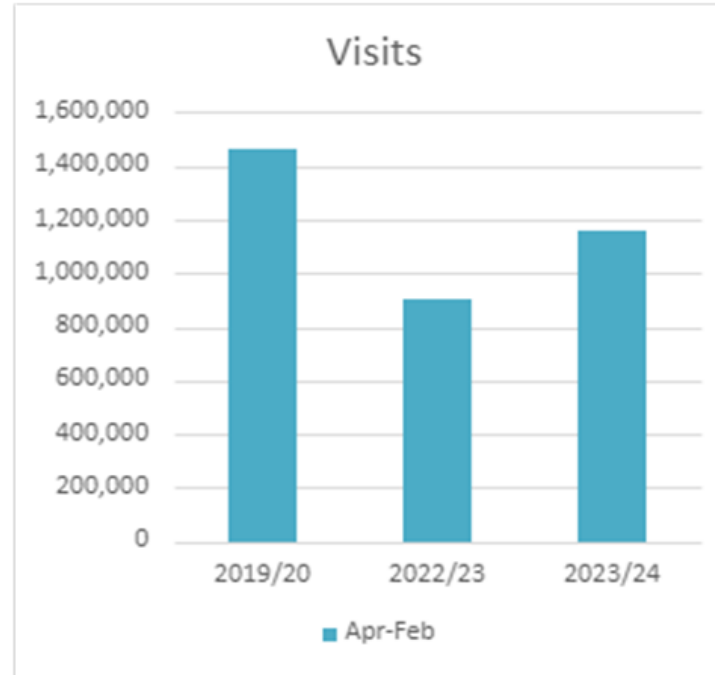
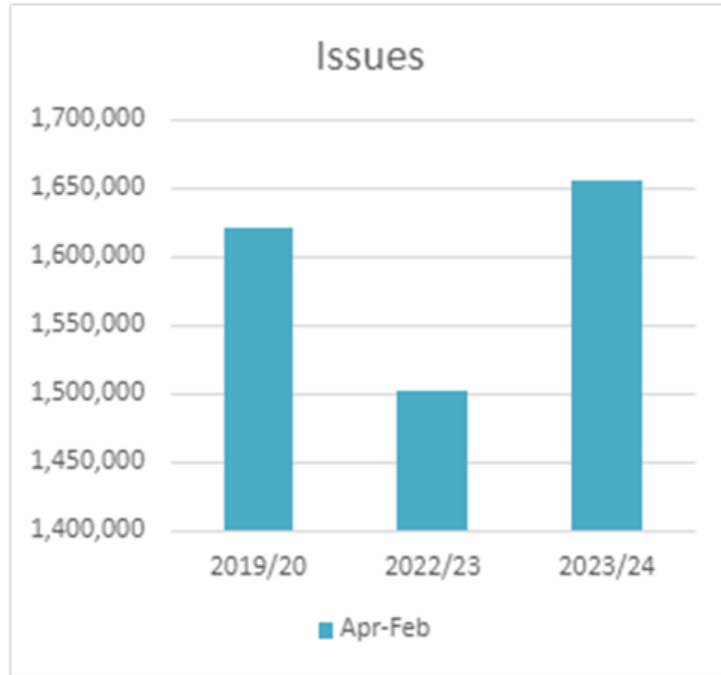


LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE

Library Service - Performance Data



Apr – Feb 2023/24 compared to
Apr – Feb 2022/23

Issues – up 10.3%
Visits – up 28.7%

Apr – Feb 2023/24 compared to
Apr – Feb 2019/20

Issues – up 2.2%
Visits – down 20.5%

Delivering Council Priorities

Support for the vulnerable

- All libraries are registered as Warm Spaces and library staff have received training from Warm & Safe Wiltshire to help people with energy queries. 683 Warm Packs have been given out this winter so far containing a hot water bottle, fleece throw, hat scarf and gloves. In addition, radiator reflector panels and heated throws have been offered to those most in need
- From Apr 2023 – Feb 2024 libraries have held 5,367 low/no cost events and activities attended by over 104,000 adults and children

Health awareness

- Successful partnership project with Public Health to loan blood pressure monitors and activity tracker watches in 4 libraries is being extended to 8 more. Aimed at improving healthy behaviours with support from information book stock e.g. cookery, medical conditions, yoga, running titles
- Provision of Reading Well self-help titles supporting those with long term health conditions, dementia and mental health issues to find out ways to improve their health and wellbeing. A new dementia list is launching in May 2024 and the service will be working with Adult Social Care to link this provision to the Council's Dementia Strategy

Delivering Council Priorities

Supporting the roll out of Family Hubs

- From 1 April Libraries will be acting as community spokes for the new Family Hub model, hosting Health Visitor led baby checks, Breastfeeding Support Groups and the new Local Navigators. Library staff are receiving 5 to Thrive trauma informed training to provide signposting to the Spurgeon's led Family Hub provision. Library staff will be able to provide access to the All Together website containing information on all council and partner services for children and their families

Best start in life

- Children's fines were abolished in July 2023 as fear of a financial penalty is a major barrier to library use. Supporting the most vulnerable, who could least afford fines, to use the library more promotes early engagement in reading for pleasure with its strong correlation to those who read doing better at school and in later life
- The year-round reading scheme 'Story Adventurer's Club' launched in autumn 2023 and provides encouragement to read and educational benefits for those aged 4 – 16. More information can be found here [Services for children and teens - Wiltshire Council](#)

LGA Peer Challenge - results

In July 2023 the LGA & Arts Council England reviewed the Library Service during a two day online challenge. Speaking to over 60 people and conducting 15 meetings the results stated:

- Wiltshire Library Service has strong foundations that can be built on when developing a vision and strategy for the future
- Both employees and volunteers are an asset to the service with partners, customers and other council services recognising them for their flexibility and inclusivity. Describing them as 'adaptable', 'having a can-do attitude' and 'welcoming' they are loved and valued. The workforce will be a key asset to the library review process and there is a real appetite to look at innovative ways of working
- Libraries are seen as non-judgemental, safe spaces that support a range of groups, many of whom are vulnerable and need support

Peer Challenge – recommendations

Recommendations	Approach being taken
Take learning from Peer Challenge as starting point to develop the vision and purpose for the library service using co-production approach	Develop and deliver a Library Strategy using community conversations approach to ensure the voice of communities is reflected in future provision
Define the purpose and requirement of library delivery through examples of existing good practice e.g. co-location, community buildings, mobile libraries and virtual spaces	The strategy will ensure the estate is fit for purpose and meets environmental requirements
Ensure the value and purpose of the library is clearly stated. It is a library first and foremost that delivers community support, information and signposting	Continue to promote and improve on access to reading, information, digital support, community spaces and cultural activities for all ages
At all levels of the organisation 'Think Library First' when considering services that contribute to the Council's Business Plan	Involve all council departments in the development of the library strategy to ensure synergies are identified and duplication avoided

Library Strategy

- The Library Service is currently working with the Data & Business Intelligence Team to benchmark the existing provision and understand future usage trends
- Work is also being progressed in partnership with The Reading Agency to develop a whole council Reading Strategy to sit alongside the overall library strategy. This work has been funded by Public Health and will provide an in-depth analysis of customer need in Wiltshire and an action plan to aid delivery
- User and non-user feedback on library service priorities will be gained through a series of focus groups and customer engagement in targeted communities, particularly those involved in the community conversations work. Other stakeholders will also be asked to contribute
- The library strategy will focus on outlining the agreed priorities, delivery methods and outcomes for the library service over the next 5 years
- It is expected the timescales for completion and sign off of the library strategy by Cabinet will be agreed at a Place Leaders meeting

Making a difference

“My 2 year old grandchild struggled being around strangers as she was born in the pandemic. Thank you for all the encouragement, so glad we stuck with rhyme times I can't believe the difference it's made to their confidence levels”

A staff member introduced a mum to the QuickReads collection today. Her depression affects her concentration and memory. Being able to enjoy a short novel she said “was life changing”

At his third digital support session a gentleman said his son told him he'd get used to his new phone but he hadn't got anywhere with it. Instead, he's delighted to be learning how to use it by coming to our digital support sessions and building his confidence.

“Access to computers and printing is a godsend for me and I am always given help when I need it”

A lady who is autistic and suffers from social anxiety came to the library today who we hadn't seen for a while. She said she rarely goes out now. She couldn't thank us enough for our attentiveness and patience while helping her scan numerous medical documents.

“The multiply course you told me about is great. I'm going to do a teaching assistant course next as I'm ready to go back to work now after my youngest started at the big school”