



# Lancashire museum consultation 2016

**Report**

[www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)



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## 1. Executive summary

This report summarises the responses to Lancashire County Council's Lancashire museum consultation 2016.

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available at museums managed by Lancashire County Council and in some local libraries close to the museums. Online questionnaires could be accessed from [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk).

The fieldwork ran for four weeks from 15 February until 13 March 2016. In total, 1,272 completed questionnaires were returned (107 paper-based and 1,165 online).

Although the questionnaire was published online for anyone to respond to, and available in museums and some libraries, the majority of respondents (84%) had used at least one of the museums managed by Lancashire County Council in the last 12 months and therefore the consultation findings predominantly represents the views of this group.

The findings presented in this report are not representative of the views of the population of Lancashire and should only be taken to represent the views of people who, were made aware of the consultation, had the opportunity to respond and felt compelled to.

### 1.1 Key findings

- Respondents were most likely to say that they have visited or made use of Lancaster Castle (81% provided a response other than 'never') and least likely to say that they have visited Cottage Museum (36% provided a response other than 'never').
- Respondents were most likely to say that on their last visit to a museum managed by LCC they visited with family or friends (70%).
- Respondents were most likely to say that the reason for their last visit was to see an exhibition or display or specific collection (51%), to learn about their heritage (48%), or to learn about Lancashire (44%).
- When asked when was the last time they used any of a list of the services that are provided at the museums managed by LCC, respondents were most likely to say that they had: been to see collections/displays (58% in the last 6 months); used the café (50% in the last six months); used the shop (50% in the last 6 months); to pick up other information from the museum (49% in the last 6 months); and been to view a temporary exhibition (48% in the last six months). Respondents were least likely to say that they had: attended an activity for teachers (4% in the last six months); donated an object to the

collection (5% in the last six months); and hired a room for a social or group function (7% in the last six months).

- Respondents who said that they hadn't visited a museum managed by LCC in the last two years were asked which options from a predefined list were the reasons why they hadn't visited. Respondents were most likely to say that they hadn't visited a museum managed by LCC: for a reason other than one provided in the list of options (30%); because, the nearest museum is too far away (24%); they have no time or are too busy (20%); and they don't know what's on offer (20%).
- Respondents were most likely to say that they would be encouraged to use museums managed by LCC more often: by more publicity (45%); if there was a wider range and frequency of activities and events (34%); and if the exhibitions were changed more frequently (27%).
- When presented with a number of statements about what the museums managed by LCC should provide, which included statements like care for Lancashire's heritage and help for people to reach their potential and live independent lives, respondents were most likely to agree with the statements that museums managed by LCC should provide: care for Lancashire's heritage (99%); encouragement for people to connect with their local heritage (99%); helpful and welcoming staff (98%); and safe spaces to enjoy culture and learning (97%).
- When asked about how important they consider different museum services to be, respondents generally said that they considered all the museum services they were asked about to be either very or fairly important.
- In response to being asked how the proposal to close Fleetwood Museum; Helmshore Mills Textile Museum; Judges' Lodgings Museum; Museum of Lancashire; and Queen Street Mill Textile Museum would impact upon them, respondents were most likely to say that it would be a loss of heritage and/or identity (51%), it would be of loss of source of education/research (47%), it would be a public/community loss (28%), they would be upset/disappointed (24%) and they wouldn't be able to visit again (24%).
- In response to being asked if they had any suggestions or other comments about the museums managed by Lancashire County Council, respondents were most likely to say that museums shouldn't face cuts (17%), that museums should be advertised more (13%), they could be run by volunteers/local community (10%), they are an important part of heritage (10%), they should be protected despite the cuts to councils (9%) and they could charge and entrance fee/generate more income (9%).

## 2. Introduction

The county council continues to face an unprecedented financial challenge. Over the next five years to 2020/21 the council needs to make savings of £262m on top of those agreed within previous budget processes. This extremely difficult financial picture is the result of continued cuts in funding by Government, rising costs and rising demand for key services.

Based on current spending and forecast demand for services, the council will not have sufficient financial resources to meet its statutory obligations by April 2018, even if we no longer continue to deliver any of the non-statutory services. The council will need to rely heavily on reserves in order to set a balanced budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) has provided a museum service for the communities of Lancashire and its visitors since the early 1970s. Lancashire County Council owns and manages the following museums: Judges Lodgings; Helmshore Mills Textile Museum (Whitaker's Mill); Queen Street Textile Museum; and the Museum of Lancashire. We also manage the Fleetwood Maritime Museum, which is leased from Wyre Borough Council. And we operate Lancaster City Museum, the Cottage Museum, and Lancaster Maritime Museum on behalf of Lancaster City Council, Clitheroe Castle on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council, Gawthorpe Hall on behalf of the National Trust and tours of Lancaster Castle on behalf of the Duchy of Lancaster.

There is a proposal that from 31 March 2016 we stop funding the following five museums: Fleetwood Museum; Helmshore Mills Textile Museum; Judges' Lodgings Museum; Museum of Lancashire; and Queen Street Mill Textile Museum. The museum service is not statutory but we are working with partners, other organisations and local people to explore a range of options in an effort to ensure that the county council's legacy of investment and commitment to the preservation of its heritage continues.

These museums enable people to explore Lancashire's collections and buildings for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. Their most notable collections reflect 2,000 years of Lancashire's social, industrial and military history. Highlights include fine furniture-making, the county's important place in the industrial revolution and its significant maritime trade and fishing heritage. Many of the collections were generous donations from local individuals, communities and beyond, held in trust for future generations.

They offer experiences for all ages from pre-school onwards, knowledgeable specialist staff, changing exhibitions and activities to suit a wide range of interests.

### 3. Methodology

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available at museums managed by Lancashire County Council and in some local libraries close to the museums. Online questionnaires could be accessed from [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk).

The fieldwork ran for four weeks from 15 February until 13 March 2016. In total, 1,272 completed questionnaires were returned (107 paper-based and 1,165 online).

The questionnaire asked respondents about which museums they use and how frequently they use them, their reasons for visiting or not visiting them, what they did on their last visit, what would encourage them to visit more often, what types of things museums should do/offer, what effect the proposal to close five museums will have on them and if they had any other suggestions or comments about the service.

Respondents were asked about what times they felt they would be most likely to visit a museum managed by Lancashire County Council. The question allowed respondents to provide a response for every day of the week. However, so that the data can be presented clearly, the responses have been grouped together and the findings have been presented as what times respondents feel they would be most likely to visit on a weekday and what times they feel they would be most likely to visit at the weekend.

#### 3.1 Limitations

Although the questionnaire was published online for anyone to respond to, and available in museums and some libraries, the majority of respondents (84%) had used at least one of the museums managed by Lancashire County Council in the last 12 months and therefore the consultation findings predominantly represent the views of this group.

The findings presented in this report are not representative of the views of the population of Lancashire and should only be taken to represent the views of people who, were made aware of the consultation, had the opportunity to respond and felt compelled to.

Hardcopy petitions and collective letters were received by the council. These were objecting to the closure of Helmshore Textile Museum and Queen Street Mill (approx. 4,000 signatories), Helmshore Textile Museum (25 signatories) and to closure of museums in general (36 signatories).

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

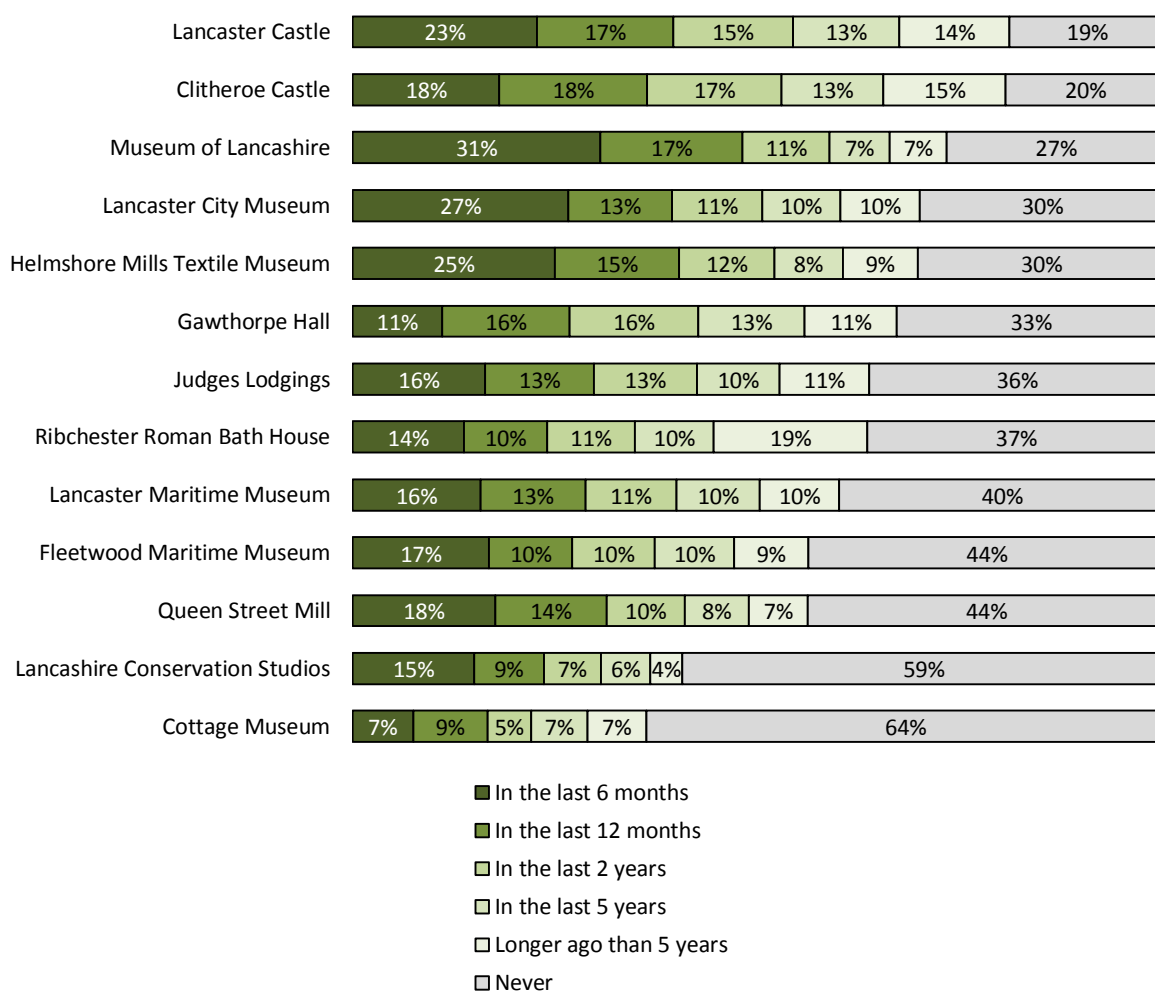
## 4. Main consultation findings

### 4.1 Use of the museum service

First, respondents were asked when, if ever, they have visited or made use of any of the services at the museums managed by Lancashire County Council.

Respondents were mostly likely to say that they had visited or made use of Lancaster Castle (81% provided a response other than 'never') and least likely to say that they have visited Cottage Museum (36% provided a response other than 'never').

**Chart 1 - When, if ever, have you visited or made use of any of the services at the museums managed by Lancashire County Council?**



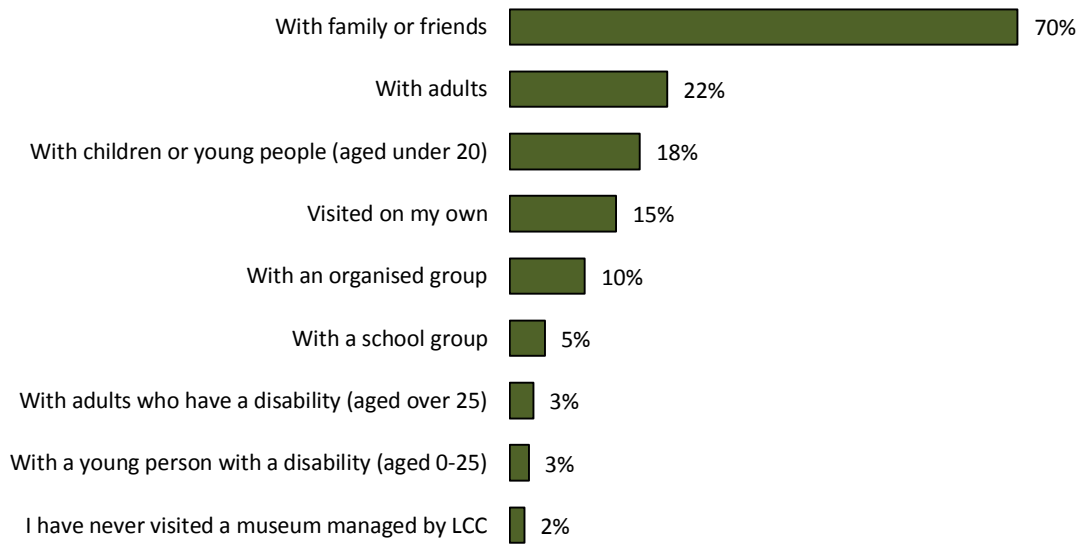
Base: all respondents 819-991



Respondents were then asked, on their last visit to a museum managed by Lancashire County Council who did they visit with.

Respondents were most likely to say that on their last visit to a museum managed by LCC they visited with family or friends (70%).

**Chart 2 - On your last visit to a museum managed by Lancashire County Council who did you visit with?**

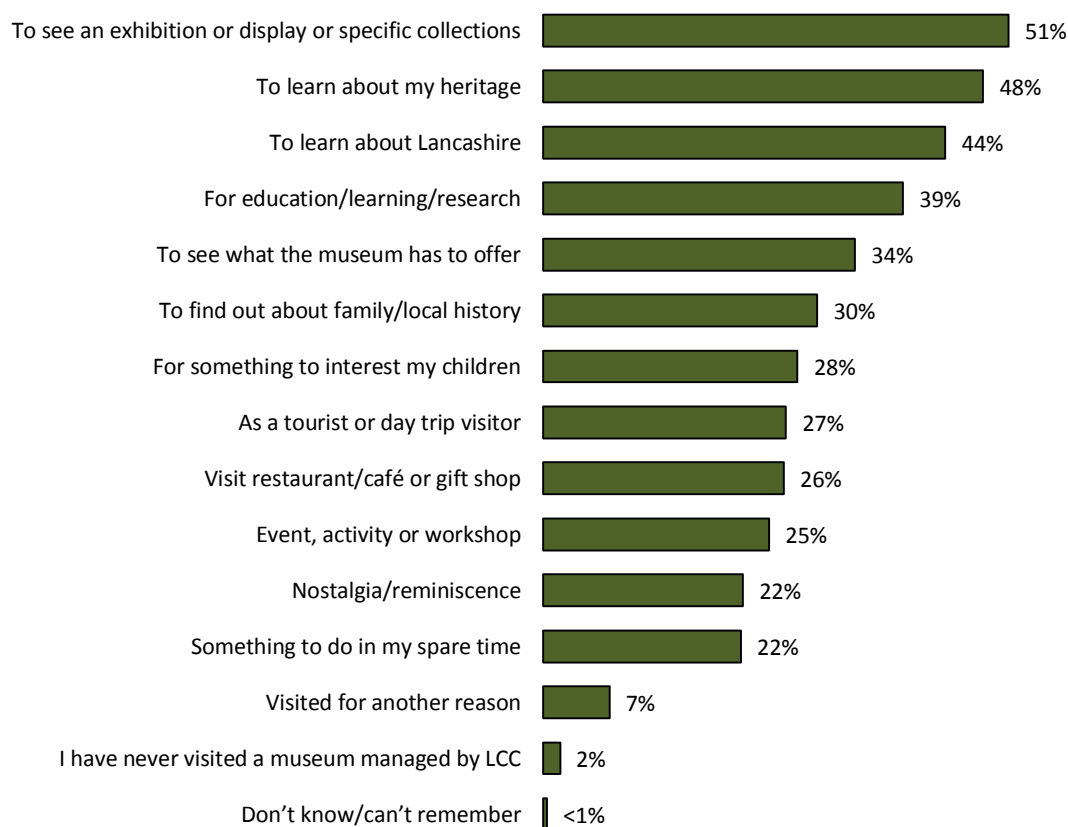


Base: all respondents 1,250

Respondents were then asked what their reasons were for their last visit to a museum managed by LCC.

Respondents were most likely to say that the reason for their last visit was to see an exhibition or display or specific collection (51%), to learn about their heritage (48%), or to learn about Lancashire (44%).

**Chart 3 - What were your reasons for your last visit to a museum managed by Lancashire County Council?**



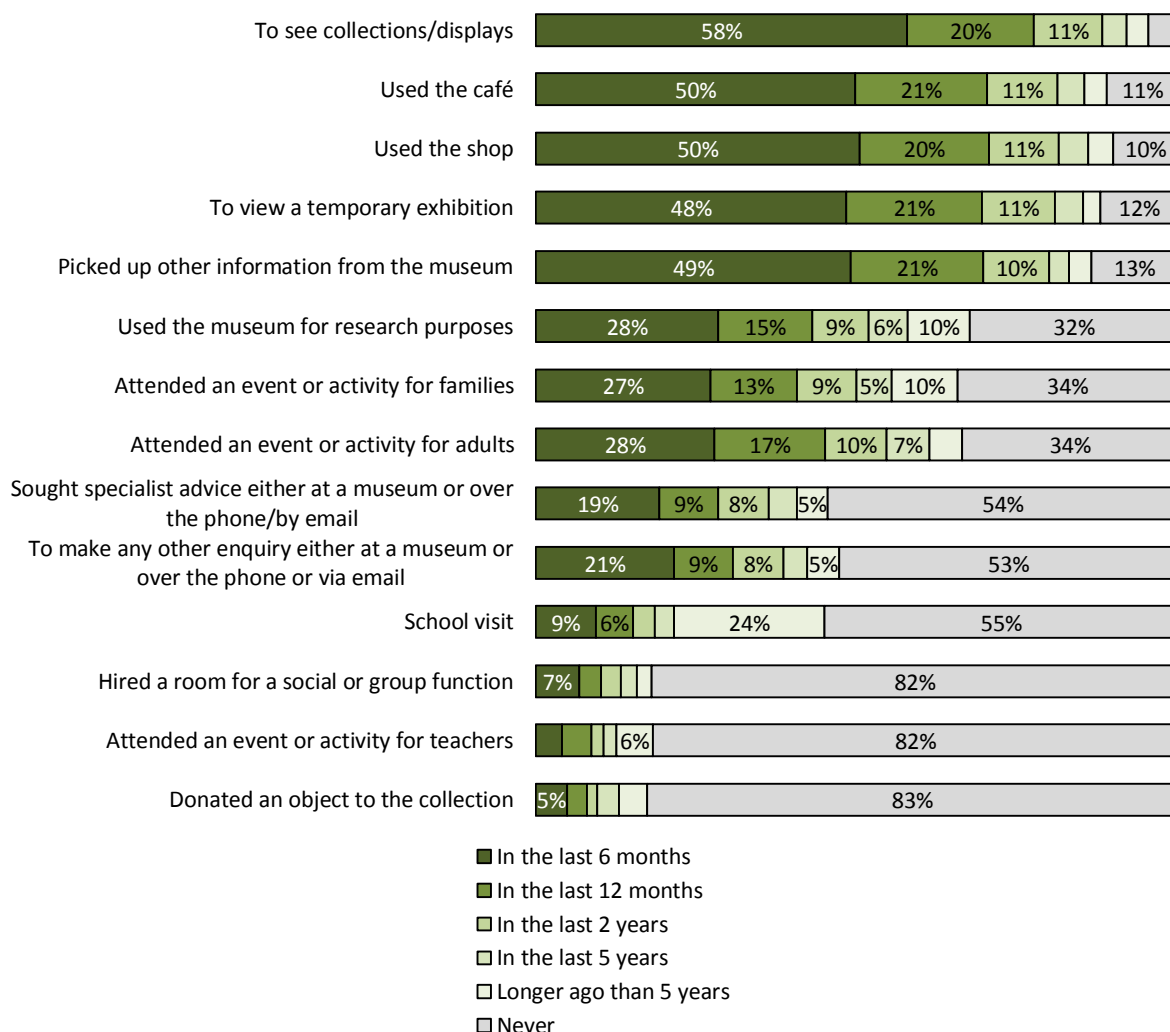
Base: all respondents 1,252

Respondents were then asked when was the last time you used any of the services provided at the museums managed by LCC.

Respondents were most likely to say that they had: been to see collections/displays (58% in the last 6 months); used the café (50% in the last six months); used the shop (50% in the last 6 months); to pick up other information from the museum (49% in the last 6 months); and been to view a temporary exhibition (48% in the last six months).

Respondents were least likely to say that they had: attended an activity for teachers (4% in the last six months); donated an object to the collection (5% in the last six months); and hired a room for a social or group function (7% in the last six months).

**Chart 4 - When, if ever, was the last time you used each of the following services provided at the museums managed by Lancashire County Council?**



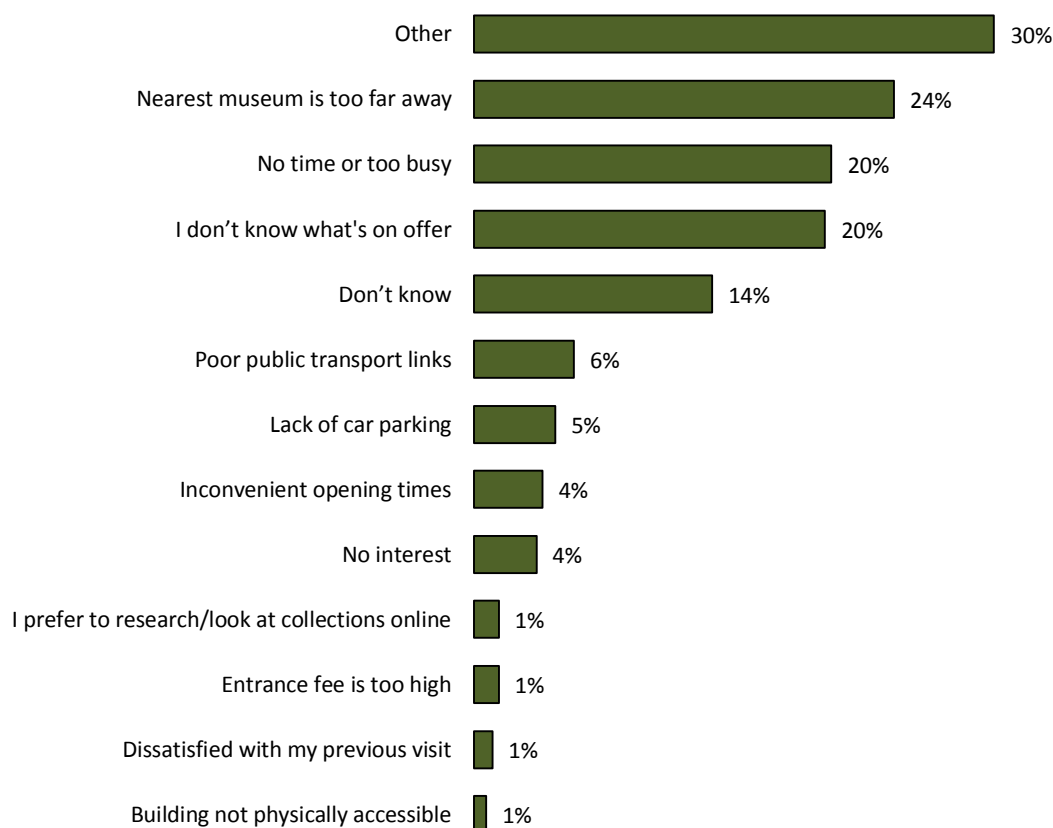
Base: all respondents (685-1130)

Respondents who said that they hadn't visited a museum managed by LCC in the last two years were then asked which options from a predefined list were the reasons why they hadn't visited.

Respondents were most likely to say that they hadn't visited a museum managed by LCC: for a reason other than one provided in the list of options (30%); because, the nearest museum is too far away (24%); they have no time or are too busy (20%); and they don't know what's on offer (20%).

Respondents were least likely to say that: the building is not physically accessible (1%); they were dissatisfied with their previous visit (1%); the entrance fee is too high (1%); and that they prefer to research/look at collections online (1%).

**Chart 5 - If you haven't visited a museum managed by Lancashire County Council in the last 2 years, why?**

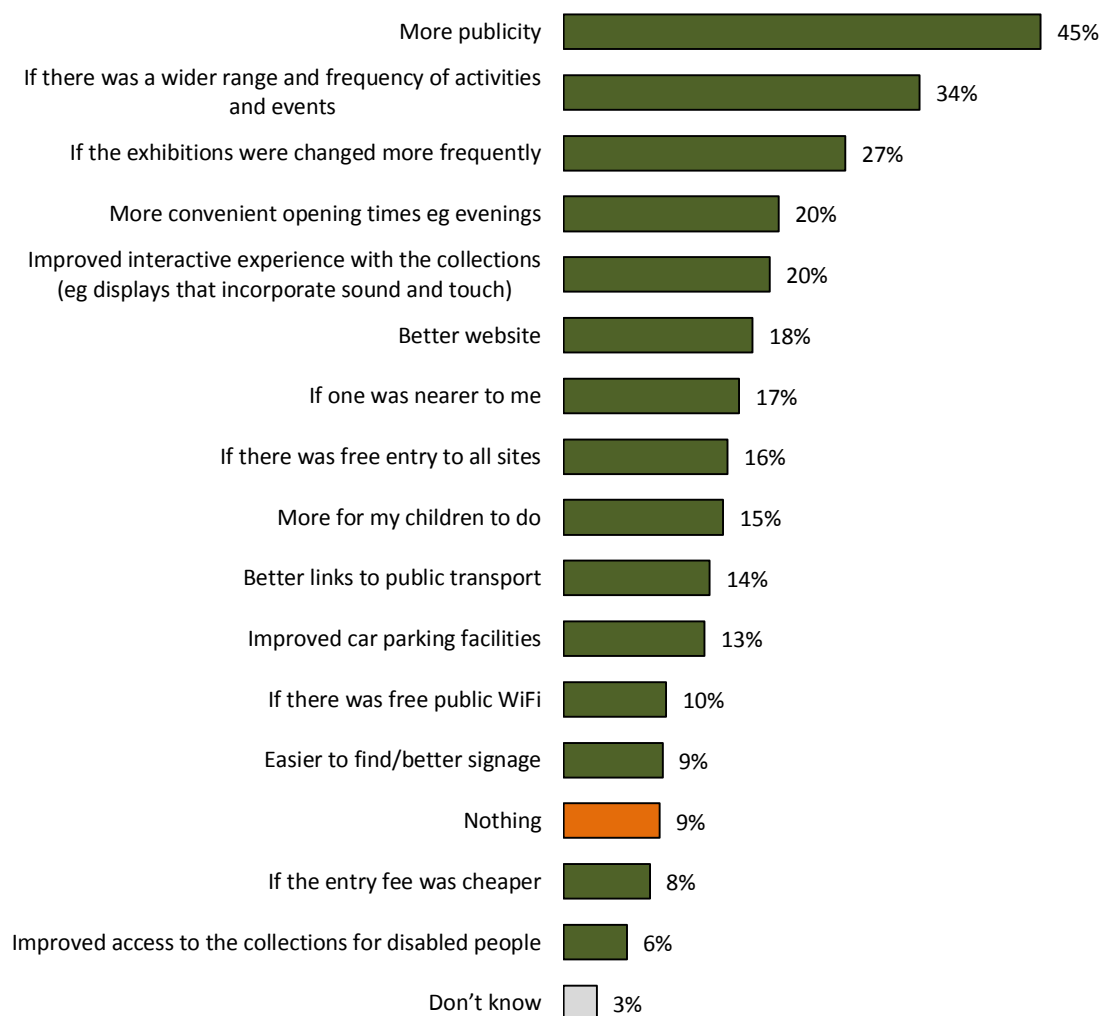


Base: respondents who hadn't visited a museum managed by LCC in the last two years (281)

All respondents were then asked what, if anything, would encourage them to use museums managed by LCC more often.

Respondents were most likely to say that they would be encouraged to use museums managed by LCC more often: by more publicity (45%); if there was a wider range and frequency of activities and events (34%); and if the exhibitions were changed more frequently (27%).

**Chart 6 - What, if anything, would encourage you to use the museums managed by Lancashire County Council more often?**

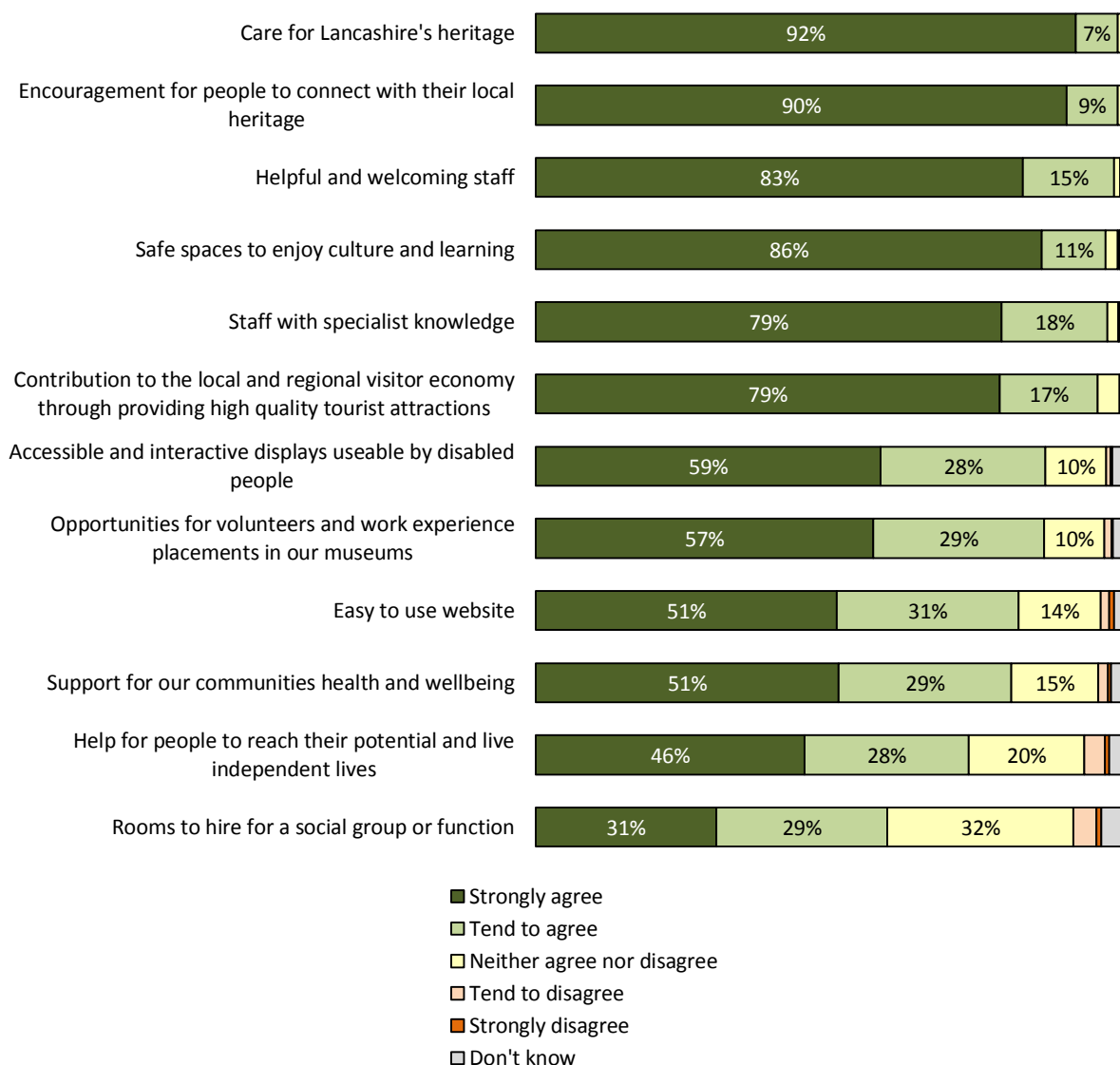


Base: all respondents 1,181

Respondents were then asked if they agree or disagree with a number of statements about what the museums managed by LCC should provide.

Respondents were most likely to agree with the statements that museums managed by LCC should provide: care for Lancashire's heritage (99%); encouragement for people to connect with their local heritage (99%); helpful and welcoming staff (98%); and safe spaces to enjoy culture and learning (97%).

**Chart 7 - Do you agree or disagree that the museums managed by Lancashire County Council should provide each of the following?**

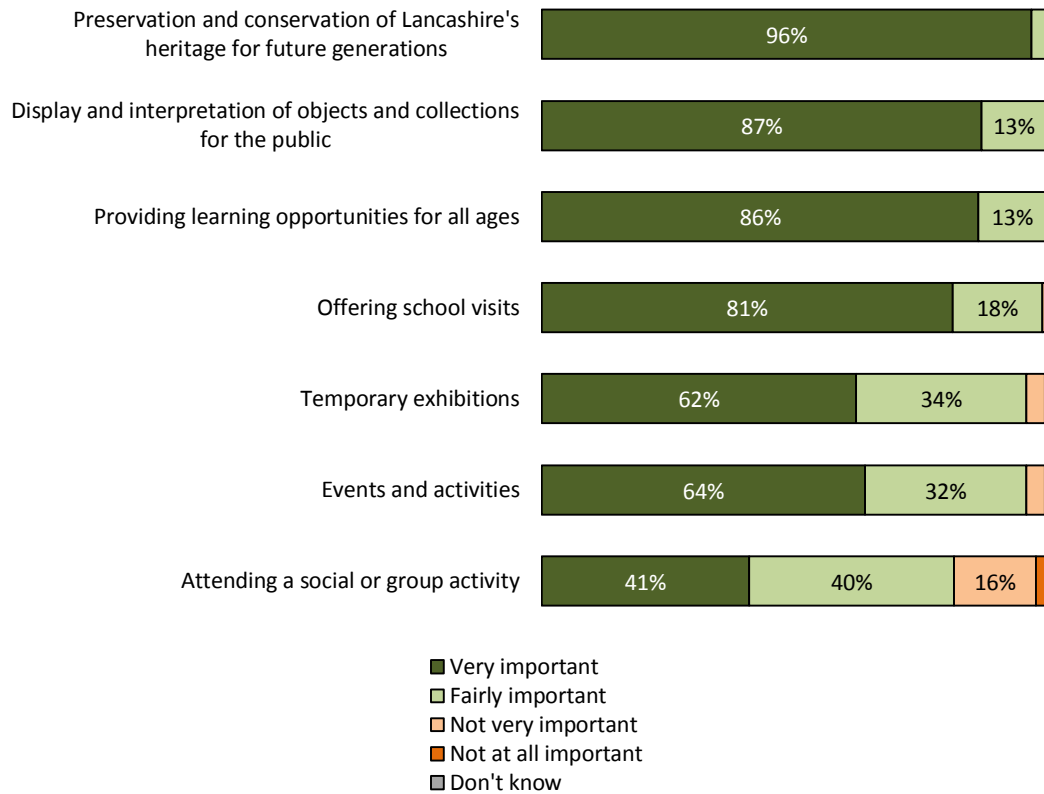


Base: all respondents 1,236-1,182

Respondents were then asked how important they consider several different museum services to be.

Respondents generally considered all the museum services they were asked about to be either very or fairly important.

**Chart 8 - Overall, how important do you consider the following museum services to be?**



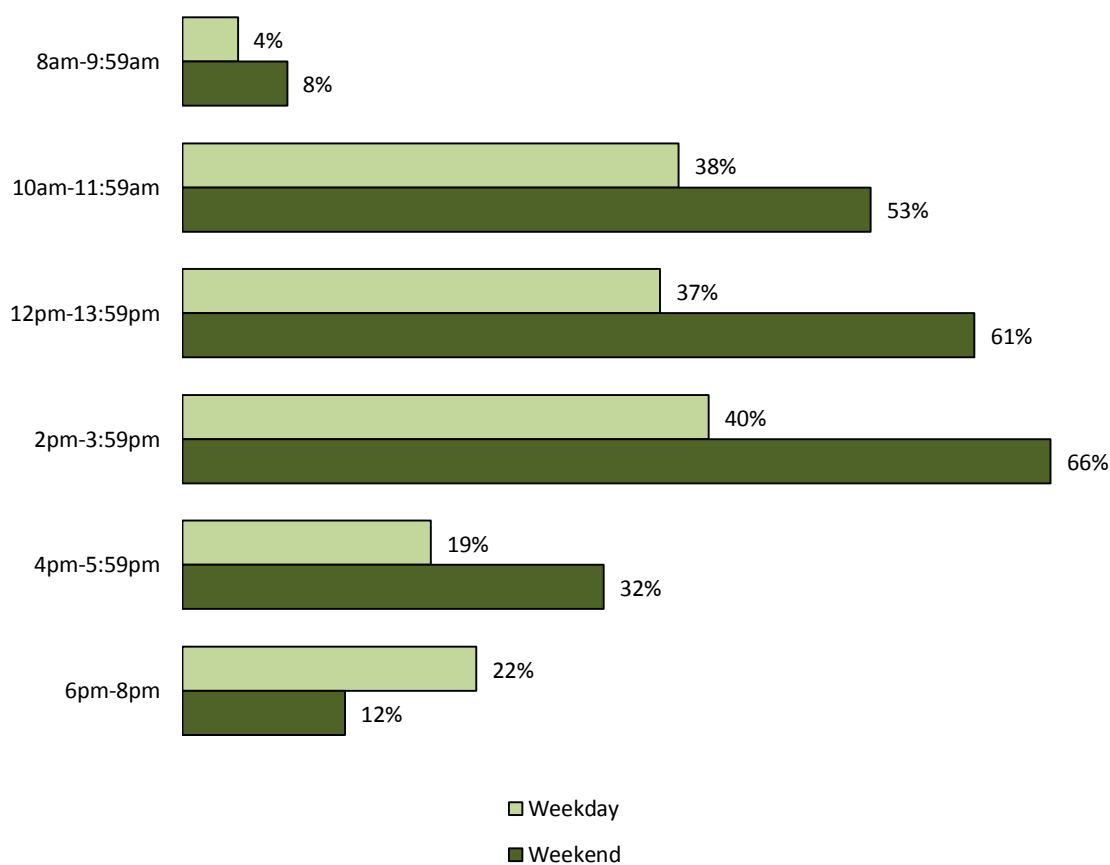
Base: all respondents 1,250-1,196

Respondents were then asked when they would be most likely to visit the museums managed by LCC.

Respondents said that they would be most likely to visit the museums managed by LCC at the weekend between: 2pm-3:59pm (66%), 12pm-13:59pm (61%) and 10am-11:59pm (53%).

During the week, respondents said that they would be most likely to visit the museums managed by LCC between: 2pm-3:59pm (40%), 10am-11:59pm (38%) and 12pm-13:59pm (37%).

**Chart 9 - When would you be most likely to visit the museums managed by Lancashire County Council?**



Base: all respondents 1,272

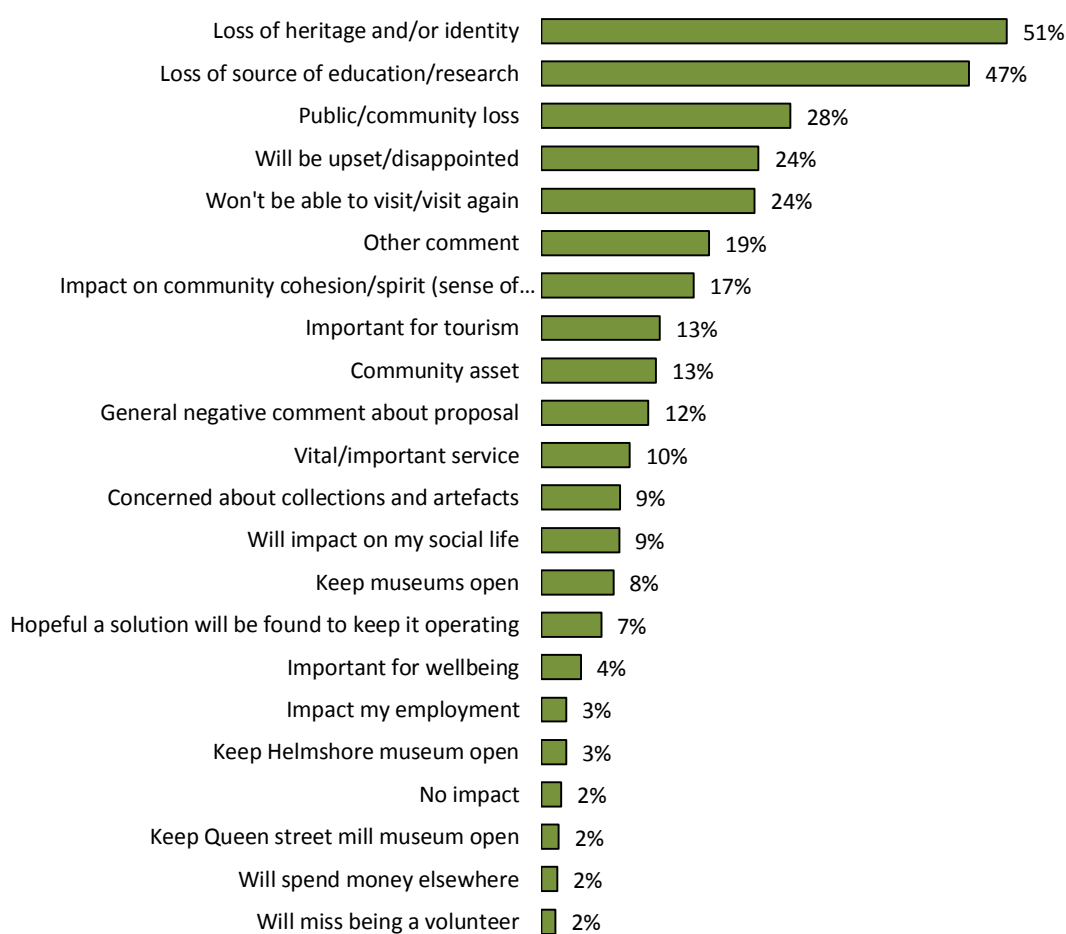


## 4.2 Other comments on the proposal

Respondents were then asked how the proposal to close Fleetwood Museum; Helmshore Mills Textile Museum; Judges' Lodgings Museum; Museum of Lancashire; and Queen Street Mill Textile Museum would impact upon them.

Respondents were most likely to say that it would be a loss of heritage and/or identity (51%), it would be of loss of source of education/research (47%), it would be a public/community loss (28%), they would be upset/disappointed (24%) and they wouldn't be able to visit again (24%).

**Chart 10 - How will this proposal impact on you?**



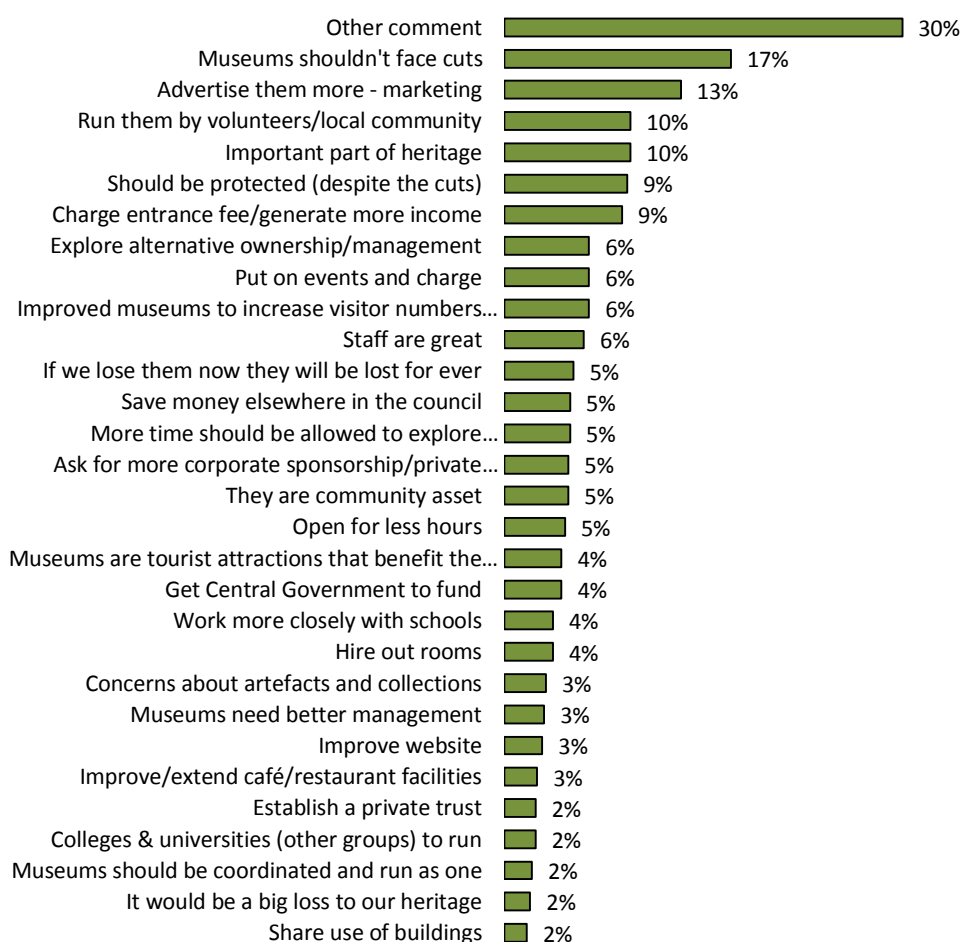
Base: all respondents 1,107

Respondents were then asked if they had any suggestions or other comments about the museums managed by Lancashire County Council.

This question prompted a wide variety of unique responses that don't naturally group together to enable them to be presented in a quantifiable way (ie in a chart or table). To highlight the proportion of this type of response this question received they have been grouped and presented in chart 11 as other comment (30%).

Of the responses that could be grouped together respondents were most likely to say that museums shouldn't face cuts (17%), that museums should be advertised more (13%), they could be run by volunteers/local community (10%), they are an important part of heritage (10%), they should be protected despite the cuts to councils (9%) and they could charge and entrance fee/generate more income (9%).

**Chart 11 - Do you have any suggestions or other comments about the museums managed by Lancashire County Council?**



Base: all respondents 758

## Appendix 1: demographic breakdown

**Table 1 - Are you...?**

	%	Count
A Lancashire resident	79%	951
A member of a voluntary or community organisation	29%	351
Other	22%	261
A local business owner	8%	91
An employee of Lancashire County Council	7%	87
A member of a museum friends group	2%	24
An elected member of a Lancashire district council	1%	10
An elected member of a parish or town council in Lancashire	1%	9
An elected member of Lancashire County Council	0%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,210</b>

**Table 2 - Are you...?**

	%	Count
Male	37%	452
Female	63%	783
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,235</b>

**Table 3 - Have you ever identified as transgender?**

	%	Count
Yes	1%	8
No	93%	1,105
Prefer not to say	6%	74
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,188</b>

**Table 4 - What was your age on your last birthday?**

	%	Count
Under 16	<1%	3
16-19	<1%	6
20-34	13%	165
35-49	29%	352
50-64	30%	368
65-74	22%	268
75+	5%	67
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,229</b>

**Table 5 - Are you a deaf person or do you have a disability?**

	%	Count
Yes	9%	114
No	91%	1,107
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,221</b>

**Table 6 - Are there any children in your household aged under 20?**

	%	Count
No children aged under 20	66%	736
Yes, aged 5-8	12%	135
Yes, aged under 5	10%	112
Yes, aged 9-11	10%	107
Yes, aged 12-16	9%	105
Yes, aged 17-19	6%	70
No, but expecting	2%	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,211</b>

**Table 7 - Are there any children with a disability in your household aged 20-25?**

	%	Count
Yes	2%	29
No	98%	1,180
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,209</b>

**Table 8 - Which best describes your ethnic background?**

	%	Count
White	98%	1,180
Any other ethnic background	2%	26
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,206</b>

**Table 9 - What is your religion?**

	%	Count
No religion	44%	527
Christian	52%	621
Buddhist	1%	13
Hindu	0%	1
Jewish	0%	3
Muslim	0%	1
Sikh	0%	0
Any other religion	2%	27
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,194</b>

**Table 10 - Are you in a marriage or civil partnership?**

	%	Count
Marriage	57%	678
Civil partnership	1%	12
Prefer not to say	7%	78
None of these	36%	428
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,196</b>

**Table 11 - How would you describe your sexual orientation?**

	%	Count
Straight (heterosexual)	83%	971
Bisexual	2%	22
Gay man	1%	15
Lesbian/gay woman	1%	6
Other	1%	15
Prefer not to say	12%	138
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,167</b>