

Idea Stores

The development of Idea Stores was based on one of the most comprehensive library consultation exercises undertaken in this country. Local people said they wanted longer opening hours, including Sunday opening, and to be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities, particularly shopping. Responding to this, each of the five new Idea Stores that opened between 2002 and 2013 was located in the middle of a busy shopping centre. The four main stores have seven day a week opening, and all stores are open until 9pm on weekdays.

From the start Idea Stores have been an integrated Library and Learning and Information service. The borough's adult and community education programmes are delivered from the stores in dedicated 'learning labs'. The Idea Store information offer includes provision of digital hubs where people can access council digital services, with extra support from staff if they need it. This is the 'full service' on offer in Idea Stores and distinguishes them from the two stand-alone libraries.

Idea Stores provide a focal point for the communities in which they are based. They are vibrant places where people can learn, study, find out information, browse from a well curated collection of books, join in activities or events, meet friends – or just relax.



Bethnal Green Library

Bethnal Green Library is one of the borough's two stand-alone libraries. It does not have any learning classes but has a programme of activities of which storytime is the most popular, and there are PCs for public use. It opened in 1922 - in the old Bethnal House asylum. The library now occupies just one ground floor room in the building. It is some distance away from the main shopping centre in Bethnal Green Road which reduces the number of visitors, and its location in Bethnal Green Gardens, although attractive in many ways is also a deterrent to visitors, especially in winter.

4500
Total members



109.7k
Annual visits



55.9k
Annual loans



4.60
Staff
(full time equivalent)



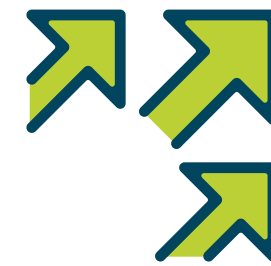
50
PC hours/wk



23%
Avg. PC usage



35%
Peak PC usage



Learning provision?
No



0
Hours spent on courses



93%
Visitor satisfaction



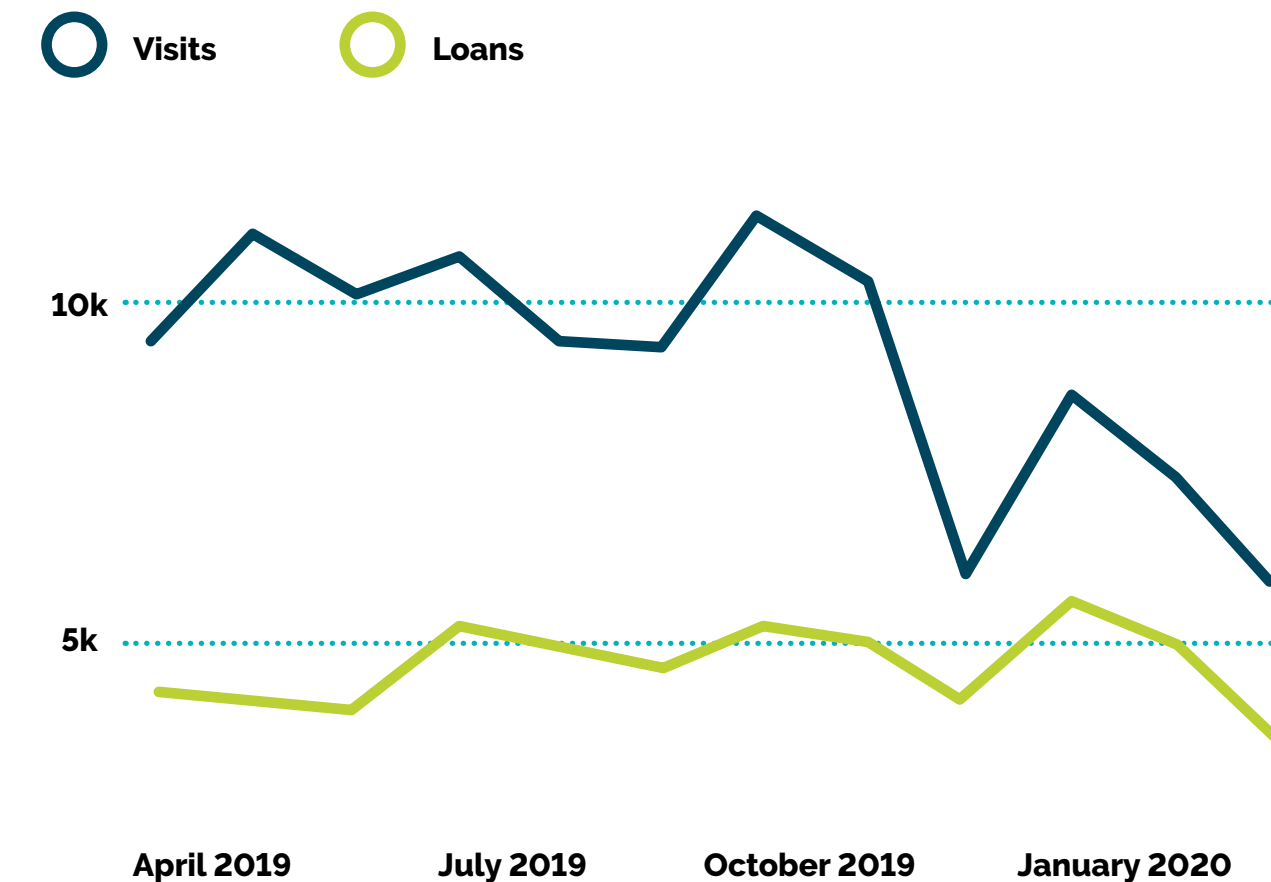
400
Square metres



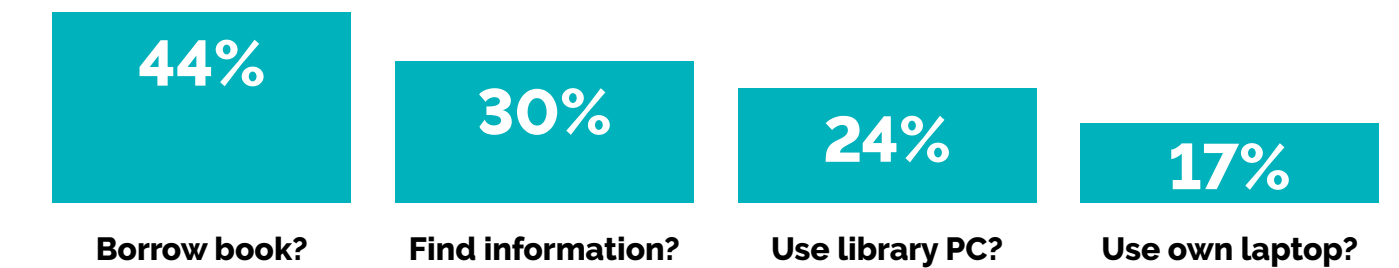
Opening hours by day

Day	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	Total
Monday														9
Tuesday														9
Wednesday														9
Thursday														11
Friday														9
Saturday														9
Sunday														0
Total	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	1	1	0	56

Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	22.5%	36.5%	59%
Active but not borrowing	3.1%	37.9%	41%
Total	25.6%	74.4%	100%

Cubitt Town Library

Cubitt Town Library is housed in an Edwardian building in a residential street on the Isle of Dogs. It does not have any learning classes but has a programme of activities including a well-attended Prime Time for older people, and there are PCs for public use. Although the interior and book stock have been improved in recent years, its location and near invisibility means that it struggles to attract visitors.

2684
Total members



44.7k
Annual visits



45.1k
Annual loans



4.20
Staff
(full time equivalent)



50
PC hours/wk



17%
Avg. PC usage



26%
Peak PC usage



Learning provision?
No



0
Hours spent on courses



91%
Visitor satisfaction



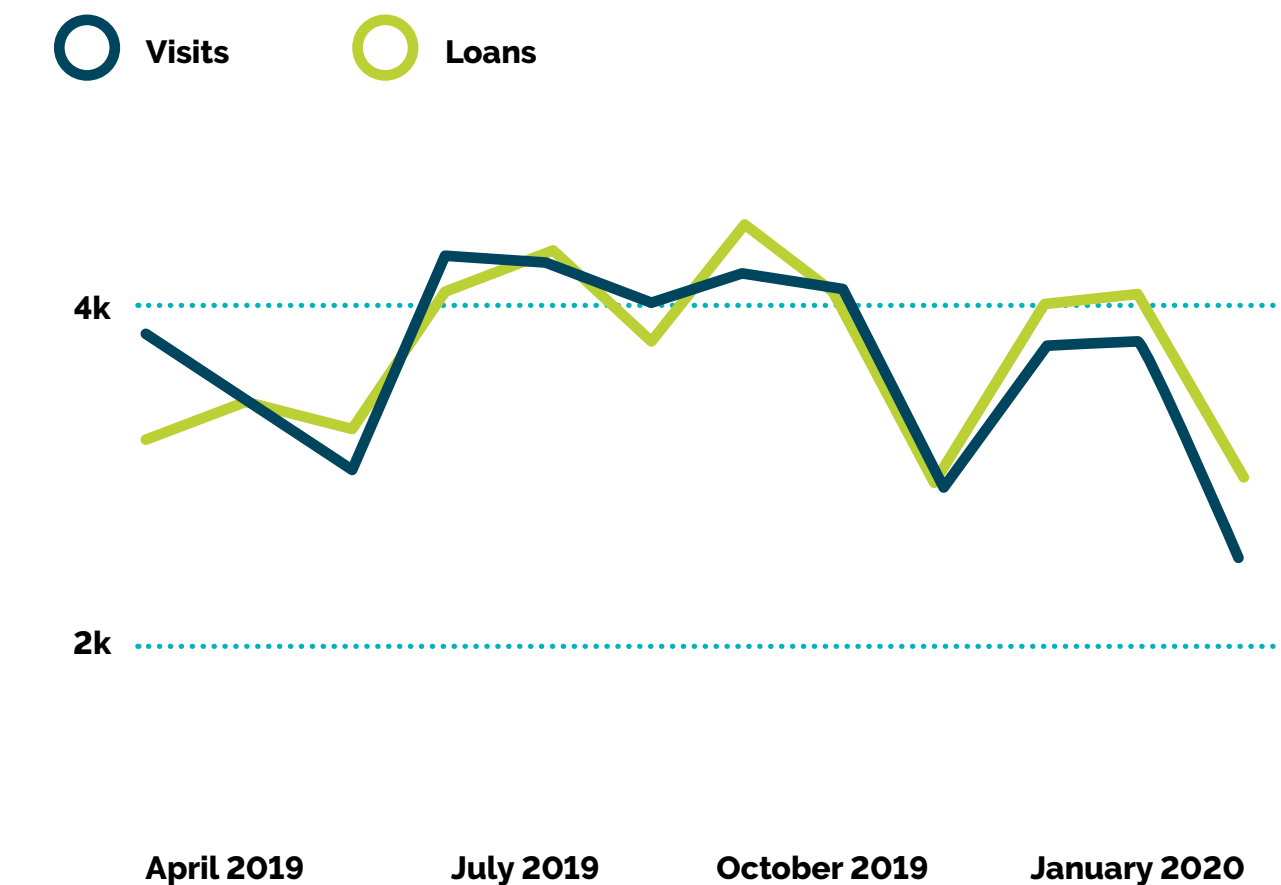
300
Square metres



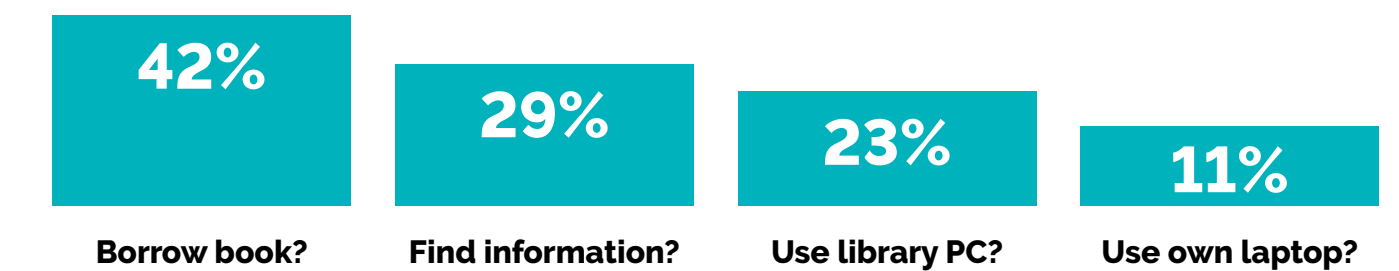
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Sunday														0
Total	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	1	1	0	56

Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	30.1%	28.4%	58.5%
Active but not borrowing	3.6%	38%	41.5%
Total	33.7%	66.3%	100%

Idea Store Bow

Idea Store Bow was the first Idea Store to open in 2002. It is set just back from Roman Road, next to Tesco. It is particularly busy on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday when the street market is open and the cafe inside the store is especially popular. Idea Store Bow offers a full range of services including adult learning classes as well as separate adults' and children's libraries and public access computers. It has a programme of activities for adults and children and health advice sessions from NHS partners. A digital hub to access council services was fitted out in 2019 and further refurbishment is planned

7511
Total members



287k
Annual visits



105.7k
Annual loans



11.76
Staff
(full time equivalent)



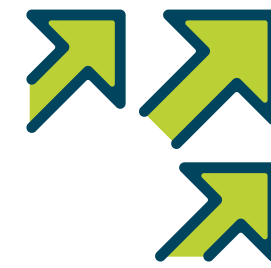
71
PC hours/wk



35%
Avg. PC usage



53%
Peak PC usage



Learning provision?
Yes



1.07K
Hours spent on courses



87%
Visitor satisfaction



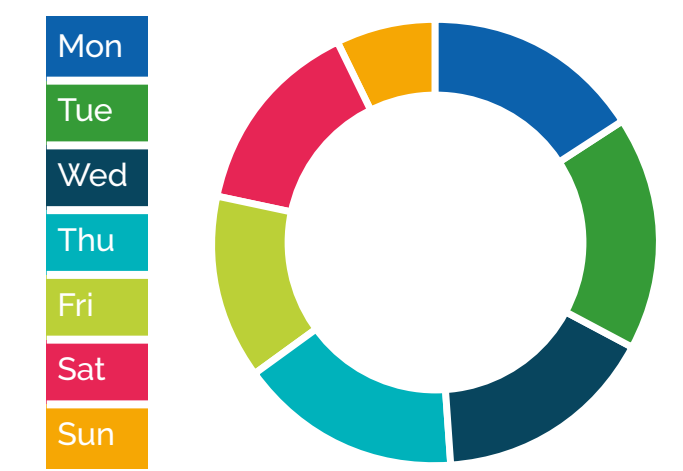
1100
Square metres



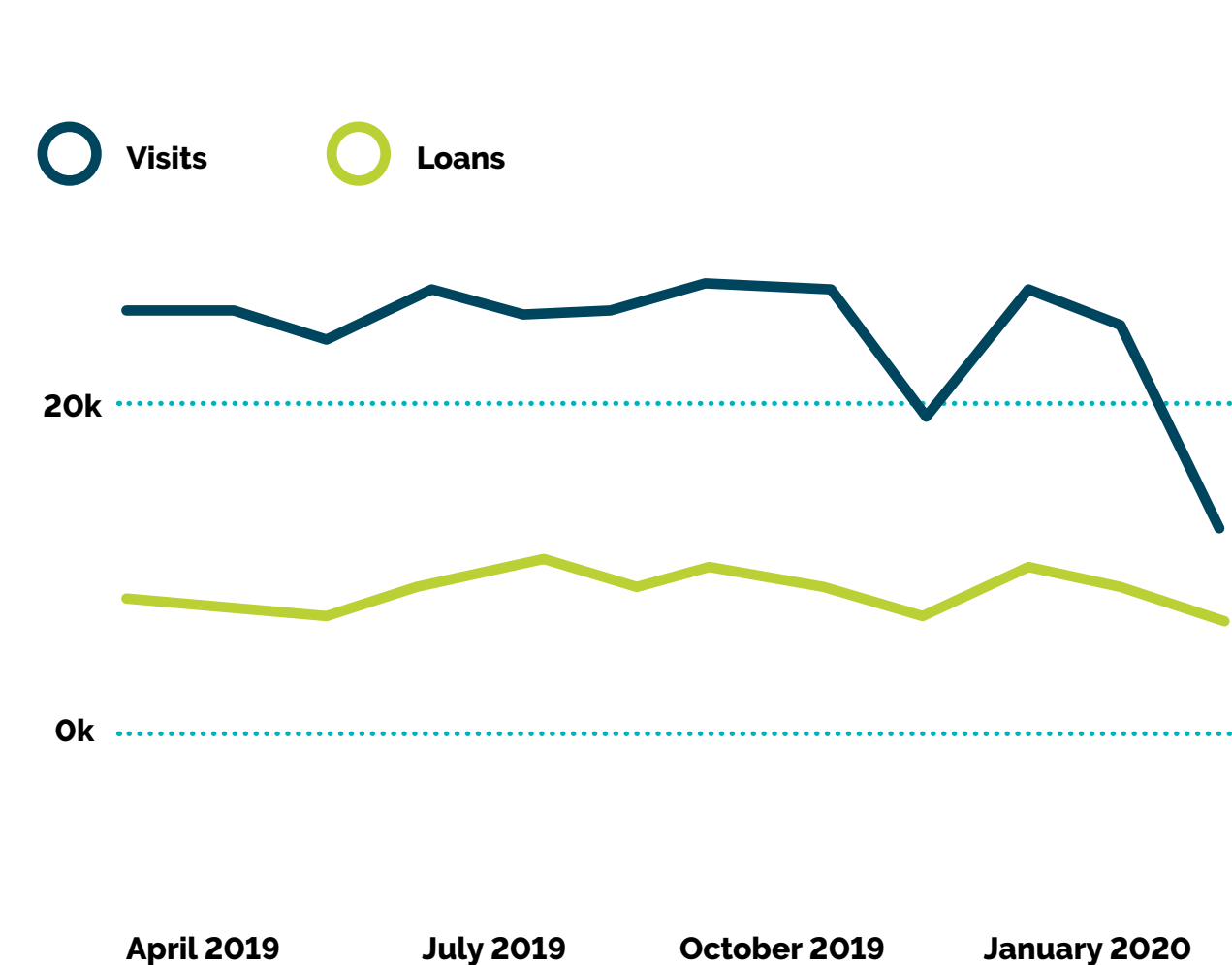
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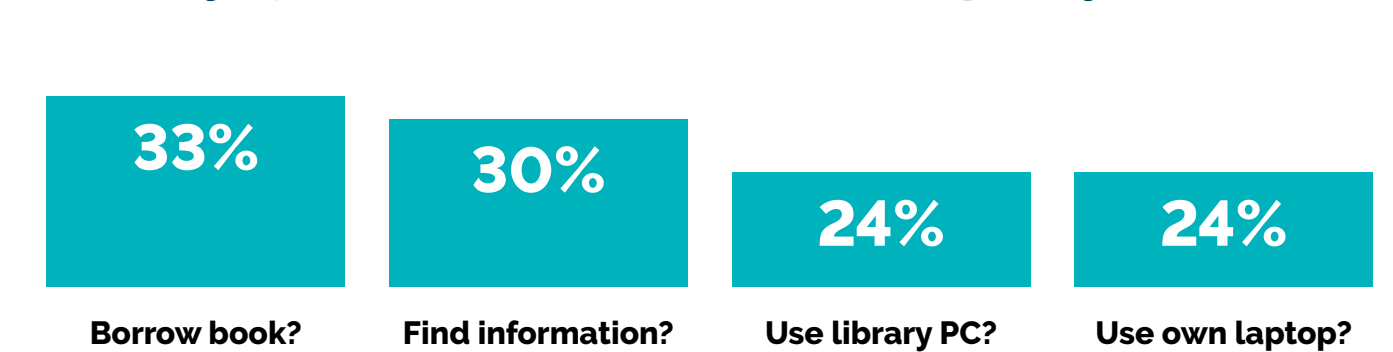
Av. daily visits (Jan-Mar)



Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	23.8%	32.5%	56.3%
Active but not borrowing	5%	38.7%	43.7%
Total	28.8%	71.2%	100%

Idea Store Canary Wharf

Idea Store Canary Wharf is in Churchill Place, at the foot of the Barclays Tower. It's set apart from main shopping areas although is near Waitrose. It offers a full range of services including adult learning classes as well as a separate adults' and children's libraries and public access computers. It has a programme of activities for adults and children. Storytime is particularly popular with some sessions attracting 50 participants. Idea Store Canary Wharf is especially busy at lunchtimes with Canary Wharf employees choosing to go there to relax. A digital hub to access council services was fitted out in 2019 and further refurbishment, including a move into the now vacant post office site next door is planned. The store is well used but our aim is to relocate to the Crossharbour area which is more centrally located.

8169
Total members



250.1k
Annual visits



145k
Annual loans



10.66
Staff



71
PC hours/wk

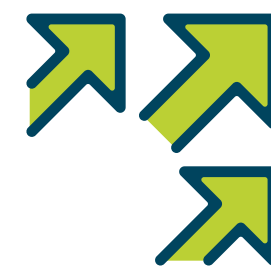


(full time equivalent)

33%
Avg. PC usage



50%
Peak PC usage



Learning provision?
Yes



11.33K
Hours spent on courses



94%
Visitor satisfaction



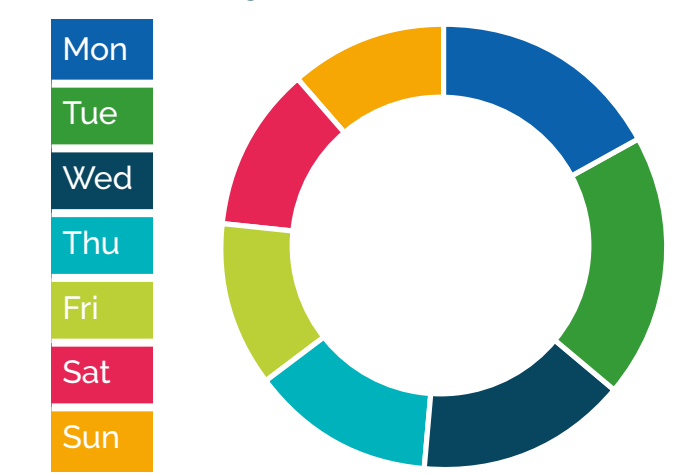
940
Square metres



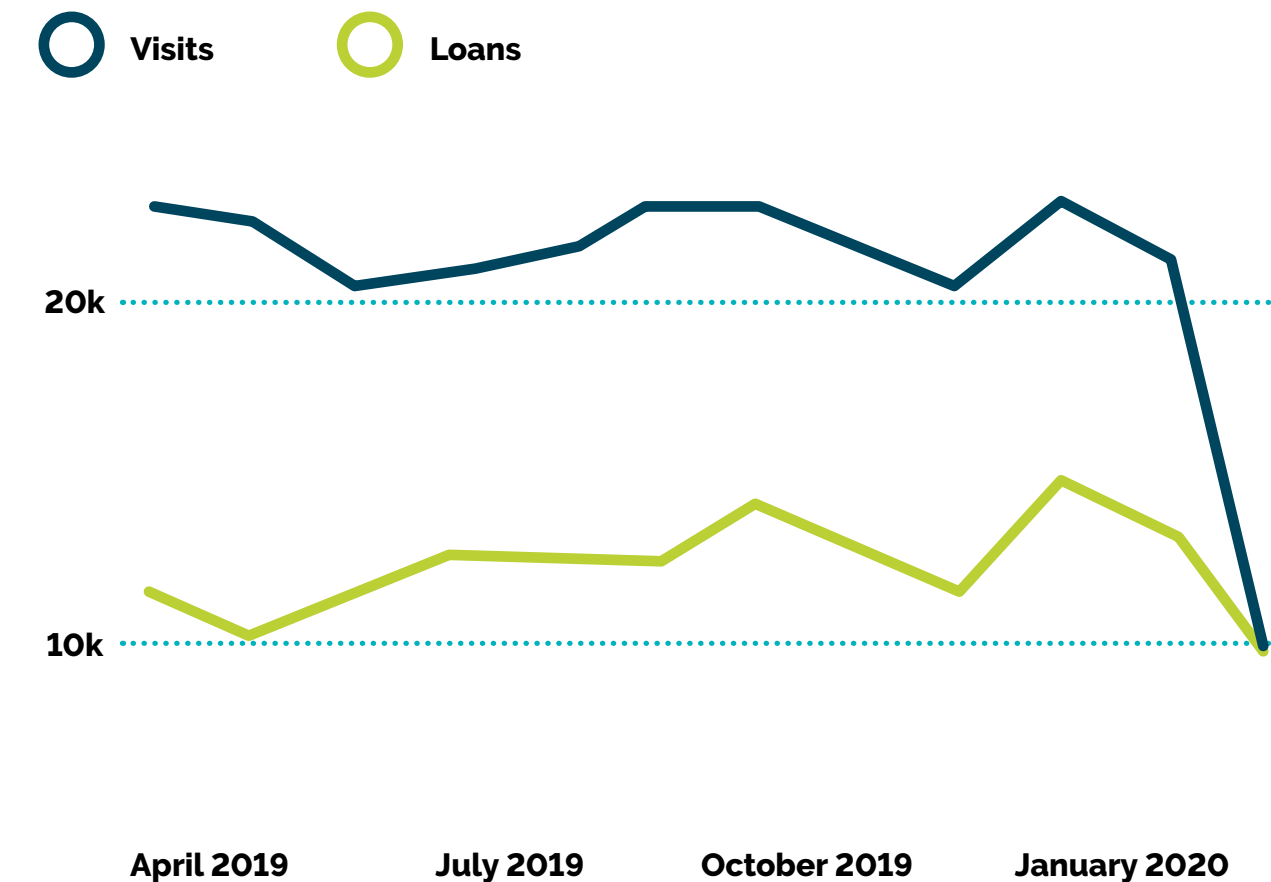
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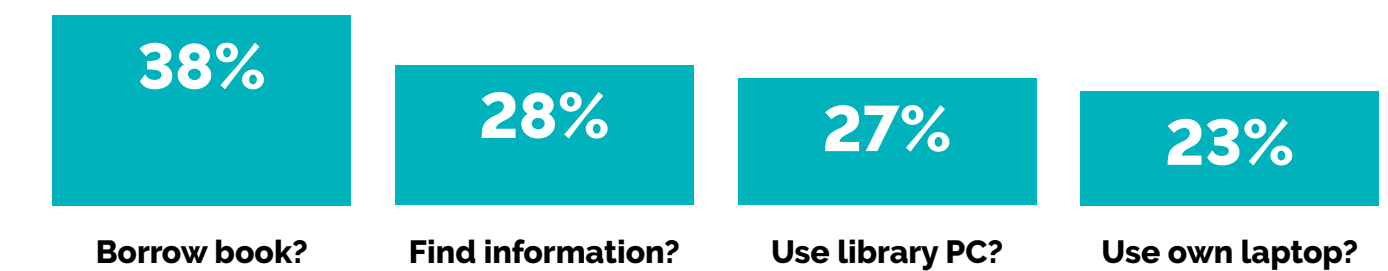
Av. daily visits (Jan-Mar)



Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	16.2%	41%	57.2%
Active but not borrowing	2.2%	40.6%	42.8%
Total	18.4%	81.6%	100%

Idea Store Crisp Street

Idea Store Crisp Street, opened in July 2004, is the second busiest site after Idea Store Whitechapel. It is situated in the east of the borough, just set back from East India Dock Road and at the southern end of Crisp Street Market. Idea Store Crisp Street is a two-storey building with a full range of services including adult learning classes as well as a separate adults' and children's libraries and public access computers. It has a programme of activities for adults and children. Partners offering regular advice sessions include Public Health, Poplaw legal services and Citizen's Advice. Major refurbishment took place in 2019 including the installation of a digital hub to access council services and there are plans to increase the size of the building in the future.

8930
Total members



349.6k
Annual visits



122.4k
Annual loans



13.76
Staff



71
PC hours/wk



(full time equivalent)

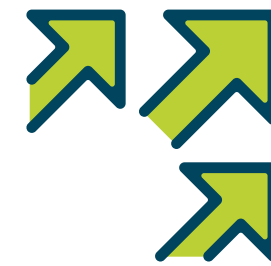
33%

Avg. PC usage



50%

Peak PC usage



Learning provision?

Yes



10.95K

Hours spent on courses



91%

Visitor satisfaction



1100

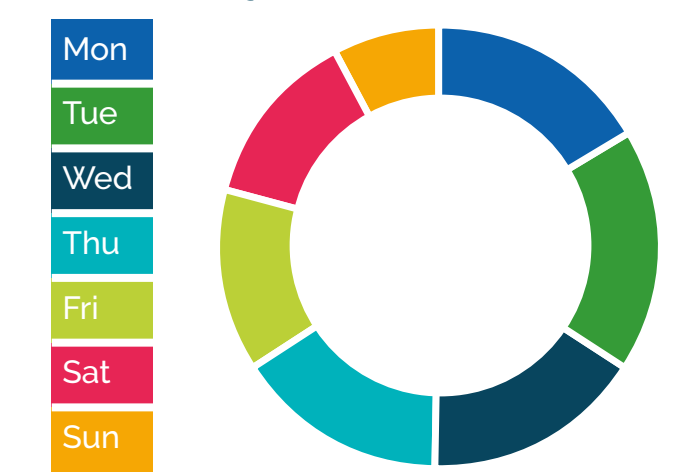
Square metres



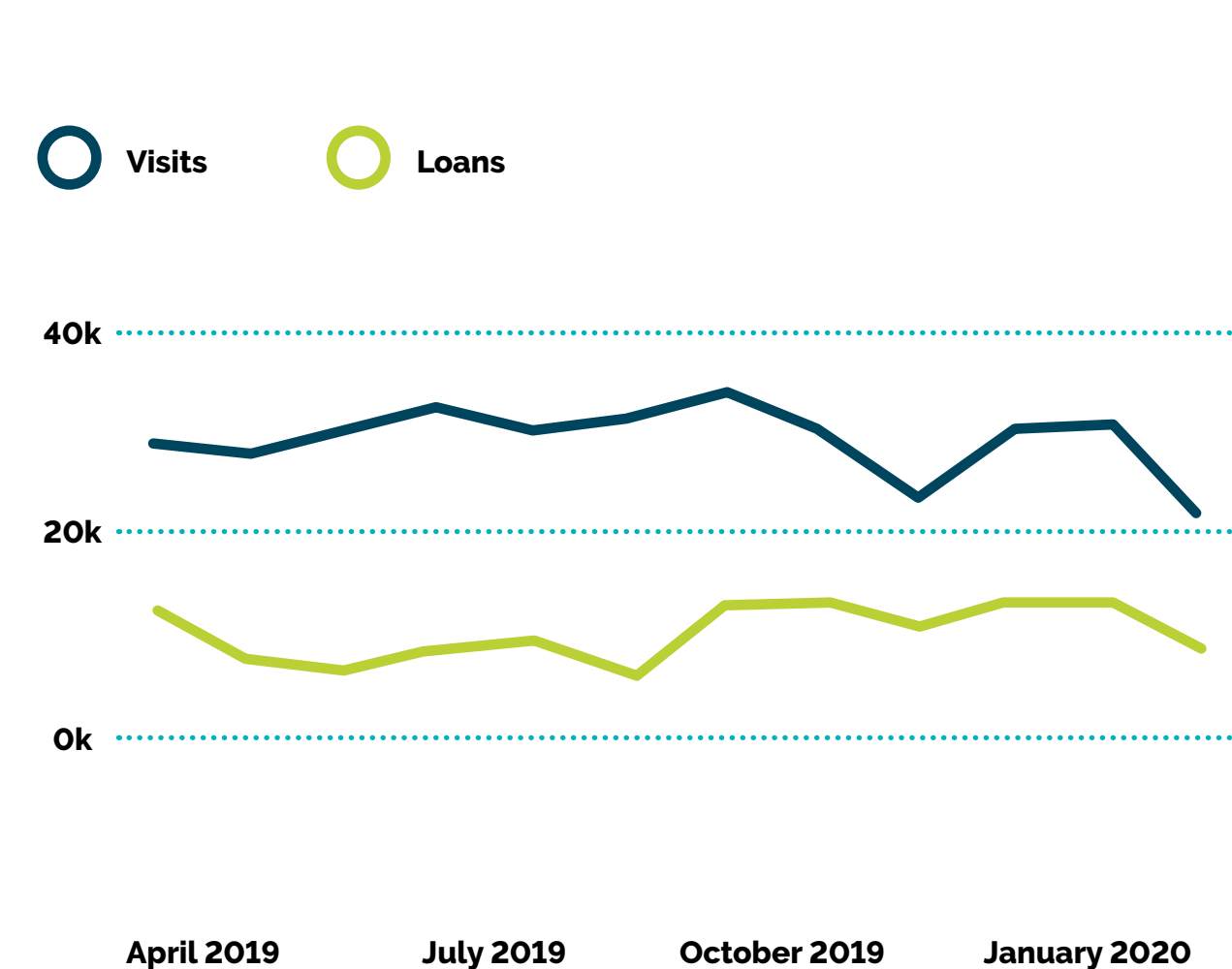
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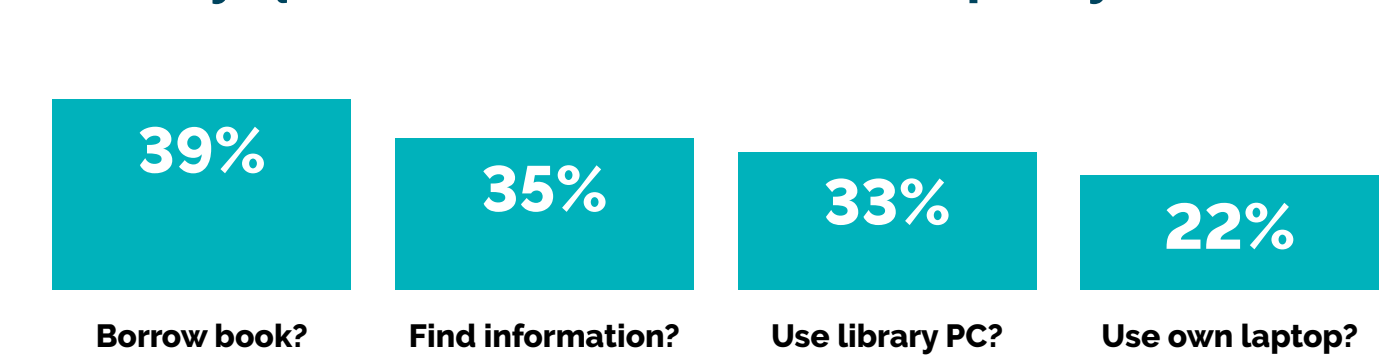
Av. daily visits (Jan-Mar)



Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	33.4%	25.2%	58.5%
Active but not borrowing	6.7%	34.8%	41.5%
Total	40%	60%	100%

Idea Store Watney Market

Idea Store Watney Market, which opened in 2013, is based on three floors. It originally included the council One Stop Shop but this was replaced last year with a digital hub as part of the Local Presence programme. Idea Store Watney Market is situated in the south west of the borough on the Commerical Road and just around the corner from Watney Market, a thriving street market. Unlike the other stores there is no learning offer and, like the two stand-alone libraries, it does not open on a Sunday. Many local residents travel to use the more extensive services at Idea Store Whitechapel, however Idea Store Watney Market is particularly popular with children and there are strong links with local schools and very well attended holiday programmes.

7040
Total members



290.2k
Annual visits



93.7k
Annual loans



11.91
Staff



65
PC hours/wk



(full time equivalent)

29%

Avg. PC usage



44%

Peak PC usage



Learning provision?

No



340

Hours spent on courses



95%

Visitor satisfaction



1200

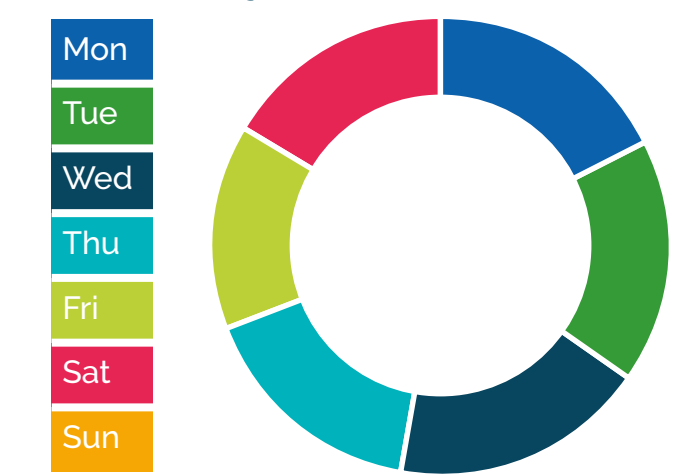
Square metres



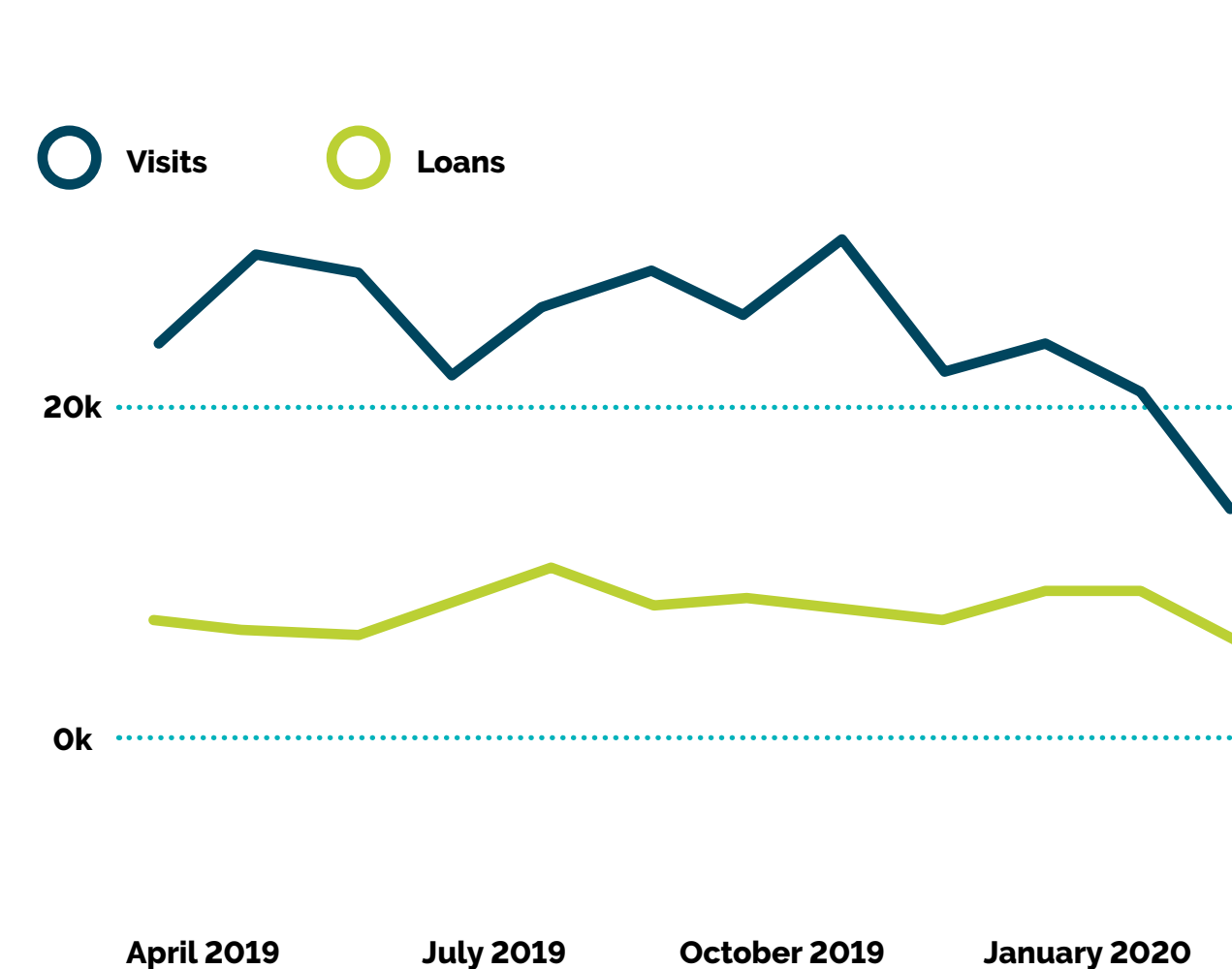
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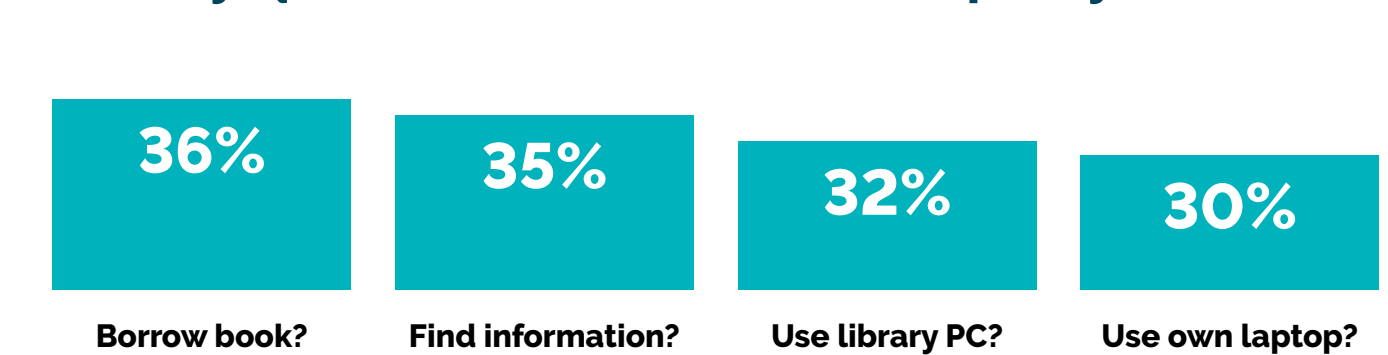
Av. daily visits (Jan-Mar)



Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	36.6%	21.3%	57.9%
Active but not borrowing	7.7%	34.4%	42.1%
Total	44.3%	55.7%	100%

Idea Store Whitechapel

Idea Store Whitechapel opened in September 2005 and is situated between Whitechapel market and Sainsbury's. It outperforms all other sites in Tower Hamlets, and it is the 4th most visited library in London. The flagship store has five storeys with a cafe and a gallery on the top floor and there are dedicated health and business and art libraries. The learning spaces include a conference room and specialist space for teaching dance. There is a full programme of activities for adults and children and regular exhibitions and events including the services' annual Writeidea reading festival. Because of its footfall Idea Store Whitechapel is very much in demand by partner organisations wanting to reach a wider audience. Partners, including Public Health regularly do outreach work at the store.

15,000
Total members



472.2k
Annual visits



184.7k
Annual loans



26.15
Staff
(full time equivalent)



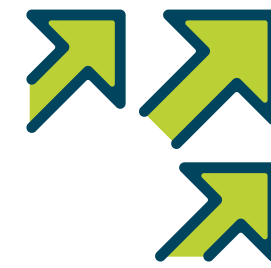
71
PC hours/wk



54%
Avg. PC usage



80%
Peak PC usage



Learning provision?
Yes



54.36
Hours spent on courses



92%
Visitor satisfaction



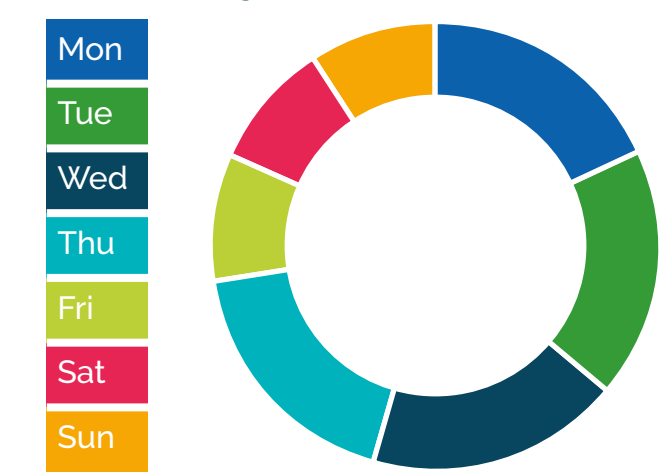
3500
Square metres



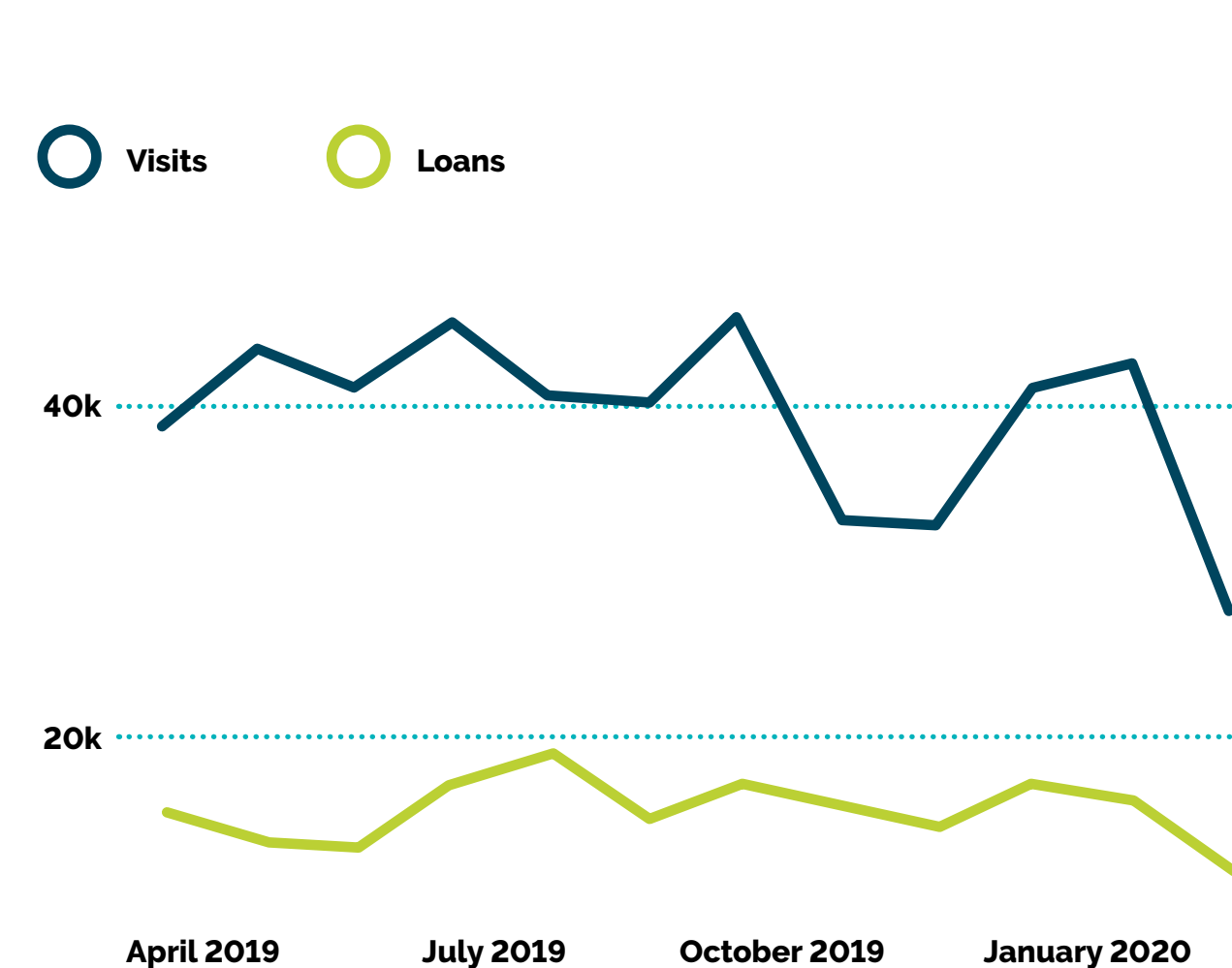
Opening hours by day

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Friday														9
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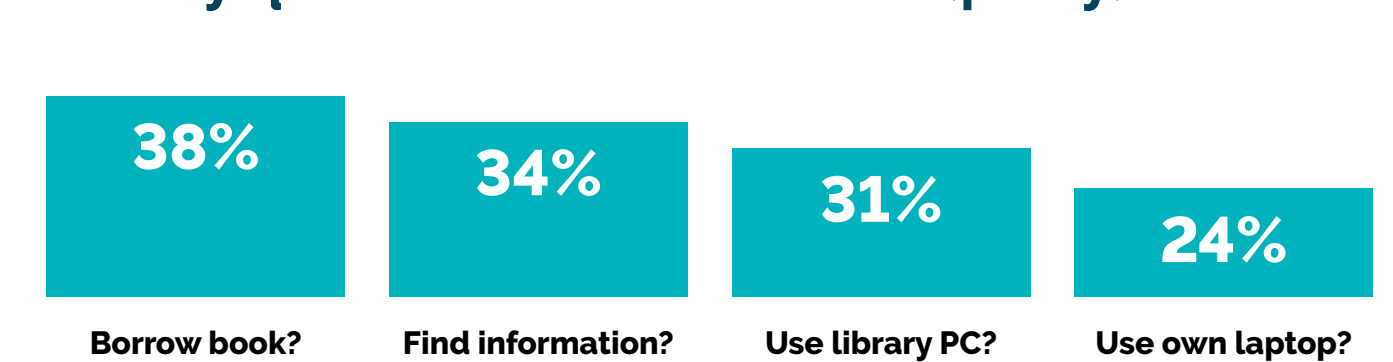
Av. daily visits (Jan-Mar)



Visits and loans over time



Survey questions: reason for visit (proxy)



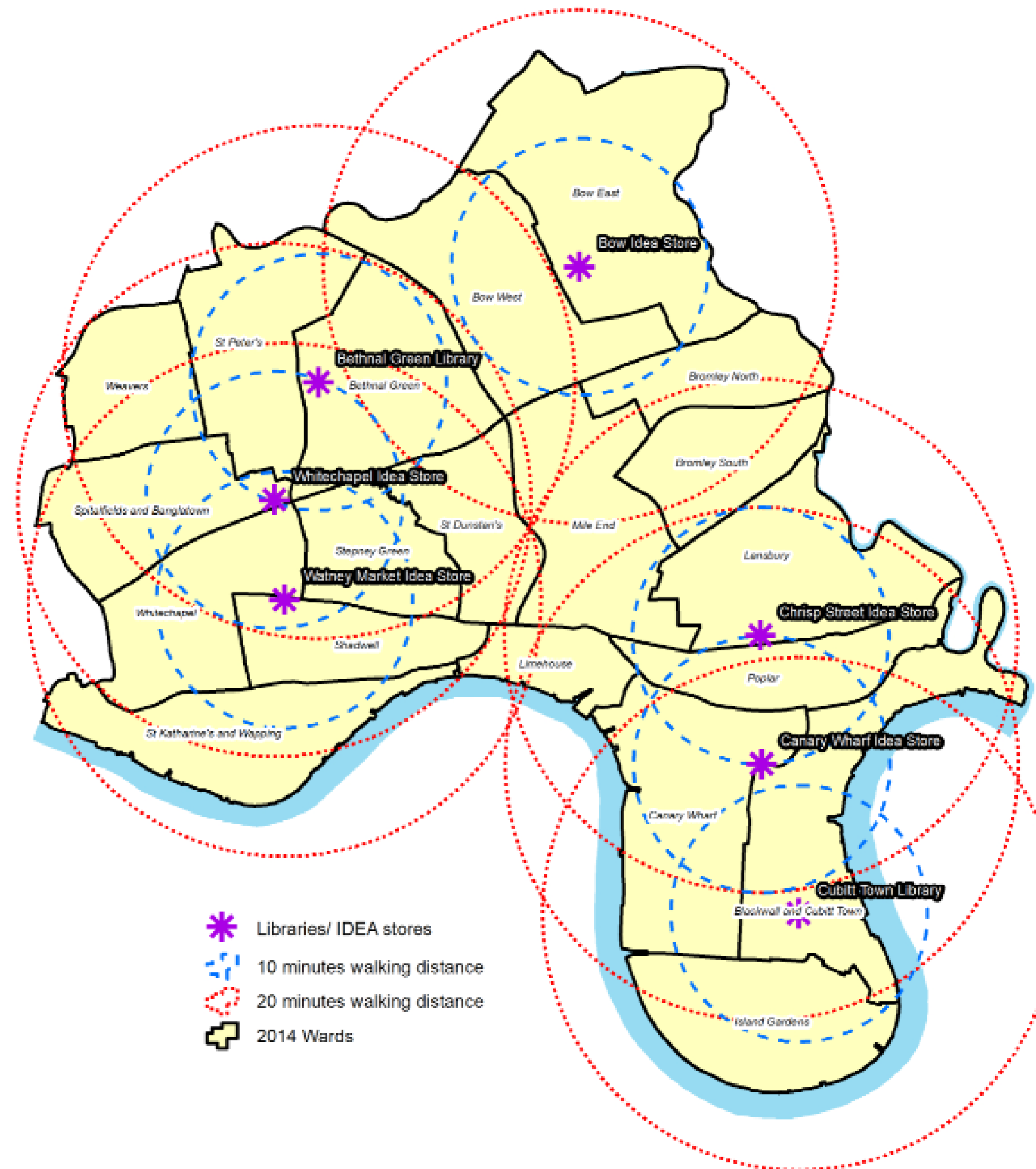
Active members by type and age category

Active users	16 and under	Over 16	Total
Active borrowers	25.3%	28.9%	54.2%
Active but not borrowing	5.8%	40.1%	45.8%
Total	31.1%	68.9%	100%

Current Idea Store and Library sites

About this map

This map shows 10 and 20 minute walking buffer zones around each site in Tower Hamlets. It is designed to give a rough indication of site coverage across the borough. It is calculated based on an average walking pace and as the crow flies rather than by road / footpath network



Situation if library sites and Watney Market close

About this map

This map shows 20 minute walking buffer zones around each site in Tower Hamlets. It is designed to give a rough indication of site coverage across the borough. It is calculated based on an average walking pace and as the crow flies. In this version, Watney Market Idea Store and Bethnal Green and Cubitt Town libraries have been removed.

