statistically higher than England. This is particularly driven by admission rates in East Suffolk and Ipswich.

The smoking prevalence rate in Ipswich is statistically significantly worse compared to England. Alcohol related and specific hospital admissions in Ipswich are also statistically significantly worse compared to England.

Nearly two thirds of Suffolk adults (63.8%) are estimated to be overweight or obese.

Under 18 conception rates ('teenage pregnancy' rates) are statistically significantly higher in Ipswich compared to England.

Housing needs

The increase in Suffolk's population and in average life expectancy means an estimated 25,000 new homes are needed in the next 20 years to meet demand. The average house price in Suffolk in December 2022 was £291k, an increase of 22% in 5 years, and housing affordability is now a challenge in all areas of the county.

Economy

Suffolk has a diverse economy with high levels of employment, although wages and productivity are consistently lower than the England average. In 2022 there were over 31,000 businesses in the county and around 97% were small or micro (employing fewer than 50 people). Some of the largest Suffolk employers include the public sector, the Port of Felixstowe, and British Telecom.

Generally, employment levels in Suffolk are high. This is a positive picture for Suffolk because high levels of overall employment are crucial for the reduction of inequalities. However, with an older age profile than most areas of the country, Suffolk has a lower proportion of people of working age.

Latest data indicates that whilst the percentage in employment in Suffolk is better compared to England overall (80.0% compared to 75.8%) there is variation within Suffolk. The lowest employment rate is currently in Babergh (73.9%).

When looking at unemployment, Suffolk typically has lower levels of unemployment compared to the East of England and England. In December 2022, 1.3% of Suffolk residents aged 16 and over were unemployed, compared to 3.6% for England.

Deprivation

There are areas of deprivation in the county, and these are bigger in urban areas, along with some localised areas of rural deprivation.

The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 were published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in September 2019. The IMD provides a way of comparing relative deprivation across England using seven domains: income, employment, health and disability, education, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the living environment. Relative deprivation shows how deprived an area is relative to other areas in England, so an area may become more or less deprived even if the absolute level of deprivation remains the same. This is different to absolute deprivation, which defines a minimum level of need enabling a person able to subsist and to participate actively in society.

Areas of greater relative deprivation can be found in more built-up areas such as Beccles, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft, and Stowmarket. Ipswich is the most deprived LTLA in Suffolk. 28 of its 85 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the 20% most deprived areas nationally (33% - or 1/3rd of the total LSOAs in Ipswich). The large area that East Suffolk covers masks the concentration of deprived LSOAs in the Lowestoft area. For example, in total only 20 of the 146 LSOAs in East Suffolk (14%) are among the 20% most deprived nationally. Of these 20, 18 (90%) are in the Lowestoft (17) and Beccles (1) area in the north of East Suffolk.

Although the most deprived areas in Suffolk are concentrated in towns and other urban areas, highly localised rural deprivation occurs when small areas of deprivation are masked in the data by areas of relative affluence. Very small areas of deprivation are difficult to identify and may mean people do not receive the same levels of resource and intervention that a larger and more defined area would.

Rurality

Rurality and rural isolation have been identified as a significant issue in which libraries have a key role to play. In 2021, 40% of Suffolk's population lives in areas defined as rural by the 2011 ONS rural/urban classification.

Infrastructure

Suffolk has a mix of vibrant market towns and includes Britain's biggest and busiest seaport in Felixstowe. It is served by two international airports located outside the county and has many road and rail network links. There is also a significant military air force presence in terms of two large RAF and US Air Force bases in West Suffolk (Lakenheath and Mildenhall).

Ethnicity

The latest data regarding ethnicity is the 2021 census data.

- Whilst diversity has increased since the 2011 census, Suffolk's population remains less diverse than that of England and Wales overall.
- The percentage of the Suffolk population that are not White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British has increased from 9.2% in 2011 to 12.7% in 2021 but remains less than half of the England and Wales figure of 25.6%.
- The usual resident population of every ethnic group in Suffolk has increased from 2011 to 2021.
- The largest population increase over the past decade was in the Other White group. There were 38,184 Other White people residents in Suffolk in 2021; 10,795 more than in 2011. This group accounts for a third of the total population increase in Suffolk over the past decade. Other White residents now make up 5% of Suffolk's population, an increase of 1.3 percentage points since 2011.
- At LTLA level, Ipswich is the most diverse area of Suffolk. Around a quarter of Ipswich's population is not White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, very similar to the national proportion, albeit with a different composition. A larger proportion of Ipswich's population is other White and mixed/multiple ethnic groups than the England and Wales average.

Religion

The latest data regarding religion is from the 2021 census.

- Just under 50% of Suffolk's population has a religion according to the 2021 Census, down from 63% in 2011.
- 6.2% of residents did not answer the religion question in 2021.
- The number of people with no religion has grown by 55% since 2011 and now accounts for 44% of Suffolk's population, up from 29.7% in 2011.

Languages spoken

2021 Census data indicates that English is not the first language for any person in around 9,000 households in Suffolk, an increase of 2,680 (43%) since 2011. It is important to note that this does not mean that people cannot speak English at all, only that it is not their first language.

- Other than English, European languages from EU countries other than French, Portuguese, and Spanish account for the largest number of other specific main languages of Suffolk residents.
- More than 18,000 people in the county gave another EU language as their main language. Of these, 5,761 selected Polish, 5,521 Romanian, 2,479 Lithuanian, 910 Hungarian and 874 Bulgarian.
- There are almost 4,000 people in Suffolk for whom a South Asian language is the main language, an increase of 26.6% since 2011. The most commonly spoken South Asian languages in the county are Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) (841 people), Malayalam (802 people) and Tamil (554 people).
- The number of people in Suffolk whose main language is East Asian has remained fairly stable from 2011 to 2021. Of the 2,523 people with a primary language from East Asia, the most commonly spoken individual language is Tagalog or Filipino, with 817 speakers in county in 2021.
- There has been an increase in speakers of most of these languages in Suffolk.

The number of Ukrainians now residing in Suffolk would not be represented in the 2021 census. In all 1,373 guests arrived in Suffolk from the beginning of the illegal invasion in Ukraine 2022 up to September 2023. 220 have returned to Ukraine and 26 have been rematched out of county. 1,068 are still known to be living in Suffolk, of whom 544 have moved into independent living and 524 are still hosted. (Suffolk County Council, September 2023)

Carers

9% of the population aged 5 and over (approximately 65,100 people) have some unpaid care responsibilities in Suffolk. This is very similar to the national average. Around half of the people with care responsibilities provide 19 hours or less of unpaid care per week. 19,500 people (2.7% of the 5+ population) in the county provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week.

Digital Inclusion Needs

Residents with lower income levels

- 40% of benefit claimants have very low digital engagement* and 31% of unemployed have low or very low digital engagement.
- Residents earning less than £17.5k are significantly less likely to have foundation level digital skills*.
- Nearly half (44%) of the very low engagement group have a household of less than £20k p/a.

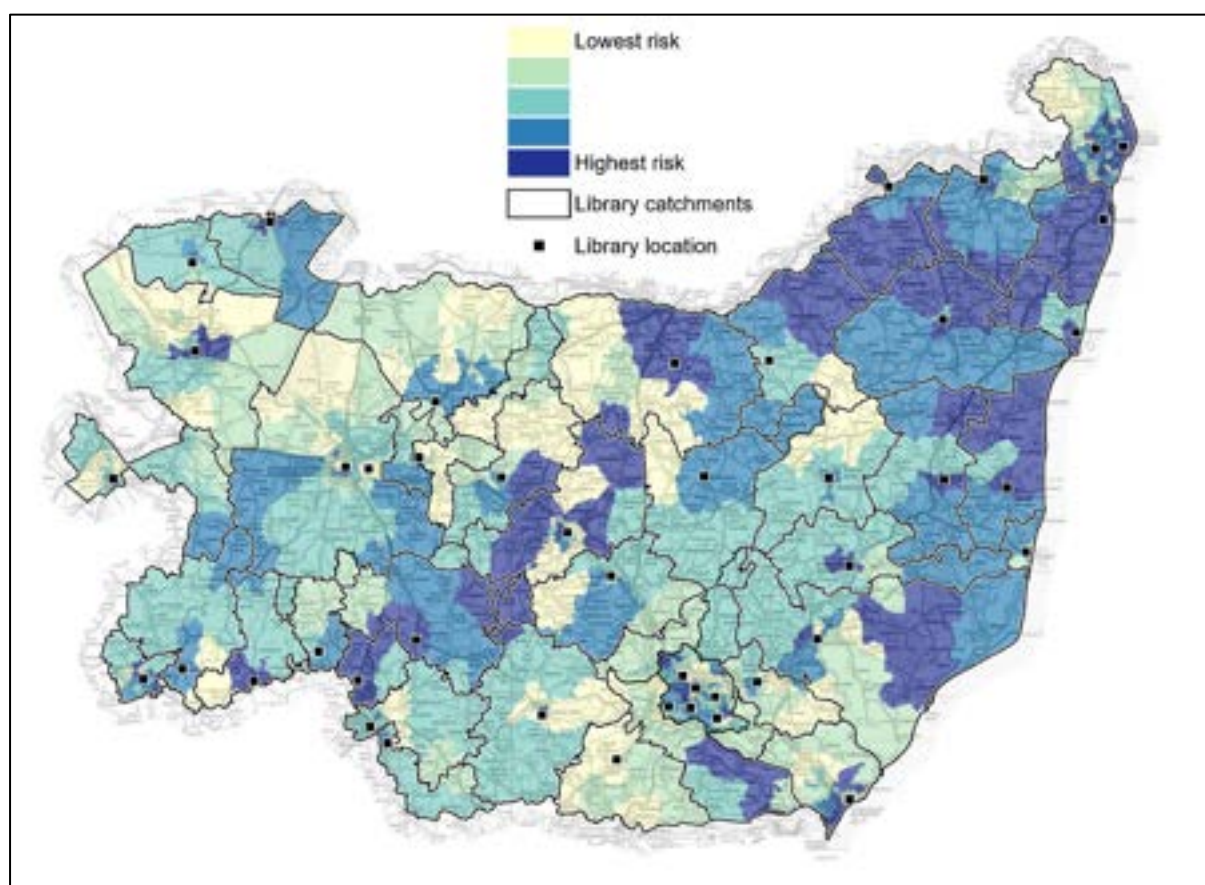
Residents living with disability/sensory impairment

- 15% of those with classed as having a disability under the Equalities Act (2010)¹⁶ have never used the internet compared to 3.4% of those who are not 'Equality Act Disabled'.
- 25% of people who have some kind of sensory impairment do not use the internet.

Residents who are unable to fully access the labour market

- 43% of the digitally disengaged* group are likely to have no formal qualifications (9% of the general population have no formal quals)
- 95% of the digitally disengaged group fall into the lower socioeconomic groups (C2,D and E) - (41% of the general population fall within these social grades)
- Higher unemployment

Figure 8: Risk of digital exclusion. Incorporating indicators of older age, lower income, disability, lower adult skills levels and higher unemployment. Sources: ONS, 2021 Census, Experian Mosaic

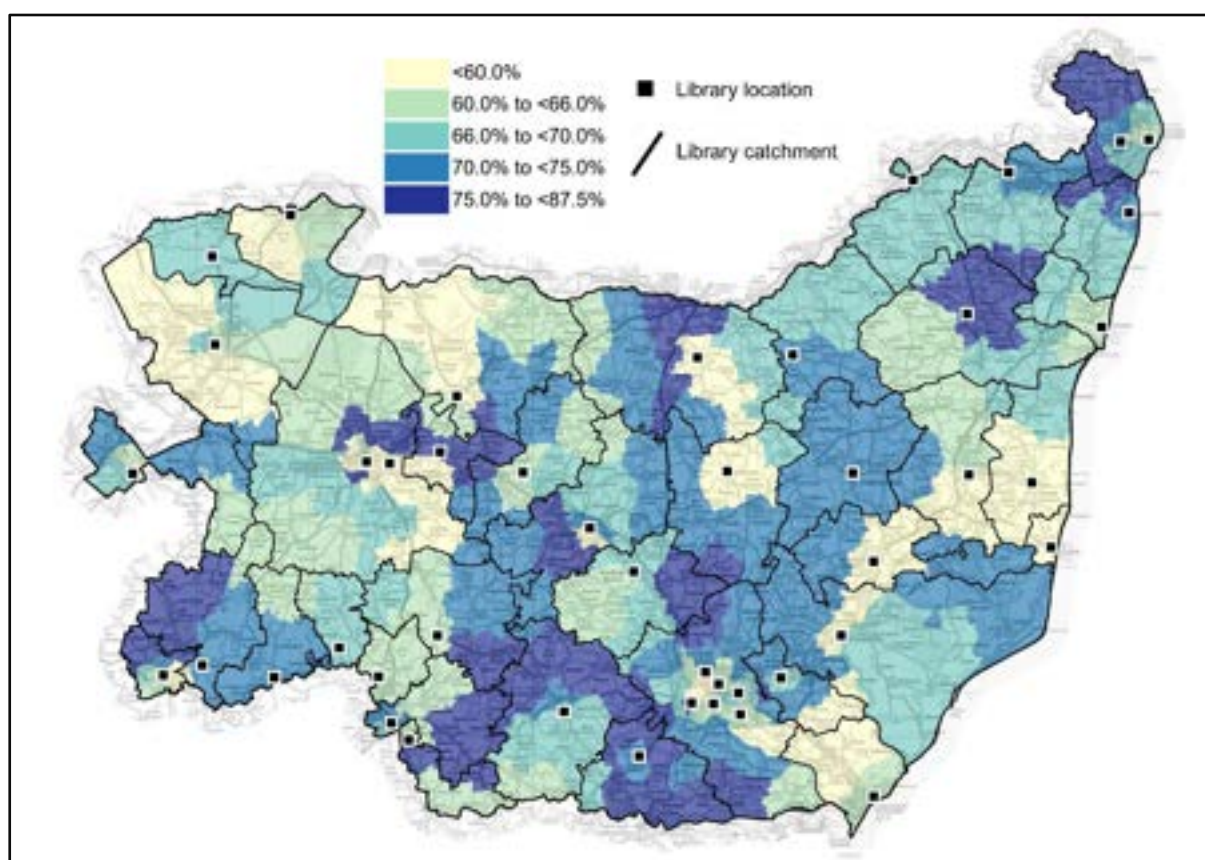


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- Broadband coverage across the county is now almost complete³², so the inability to access a usable internet connection is no longer a significant barrier to digital inclusion.
- The extent of digital exclusion is difficult to identify and quantify, but the map above shows a combination of characteristics which are indicative of higher risk.
- In general, the risk of digital exclusion is higher in parts of rural Suffolk and in more deprived urban areas, where older populations with greater health concerns, and higher deprivation are concentrated.

Educational Attainment

Figure 9: Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023) by Ward. Source: Suffolk County Council

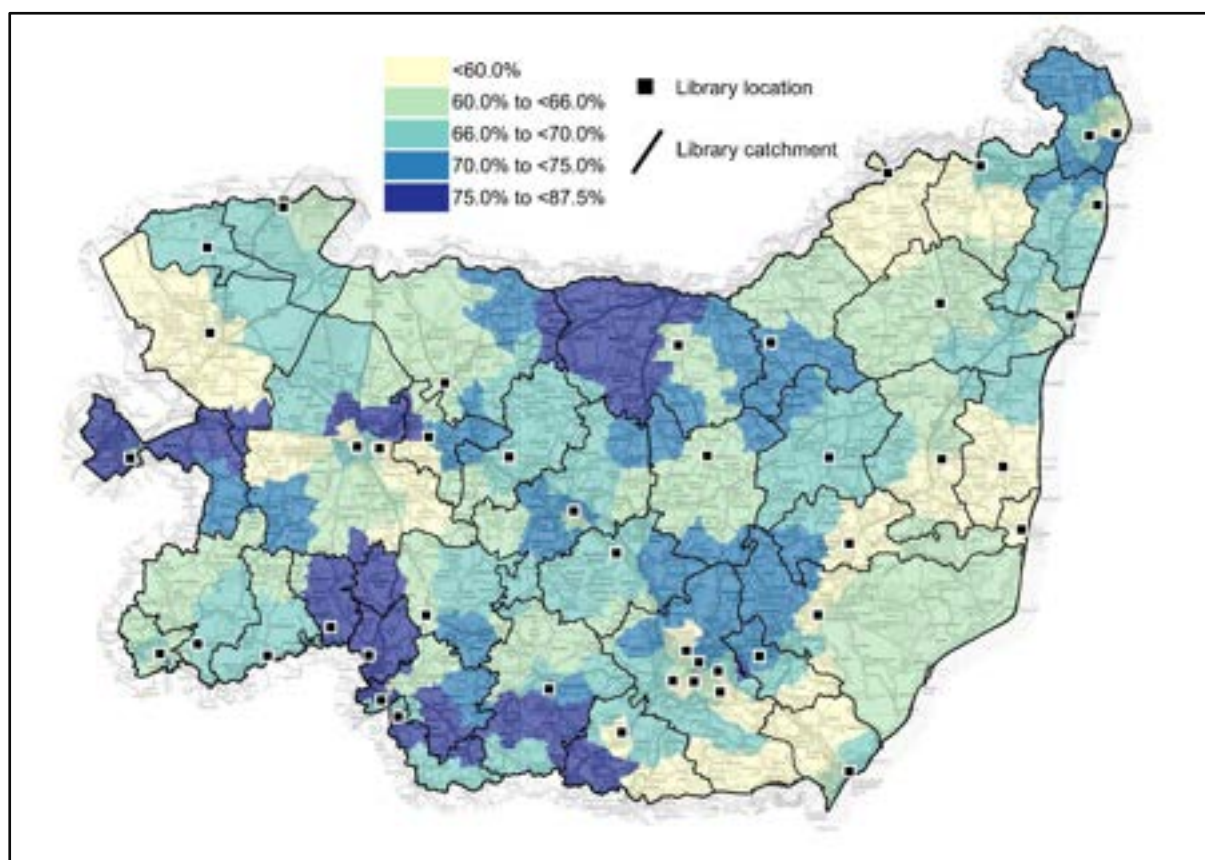


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- The percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, reception year, age 5) in 2023 ranges from 50% in Aldeburgh library catchment to 78% in Capel St Mary library catchment.
- EYFS attainment by pupils in Saxmundham, Thurston, Glemsford, Needham Market, Beccles, Eye, Halesworth, Stradbroke, Kesgrave and Clare library catchments is relatively high (above 70% achieving a GLD in each case).
- The lowest attainment levels are found in Southwold, Haverhill, Brandon and Leiston library catchments. It should be remembered that this is just one year of data and, in some library catchments, the cohort of pupils is relatively small.

Across Suffolk, two thirds of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development at EYFS.

Figure 10: Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023) by Ward. Source: Suffolk County Council



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- The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (KS2, year 6, age 11) in 2023 ranges from 32% in Bungay library catchment to 76% in Long Melford catchment.
- KS2 attainment by pupils in Long Melford, Kedington, Lavenham, Newmarket, Eye, Kesgrave, Thurston and Hadleigh library catchments is relatively high (above 65% achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in each case).
- The lowest attainment levels are found in Bungay, Mildenhall and Leiston library catchments. It should be remembered that this is just one year of data and, in some library catchments, the cohort of pupils is relatively small.
- Across Suffolk, 55.7% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in KS2

Key Stage 4 data for this period is not yet available but is expected to be added.

Summary

Suffolk is a county of great contrasts. Much of Suffolk is relatively affluent, but around 80,000 people live in neighbourhoods ranked among the 20% most deprived in England. While the county remains less ethnically diverse than the England

average, ethnic diversity is increasing and people from non-White British ethnic backgrounds make up a quarter of the population in Ipswich.

The ageing population and associated increases in health risks, and rural deprivation will affect Suffolk more acutely than many parts of the country.

The local economy is characterised by low unemployment but below average pay, particularly for those who work in the county. House prices are relatively high away from more deprived areas.

The coastal communities and north-west Suffolk (home to a large population of RAF and USAF servicemen) also possess their own set of unique characteristics and challenges.

Library provision must take into account the different demographics, affluence and accessibility needs of the local population. The following section considers the needs of the local population for each library.

Needs by Library catchment area

Defining needs at catchment level makes it possible for the County Council, as commissioner of the Library Service, to examine how each library tailors its offer to support those needs, as well as supporting needs-based development of provision for the future.

The library catchments are built using Census Output Areas (OAs). These are the smallest Census geography with each area covering an average population of ~300 people. It is important that the 'building blocks' for the catchments are a statistical geography for which data are available so we have access to good information about the characteristics of the local population and library user base. The OAs are assigned to a library based on a combination of proximity to the nearest library from the population-weighted centroid of the OA, and which library the majority of users in each OA used according to 2021/22 data. Where an OA was closest to a smaller library but the majority of users in that area travelled to a larger library slightly further away, the OA was assigned to the latter library. Adjustments were made to ensure catchments are complete and tessellate.

Maps of catchments and libraries

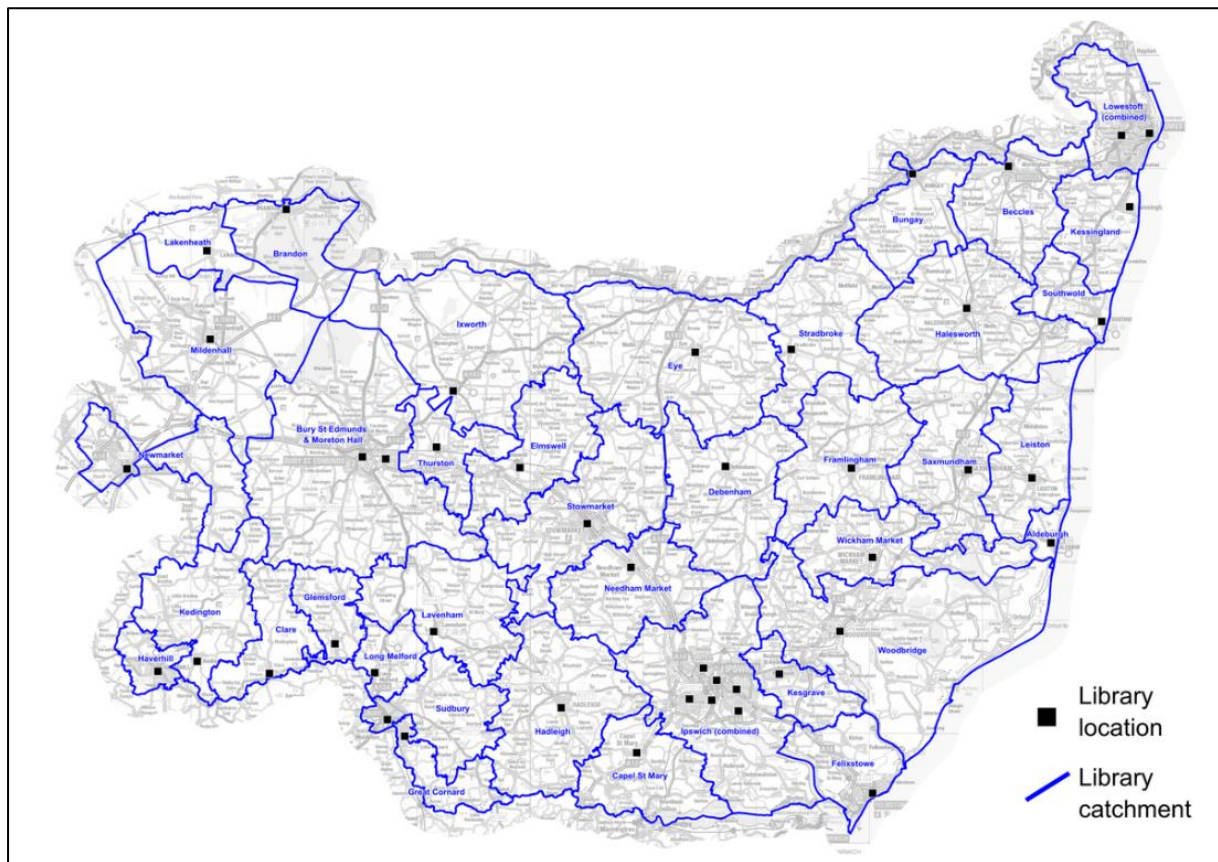
Figure 11: Suffolk static library locations and catchments 2023 (libraries labelled). Sources: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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For data purposes the Ipswich libraries are combined as one catchment, Lowestoft, and Oulton Broad form one catchment, and likewise Bury St Edmunds with Moreton Hall. This is due to the concentration of library buildings within a continuous urban area and the difficulties this presents for generating individual catchments.

Figure 12: Suffolk static library locations and catchments 2023 (catchments labelled). Sources: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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Protected characteristics summary

Table 4 below shows the rank of each library catchment according to the percentage of the catchment population possessing each of the protected characteristics. For example, the proportion of the population that is of older age is highest in the Aldeburgh library catchment (ranked 1) and lowest in Lakenheath library catchment (ranked 38).

	Age (older)	Age (children & young people)	Disability	Ethnicity	Female	Male	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion/belief	Pregnancy/maternity	Marriage/civil partnership
Aldeburgh	1	38	9	15	1	38	14	9	1	38	13
Beccles	14	24	8	30	8	31	25	16	25	18	23
Brandon	27	16	6	5	34	5	4	3	24	6	34
Bungay	15	23	5	13	22	17	13	6	21	26	32
Bury St Edmunds	28	11	23	8	20	19	9	14	20	9	27
Capel St Mary	11	21	31	29	14	25	38	38	10	32	2
Clare	7	30	22	37	3	36	32	15	12	36	12
Debenham	22	13	33	35	28	11	28	23	3	35	1
Elmswell	19	26	29	27	27	12	19	37	18	13	5
Eye	10	27	19	28	10	29	30	33	15	31	7
Felixstowe	16	28	11	10	11	28	18	10	31	17	29
Framlingham	20	7	26	17	4	35	21	19	16	29	18
Glemsford	18	22	28	38	30	9	29	20	29	16	11
Great Cornard	30	6	17	21	6	33	10	31	36	11	25
Hadleigh	21	10	25	18	7	32	37	24	9	20	9
Halesworth	3	33	7	33	19	20	17	18	27	30	17
Haverhill	36	2	32	6	25	14	26	7	37	5	35
Ipswich (combined)	35	4	18	3	26	13	2	1	30	4	37
Ixworth	23	19	27	20	32	7	20	29	11	14	14
Kedington	31	35	12	7	38	1	33	12	7	25	31
Kesgrave	32	5	34	9	24	15	34	26	22	15	8
Kessingland	9	31	1	32	18	21	15	28	23	21	20
Lakenheath	38	1	38	1	37	2	1	25	14	1	19
Lavenham	4	36	24	31	17	22	24	11	4	34	6
Leiston	6	32	4	19	16	23	5	21	28	19	30
Long Melford	5	34	13	34	15	24	35	36	8	23	15
Lowestoft (combined)	26	9	3	23	13	26	8	8	38	10	36

	Age (older)	Age (children & young people)	Disability	Ethnicity	Female	Male	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	Religion/belief	Pregnancy/maternity	Marriage/civil partnership
Mildenhall	37	3	37	2	36	3	7	5	32	2	26
Needham Market	29	18	30	11	35	4	22	27	34	7	24
Newmarket	34	14	36	4	29	10	3	2	6	3	38
Saxmundham	12	15	10	24	5	34	31	32	26	27	21
Southwold	2	37	2	26	2	37	23	35	2	37	22
Stowmarket	33	8	21	16	21	18	12	17	35	8	28
Stradbroke	8	29	20	36	31	8	27	30	5	33	4
Sudbury	25	20	14	14	9	30	11	4	33	12	33
Thurston	24	12	35	22	23	16	36	34	13	22	3
Wickham Market	13	25	15	25	12	27	6	22	19	24	10
Woodbridge	17	17	16	12	33	6	16	13	17	28	16

Source: 2021 Census. Individual indicators listed below:

- Older people: percentage of the catchment population aged 65 and over
- Children and young people: percentage of the catchment population aged 0-19
- Disability: percentage of the catchment population who are disabled under the Equality Act (2010)¹⁶
- Ethnicity: ethnically diverse population as a percentage of all people in the library catchment (ethnically diverse = not white British)
- Female/male: percentage of the library catchment population that are female/male
- Sexual orientation: percentage of the catchment population aged 16 and over who answered the 2021 Census and identified as gay or lesbian, bisexual, or all other sexual orientations. These data are not available at a sufficiently low geographical level to provide completely accurate catchment level figures, so a best-fit approach has been applied.
- Gender reassignment: percentage of the population aged 16 and over who answered the 2021 Census and identified as: having a gender identity different from the sex registered at birth (but no specific identity given), trans woman, trans man, having any other gender identity not the same as the sex registered at birth. These data are not available at a sufficiently low geographical level to provide completely accurate catchment level figures, so a best-fit approach has been applied.
- Religion/belief: percentage of the catchment population who have a religion.
- Pregnancy/maternity: percentage of the female catchment population of the most common child-bearing age according to the ONS 2020 data here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriage/s/livebirths/bulletins/birthcharacteristicsinenglandandwales/2020/relateddata>

- Marriage/civil partnership: percentage of the catchment population aged 16 and over who are currently married or in a civil partnership and are not separated.

Table 5: Top five library catchments for each protected characteristic

(Libraries that occur more than once have each been assigned a colour)

	1	2	3	4	5
Age (older)	Aldeburgh	Southwold	Halesworth	Lavenham	Long Melford
Age (children & young people)	Lakenheath	Haverhill	Mildenhall	Ipswich (combined)	Kesgrave
Disability	Kessingland	Southwold	Lowestoft (combined)	Leiston	Bungay
Ethnicity	Lakenheath	Mildenhall	Ipswich (combined)	Newmarket	Brandon
Female	Aldeburgh	Southwold	Clare	Framlingham	Saxmundham
Male	Kedington	Lakenheath	Mildenhall	Needham Market	Brandon
Sexual orientation	Lakenheath	Ipswich (combined)	Newmarket	Brandon	Leiston
Gender reassignment	Ipswich (combined)	Newmarket	Brandon	Sudbury	Mildenhall
Religion/belief	Aldeburgh	Southwold	Debenham	Lavenham	Stradbroke
Pregnancy/maternity	Lakenheath	Mildenhall	Newmarket	Ipswich (combined)	Haverhill
Marriage/civil partnership	Debenham	Capel St Mary	Thurston	Stradbroke	Elmswell

Table 6: Count of top fives for each library

Library catchment	Count of Top 5s	Library catchment	Count of Top 5s
Ipswich (combined)	5	Clare	1
Lakenheath	5	Elmswell	1
Mildenhall	5	Framlingham	1
Brandon	4	Halesworth	1
Southwold	4	Kedington	1
Newmarket	4	Kesgrave	1
Aldeburgh	3	Kessingland	1
Debenham	2	Long Melford	1
Lavenham	2	Lowestoft (combined)	1
Leiston	2	Needham Market	1
Stradbroke	2	Saxmundham	1
Haverhill	2	Sudbury	1
Bungay	1	Thurston	1
Capel St Mary	1		

Deprivation summary

Table 7 below ranks each library catchment by the average deprivation score in the catchment for each of the domains of deprivation according to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. For example, the overall deprivation score is highest in Lowestoft library catchment (ranked 1) and lowest in Kesgrave library catchment (ranked 38).

Library catchment	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health Deprivation and Disability	Crime	Barriers to Housing and Services	Living Environment
Aldeburgh	31	24	31	20	22	35	30	9
Beccles	9	4	4	15	8	15	34	22
Brandon	4	6	11	1	4	8	19	36
Bungay	5	7	6	12	7	13	20	8
Bury St Edmunds	23	22	18	25	16	16	12	35
Capel St Mary	37	36	32	38	32	27	23	34
Clare	28	23	21	29	27	18	10	21
Debenham	26	31	33	35	37	30	5	2
Elmswell	35	32	29	28	30	29	28	28
Eye	18	27	20	30	35	19	4	6
Felixstowe	10	11	5	8	5	14	37	23
Framlingham	30	33	35	37	36	37	15	4
Glemsford	27	16	24	18	31	22	18	16
Great Cornard	13	14	14	10	17	6	17	30
Hadleigh	32	26	26	27	33	21	21	25
Halesworth	6	12	10	17	15	31	11	7
Haverhill	7	10	7	3	10	2	13	38
Ipswich (combined)	3	3	3	6	2	1	33	14
Ixworth	24	25	30	22	19	26	8	17
Kedington	29	37	34	23	21	12	1	20
Kesgrave	38	38	36	36	26	36	31	37
Kessingland	2	2	2	5	3	7	29	12
Lakenheath	20	34	37	4	12	32	3	18
Lavenham	17	18	16	31	28	24	2	11
Leiston	11	5	12	7	11	20	35	10
Long Melford	25	17	17	21	18	10	16	32
Lowestoft (combined)	1	1	1	2	1	3	38	19
Mildenhall	14	21	25	9	13	11	9	24
Needham Market	34	29	28	26	29	34	27	29
Newmarket	15	19	19	13	9	5	14	27
Saxmundham	8	9	13	19	20	17	24	1
Southwold	16	13	9	16	6	23	36	15
Stowmarket	21	15	15	14	25	9	26	31
Stradbroke	22	28	27	32	38	38	6	3

Library catchment	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Income	Employment	Education, Skills and Training	Health Deprivation and Disability	Crime	Barriers to Housing and Services	Living Environment
Sudbury	12	8	8	11	14	4	22	26
Thurston	36	35	38	34	34	33	7	33
Wickham Market	19	20	22	24	24	25	25	5
Woodbridge	33	30	23	33	23	28	32	13

Source: Indices of Deprivation 2019, DLUHC

Lowestoft library catchment ranks as the most deprived in three of the seven domains of deprivation (income, employment and health deprivation and disability), as well as the overall composite index.

The Ipswich libraries combined catchment ranks in the top three in four of the domains of deprivation.

Table 8: Top five library catchments for each domain of deprivation

(Libraries that occur more than once have each been assigned a colour)

	1	2	3	4	5
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Lowestoft (combined)	Kessingland	Ipswich (combined)	Brandon	Bungay
Income	Lowestoft (combined)	Kessingland	Ipswich (combined)	Beccles	Leiston
Employment	Lowestoft (combined)	Kessingland	Ipswich (combined)	Beccles	Felixstowe
Education, Skills and Training	Brandon	Lowestoft (combined)	Haverhill	Lakenheath	Kessingland
Health Deprivation and Disability	Lowestoft (combined)	Ipswich (combined)	Kessingland	Brandon	Felixstowe
Crime	Ipswich (combined)	Haverhill	Lowestoft (combined)	Sudbury	Newmarket
Barriers to Housing and Services	Kedington	Lavenham	Lakenheath	Eye	Debenham
Living Environment	Saxmundham	Debenham	Stradbroke	Framlingham	Wickham Market

Table 9: Count of top fives for each library

Library catchment	Count of Top 5s
Lowestoft (combined)	7
Ipswich (combined)	6
Kessingland	6
Brandon	3
Beccles	2
Debenham	2
Felixstowe	2
Haverhill	2

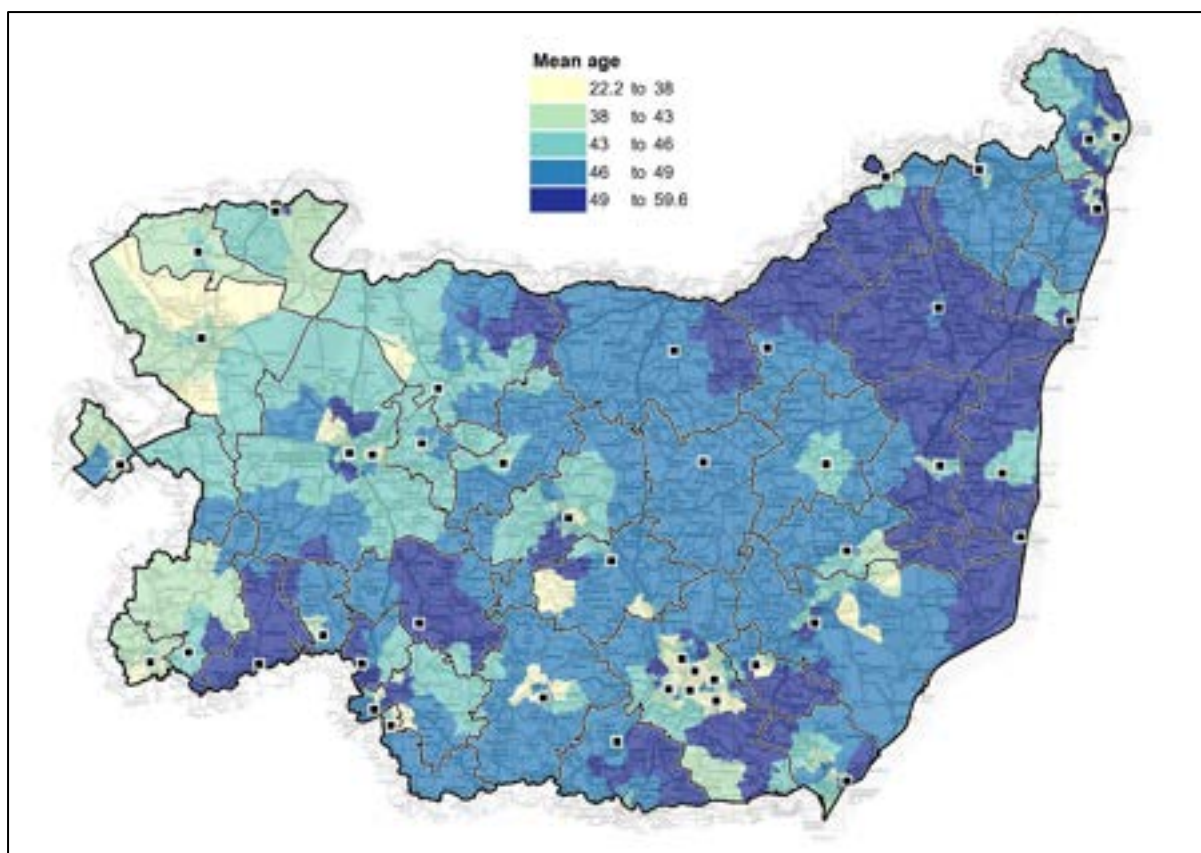
Library catchment	Count of Top 5s
Lakenheath	2
Bungay	1
Eye	1
Framlingham	1
Halesworth	1
Kedington	1
Lavenham	1
Leiston	1
Newmarket	1
Saxmundham	1
Southwold	1
Stradbroke	1
Sudbury	1
Wickham Market	1

Age

Figure 13: Mean age of population, and Suffolk library catchments

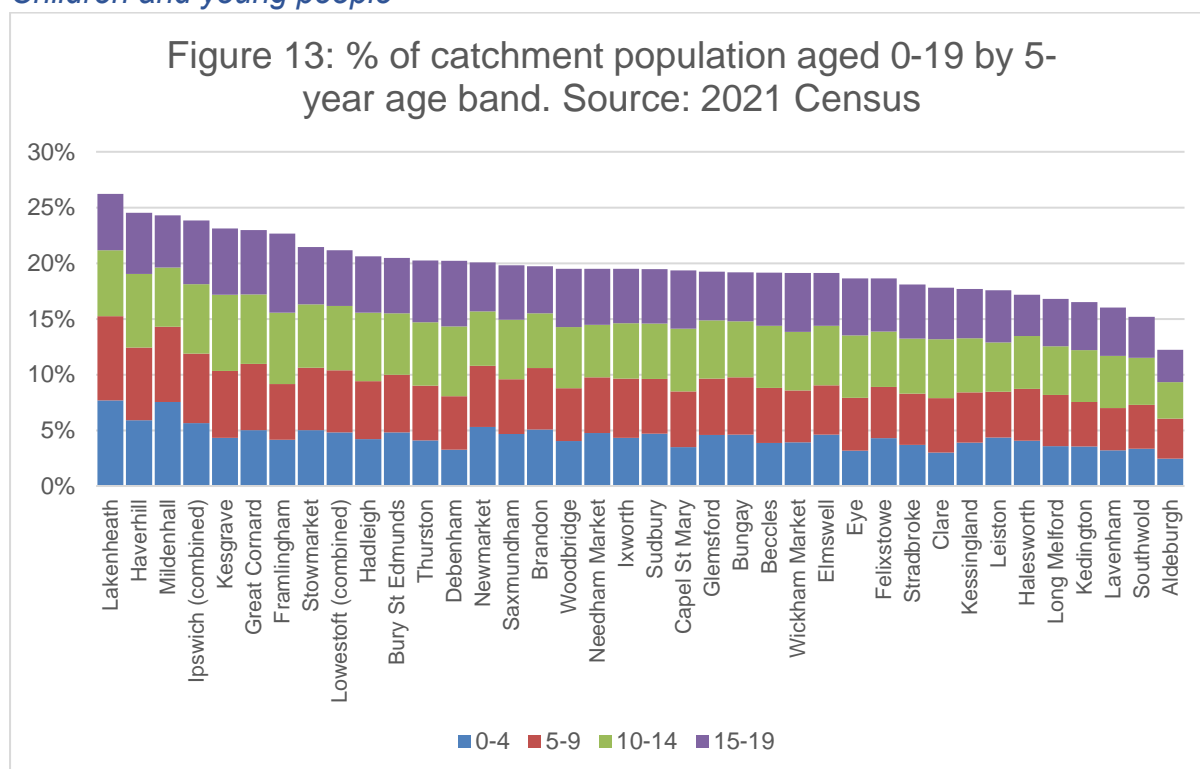
Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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Children and young people

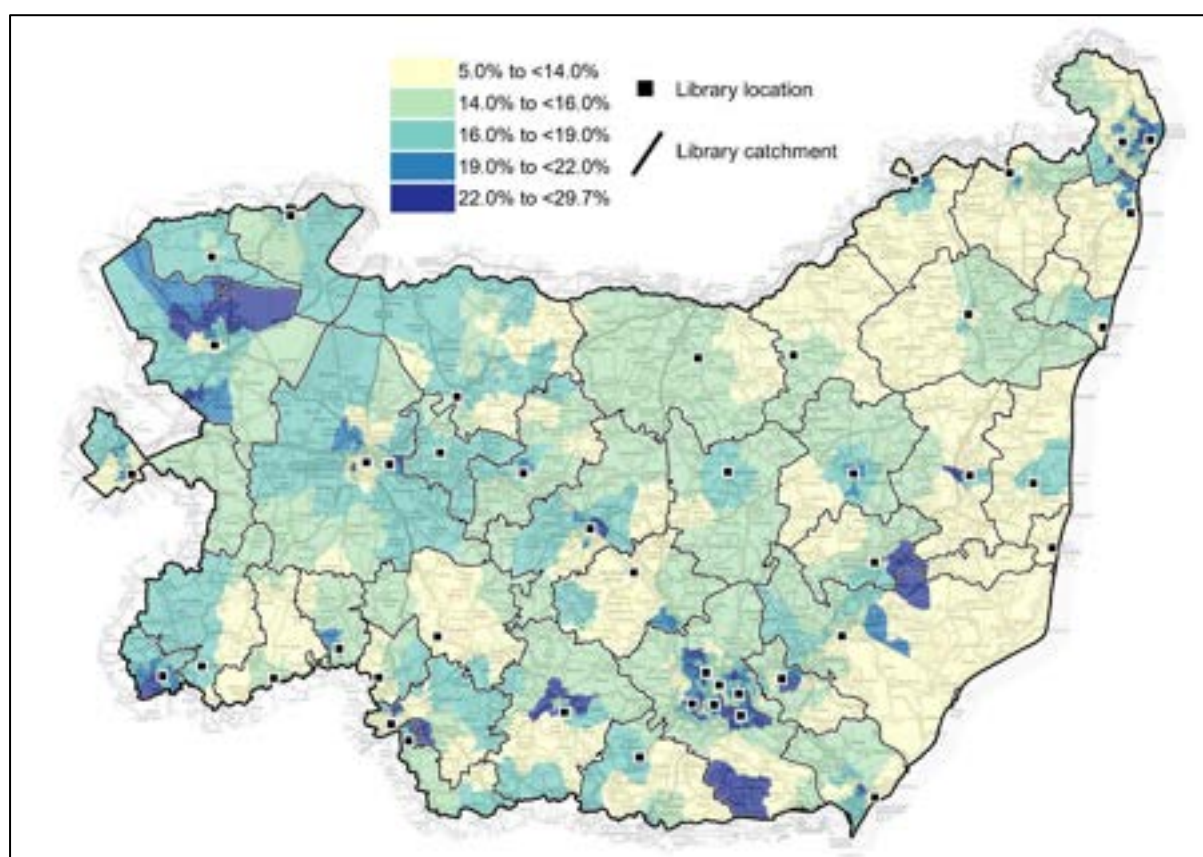


- More than one in four residents in the Lakenheath library catchment was aged under 20 at the time of the 2021 Census. At the other end of the scale, around one in eight people in Aldeburgh library catchment was aged 0 to 19 according to the same source.
- Lakenheath and Mildenhall catchments have the largest proportion of children under 5 and aged 5 to 9, followed by Haverhill.
- Slightly older children aged 10-14 make up the largest proportion of the population in Kesgrave library catchment (6.8%). This age band also makes up more than 6% of the population in Haverhill, Framlingham, Debenham, Great Cornard, Ipswich, and Hadleigh catchments.
- The 15-19 age group makes up just over 7% of the population of Framlingham library catchment, followed by 5.9% in Kesgrave and Debenham catchments.

Figure 14: % population aged 0-15 and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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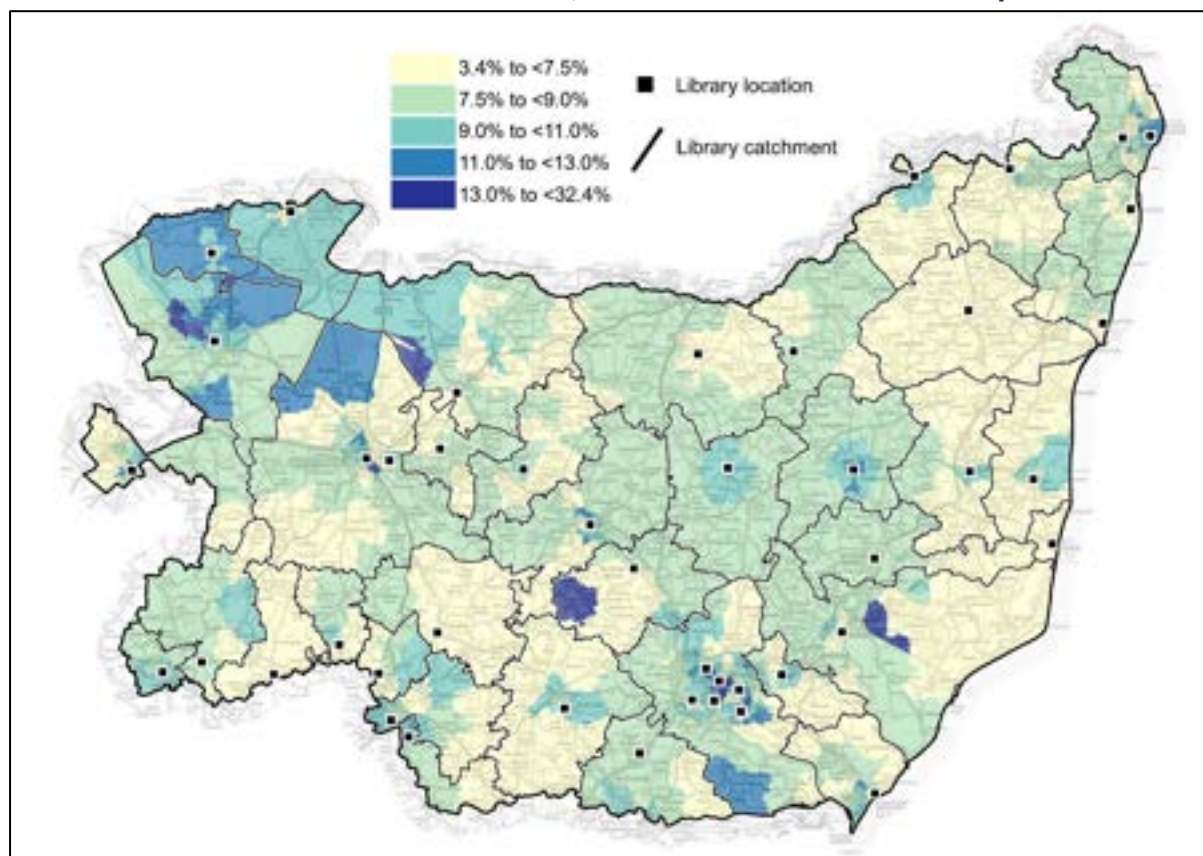
- The percentage of the population that are aged under 16 varies from 10.2% in Aldeburgh library catchment to 22% in Lakenheath library catchment.
- Urban libraries tend to have a higher proportion of children in their catchments. These data include children at boarding schools. such as Royal Hospital School.

Table 10: % of catchment population aged 0-15

Library	% of catchment population aged 0-15
Lakenheath	22.0%
Mildenhall	20.5%
Haverhill	20.3%
Ipswich (combined)	19.3%
Kesgrave	18.6%
Great Cornard	18.4%
Stowmarket	17.5%
Lowestoft (combined)	17.2%
Framlingham	17.1%
Hadleigh	16.9%

Lakenheath, Mildenhall and Haverhill library catchments have the greatest proportion of children under the age of 16.

Figure 15: % population aged 16-24 and Suffolk library catchments
Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.
Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- The percentage of the population that are aged from 16 to 24 varies from 4.7% in Aldeburgh library catchment to 17.4% in Lakenheath library catchment.
- This age group accounts for less than 1 in 10 people in most library catchments. Only the Ipswich combined catchment, Lakenheath and Mildenhall have a higher percentage of local residents aged 16 to 24. High concentrations of populations in this age group are found at armed forces bases including Sutton Common, Wattisham, Honington, Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

Table 11: % of catchment population aged 16-24

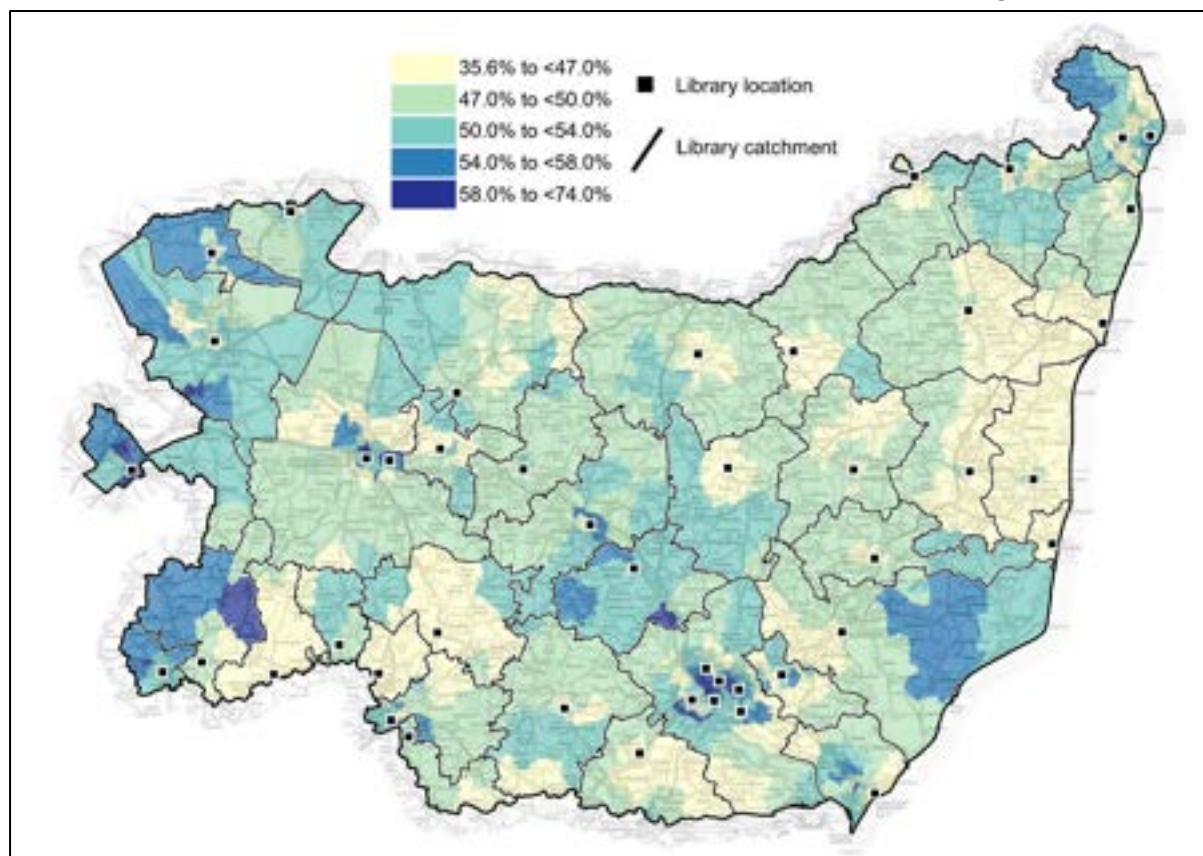
Library	% of catchment population aged 16-24
Lakenheath	17.4%
Mildenhall	11.7%
Ipswich (combined)	10.0%
Framlingham	9.8%
Haverhill	9.6%
Great Cornard	9.4%
Ixworth	9.3%
Needham Market	9.2%
Kesgrave	9.1%

Working age

Figure 16: % population aged 25-64 and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- The working age population between 25 and 64 accounts for around 50% of the population in most library catchments. There is some variation; from 56.2% in Newmarket to 40.6% in Aldeburgh.

Table 12: % of catchment population aged 25-64

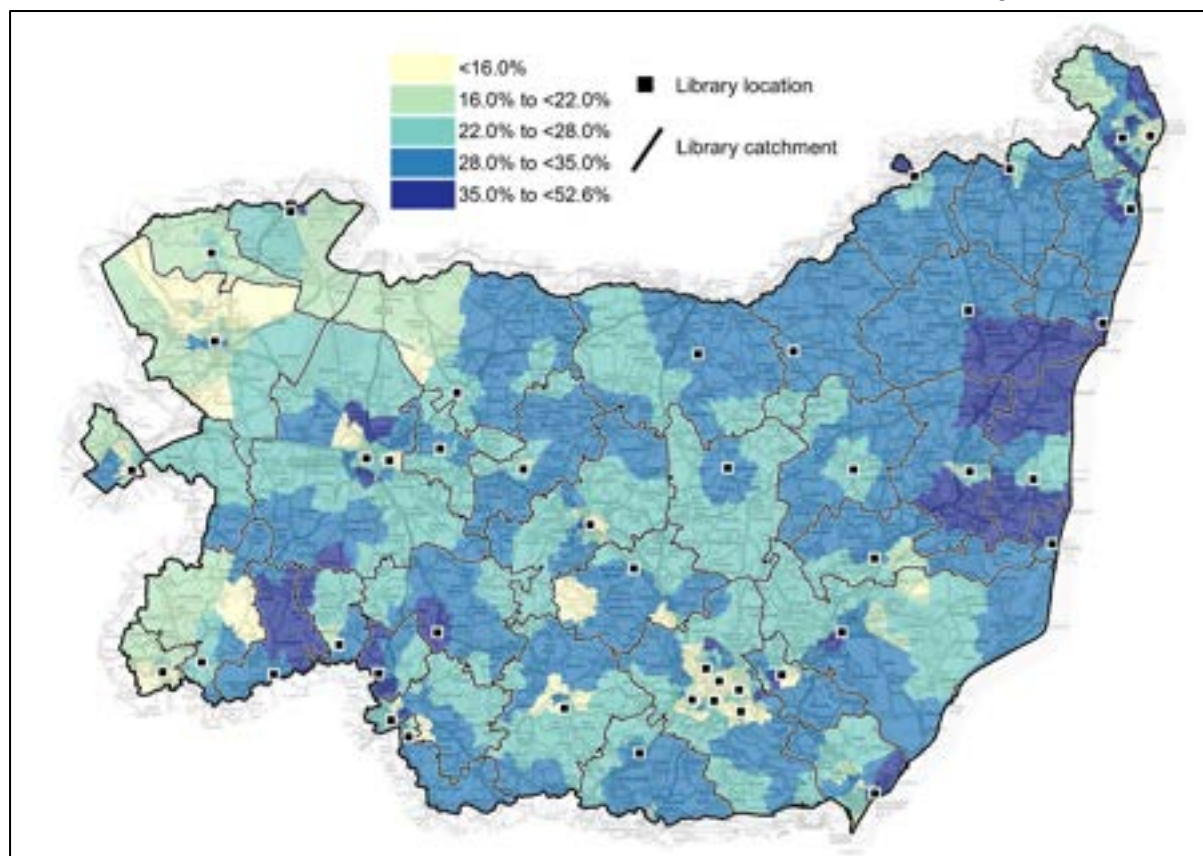
Library	% of catchment population aged 25-64
Newmarket	56.2%
Kedington	55.8%
Haverhill	53.4%
Mildenhall	52.8%
Ipswich (combined)	52.8%
Needham Market	52.2%
Stowmarket	52.0%
Brandon	50.6%
Kesgrave	50.6%
Bury St Edmunds	50.5%

Older people

Figure 17: % population aged 65 and over and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



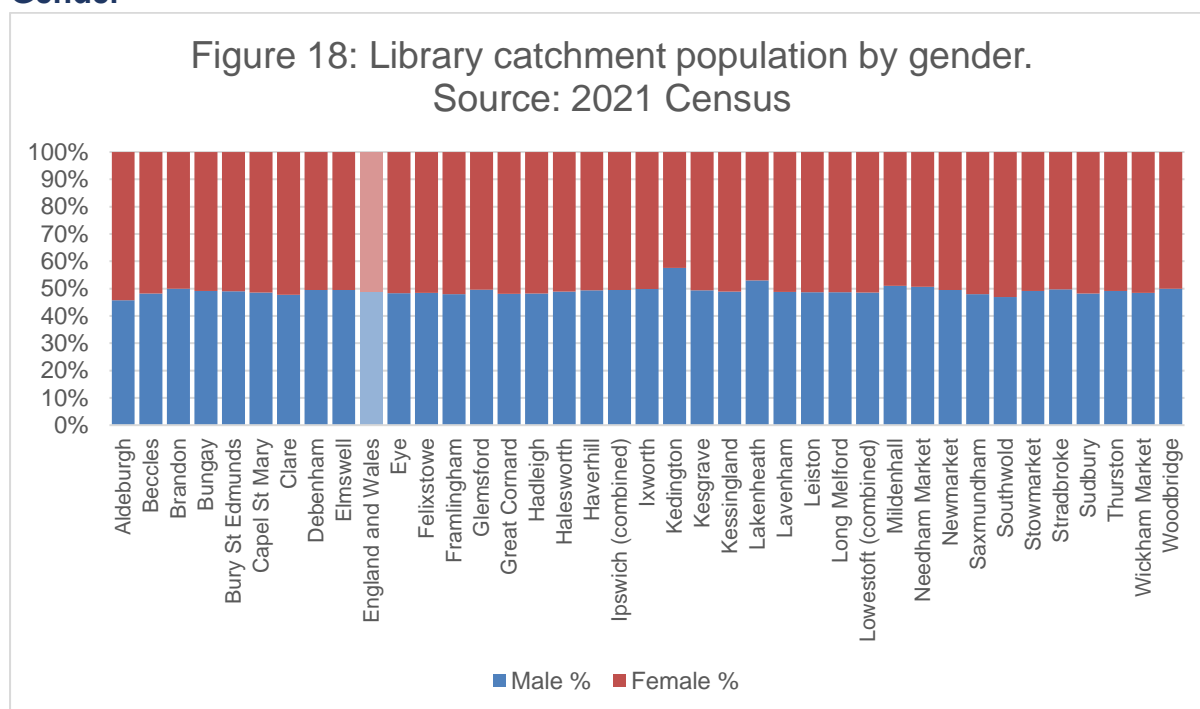
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- More than 35% of the population is aged 65 and over in parts of Suffolk, particularly by the coast and in Clare, Long Melford and Lavenham library catchments.

Table 13: % of catchment population aged 65+

Library	% of catchment population aged 65+
Aldeburgh	44.6%
Southwold	40.4%
Halesworth	34.6%
Lavenham	33.4%
Long Melford	33.0%
Leiston	31.8%
Clare	31.2%
Stradbroke	30.8%
Kessingland	30.7%
Eye	29.8%
Capel St Mary	29.5%

Gender



- Across Suffolk as a whole, females account for 50.7% of the population. Catchment populations generally follow the same pattern, although a few have a higher proportion of males.
- In particular, Kedington (which contains HM Prison Highpoint), Lakenheath and Mildenhall (which contain RAF and USAF air bases) have a larger than average male population.

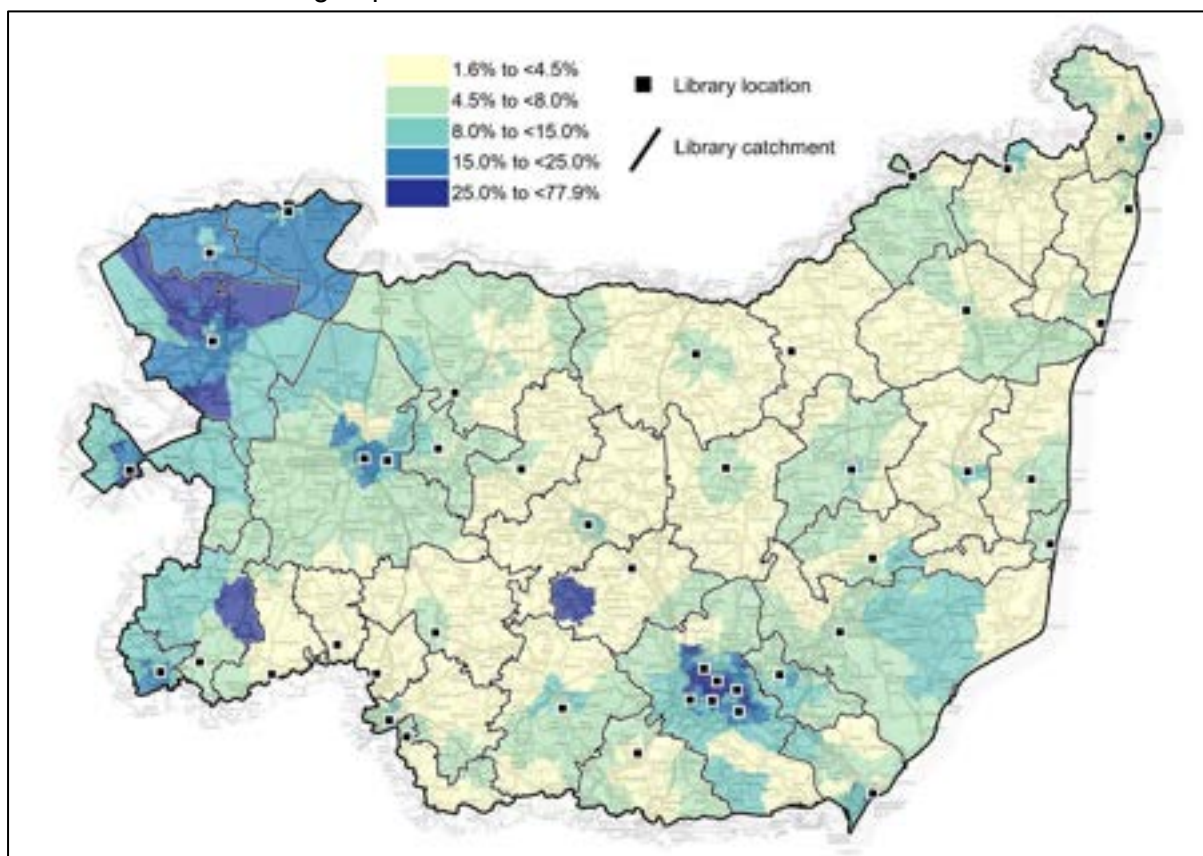
Ethnicity

Figure 19: % population who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

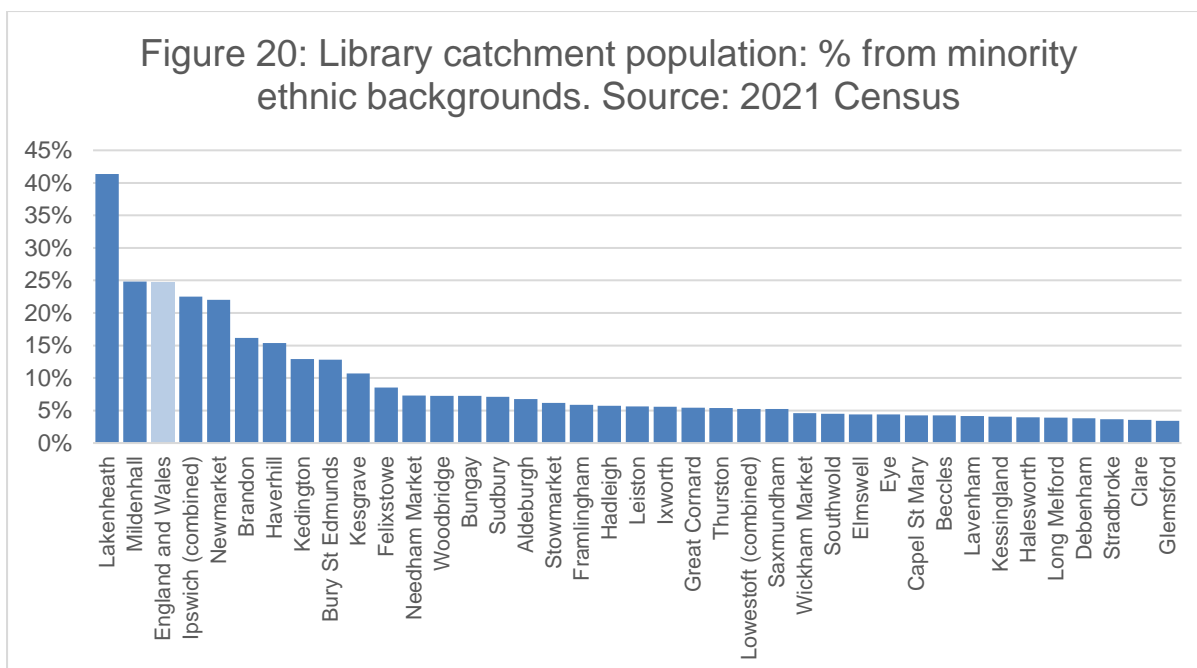
Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas

Minority ethnic includes the following groups: Asian or Asian British; Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African; Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma, Other White and Other ethnic group

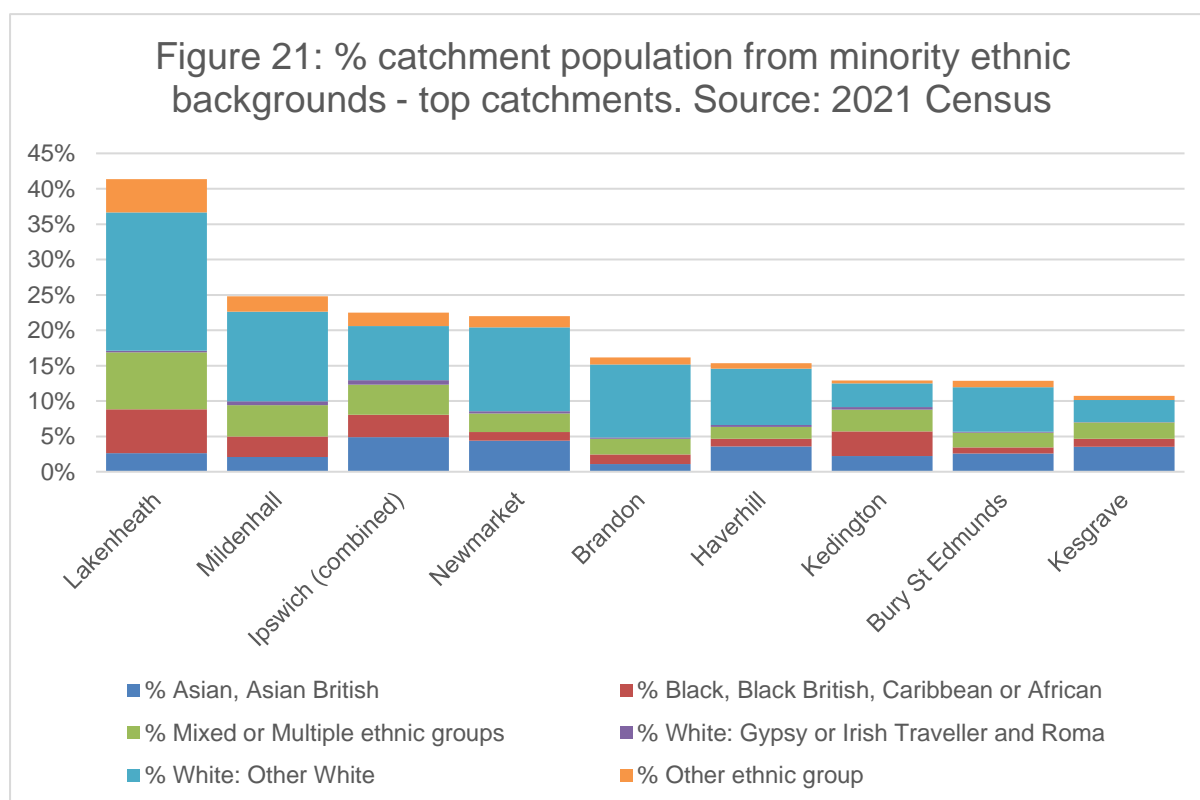


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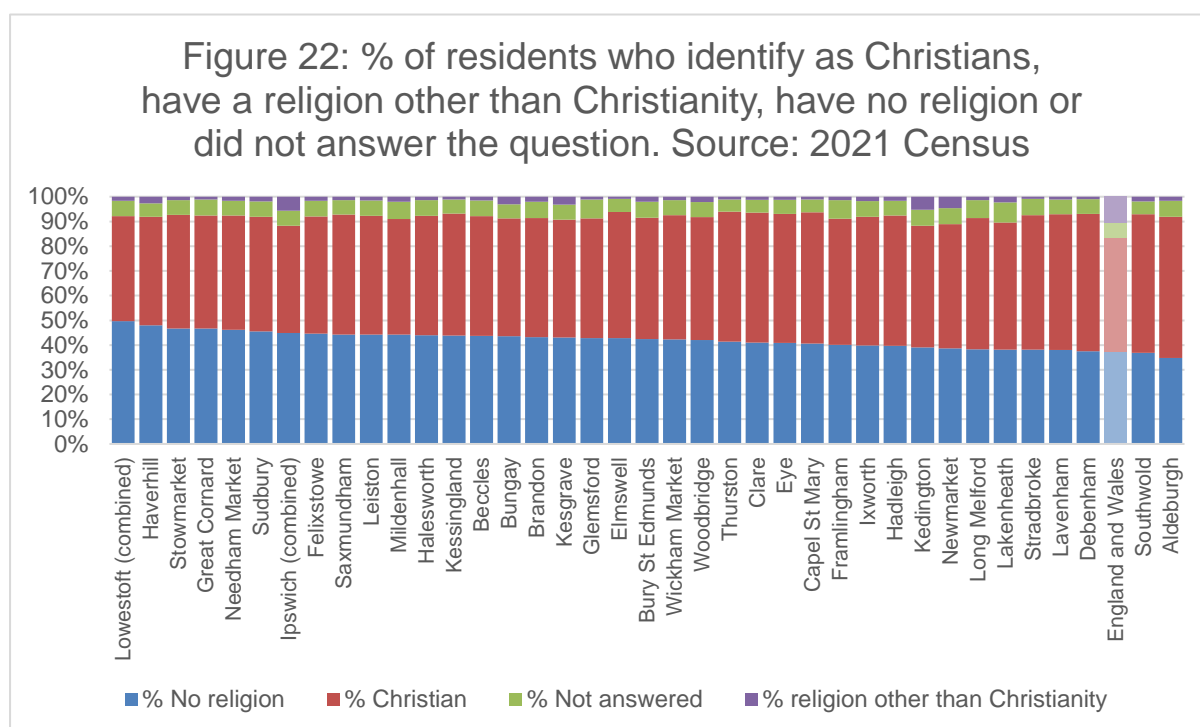
- The parts of Suffolk with the highest minority ethnic populations are in the north-west of the county (Lakenheath, Mildenhall, Red Lodge and Newmarket), and in Ipswich.
- More than a fifth of the population in these areas identify as from a minority ethnic background according to the most recent Census in 2021.



- Brandon, Haverhill, Kedington, Bury St Edmunds and Kesgrave library catchment populations are also more than 10% minority ethnic.
- The breakdown of the minority ethnic population by specific groups for the most diverse catchments is shown below.
- Other White populations account for the majority of the population from minority ethnic backgrounds in most catchments, with the exception of Kedington.
- Ipswich has proportionally the highest Asian/Asian British population.



Religion



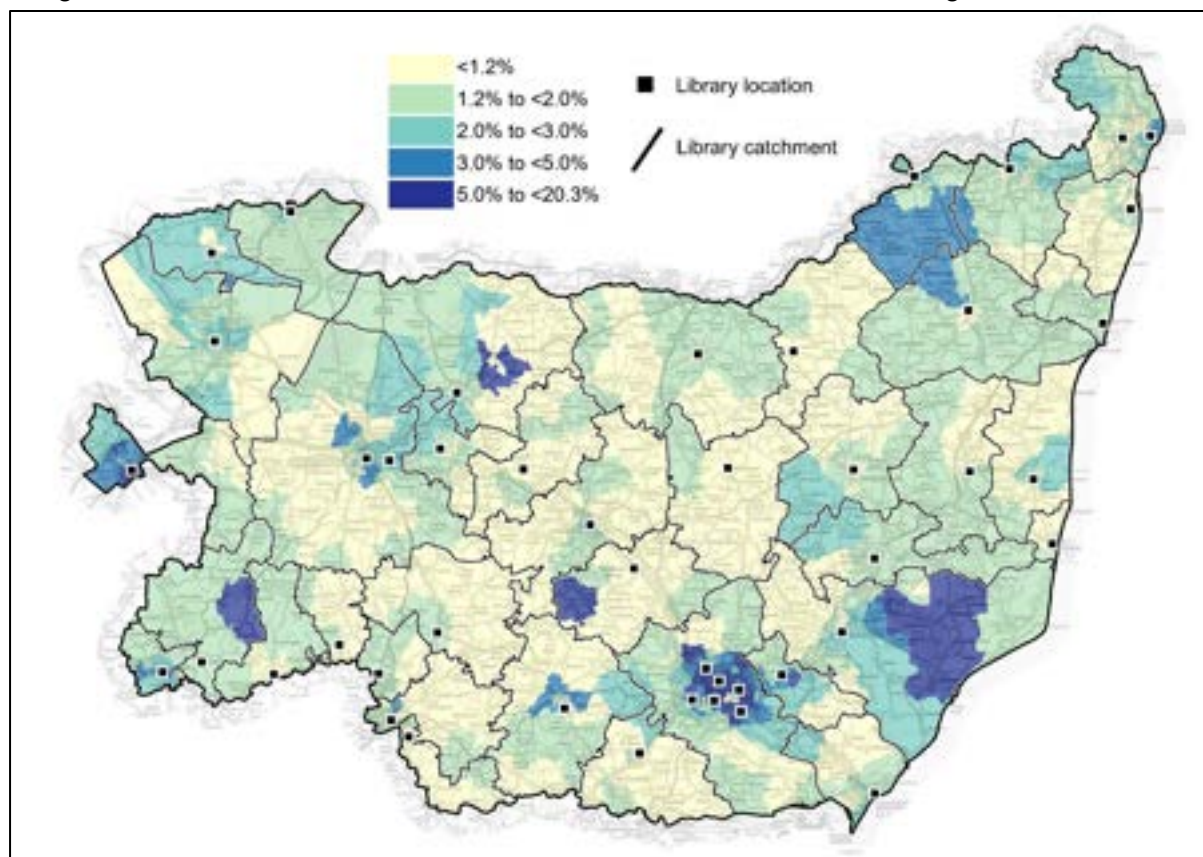
- The percentage of the population with no religion varies between 49.7% in Lowestoft/Oulton Broad library catchment and 34.7% in Aldeburgh library catchment. Between 45% and 55% of the population are Christians in 32 of 38 library catchments.
- Below, we explore the groups who identify as 'Religion other than Christianity' in more detail.

Figure 23: % population who have a religion other than Christianity and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas

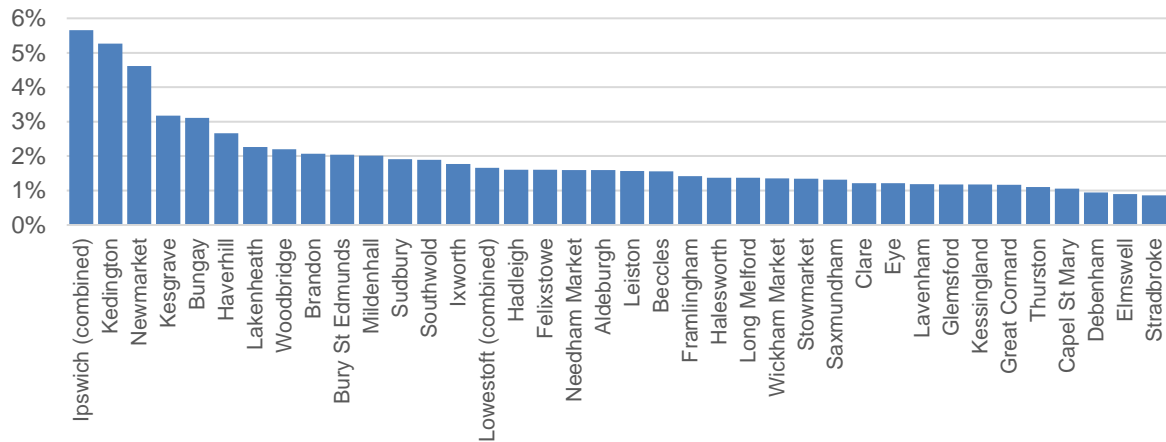
Religions included are: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Other religion



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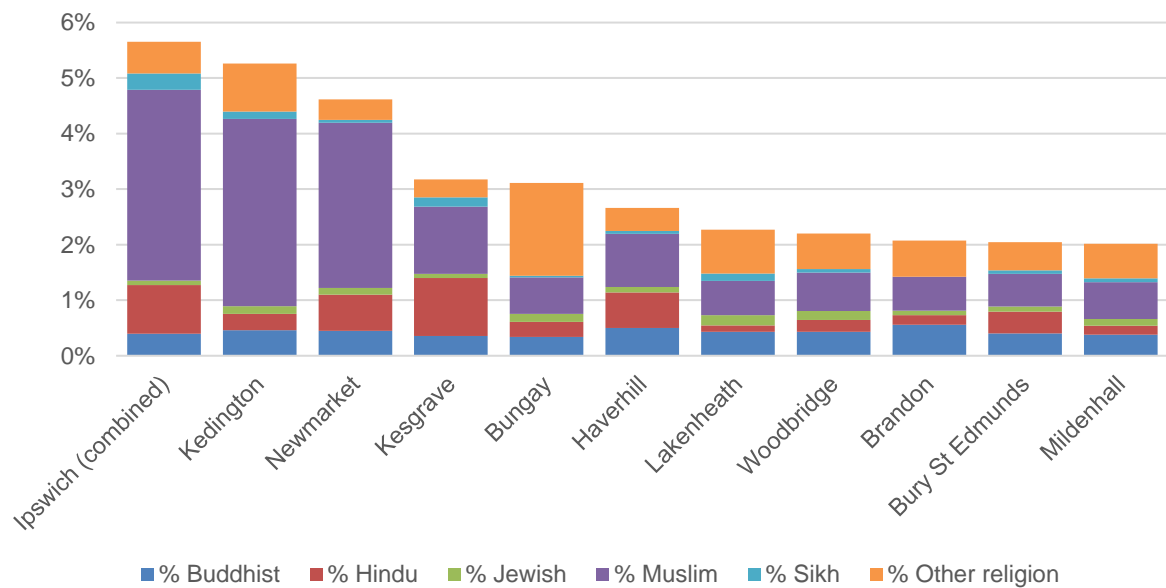
- More than 5% of the population of Ipswich, Kedington and Newmarket library catchments has a religion other than Christianity.
- In these catchments, Muslims make up the majority of people that follow a religion other than Christianity, accounting for at least 3% of the population in each case.
- Between 1% and 2% of the population of 26 of the remaining 35 catchments have a religion other than Christianity.
- Around 1% of the population of Ipswich and Kesgrave library catchments follows the Hindu religion.
- Bungay library catchment has a high proportion of the population following a different religion to those listed in the 2021 Census question.

Figure 24: % religion other than Christianity. Source: 2021 Census



England and Wales figure: 10.6%

Figure 25: Catchments with 2% or more of the population with a religion other than Christianity. Source: 2021 Census

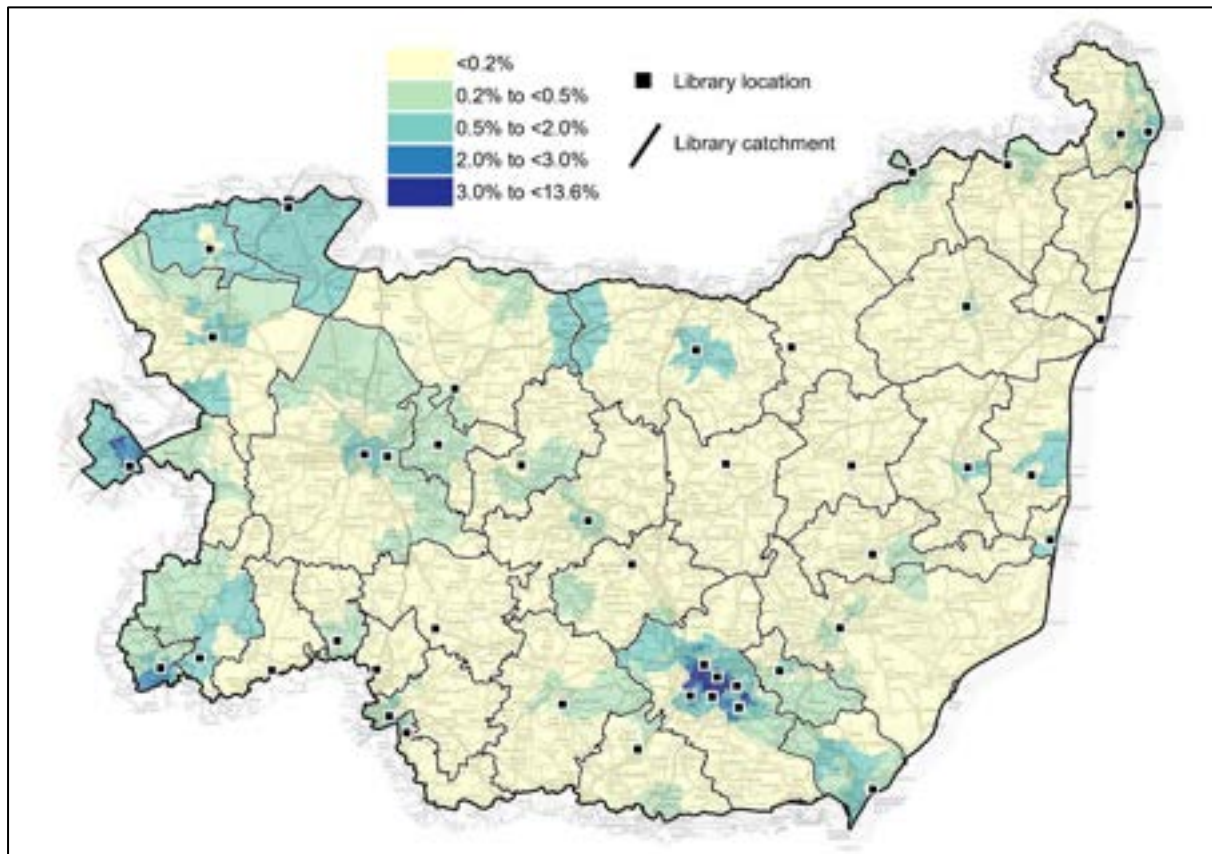


Main Language

Figure 26: % population whose main language is not English and cannot speak English well or cannot speak English at all and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

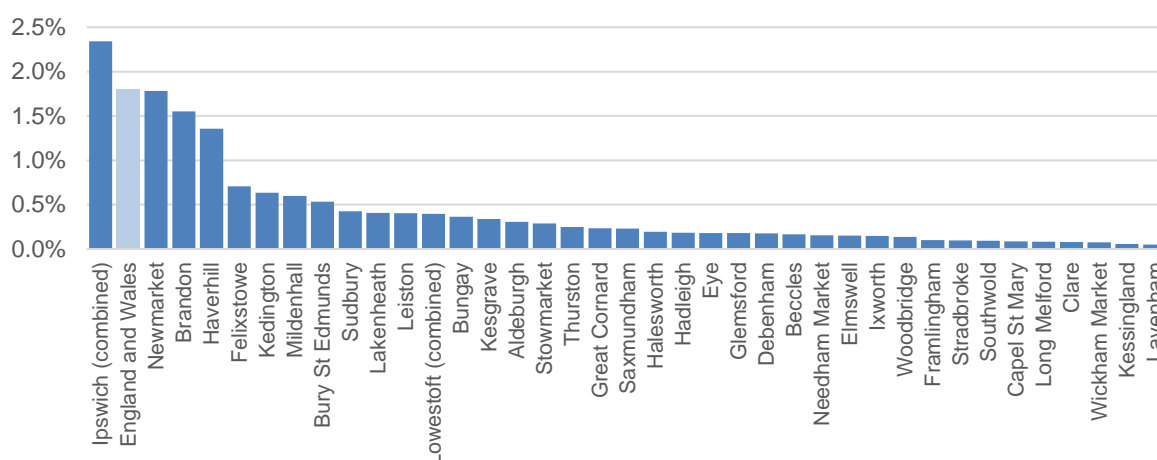
Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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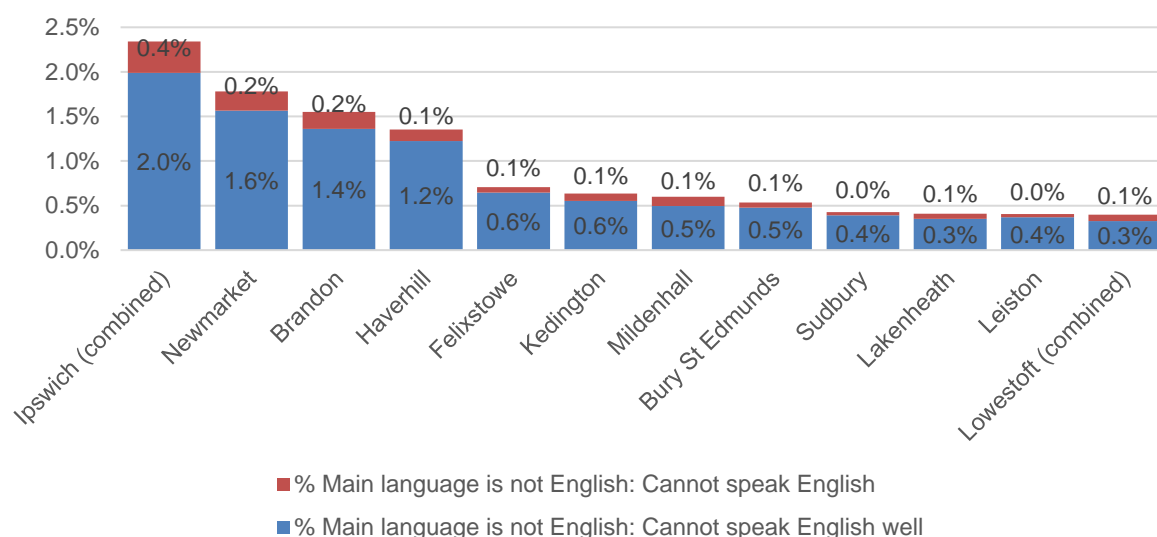
- In parts of Ipswich and Newmarket, English is not the main language for more than 3% of the population and they are unable to speak it well or cannot speak it at all.
- Across most of Suffolk, English is either a person's main language or it is not their main language, but they are able to speak it well for more than 98% of the population.

Figure 27: % Main language is not English: Cannot speak English or cannot speak it well. Source: 2021 Census



- Only the Ipswich combined library catchment has a higher percentage of the population that cannot speak English or cannot speak it well than the average across England and Wales.
- More than 1% of the population in Newmarket, Brandon and Haverhill catchments also cannot speak English or cannot speak it well.
- The catchment populations of Felixstowe, Kedington, Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds libraries also have between 0.5% and 1% of inhabitants who cannot speak English or cannot speak it well.

Figure 28: % main language is not English - top catchments. Source: 2021 Census

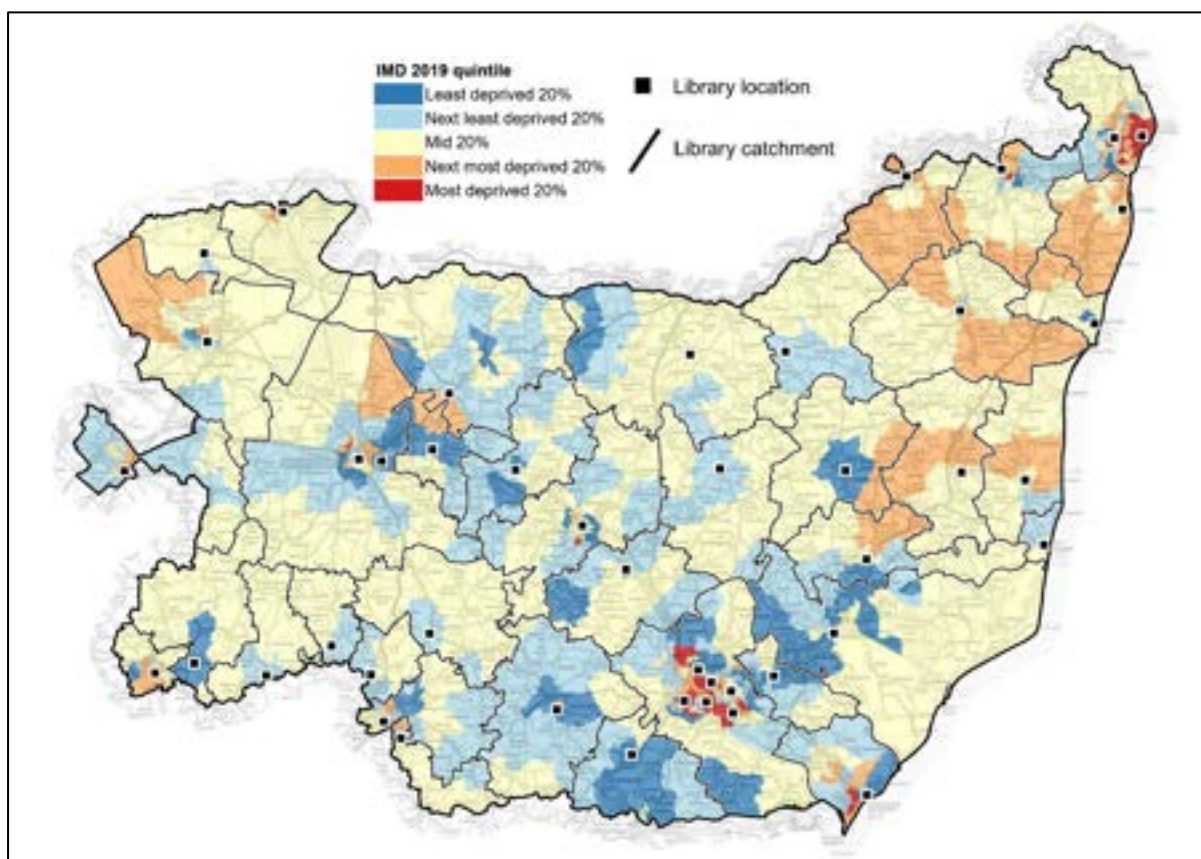


- The largest proportion of a catchment population that cannot speak English is in the Ipswich combined library catchment (0.4%).

Deprivation

Figure 29: Indices of Deprivation 2019: composite index and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas

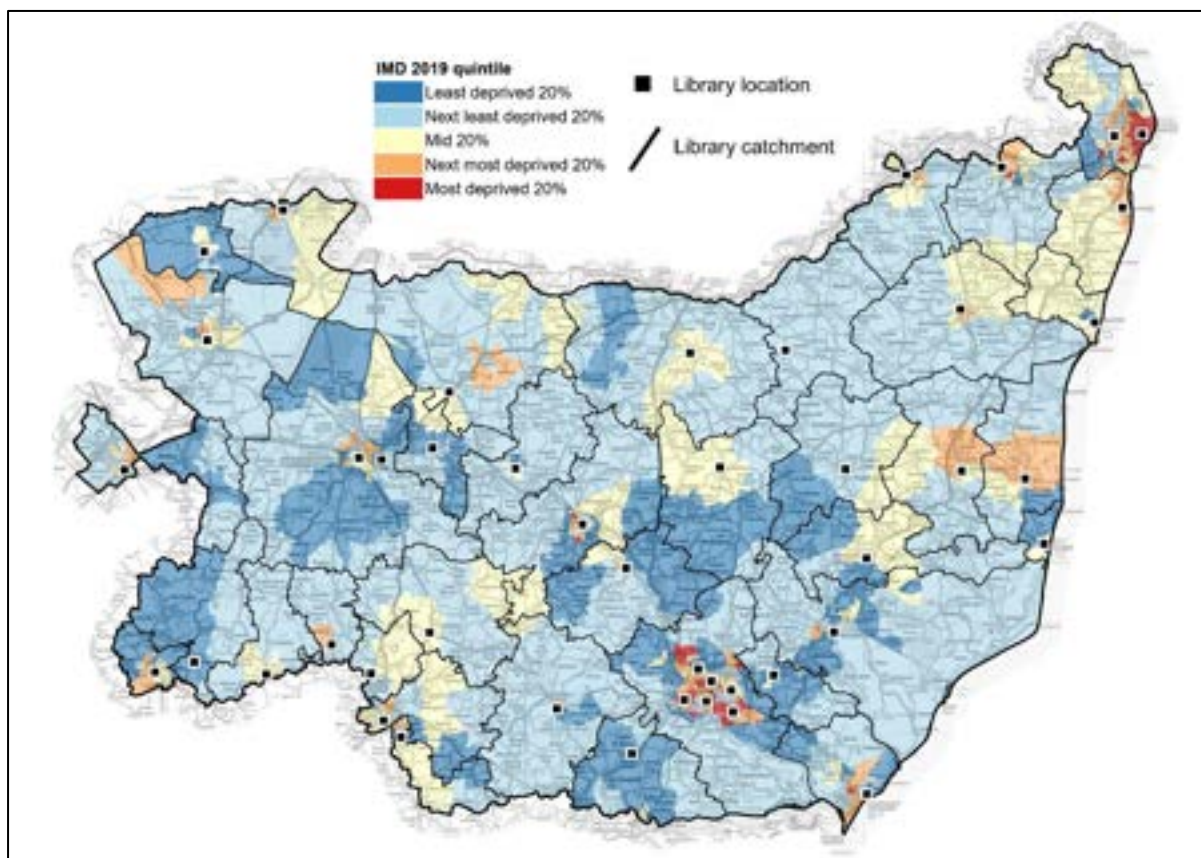


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- Suffolk has a varied **deprivation profile**. More than a quarter of the population of the large towns of Ipswich and Lowestoft live in areas ranked among the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in England. Smaller parts of Felixstowe, Stowmarket, Bury St Edmunds, and Beccles have similarly high levels of relative deprivation.
- The least deprived parts of the county are generally found surrounding the main and market towns, which are affluent areas that also benefit from close proximity to services.
- Much of rural Suffolk is ranked in the middle quintile of deprivation. While income, employment and health deprivation are relatively low, issues such as rurality and the subsequent poor access to services increases the overall deprivation profile.
- The most deprived library catchment is Lowestoft/Oulton Broad. 34.5% of the population of the Lowestoft/Oulton Broad combined library catchment lives in areas ranked among the most deprived 20% in England.
- The least deprived library catchment population is that of Kesgrave, where 4 in 5 residents in the catchment live in neighbourhoods among the least deprived 20% in England.

Figure 30: Indices of Deprivation 2019: income deprivation and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- **Income deprivation** levels in Suffolk are relatively low. Large parts of the county are ranked among the least deprived 40% of areas in England in terms of income deprivation. Overall, an estimated 10.2% of the working age population in the county are impacted by income deprivation.
- Across our library catchments, income deprivation varies from 4.4% of working age people in Kesgrave to 18% in Lowestoft/Oulton Broad. Income deprivation in Beccles, Brandon, Bungay, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Leiston, Saxmundham and Sudbury catchments is higher than the county average.

The following indicators contribute to this domain:

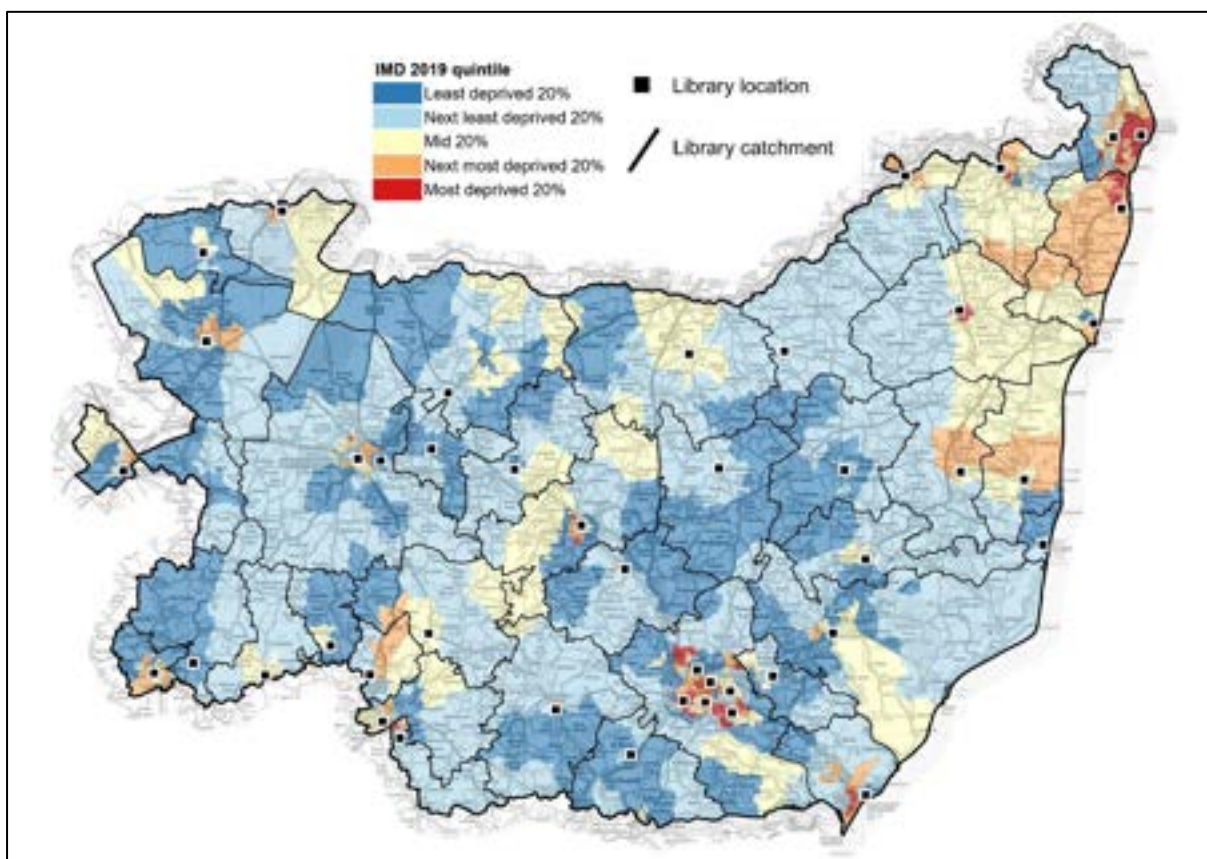
- Adults and children in Income Support families
- Adults and children in income-based Jobseeker's Allowance families
- Adults and children in income-based Employment and Support Allowance families
- Adults and children in Pension Credit (Guarantee) families
- Adults and children in Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit families not already counted, and whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefit) is below 60 per cent of the median before housing costs

- Asylum seekers in England in receipt of subsistence support, accommodation support, or both
- Adults and children in Universal Credit families where no adult is classed within the 'Working - no requirements' conditionality regime

It should be noted that this measure precedes the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living situation.

Figure 31: Indices of Deprivation 2019: employment deprivation and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- **Employment deprivation** follows a similar pattern to income, with lower relative deprivation across much of the county and higher levels generally confined to the main towns.
- The north-east library catchments of Lowestoft/Oulton Broad (15.2%), and Kessingland (12.1%) have the highest percentage of their population impacted by employment deprivation. The catchments of Lakenheath and Thurston libraries contain the working-age population with the lowest levels of income deprivation (4%).

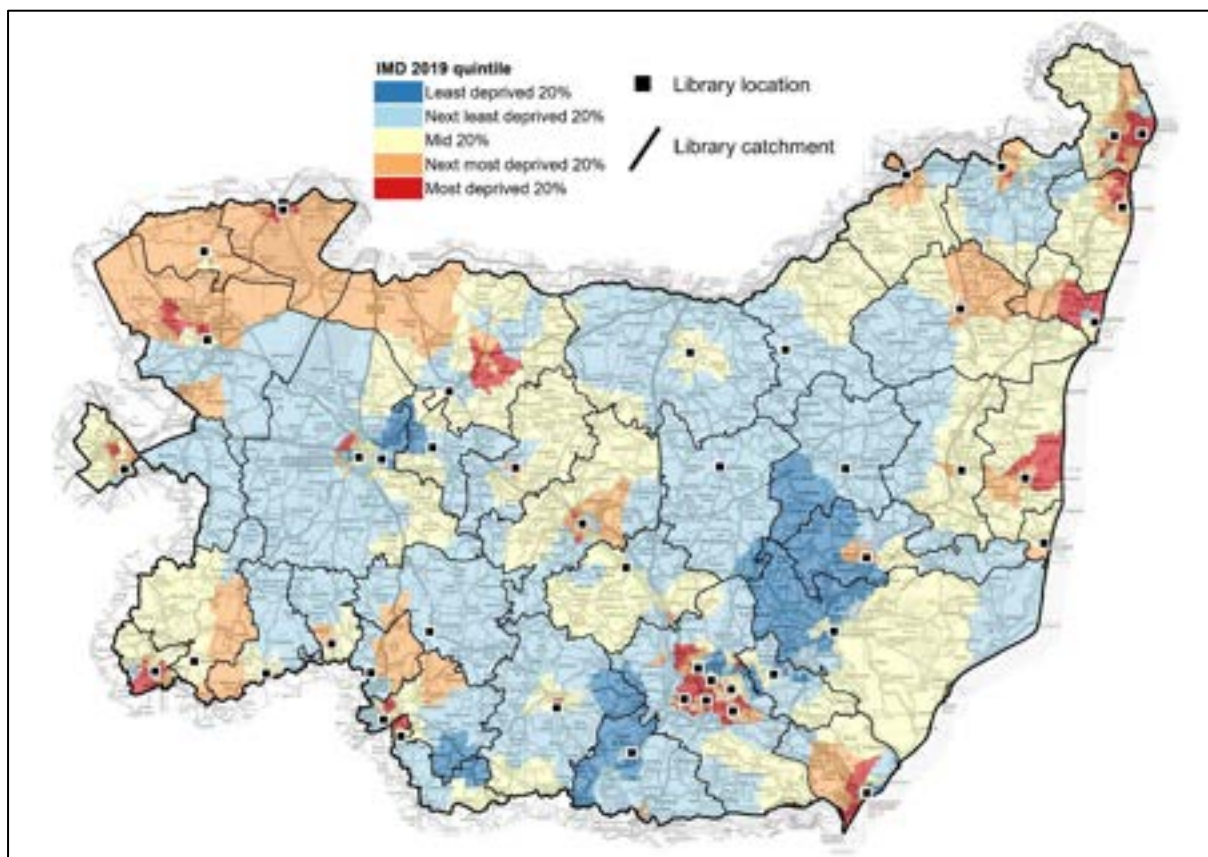
The following indicators contribute to this domain:

- Claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (both contribution-based and income-based), women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Incapacity Benefit, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Severe Disablement Allowance, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Carer's Allowance, women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64
- Claimants of Universal Credit in the 'Searching for work' and 'No work requirements' conditionality groups.

It should be noted that this measure precedes the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 32: Indices of Deprivation 2019: education, skills and training and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- **Education, skills, and training deprivation** in Suffolk is above average. Just 5.9% of the population of the county live in areas ranked among the 20% least deprived parts of England for this domain.
- Almost two-thirds of the population of Brandon library catchment lives in areas ranked among the most deprived 20% in England for this measure. More than a fifth of the population of a further eight catchments live in neighbourhoods among

the most deprived 20% in England (Lowestoft/Oulton Broad, Haverhill, Ipswich, Felixstowe, Southwold, Great Cornard, Sudbury and Kessingland).

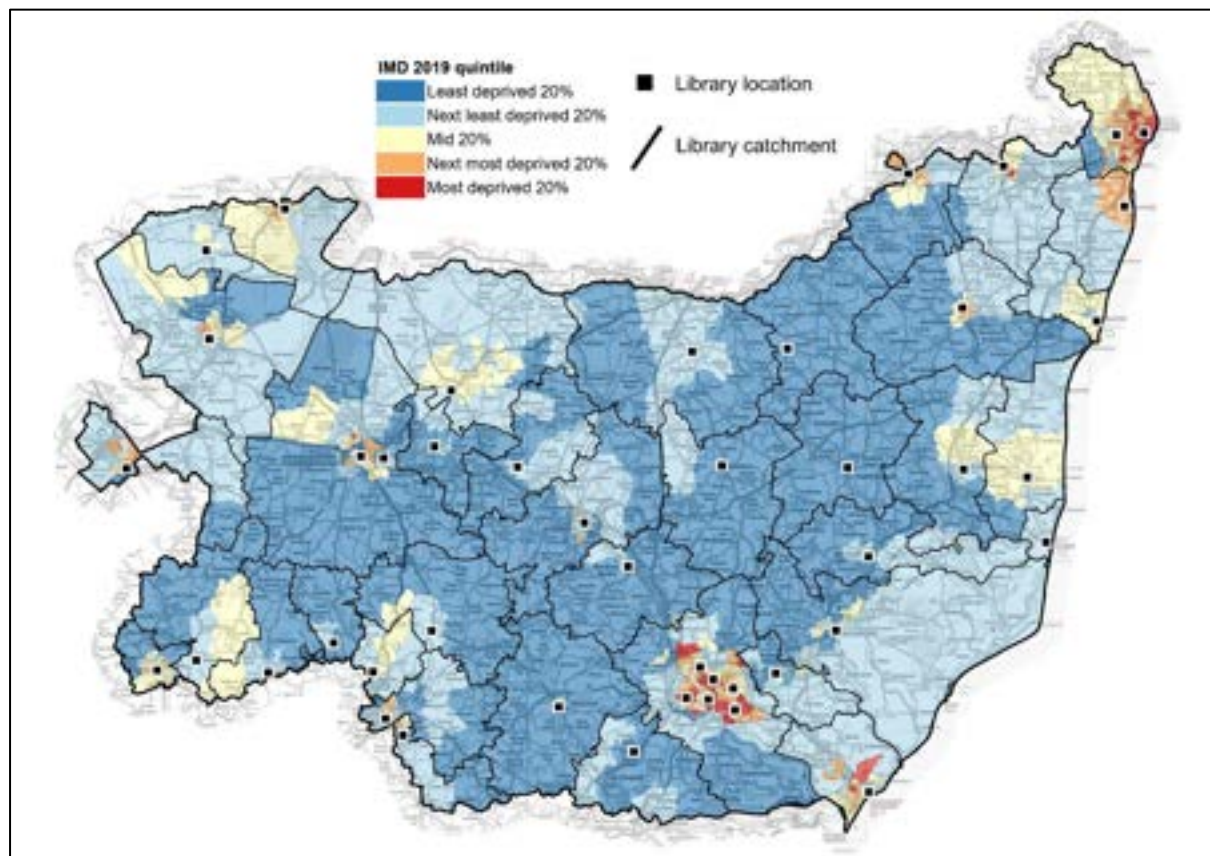
The following indicators contribute to this domain:

- Key Stage 2 attainment
- Key Stage 4 attainment
- Secondary school absence
- Adult Skills
- English language proficiency

It should be noted that this data precedes the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 33: Indices of Deprivation 2019: health deprivation and disability and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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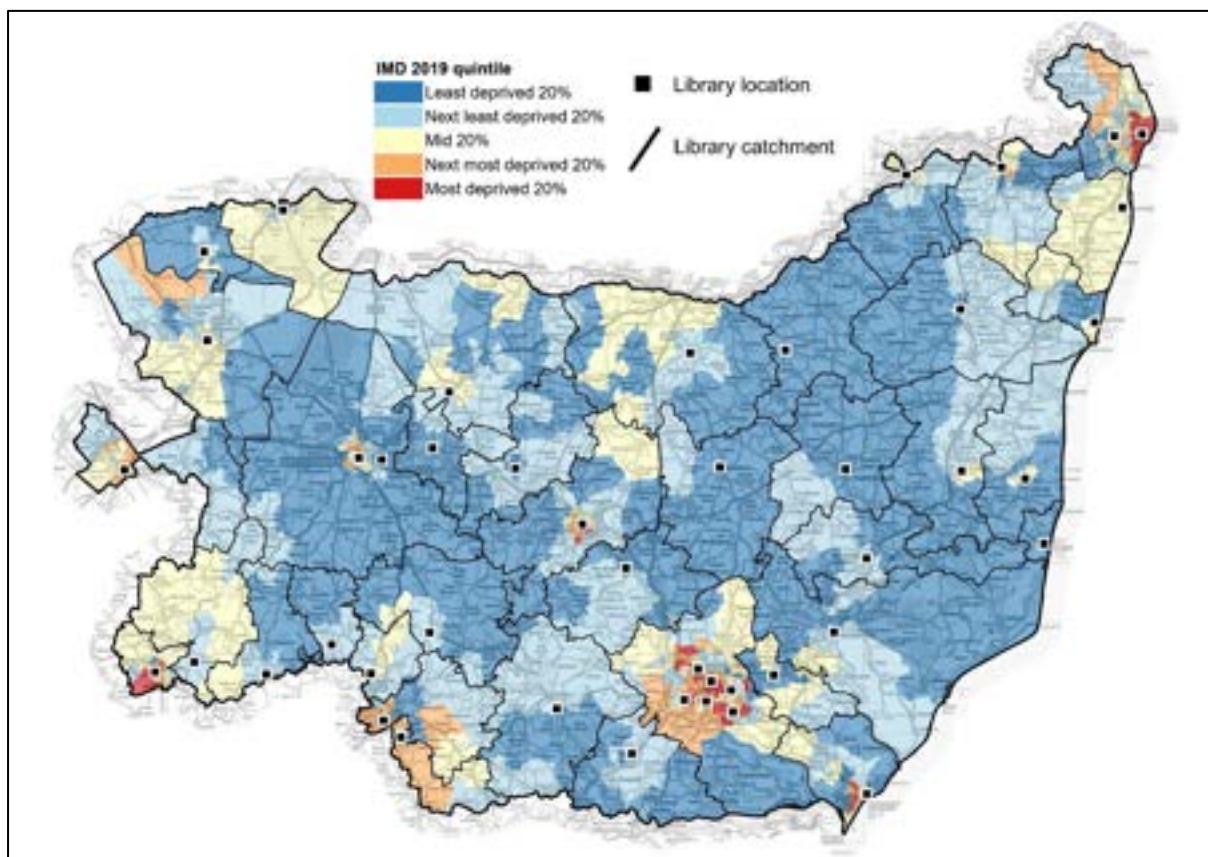
- **Health deprivation and disability** levels are low across much of Suffolk. The Ipswich, Felixstowe and Lowestoft/Oulton Broad catchments stand out as having higher levels of deprivation according to these data.
- The entirety of Framlingham and Stradbroke catchments are in the least deprived quintile in this domain.

The following indicators contribute to this domain:

- Years of potential life lost
- Comparative illness and disability ratio
- Acute morbidity
- Mood and anxiety disorders

It should be noted that this data precedes the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 34: Indices of Deprivation 2019: crime and Suffolk library catchments
Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- Suffolk is a relatively safe county. 54% of the population of Suffolk live in areas ranked among 40% least impacted by **crime** in England.
- The urban areas of the county see higher crime rates. Areas of particularly high crime levels (among the 20% highest in England) are found in Ipswich, Lowestoft, Haverhill, Felixstowe, and Stowmarket.

The following indicators contribute to this domain:

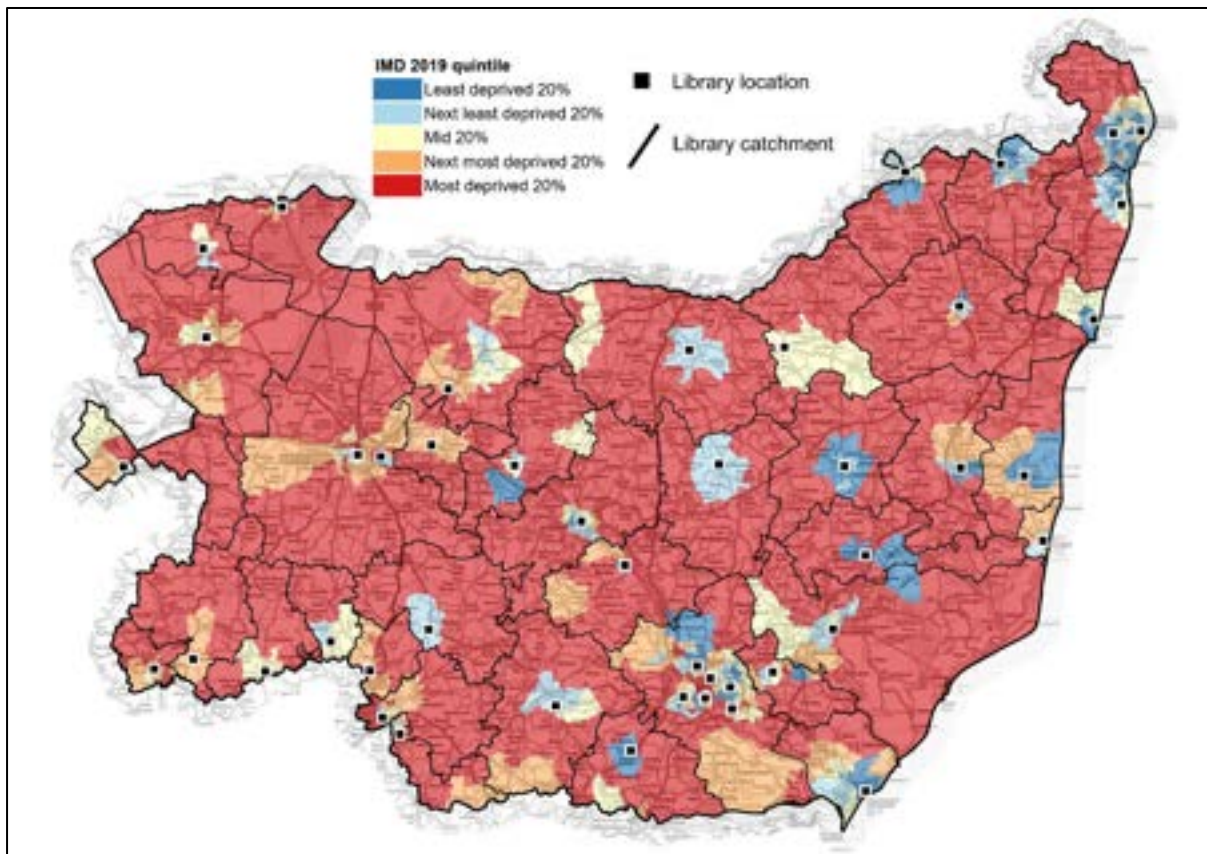
- Violence
- Burglary
- Theft

- Criminal damage

It should be noted that this data precedes the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living situation.

Figure 35: Indices of Deprivation 2019: barriers to housing and services and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- Suffolk's rurality means that much of the county is ranked among the most deprived 20% of areas in England for **barriers to housing and services**.
- Even some large towns, such as Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, are also relatively deprived according to this domain, while the homelessness and overcrowding elements mean higher deprivation in areas such as Ipswich town centre.
- More than 50% of the population of Eye, Kedington, Lavenham, Debenham, Lakenheath, Ixworth, Stradbroke, Halesworth, Capel St Mary and Wickham Market catchments live in areas ranked among the most deprived fifth in England.

The following indicators contribute to this domain:

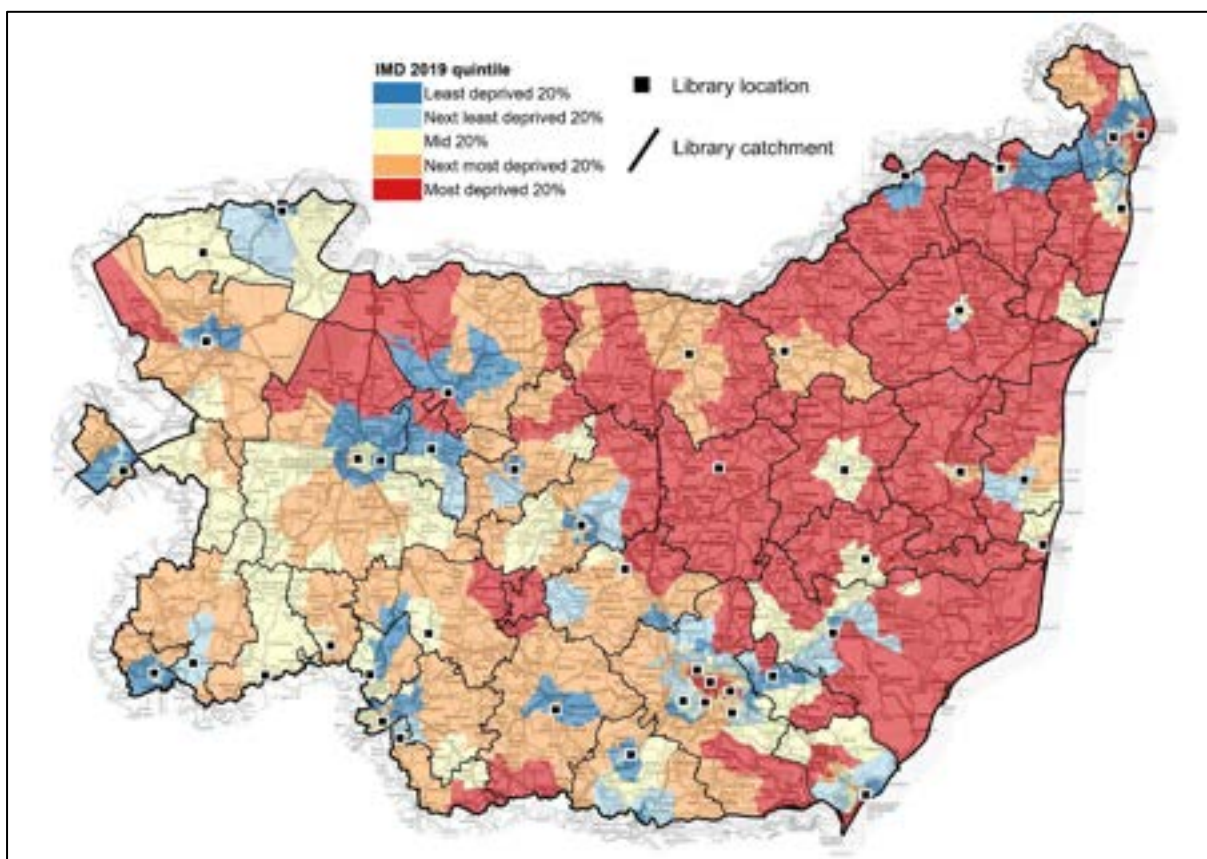
- Road distance to a post office

- Road distance to a primary school
- Road distance to a general store or supermarket
- Road distance to a GP surgery
- Household overcrowding
- Homelessness
- Housing affordability

It should be noted that this data precedes the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living situation.

Figure 36: Indices of Deprivation 2019: living environment and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: IoD: DLUHC, by 2011 Lower Super Output Areas. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- Much of east Suffolk is ranked among the most deprived 20% of areas in England in the **living environment** domain of the Indices of Deprivation. Debenham library catchment is ranked entirely within the highest quintile of deprivation for this domain.
- Parts of central Ipswich and Lowestoft also suffer from relatively high deprivation according to this measure.
- Higher deprivation in this domain in rural areas is largely influenced by the housing indicators (housing in poor condition and houses without central

heating), while in urban areas air quality and road traffic accidents also play a part.

- The least deprived catchments in terms of the living environment are Kesgrave, Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds, and Thurston.

The following indicators contribute to this domain:

- Housing in poor condition
- Houses without central heating
- Air quality indicator
- Road traffic accidents indicator

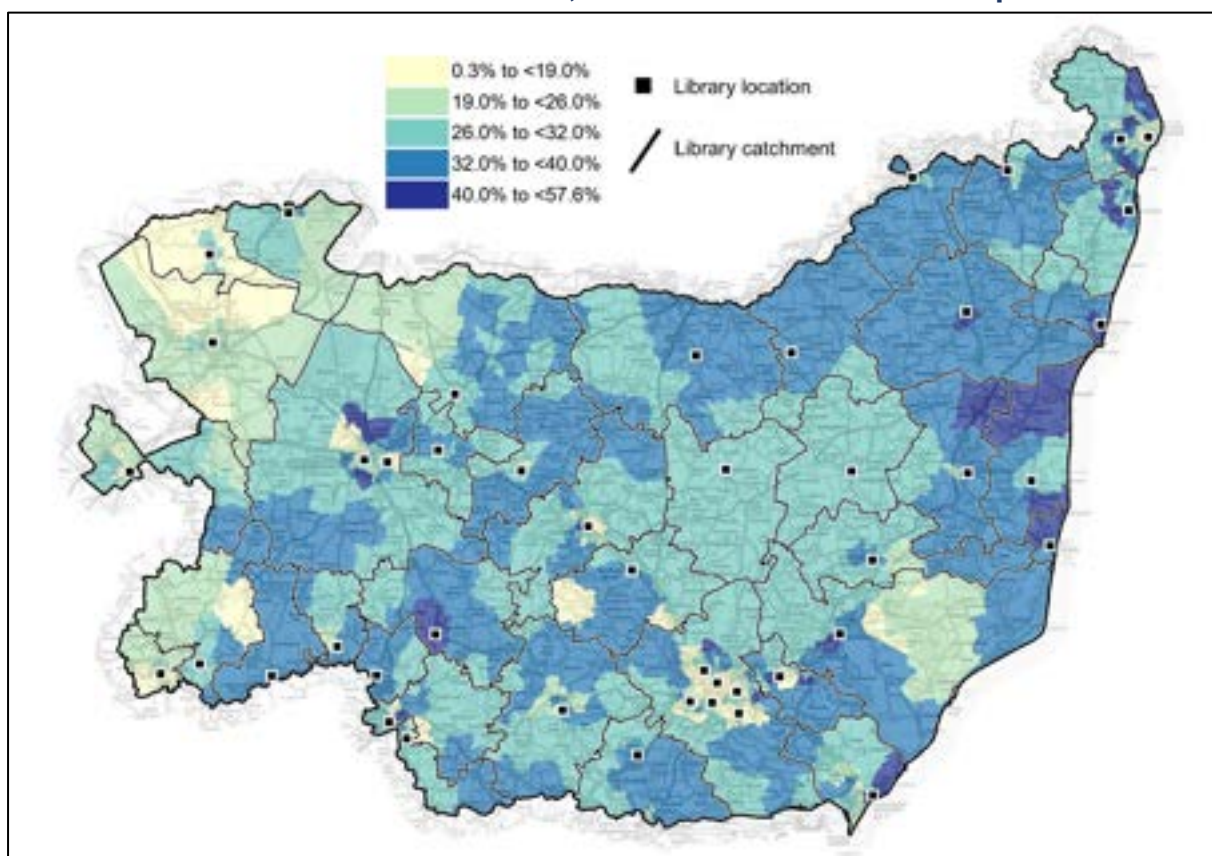
It should be noted that this data precedes the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living situation.

Economic activity

Figure 37: % population aged 16+ that are retired and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- Across much of rural Suffolk and on the edge of the main towns, more than a quarter of the population aged 16+ are **retired**.

- Ipswich, Haverhill, Rendlesham, parts of Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury, and the areas around military bases have the lowest levels of retired residents.
- At library catchment level, the proportion of retired residents ranges from 46.3% in Aldeburgh to 15.5% in Lakenheath.
- More than a third of residents aged 16+ are retired in Southwold, Halesworth, Lavenham, Long Melford, Kessingland, Leiston, Capel St Mary and Clare library catchments.

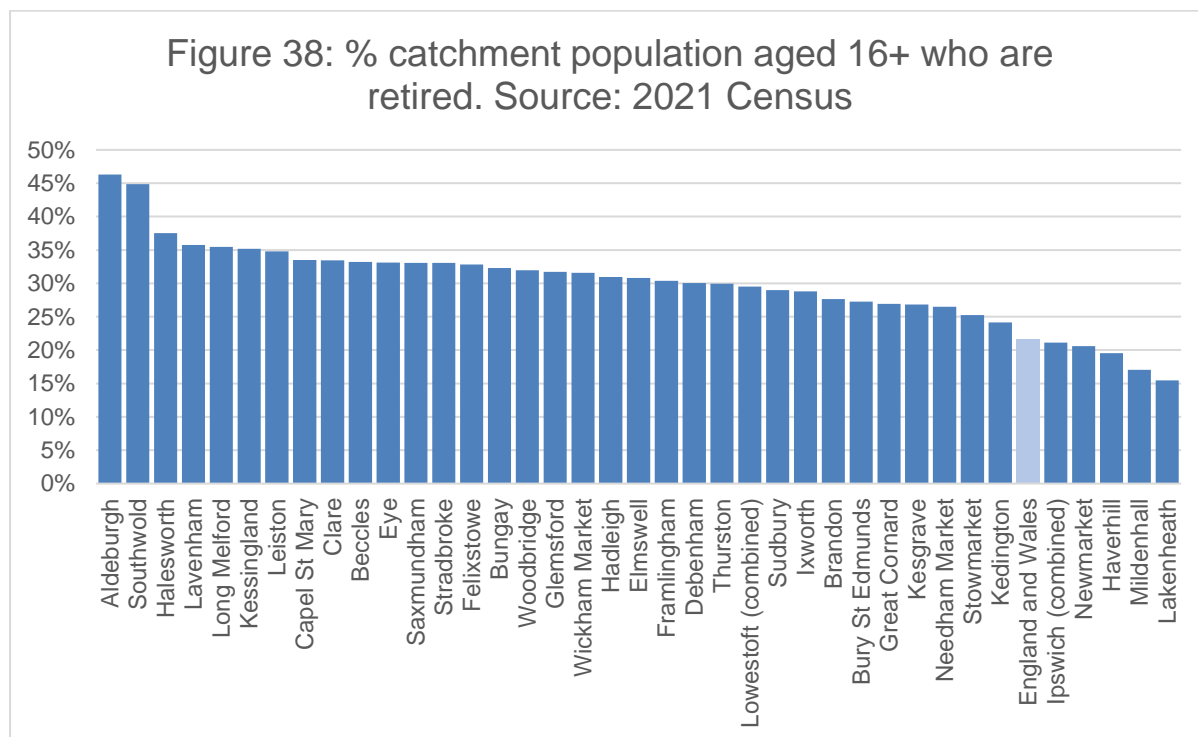
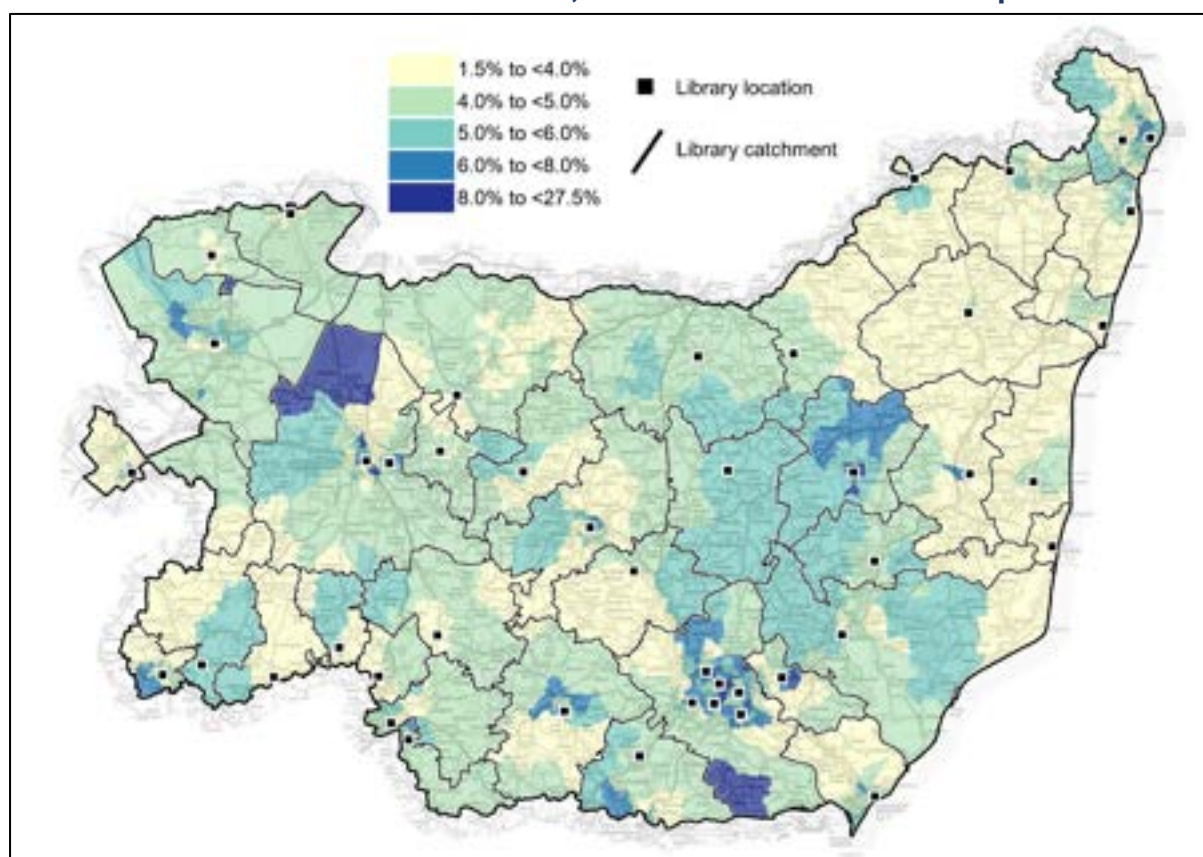


Figure 39: % population aged 16+ that are students and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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- **Students** account for less than 4% of the 16+ population across all, but two of our library catchments; the exceptions being Framlingham and the Ipswich combined catchments.
- There are pockets of higher student numbers around private schools such as the Royal Hospital School (Ipswich combined catchment) and Culford School (Bury St Edmunds catchment).
- Between 2.5% and 3.5% of residents aged 16+ are students in the majority of library catchments.
- Just 1.2% of people aged 16 or over in Aldeburgh library catchment are students.

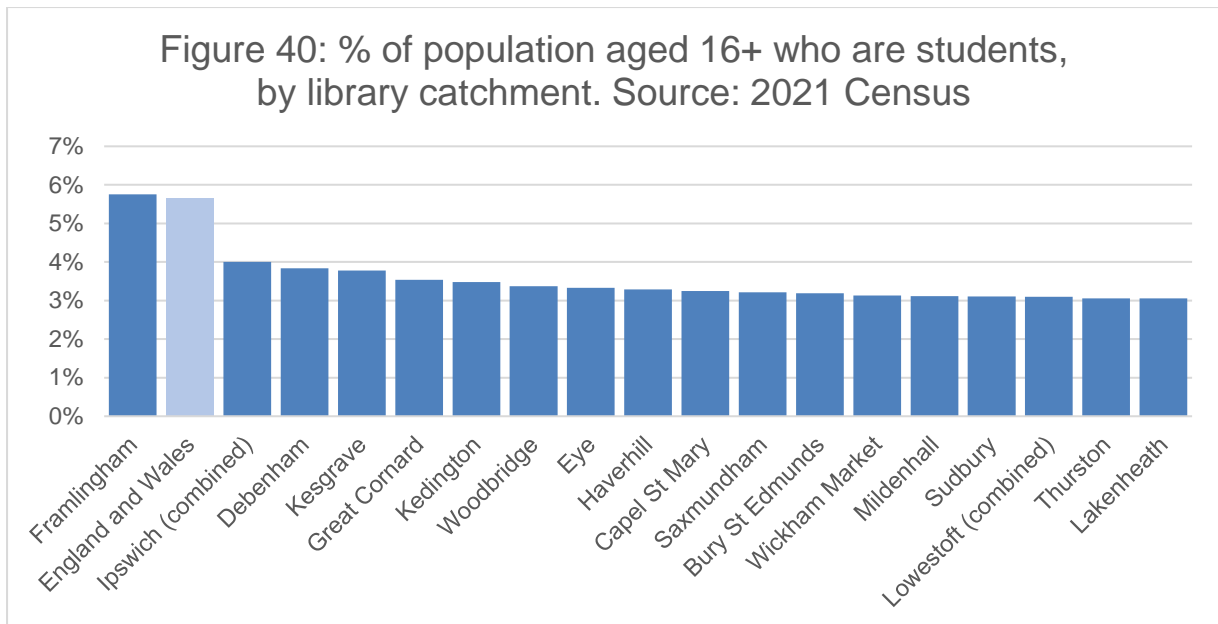
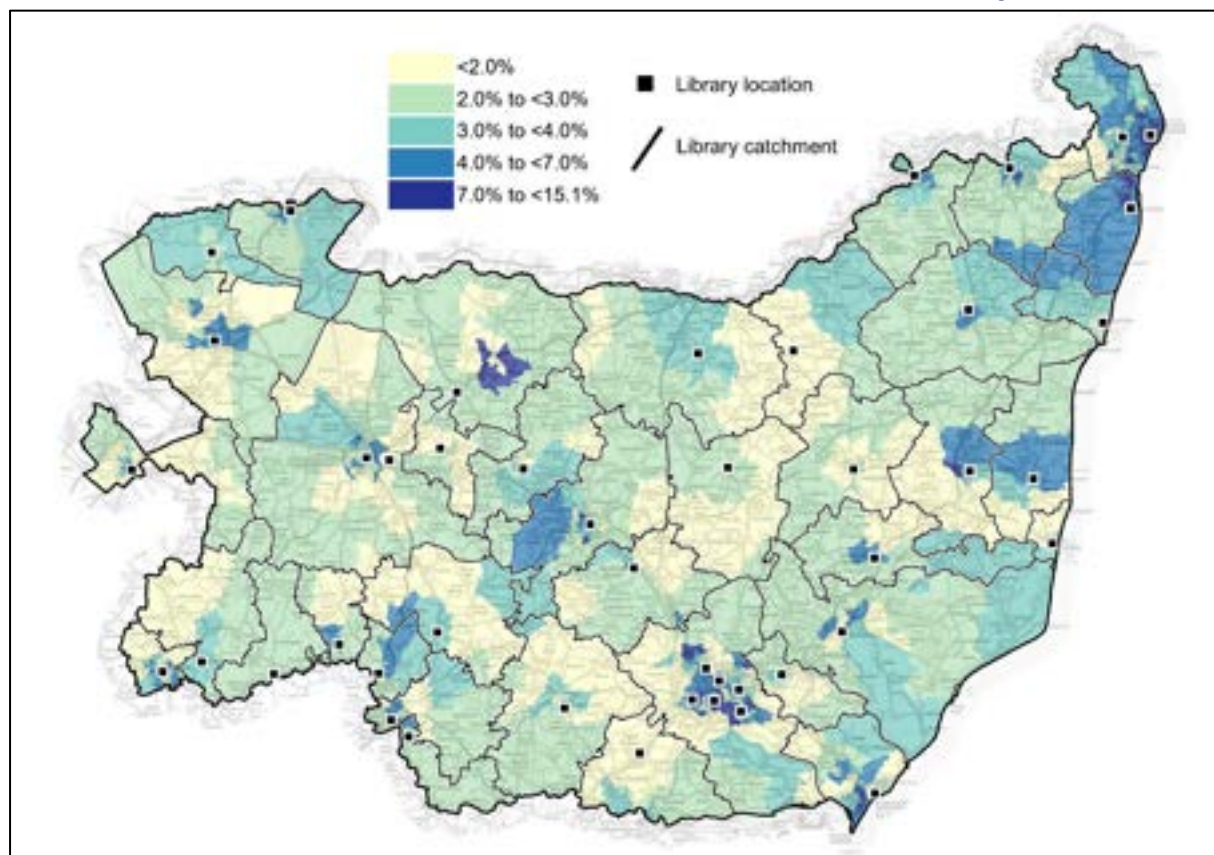


Figure 41: % population that are economically inactive and are long-term sick and disabled and Suffolk library catchments

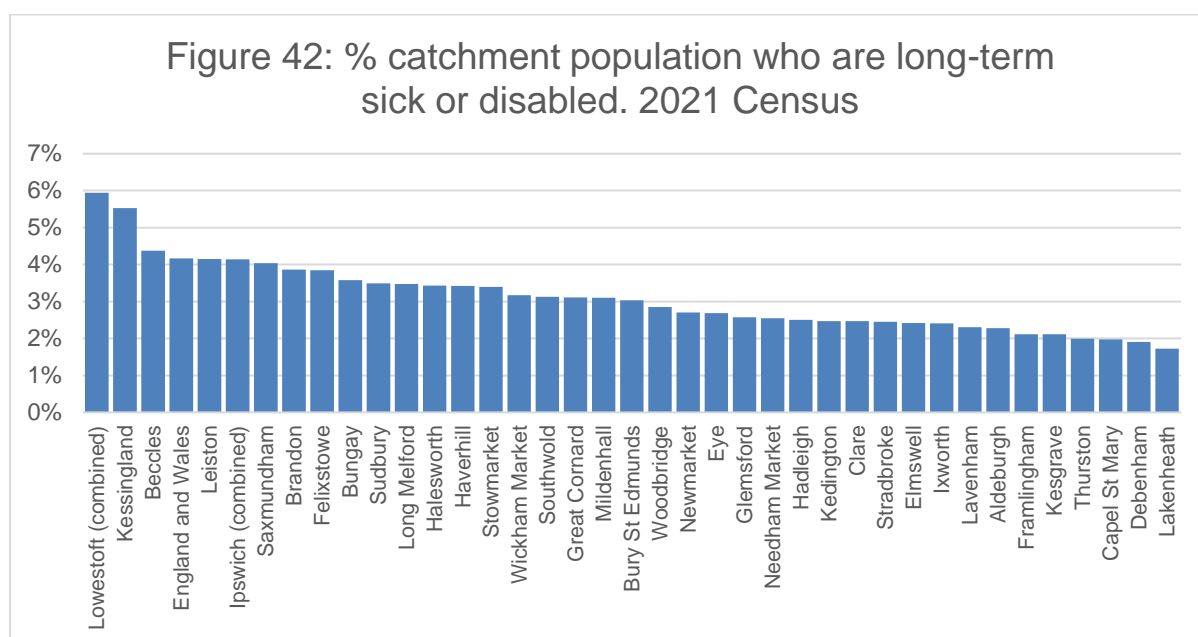
Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Lower Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



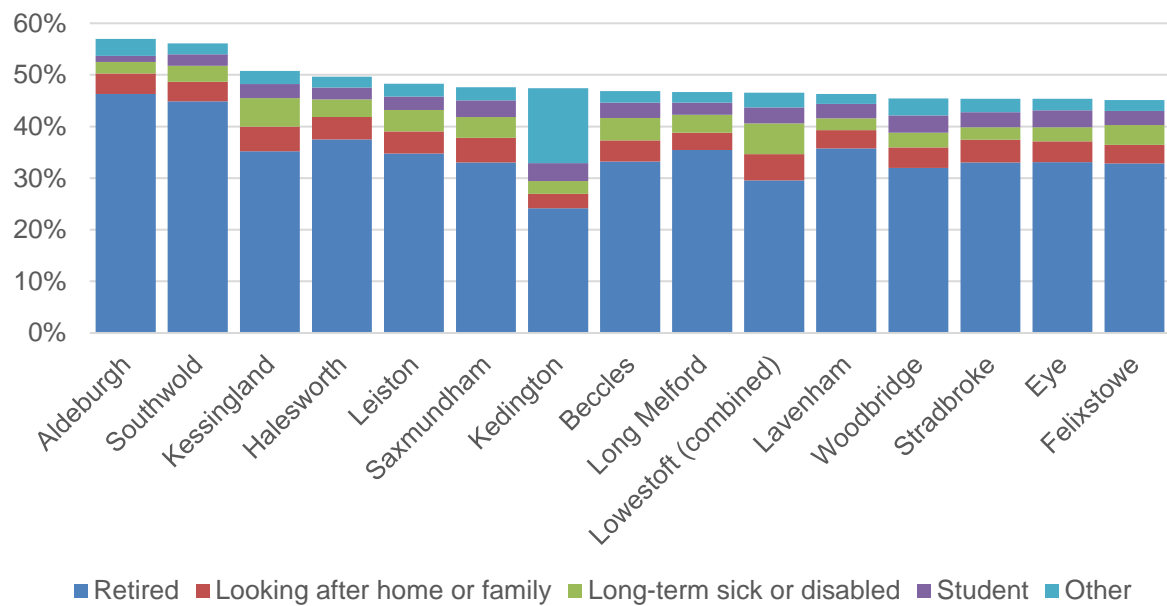
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- **Economic inactivity due to long term sickness or disability** is most common in Lowestoft/Oulton Broad, Kessingland, Beccles, Leiston, and Ipswich library catchments, where more than 4% of the population aged 16+ are affected.
- Overall, the percentage of the population that are economically active is higher in the west of the county.
- HM High Point prison is situated in Kedington library catchment, which explains the high percentage of the population that are economically inactive for other reasons in the area.



- The proportion of the population who are long-term sick or disabled is highest in Lowestoft/Oulton Broad library catchment (5.9%) and Kessingland (5.5%).
- Long-term sickness and disability is lowest in Lakenheath (1.7%) and Debenham catchments (1.9%).
- All other catchments have between 2% and 4.4% of residents reporting a long-term sickness or disability at the time of the 2021 Census.

Figure 43: % catchment population aged 16+ economically inactive - top catchments - by reason for economic inactivity

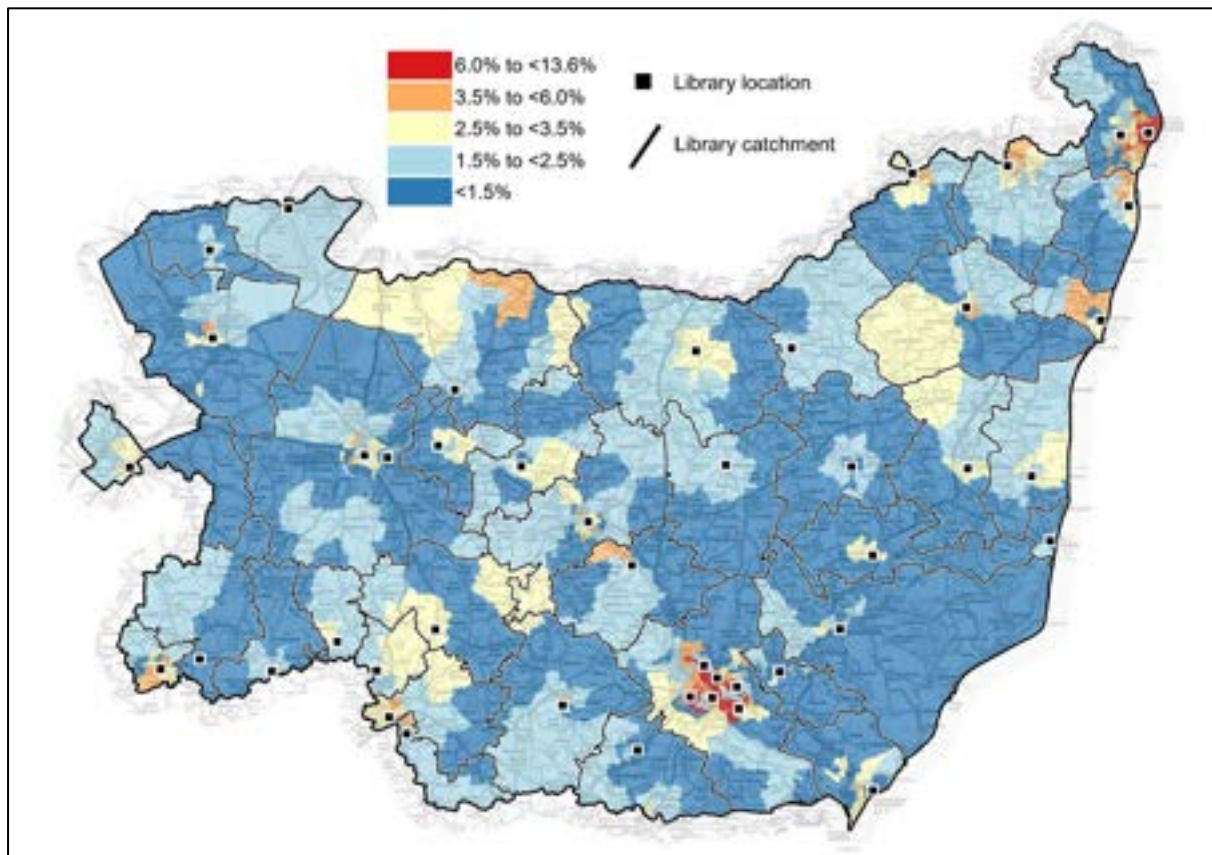


- Economic inactivity is highest in Aldeburgh, Southwold and Kessingland catchments. Each catchment has more than 50% of the 16+ population economically inactive at the time of the 2021 Census.
- The reasons for economic inactivity are generally uniform across these catchments, with retirees making up the majority of economically inactive population. People who are looking after home or family, are long-term sick or disabled, or full-time students make up the remainder of the economically inactive population.
- Kedington stands out for having a high percentage of people who are economically inactive for other reasons. This is due to the presence of Highpoint prison in the catchment.

Figure 44: % population of working age (16-64) claiming out of work benefits, and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: DWP via NOMIS May 2023 data, by Lower Super Output Area.

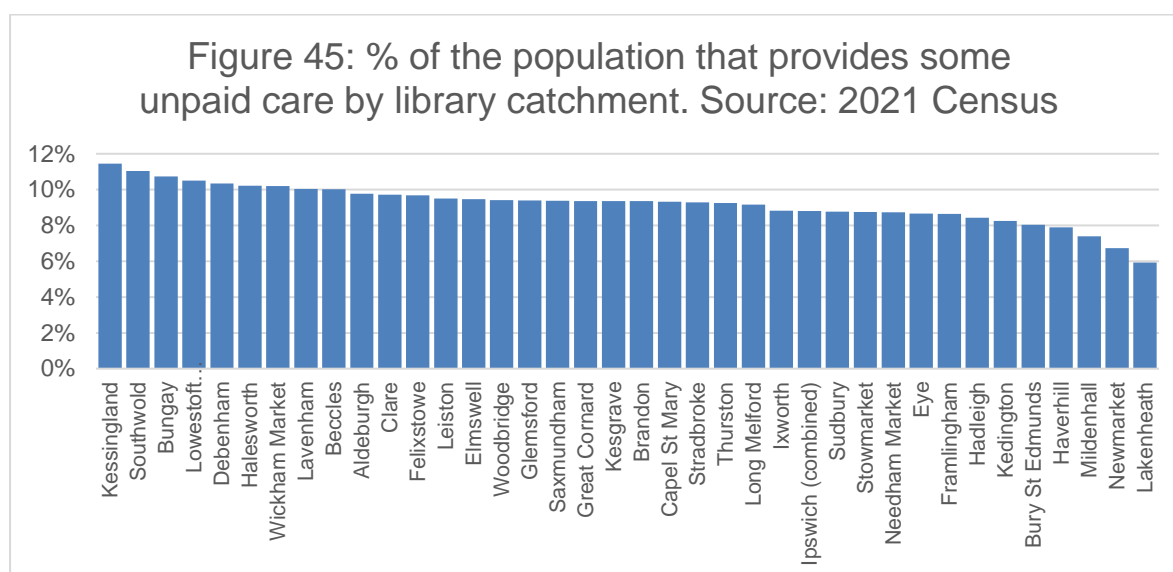
Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



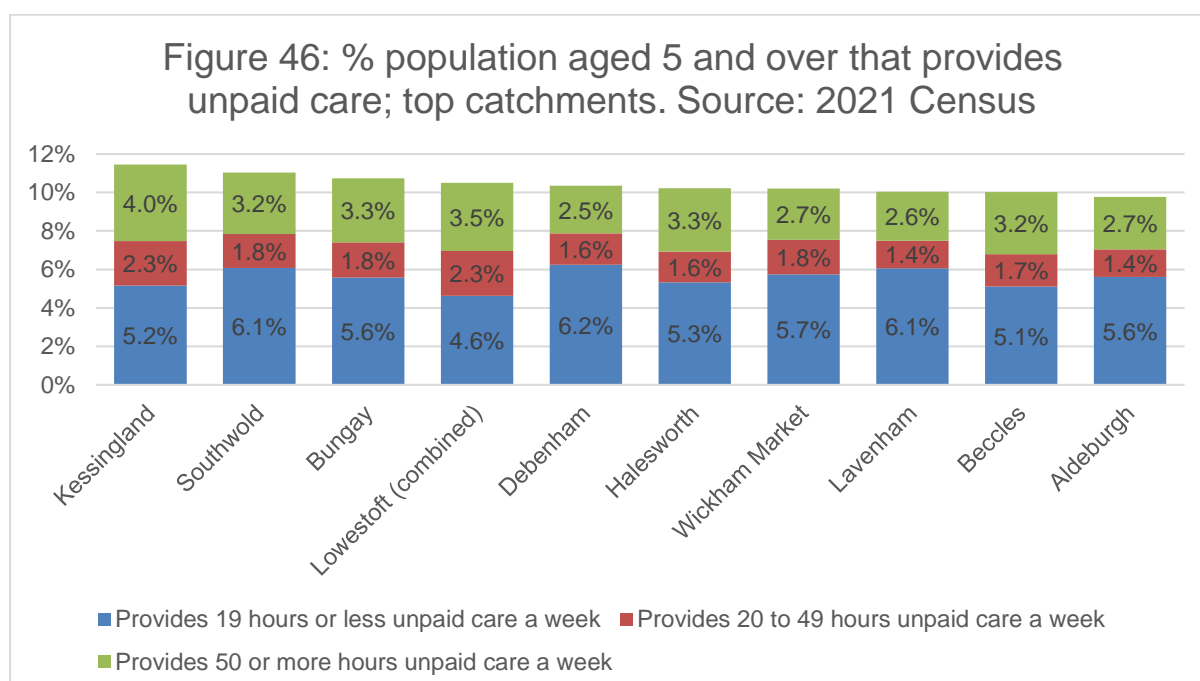
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- **Claimant unemployment** levels are low across most of rural Suffolk.
- The only catchments in which more than 4% of the working-age population are claiming out-of-work benefits are Lowestoft/Oulton Broad and Ipswich.
- The lowest claimant rates are in Lakenheath, Kesgrave, Kedington, Framlingham, Clare, Woodbridge, and Aldeburgh. Less than 1.5% of the working-age population is claiming out-of-work benefits in these areas.
- Suffolk's overall claimant rate is 2.8%.

Carers



- 9% of the population aged 5 and above in Suffolk have some unpaid care responsibilities.
- At a library catchment level, the proportion of people providing unpaid care varies from 11.5% in Kessingland to 5.9% in Lakenheath. Between 8% and 10% of people provide unpaid care in 27 of the 38 catchments.
- Kessingland library catchment also has the highest proportion of residents that provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week (4.0%), followed by Brandon (3.6%), Lowestoft/Oulton Broad (3.5%), Bungay (3.3%) and Halesworth (3.3%).
- Broadly, a greater proportion of people provide unpaid care in the east of the county than the west. This matches the age distribution of people across the county, with older people making up a larger proportion of the population in the east of Suffolk.

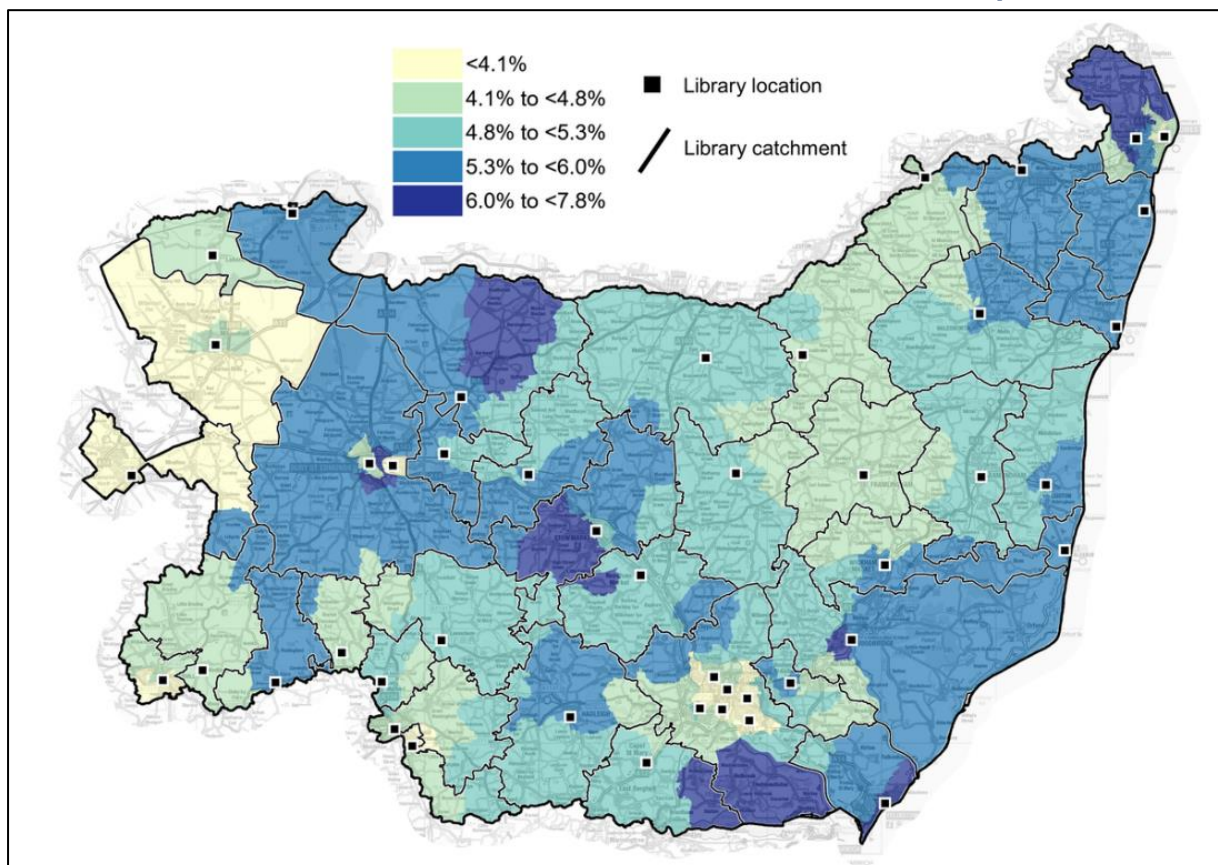


Veterans

Figure 47: % population that previously served in the UK armed forces, and Suffolk library catchments

Sources: Veterans data: 2021 Census, by Middle Super Output Area.

Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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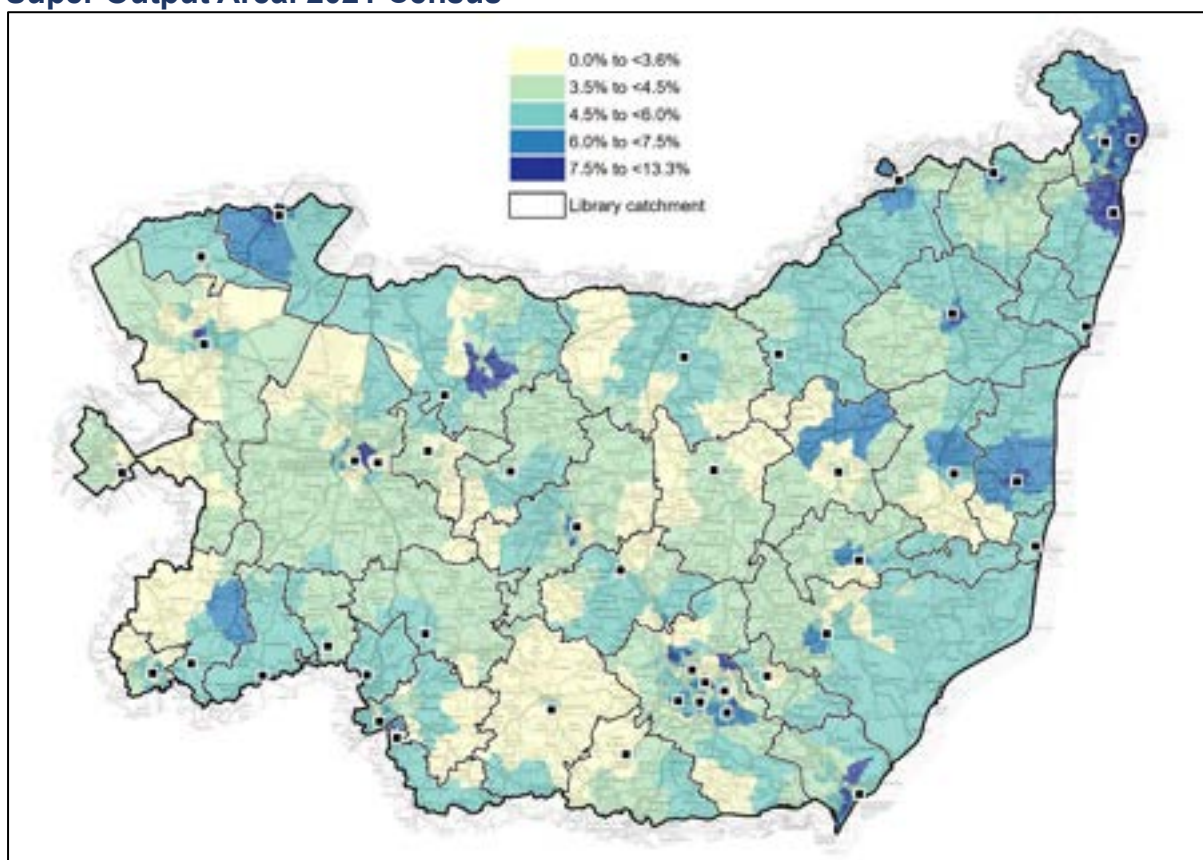
- The veterans data from the 2021 Census are only available down to Middle Super Output Area level, which is not sufficiently granular to allow calculation of meaningful catchment level figures.
- Areas with a higher proportion of armed forces veterans in residence at the time of the 2021 Census are found around Bury St Edmunds, on the Shotley Peninsula (closest to Capel St Mary and the Ipswich libraries), the Stowmarket area, the area north of Ixworth, Woodbridge, and the area to the north of Lowestoft.

Children in care

In August 2023 there were approximately 1,083 Children in Care residing within Suffolk, with approximately 758 placed from within Suffolk and approximately 222 placed in Suffolk from other authorities.

Health

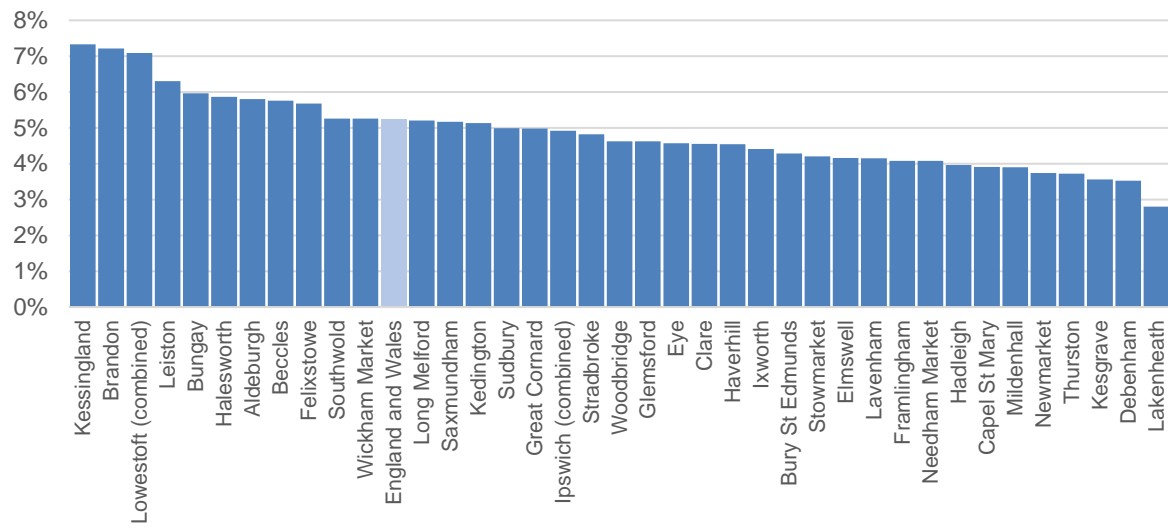
Figure 48: % population assessing their health as bad or very bad, by Lower Super Output Area. 2021 Census



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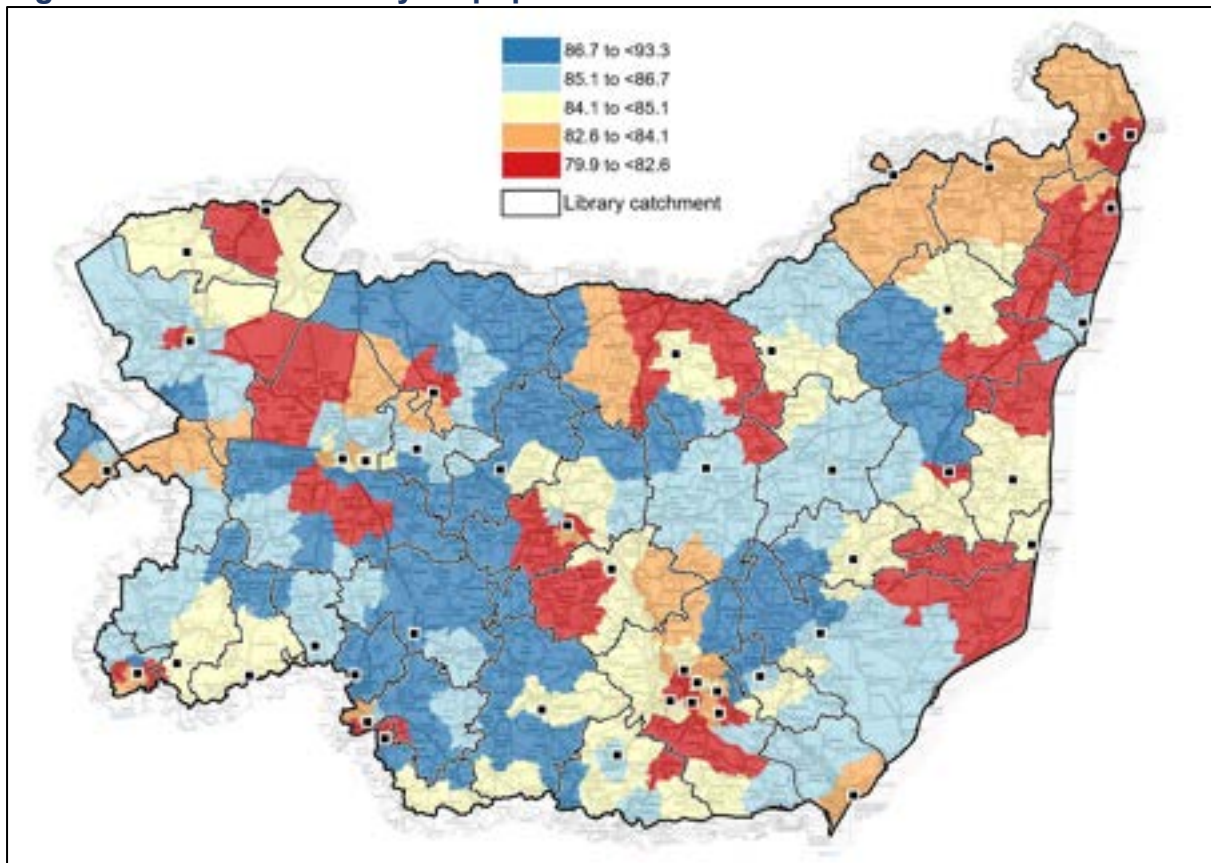
- Small areas with higher levels of the population assessing their health as bad or very bad are scattered across the county, but are mainly found in town centres, often close to library buildings.
- Kessingland, Brandon and Lowestoft/Oulton Broad library catchments each have more than 7% of their population in bad or very bad health. The England and Wales average is 5.2%. Less than 3% of the population of Lakenheath library catchment assessed their health as bad or very bad at the time of the 2021 Census.

Figure 49: % catchment population self-assessing their health as 'bad or very bad'. Source: 2021 Census



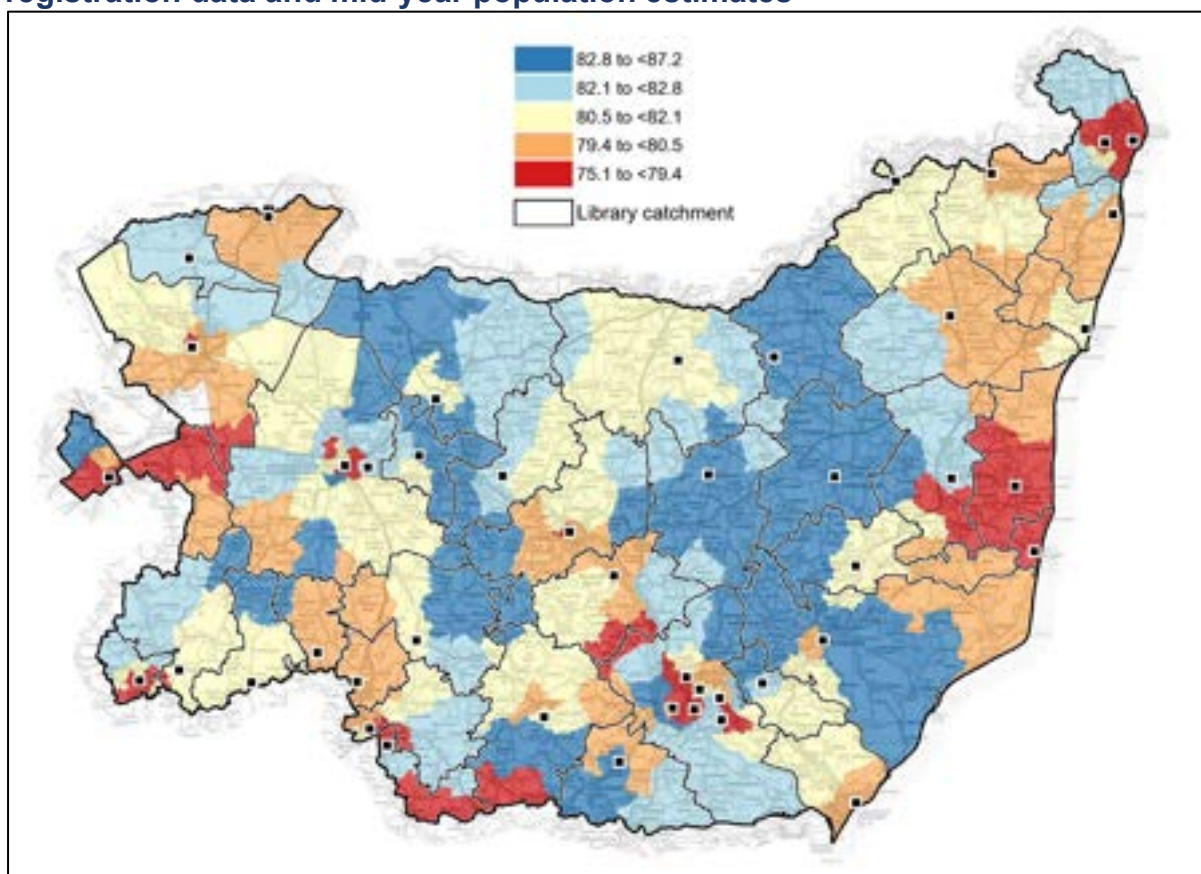
Life Expectancy

Figure 50: Life expectancy at birth for females, by Ward, 2016-2020. Source: The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities analysis of ONS death registration data and mid-year population estimates



- Life expectancy at birth data are only available down to Ward level, which is not sufficiently granular to allow calculation of meaningful catchment level figures. These data also have relatively wide confidence intervals, meaning caution should be applied to using these figures.
- Areas of lower life expectancy at birth for females are found across Suffolk, in both rural and urban areas. The towns of Lowestoft, Ipswich, Saxmundham, Sudbury, Haverhill, Stowmarket, and Mildenhall all have below average life expectancy at birth for females.
- However, life expectancy is higher than the England average of 83.1 across most of the county; 101 of 138 Wards in Suffolk have better than average life expectancy at birth for females.

Figure 51: Life expectancy at birth for males, by Ward, 2016-2020. Source: The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities analysis of ONS death registration data and mid-year population estimates



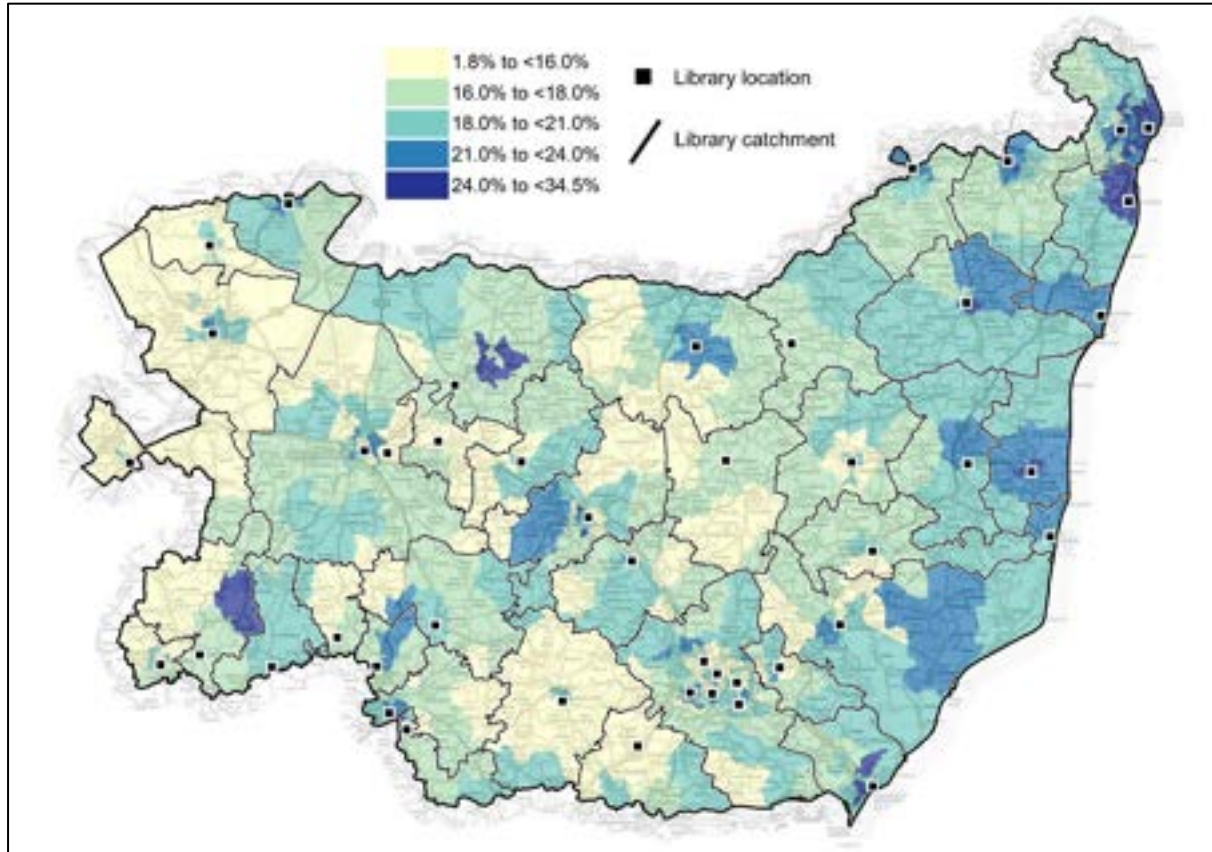
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- Life expectancy at birth data are only available down to Ward level, which is not sufficiently granular to allow calculation of meaningful catchment level figures. These data also have relatively wide confidence intervals, meaning caution should be applied to using these figures.
- Life expectancy at birth for males is better than the England average of 79.4 in 110 of Suffolk's 138 Wards.
- Areas of lower life expectancy at birth for males are found in Lowestoft, Ipswich, Aldeburgh/Leiston/Saxmundham, Sudbury and the nearby area along the border with Essex, Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket.

Disability

Figure 52: % population that are disabled under the Equality Act and Suffolk library catchments

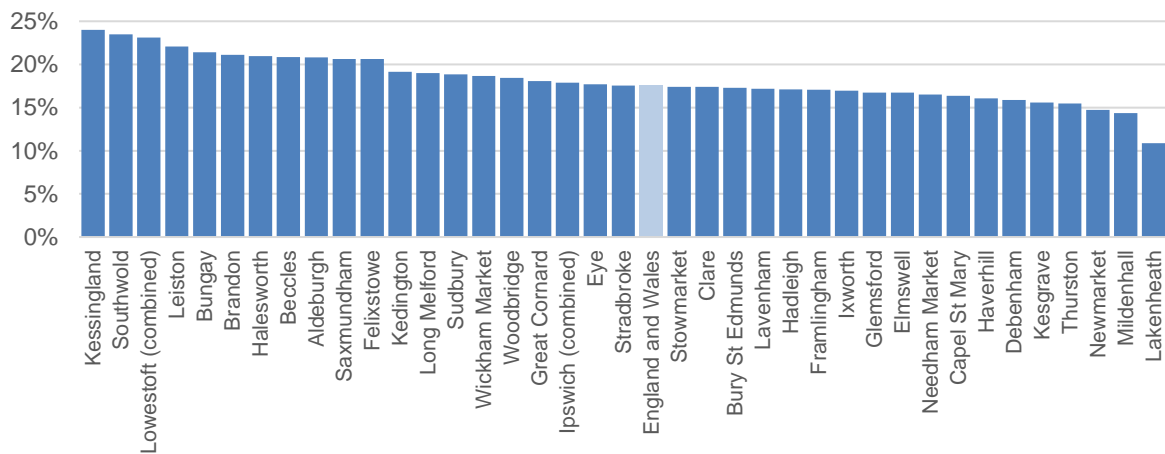
Sources: Population data: 2021 Census, by Output Area. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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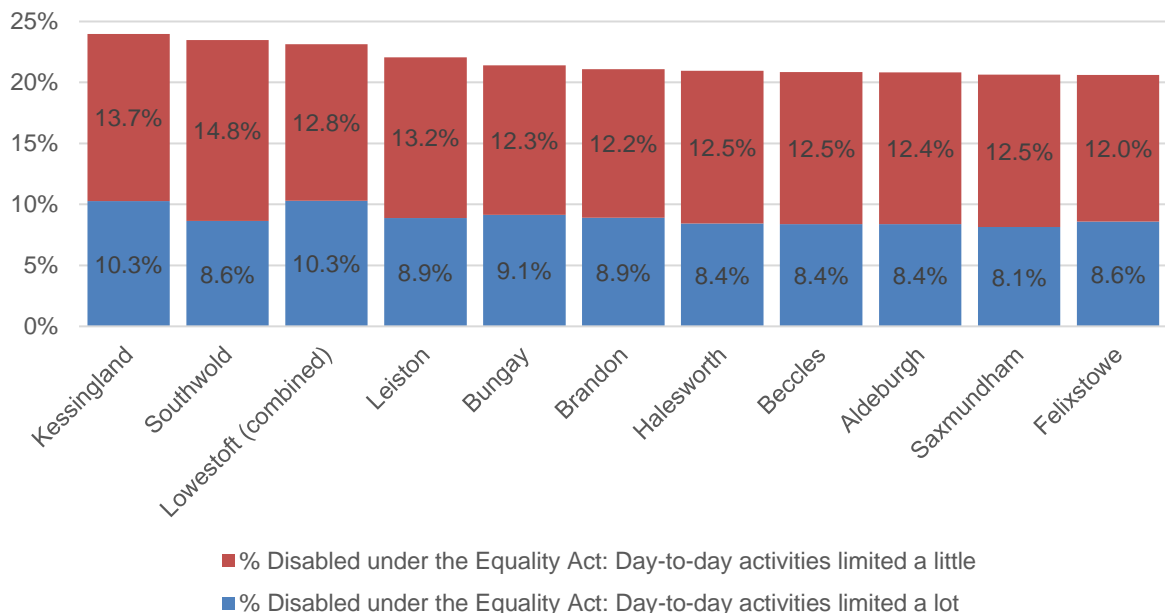
- Across Suffolk as a whole, 18.3% of the population is disabled under the Equality Act (2010)¹⁶ according to data from the 2021 Census. This is slightly higher than the England and Wales average of 17.5%.

Figure 53: % of the population who are disabled under the Equality Act by library catchment. Source: 2021 Census



- At library catchment level, the percentage of the population who are disabled under the Equality Act (2010)¹⁶ varies from 24.0% in Kessingland to 10.9% in Lakenheath. A further ten library catchments have more than 20% of residents identifying as disabled, see chart below.
- More than 10% of the population of Lowestoft/Oulton Broad and Kessingland catchments have their day-to-day activities limited a lot by their disability.

Figure 54: % catchment population disabled under the Equality Act - top catchments. Source: 2021 Census



Educational Attainment

Early Years Foundation Stage

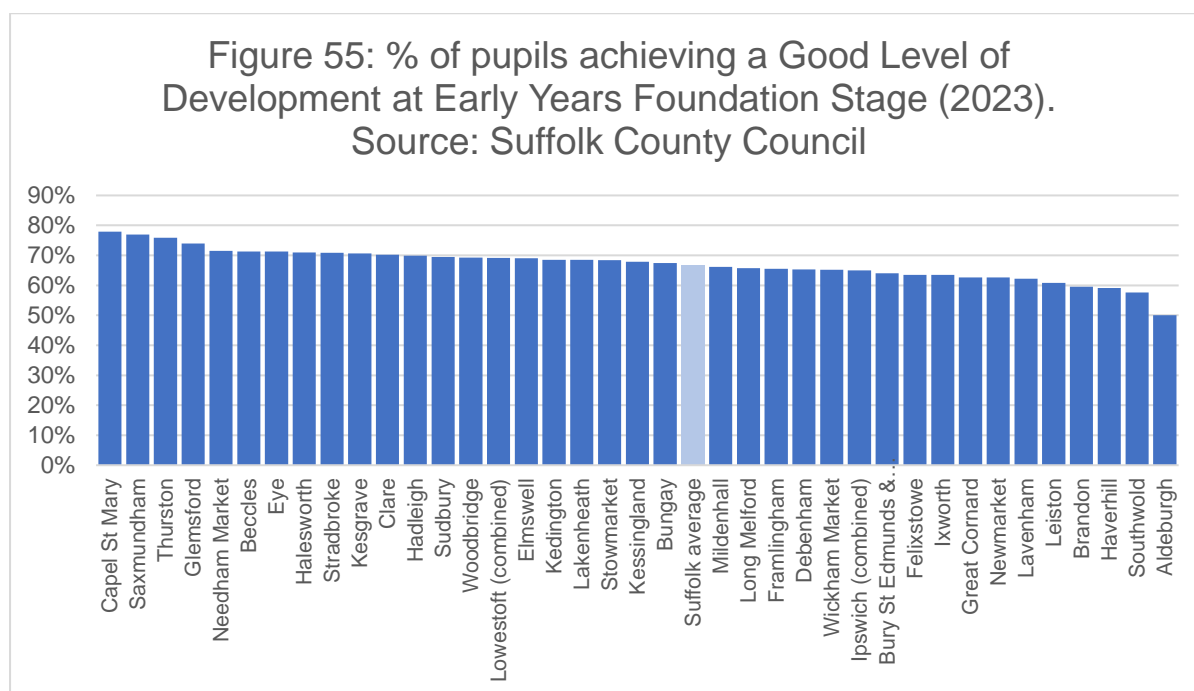


Table 14: % of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023) by library catchment

Library catchment	2023 cohort	% of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023)
Capel St Mary	95	77.9%
Saxmundham	91	76.9%
Thurston	83	75.9%
Glemsford	50	74.0%
Needham Market	151	71.5%
Beccles	122	71.3%
Eye	101	71.3%
Halesworth	93	71.0%
Stradbroke	48	70.8%
Kesgrave	211	70.6%
Clare	37	70.3%
Hadleigh	143	69.9%
Sudbury	167	69.5%
Woodbridge	254	69.3%
Lowestoft & Oulton Broad	721	69.2%
Elmswell	110	69.1%
Kedington	54	68.5%
Lakenheath	73	68.5%

Library catchment	2023 cohort	% of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023)
Stowmarket	348	68.4%
Kessingland	53	67.9%
Bungay	43	67.4%
Suffolk total	7,175	66.6%
Mildenhall	284	66.2%
Long Melford	38	65.8%
Framlingham	61	65.6%
Debenham	49	65.3%
Wickham Market	46	65.2%
Ipswich (combined)	1,788	65.0%
Bury St Edmunds & Moreton Hall	542	64.0%
Felixstowe	285	63.5%
Ixworth	137	63.5%
Great Cornard	134	62.7%
Newmarket	198	62.6%
Lavenham	45	62.2%
Leiston	92	60.9%
Brandon	94	59.6%
Haverhill	291	59.1%
Southwold	33	57.6%
Aldeburgh	10	50.0%

- The percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, reception year, age 5) in 2023 ranges from 50% in Aldeburgh library catchment to 78% in Capel St Mary library catchment.
- EYFS attainment by pupils in Saxmundham, Thurston, Glemsford, Needham Market, Beccles, Eye, Halesworth, Stradbroke, Kesgrave and Clare library catchments is relatively high (above 70% achieving a GLD in each case).
- The lowest attainment levels are found in Southwold, Haverhill, Brandon and Leiston library catchments. It should be remembered that this is just one year of data and, in some library catchments, the cohort of pupils is relatively small.

Across Suffolk, two thirds of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development at EYFS.

Key Stage 2

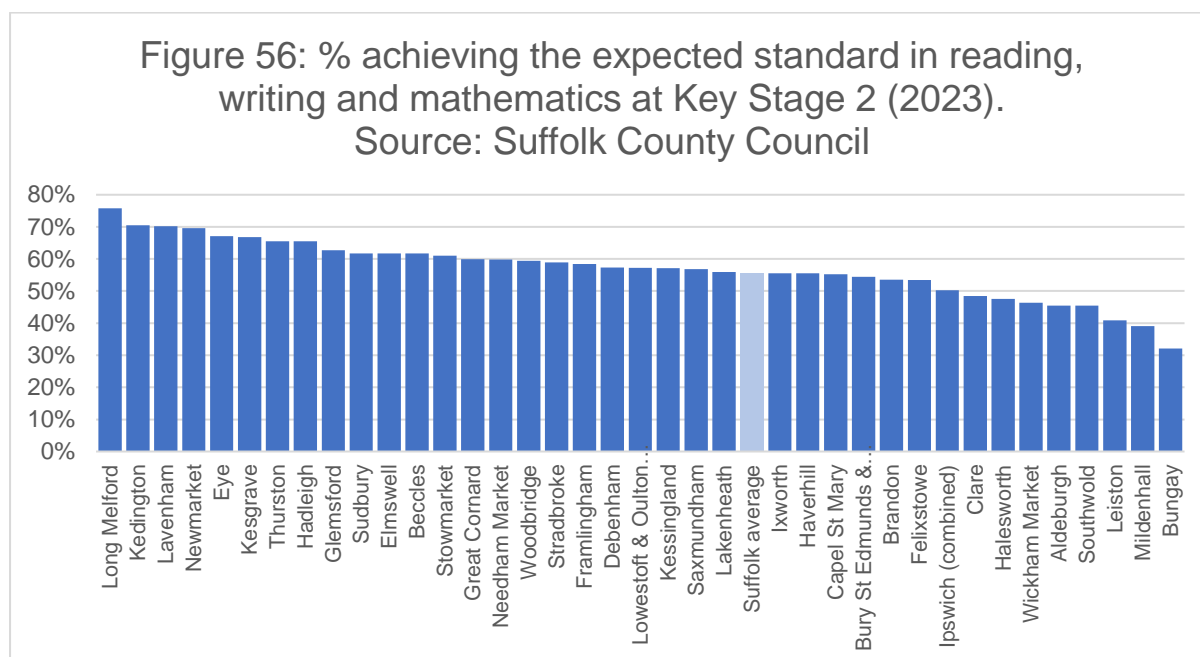


Table 15: % achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023) by library catchment

Library catchment	2023 cohort	% achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023)
Long Melford	33	75.8%
Kedington	44	70.5%
Lavenham	47	70.2%
Newmarket	204	69.6%
Eye	167	67.1%
Kesgrave	289	66.8%
Thurston	90	65.6%
Hadleigh	171	65.5%
Glemsford	59	62.7%
Sudbury	175	61.7%
Elmswell	94	61.7%
Beccles	154	61.7%
Stowmarket	377	61.0%
Great Cornard	162	59.9%
Needham Market	152	59.9%
Woodbridge	281	59.4%
Stradbroke	56	58.9%
Framlingham	89	58.4%
Debenham	82	57.3%

Library catchment	2023 cohort	% achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023)
Lowestoft & Oulton Broad	910	57.3%
Kessingland	63	57.1%
Saxmundham	88	56.8%
Lakenheath	59	55.9%
Suffolk average	8,107	55.7%
Ixworth	144	55.6%
Haverhill	353	55.5%
Capel St Mary	105	55.2%
Bury St Edmunds & Moreton Hall	593	54.5%
Brandon	86	53.5%
Felixstowe	294	53.4%
Ipswich (combined)	2,059	50.3%
Clare	33	48.5%
Halesworth	103	47.6%
Wickham Market	41	46.3%
Aldeburgh	11	45.5%
Southwold	33	45.5%
Leiston	71	40.8%
Mildenhall	279	39.1%
Bungay	56	32.1%

- The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (KS2, year 6, age 11) in 2023 ranges from 32% in Bungay library catchment to 76% in Long Melford catchment.
- KS2 attainment by pupils in Long Melford, Kedington, Lavenham, Newmarket, Eye, Kesgrave, Thurston and Hadleigh library catchments is relatively high (above 65% achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in each case).
- The lowest attainment levels are found in Bungay, Mildenhall and Leiston library catchments. It should be remembered that this is just one year of data and, in some library catchments, the cohort of pupils is relatively small.
- Across Suffolk, 55.7% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in KS2.

Key Stage 4 data for this period is not yet available but is expected to be added.

Section 3 - Provision of existing services

Library coverage

Travel Distance to Static Library

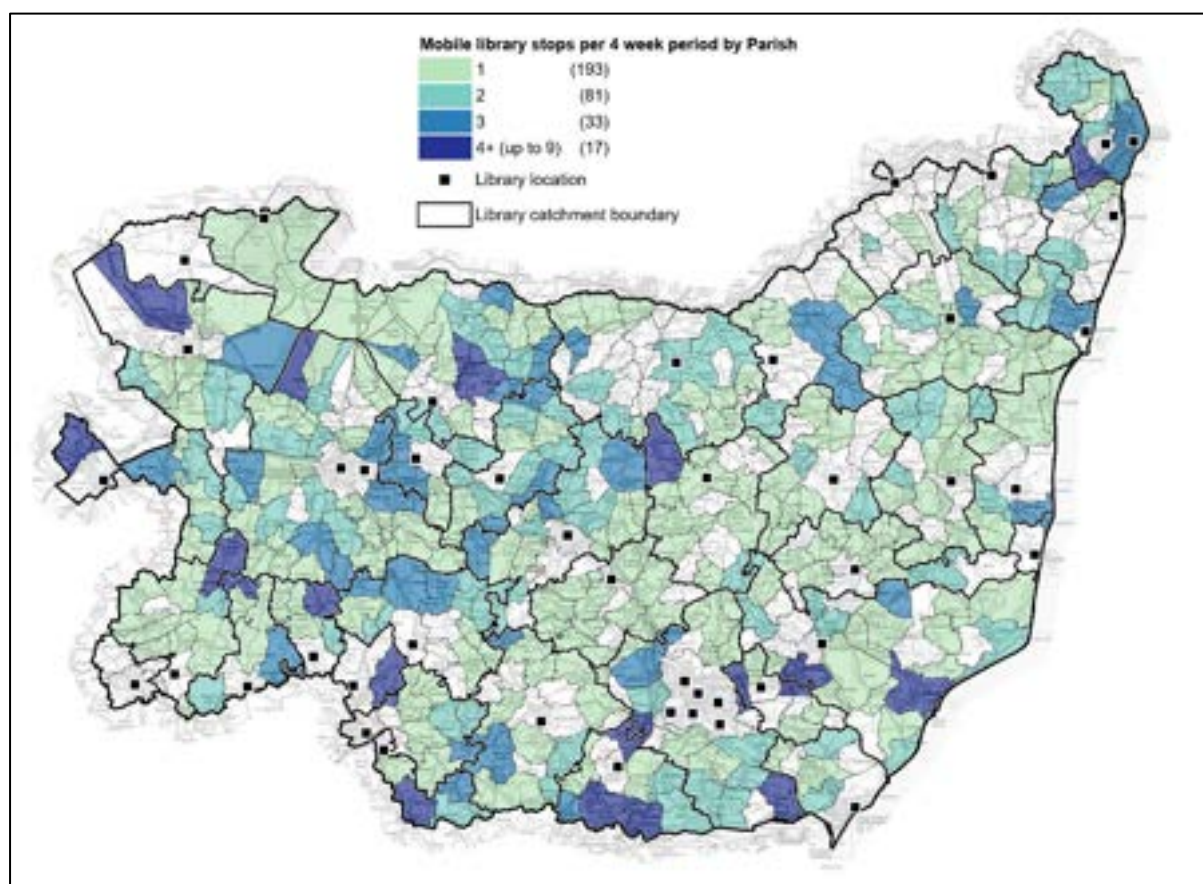
- Almost half of Suffolk's population (46.3%) lives within 1 mile of a static library. 18.1% of the population also live within half a mile of their nearest library building.
- Less than 7% of the population of the county needs to travel more than 5 miles to reach their nearest static library.
- For the population for whom Eye is the closest static library, 41.3% live 5 or more miles away.

Connecting Communities is a transport service to help people, who might not have access to a regular bus service, to travel around the county of Suffolk. Although free travel and bus passes are not accepted, those eligible for Travel Vouchers can redeem these on Connecting Communities.

Coverage of Mobile Library Service

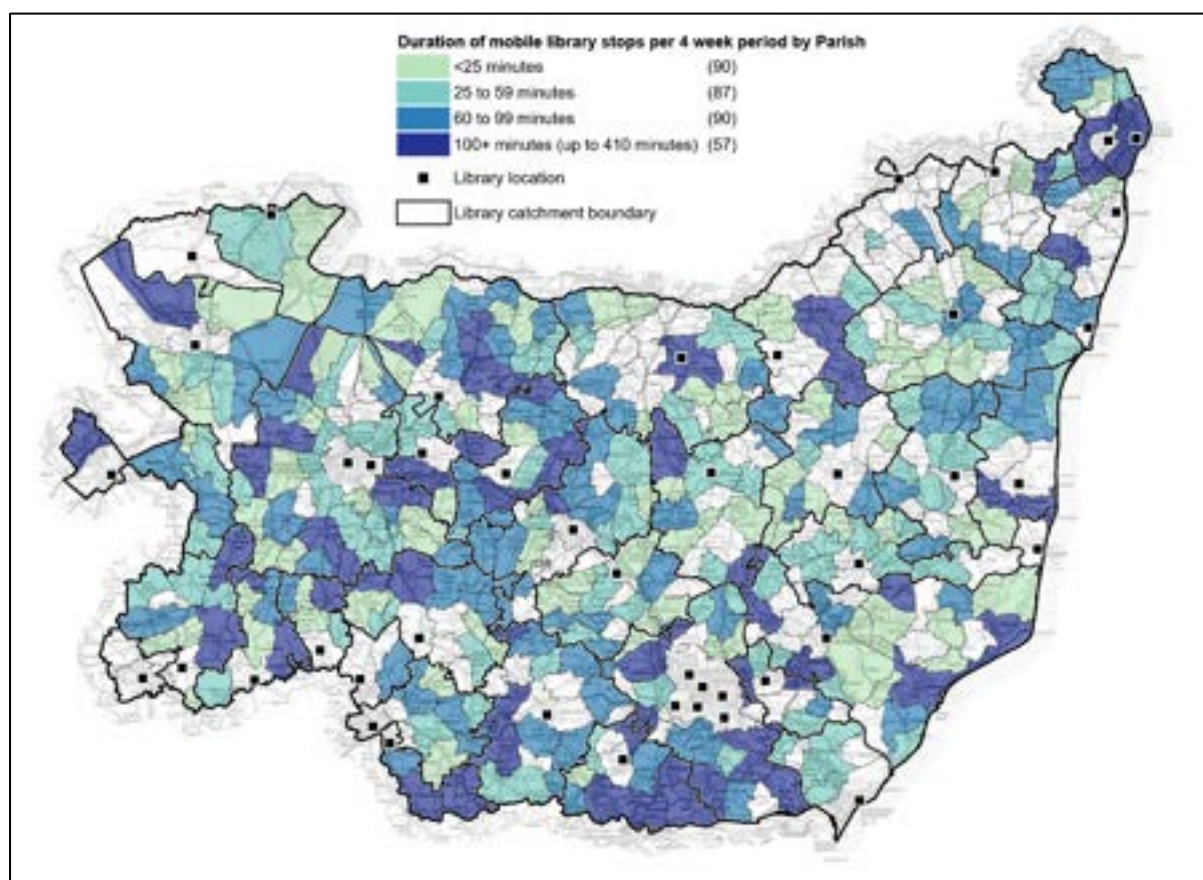
- The three current mobile library routes reach 324 of Suffolk's 480 parishes.
- Of the remaining 156 parishes, the mobile library stops at a nearby parish that is within 1 mile in 15 cases, between 1 and 2 miles in 126 cases, and between 2 and 3 miles in 15 cases.
- These calculations are based on a straight-line distance between the centre of each parish as the exact coordinates of the mobile library stops are not available.

Figure 57: Count of mobile library stops over a 4-week period, by Parish
Sources: Mobile library stops: Suffolk Libraries. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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Figure 58: Duration of mobile library stops over a 4-week period, by Parish
Sources: Duration of mobile library stops: Suffolk Libraries. Catchments: SCC & Suffolk Libraries, based on 2021 Census Output Areas



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Table 16: Parishes that do not have a mobile library stop by average distance to their nearest static library, and details of their nearest mobile library stop

Parish name	LTLA	Average distance to nearest static library	Nearest Parish with mobile library stop(s)	Distance to nearest mobile library
Gedgrave	East Suffolk	10.25	Orford	1.4
Ramsholt	East Suffolk	7.74	Alderton	1.5
Rickingham Superior	Mid Suffolk	7.57	Rickingham Inferior	1.1
Capel St. Andrew	East Suffolk	7.48	Boyton	1.4
Arwarton	Babergh	7.38	Shotley	1.2
Knettishall	West Suffolk	7.23	Coney Weston	1.1
Higham	West Suffolk	6.69	Barrow	1.5
Finningham	Mid Suffolk	6.67	Gislingham	1.1
Mendham	Mid Suffolk	6.49	Metfield	1.9
Wattisham	Babergh	6.20	Hitcham	1.2
Iken	East Suffolk	6.18	Sudbourne	1.4
Ubbeston	East Suffolk	5.94	Heveningham	1.3

Parish name	LTLA	Average distance to nearest static library	Nearest Parish with mobile library stop(s)	Distance to nearest mobile library
Wantisden	East Suffolk	5.86	Chillesford	1.5
Linstead Magna	East Suffolk	5.72	Cratfield	1.1
Hemley	East Suffolk	5.51	Newbourne	1.1
St. James, South Elmham	East Suffolk	5.46	Metfield	1.3
Burgate	Mid Suffolk	5.39	Botesdale	1.3
Weybread	Mid Suffolk	5.38	Wingfield	2.4

The table above shows the 18 Suffolk parishes for which the average distance for residents to the nearest static library building is 5 miles or more by road/footpath and which do not have a mobile library stop within the parish. The final two columns show details of the nearest parish that is served by a mobile library stop, plus the distance in a straight line between the central points of both parishes.

Weybread and Mendham have the greatest distances to travel to access the library service either by static or mobile library options. There is no record of residents from Ramsholt, Higham, Mendham, Wantisden and Weybread, which are furthest away from provision, making use of the Home Library service. It is possible that people in the north of the county access library services across the border at Harleston or Diss.

Rural Outreach and Alternative Access

Rural Outreach currently comprises a mobile library service, a home library service and 'Libraries Local' Pop Up Libraries.

Mobile Libraries

Three mobile library vehicles serve the rural parts of Suffolk, with one spare vehicle on standby, to cover for vehicle servicing and repairs. There is a monthly route pattern with a total of 544 stops, visited by people 14,299 times in 2022-3. Locations for mobile library stops are considered on a case-by-case basis. Factors in deciding on this include level of need, capacity to add to existing routes, availability of a safe place to stop. Similarly, where usage is low, this can lead to removal of a stop.

Home Library Service

A home library service, run by local volunteers, is available for vulnerable residents in Suffolk who find it difficult to access a static or mobile library. This service is not limited to those who live in highly rural locations but supports universal access. A volunteer liaises with individual customers and selects, collects, and delivers books based on their preferences. This is offered to anyone who is struggling to attend other elements of the library service. It may suit customers who are socially isolated, lack digital skills to access the online catalogue, or who need support with making selections.

Libraries Local

There are currently 3 locations where 'Libraries local' is delivered in Suffolk, also known as 'Pop Up Libraries'. These are located in Shotley, Rushmere and Red Lodge. In each, space a community building is hired on an hourly basis. In 2017, Suffolk County Council funded a 6-month pilot of weekly Suffolk Libraries sessions. After a 6-month trial in Shotley, Red Lodge and Moreton Hall, usage was reviewed.

Table 17: Suffolk Libraries Local pilot (1st June and 30th November 2017)

Libraries	Visits	Issues	Borrowers
SL Local: Moreton Hall	850	902	110
SL Local: Red Lodge	843	1,199	79
SL Local: Shotley	1,078	1,466	112

Red Lodge and Moreton Hall ceased. Shotley had the highest use and was continued with Suffolk Libraries absorbing the cost.

Opening Hours of static and pop-up libraries

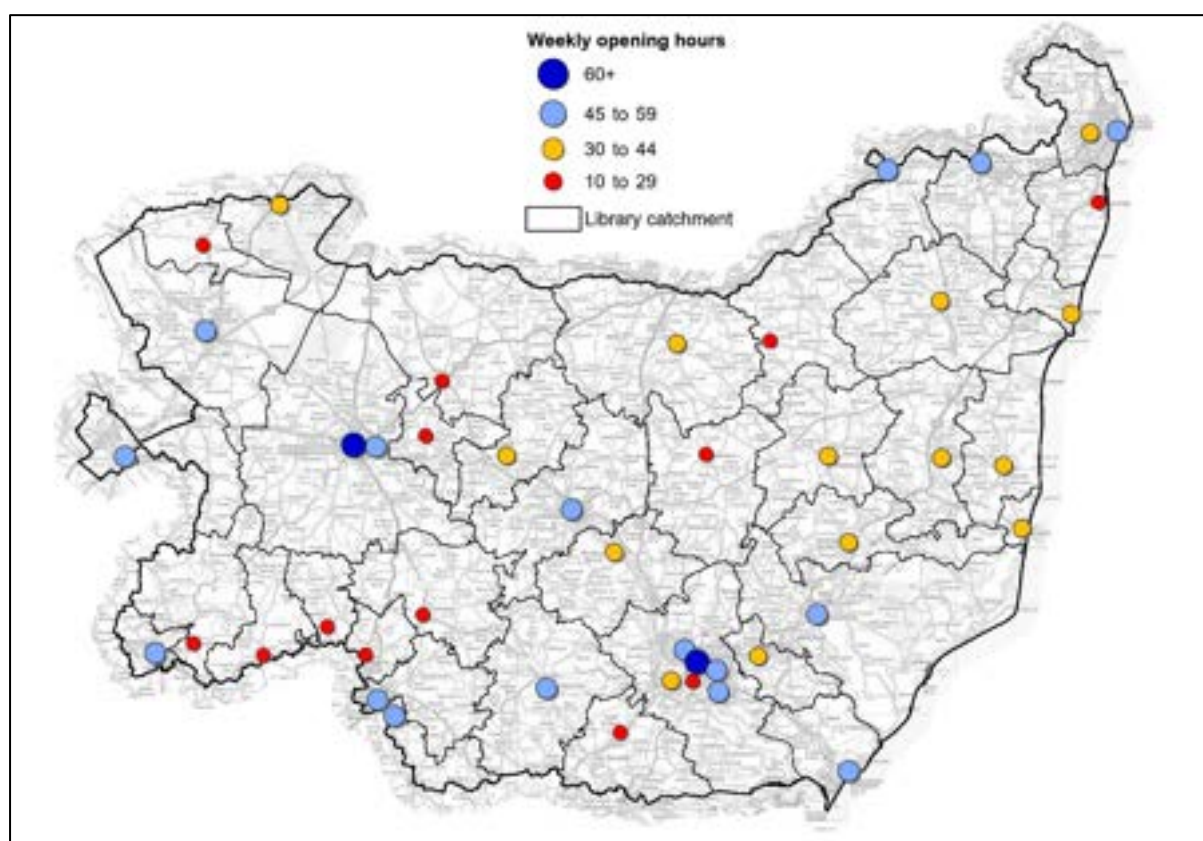
Opening hours per 1,000 population

(based on total opening hours of all libraries, July 2023)

Static and pop-up libraries are open for a total of 1,724.75 hours per week and the population of Suffolk, based on Suffolk Observatory figures, is 760,688. This means that libraries are open for 2.25 hours per week per 1,000 population.

- All of Suffolk's 45 static libraries are open on at least 4 days per week. Almost three-quarters (73%) open on at least 6 days per week. 17 (38%) are open on every day of the week.
- Of Suffolk's 45 static libraries, 44 (98%) are open on a Saturday. Of these, 28 are open for 6 or more hours, 10 open for 4 to 6 hours and 6 are open for less than 4 hours.
- On Sundays, 84% of Suffolk's libraries are open (38 of 45). The majority of libraries (23) open for 4 to 6 hours on a Sunday, while 13 open for 6 hours or more and 2 open for less than 4 hours.
- Glemsford is the only library that does not open on a Saturday, but it is open on a Sunday.
- 71% of Suffolk's libraries (32 of 45) have opening hours beyond 5pm on at least one day per week. Four libraries are open beyond 5pm on 5 days per week. 23 of these 32 libraries are open for fewer than 4 hours beyond 5pm per week. A further 6 libraries are open for 4 to 6 hours beyond 5pm per week. Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich County and Woodbridge libraries are open for 6 hours or more beyond 5pm per week.
- A third of libraries also open beyond 6pm on at least one day per week.

Figure 59: Weekly library opening times, July 2023. Source: Suffolk Libraries



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The map displays the term time opening hours for Great Cornard library (in holiday time, the library is open for 28 hours).

In the case of Moreton Hall, the map shows the full opening hours - the library is staffed for 17 hours per week and operates on a self-service (open plus) basis the rest of the time.

Figure 60: Count of libraries by opening hours on weekends and during evenings. Source: Suffolk Libraries

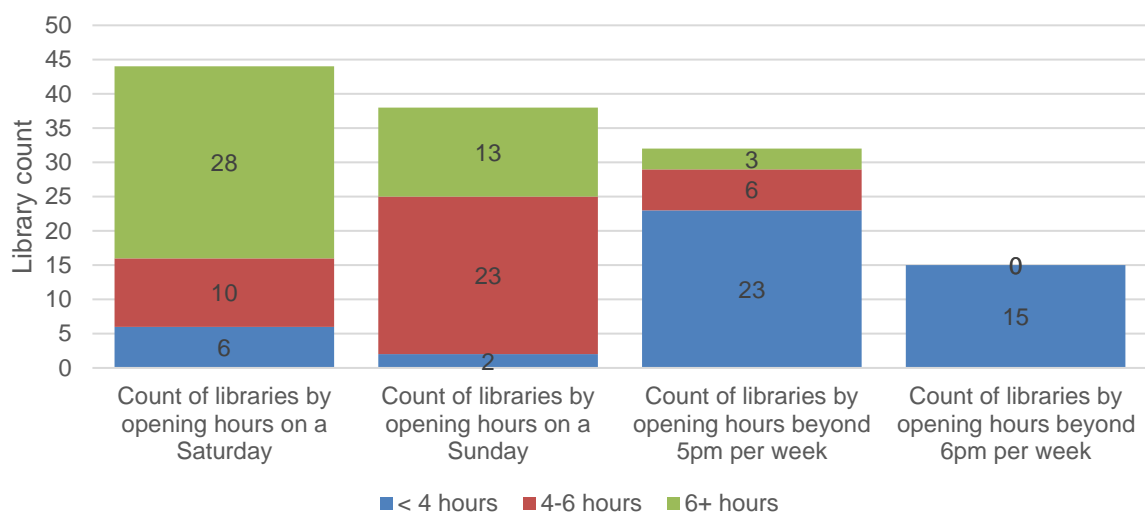
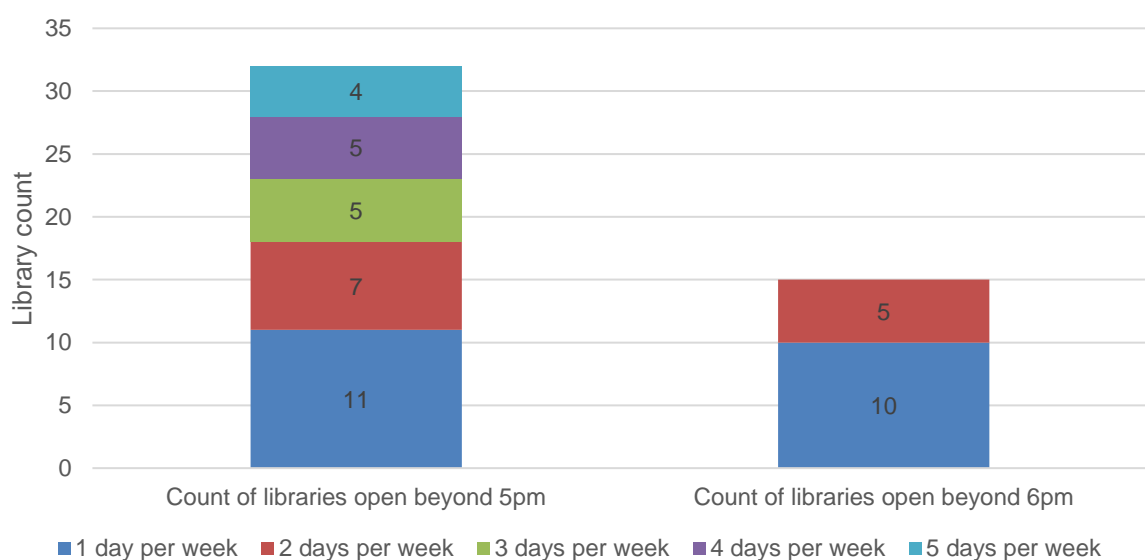


Figure 61: Count of libraries by number of days with evening opening hours. Source: Suffolk Libraries



Occasionally libraries host one-off events outside of opening hours. These include music events, author talks, events organised by the friends' groups.

Table 18: Count of libraries by weekend opening hours

	Count of libraries by opening hours on a Saturday	Count of libraries by opening hours on a Sunday
< 4 hours	6	2
4-6 hours	10	23
6+ hours	28	13
Total	44	38

Open Plus

Open Plus is being trialled at Moreton Hall library. It aims to widen access to libraries by individuals and other agencies. Some of the opening hours are not staffed and registered users can enter the library to return, browse and borrow. Of the 50 hours per week that Moreton Hall Library is open, 33.75 hours are on a self-service (unstaffed) basis.

Library Management System

The SPINE libraries consortium has four partners – Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Peterborough. The Consortium works together under a Memorandum of Understanding. All partners are currently using the cloud-based SPYDUS Library Management System (LMS).

Civica were awarded the contract for Support and Maintenance of SPYDUS from 1 June 2020 for 4+1+1 years and the consortium achieved better economy by joining together to purchase a library management system. Following the procurement process, the agreed contract price revealed a net saving of over £98k in total for the partners.

Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Peterborough share an LMS database and are full members of SPINE. Norfolk has a stand-alone database, which makes them an associate member of SPINE. This allows for sharing of stock across the borders of Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough –thereby increasing stock availability for service users in each area and reducing stock outlay costs for niche titles. Suffolk is currently a net loaner of books within the consortium. Customer who requests books from across the county border pay a £2 reservation charge. Transfer between the 3 areas works well because there are libraries adjacent to shared borders, allowing for transfer by a short courier journey.

Budget considerations associated with increasing digital loans

Costs within the service will evolve as library users increasingly engage with digital loans. Currently, the licences for libraries to use digital copies of materials are variable but can be at a high cost for short licences when a book is new and/or popular. In addition, there are costs associated with using the various platforms such as BorrowBox, and Libby.

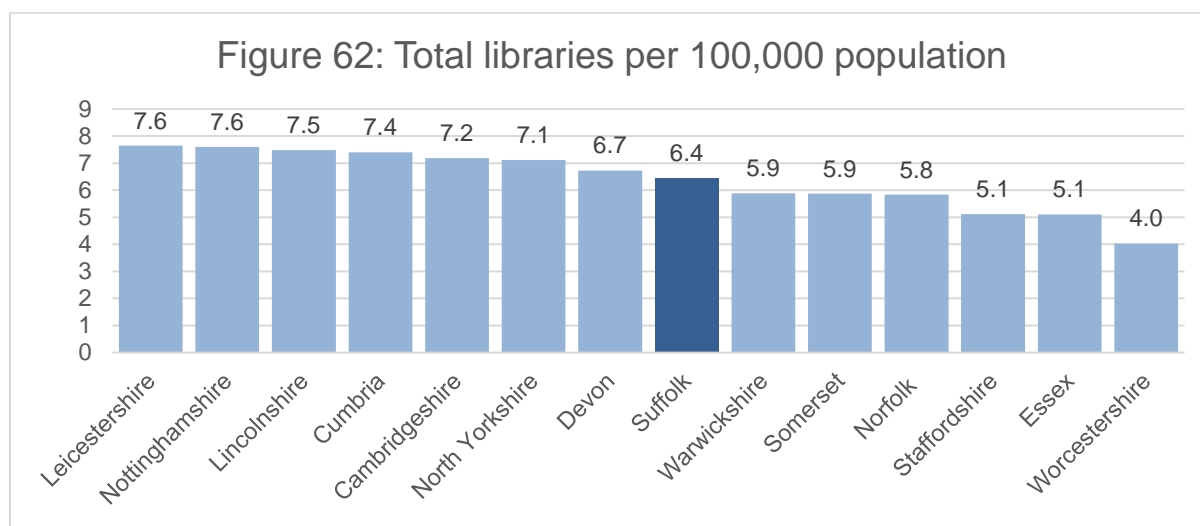
Nationally, moves to drive down the price of digital resources for Libraries are underway but the likely outcome of this is not known. Although digital materials avoid some of the associated overheads of hard copies, such as processing, stock control, transportation, storage or replacement of lost/damaged copies, this diversification of options for borrowers has increased costs for the service.

As digital loans are free and automatically return when they expire, increases in digital borrowing and reduction in physical borrowing will result in lost revenue.

How Suffolk's library service compares with statistical neighbours

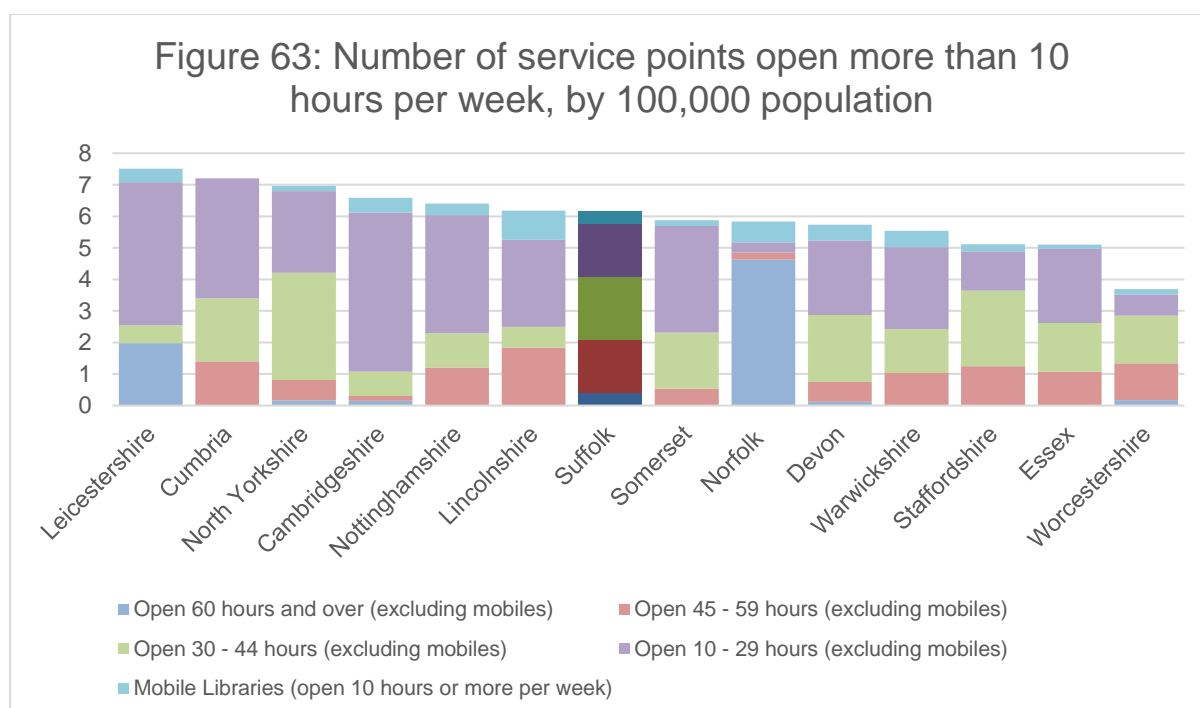
Source of data for all charts: CIPFA public library statistics - actuals - 2019/20

The 2019/20 data from CIPFA is last full year of data available that is not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data since then has been skewed by the pandemic and is becoming increasingly incomplete, as more local authorities are moving away from reporting through CIPFA.

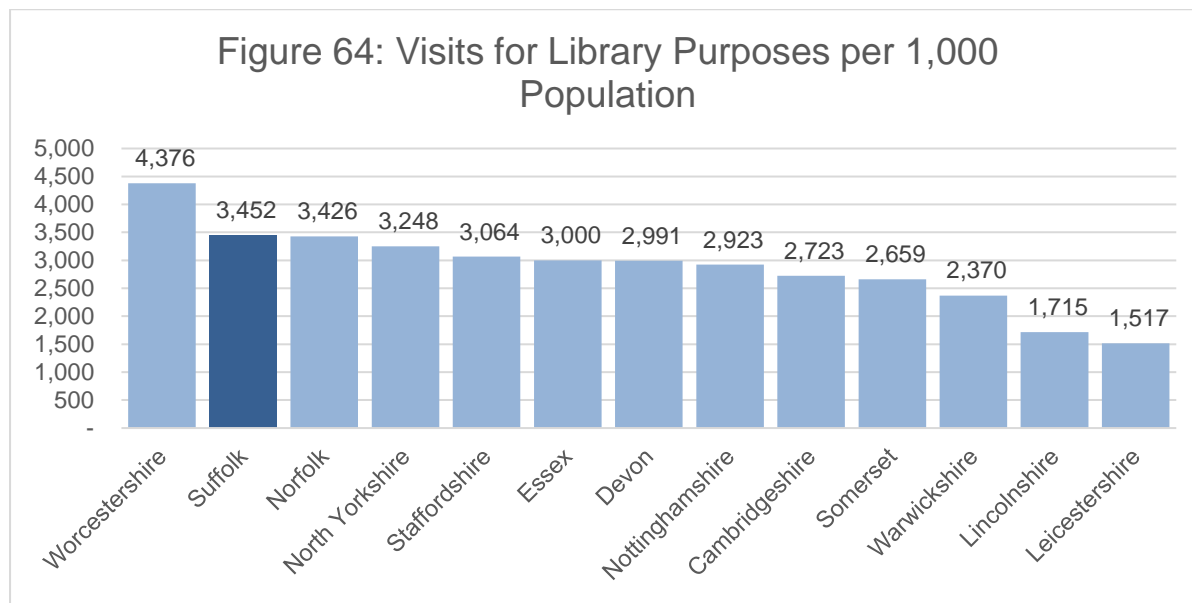


Includes: Local Authority Run Library, Community Managed Co-Produced Library, Commissioned Community Co-Produced Library, and Independent Library

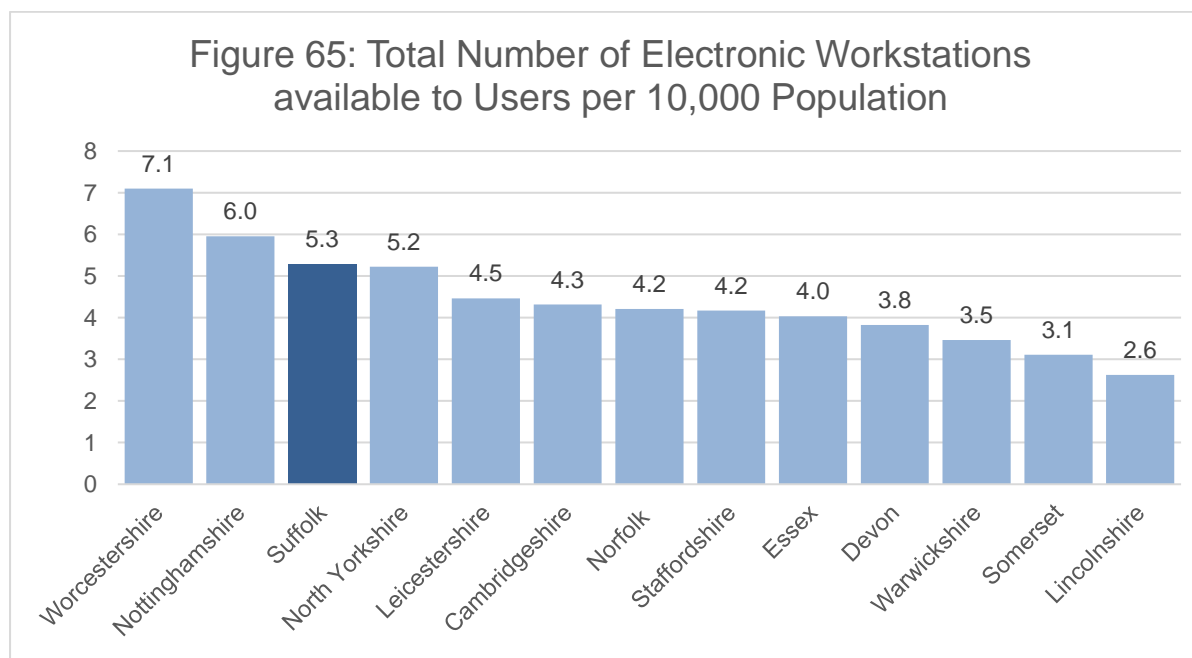
- Suffolk has 6.4 static libraries per 100,000 population: around average across our statistical neighbours.



- There are 6.4 library service points open more than 10 hours per week by 100,000 population in Suffolk; an average figure among our statistical neighbours.
- Leicestershire has the highest number of service points when taking into account the population (7.6) and Worcestershire the lowest 3.8)

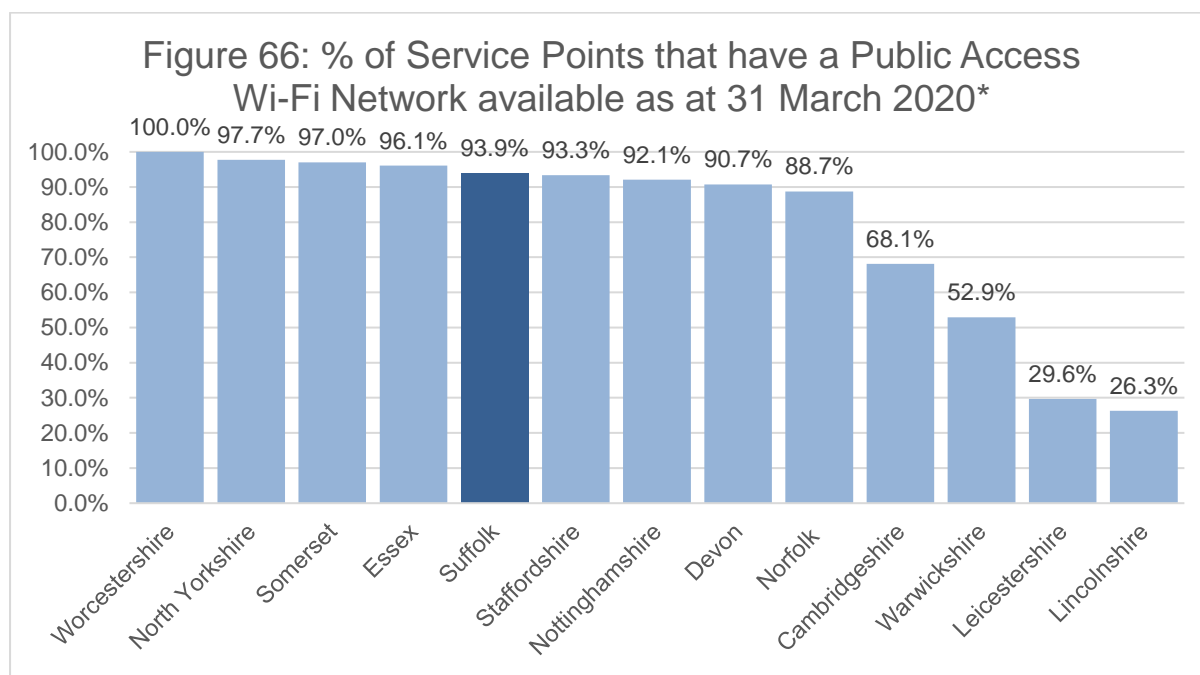


- In 2019/20 there were 3,452 library visits for every 1,000 residents in Suffolk, second only to Worcestershire among our statistical neighbours.
- Suffolk ranks 2nd on the list (3,452 visits per 1,000 population) behind Worcestershire (4,376).

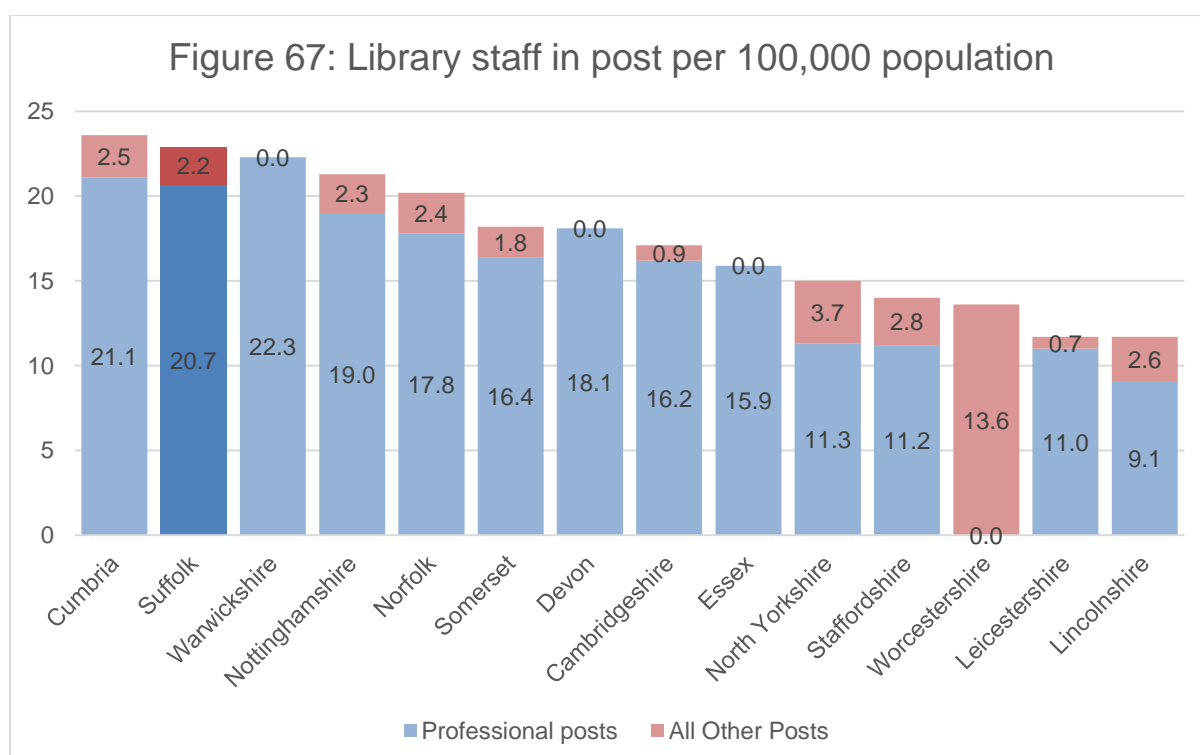


- In 2019/20 Suffolk libraries held 5.3 electronic workstations per 10,000 residents.
- Worcestershire is highest (7.1 workstations per 10,000 population), while Lincolnshire is lowest (2.6).

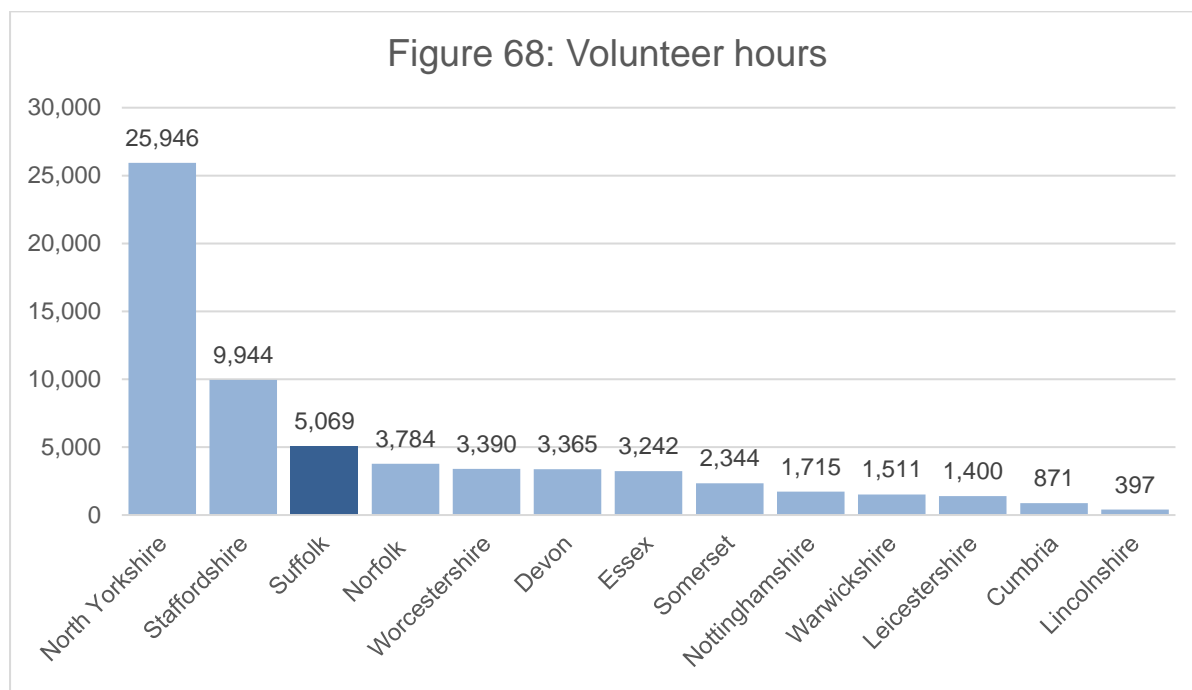
- Only Worcestershire (7.1) and Nottinghamshire (6) had a greater number of electronic workstations when accounting for the local user base.



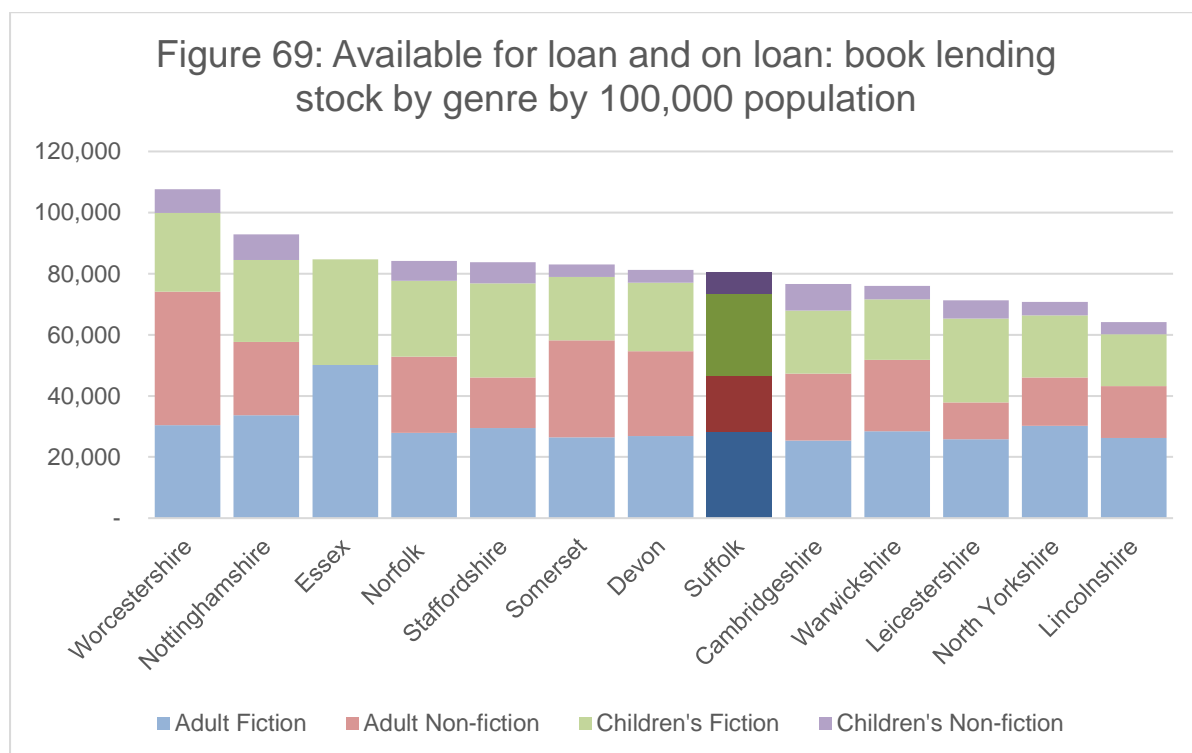
- In Suffolk, all static libraries have a public access Wi-Fi network, although the mobile libraries do not. This means that 93.9% of Suffolk's service points have a public access Wi-Fi network available (at 31 March 2020).
- Worcestershire, North Yorkshire, Somerset and Essex each have greater Wi-Fi coverage at their service points than Suffolk.
- Most counties have 90% or more Wi-Fi coverage.



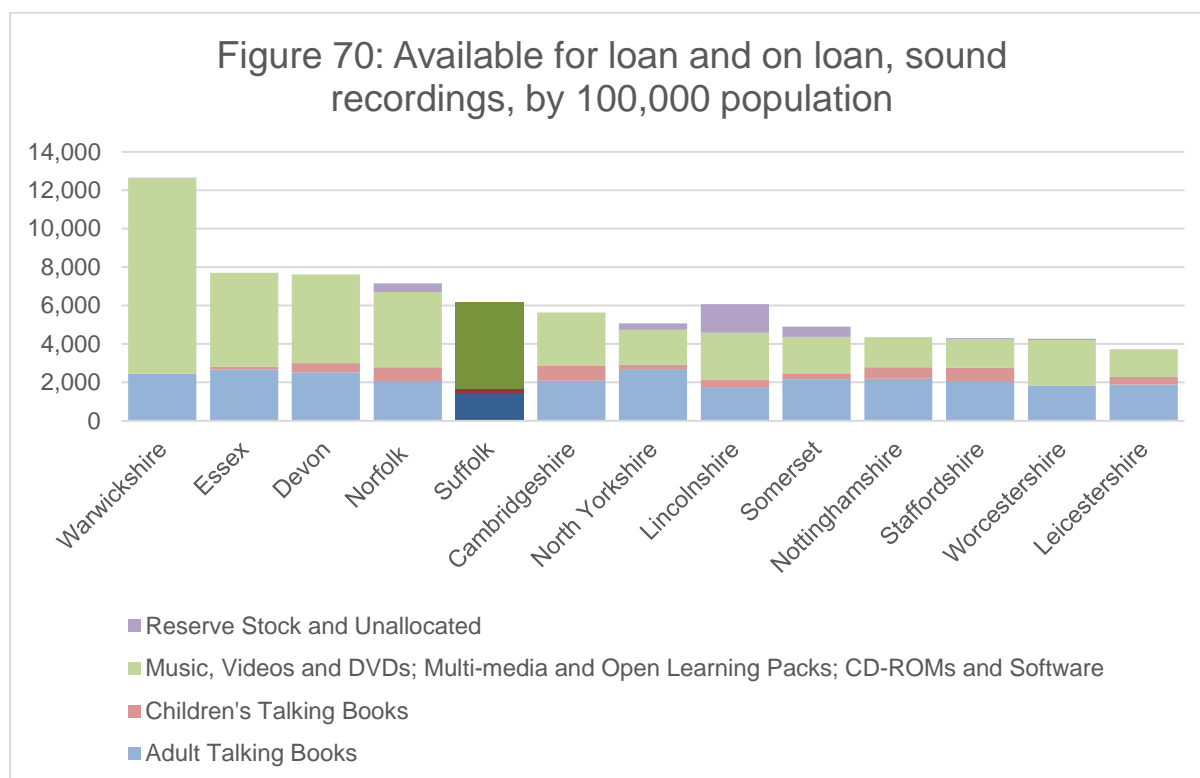
- It is unclear whether Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Devon separated professional and other posts in their CIPFA return.
- Suffolk has the 2nd highest number of staff per 100,000 population (22.9 in total, 20.7 professional posts and 2.2 other posts), second only to Cumbria.



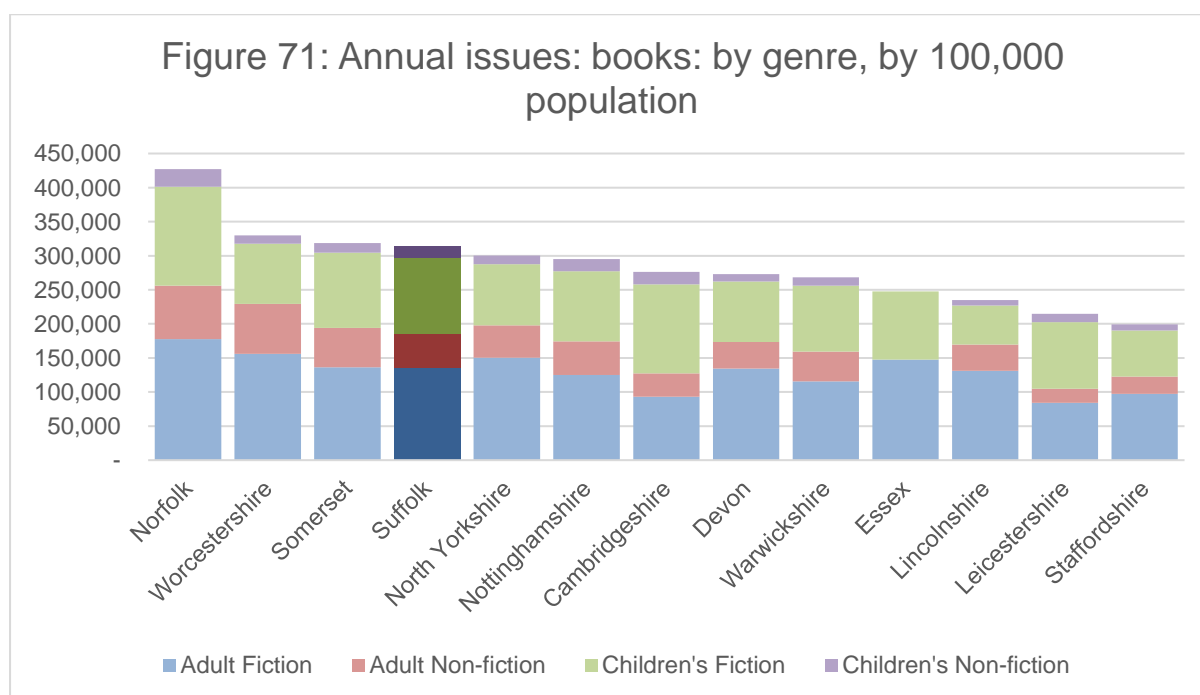
- Suffolk has the third highest volunteer hours (5,069) of these counties, around a fifth of the figure in North Yorkshire but 138 times the figure in Lincolnshire.



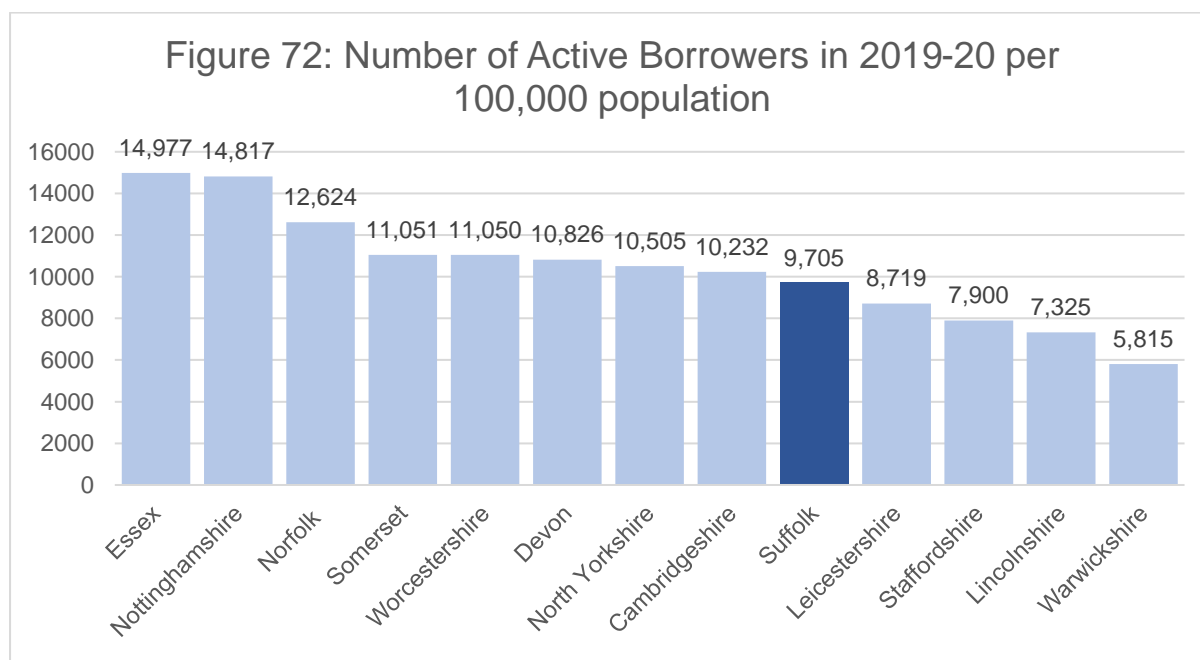
- Suffolk has lending stock of about 80,000 items per 100,000 population. This is average among our statistical neighbours.



- Suffolk has the 5th highest sound recordings stock (excluding reserve stock and unallocated) of about 6,000 per 100,000 population, though this is about half that of Warwickshire.



- Just over 300,000 books were issued by Suffolk libraries per 100,000 Suffolk residents in 2019/20.
- The highest figure for this measure was in Norfolk (around 430,000 issues per 100,000 residents) and the lowest was in Staffordshire (200,000 issues per 100,000 residents).
- Suffolk has the fourth highest total annual issues of books when compared to our statistical neighbours. The split between adult fiction, adult non-fiction, children's fiction and children's non-fiction is similar for most libraries, including Suffolk.



- There were 9,705 active borrowers per 100,000 residents in Suffolk in 2019/20 according to CIPFA returns. Suffolk is ninth highest among our statistical neighbours for this measure.
- Suffolk's number of active borrowers is around two thirds of the level seen in Essex and Nottinghamshire, but 1.67 times that of Warwickshire.

Section 4 - Recommendations

- The information within this Needs Assessment should be used when considering the library service specification and the future contract of the library services across Suffolk.
- It is recommended that this Needs Assessment is updated where key parameters change or when data is updated. (e.g., when new census is released and when the new public library strategy is published by DCMS).
- For Service Leads and the Provider(s) of library services should use the information in this Needs Assessment to inform an evidenced-based approach when developing library services in Suffolk.
- The needs assessment should be a tool that is used to help inform decisions at a hyper-local and local level when deciding service delivery opportunities and changes that meet their local population needs.
- The information within this needs assessment can be used to support section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bids, which benefit the delivery of library services across Suffolk.
- Information contained within the needs assessment along with individual library data sets should be used to support any challenges to funding which may affect the development and ongoing maintenance of library buildings across Suffolk.
- The County Council should support the library service provider to collaborate effectively with a range of statutory, voluntary, and private sector partners to maximise impact and efficiency, where priorities are aligned.
- Library service providers should support service leads for library services by capturing robust data and information that can be used to demonstrate the impact of library services on those who live, work, and study in Suffolk.
- Suffolk County Council and the library service provider should work together to communicate the wide range of services on offer across libraries in Suffolk and encourage more people to make use of library services and library buildings.
- A long-term strategy for library locations and library buildings should be developed taking into consideration planned housing developments and population trends across the county. Section 106 and Community Infrastructure funding should be accessed to support this work.

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