

Accessibility of Scottish Public Libraries: An Analysis

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This dissertation was submitted in part fulfilment of
requirements for the degree of MSc Information and Library
Studies

Department of Computer and Information Sciences

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September 2015

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I declare that this dissertation embodies the results of my own work and that it has been composed by myself. Following normal academic conventions, I have made due acknowledgement to the work of others.

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Abstract

This study sought to analyse the library services offered to disabled people in Scotland and to assess the accessibility of Scottish public libraries from the perspective of the author, librarians and disabled people themselves.

To do this, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were sent to each of Scotland's 32 local authorities asking them to provide copies of disabled library users policies (if they existed), if staff awareness training is implemented and at what level, if staff training in the use of assistive technologies is implemented and at what level, if the authority's libraries offer a home delivery service to housebound people, and if the authority's libraries provide accessible reading materials. Two self-completion surveys were also distributed online – one via email to librarians and a second on to the social media pages of two Scottish disability organisations requesting input from disabled people. The surveys asked for the opinions of both groups with regards to the accessibility of their libraries, the challenges they face and how access can be improved.

The FOI requests revealed that an inconsistent service is being provided to disabled people across Scotland, and it is argued that this is largely caused by a lack of national and authority-wide guidelines concerning disabled library users. While authorities in Scotland have made great gains since the implementation of the Equality Act (2010), there is still much work to do.

The surveys revealed that there is an awareness of this inconsistency in the minds of librarians, but they are restricted in the pursuit of the universal library service by budget cuts, structural limitations and lack of contact with disabled people or organisations representing them.

As a result of these findings, the principle recommendation is the development and implementation of national guidelines concerning disabled library users similar to those of the ALA, CLA and ALIA. Such a policy will provide clear objectives and offer no excuse for universal access not to be provided to the very best of every public library's ability. These guidelines offer advice as to how to achieve the universal service and will highlight examples of best practice based upon the findings of the FOI requests and survey results.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor David McMenemy for his help and guidance throughout this study. I would also like to thank everyone who participated in the research and shared their opinions and experiences. Lastly, I would like to thank the organisations UPDATE Disability Information Scotland and the Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) for their assistance in promoting my research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Research Objectives

Public libraries in Scotland are said to provide "a highly valued universal service" (Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), 2015, p.8). The word "universal" suggests anyone and everyone can use and benefit from the library, and that access to buildings, services, collections and resources is guaranteed regardless of such factors as age, gender or disability. It is library accessibility to this last category of people that will be the focus of this research. In the United Kingdom (UK), service providers are required by law to ensure access to their premises and resources. Compliance with the law however is not equal to the active consultation with and promotion to disabled people about the availability and accessibility of services. Many scholars, both in the UK and further afield, have attempted to analyse the accessibility of libraries from the perspective of the researcher alone. While this is undoubtedly useful in highlighting the steps being taken to ensure universal access, it does not address the particular challenges faced by librarians in delivering this or the experiences of people using the service. This research will investigate the accessibility of public libraries in Scotland by analysing service provision resulting from answers received from Freedom of Information (FOI) requests sent to every local authority. Librarians will also be questioned about their opinions and the challenges they face in meeting the needs of disabled people via a self-completion survey sent by email. Disabled people will also be given an opportunity to set out their experiences of, attitudes towards and needs from a public library via a self-completion survey. The quantitative and qualitative data collected by these methods will allow discussion as to how well Scottish public libraries are serving disabled members of their communities from the perspectives of the author, librarians and disabled people. Similarities and differences in opinions and practice will be highlighted, and from these it will be possible to make recommendations for national guidelines to be implemented to ensure a universally accessible Scottish public library service can be provided.

1.2: Scotland and Disability in Context

The rights and abilities of disabled people have received much attention in Scotland, and the UK as a whole, in recent years through positive measures such as the introduction of the Equality Act (EQA) in 2010, and also more unpopular ones such as the "bedroom tax" in 2013. The 2012 London Paralympic Games undoubtedly had a positive effect on the public's perception of disabled people and this was assisted by positive media coverage (Her Majesty's (HM) Government and Mayor of

London, 2013, pp.71-72), including television shows such as Channel 4's *The Last Leg* which is still on air and attempts to overcome the discomfort people feel in talking about disability (Ryan, 2012). Disabled people do still continue to face "barriers" however which can be defined as attitudes, actions or measures imposed upon disabled people which prevent their full participation in society. For example, disabled people are often described as being "vulnerable" and in need of protection, become more isolated after leaving school and generally have lower academic achievement than able-bodied people (Hollomotz, 2012). These may have long-term effects such as preventing disabled people from having the correct skills or qualifications to gain employment. The public library can play an important role in removing these barriers by following guidelines set out by bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP, 2012a), which encourages the library to be a place that is accessible to all citizens and for the differing needs of communities to be equally addressed.

As society shifts from being "manufacturing based" to "knowledge based" the need to access information is arguably more important than ever before. It is a right for all people enshrined in Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations (UN), 1948). It is also included in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, Council of Europe, 1950, Article 10) and in the UK's own Human Rights Act (HM Government, 1998, Article 10). By ensuring universal access libraries can assist disabled people in contributing to the "knowledge society", for example, by offering classes in digital literacy which can provide the skills needed to gain employment. The leisure and social aspects of the public library can also be enjoyed by all, the importance of which should not be underestimated. This right too is enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948, Article 27), which guarantees the right of every individual to enjoy the arts and the benefits from scientific achievement.

Research by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014) has found that approximately 1 billion people across the world have some form of disability. In Scotland this number is nearly 1 million people, or 19% of the working-age population (Scottish Government, 2011). One of the issues in discussing disability is that there is no one definition of this term, meaning there is potential for insult or confusion based upon word choice. In 2006 the UN published the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was ratified by the UK government in 2009 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015). The Convention introduced the concept of disability and adopted the social model to define it. This British model has strongly influenced how the world thinks about disability, and is marked by differentiating between "impairment" and "disability" as follows:

- An impairment is an individual and biological term;
- Disability is a social creation and what makes impairment a problem (Shakespeare, 2014, p.21).

Shakespeare (2014, p.26) however defines disability as being “a complex interaction of biological, psychological, cultural and socio-political factors, which cannot be extracted except with imprecision”. A similar definition is provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2015), which defines disability as an “umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitation, and participation restrictions”. The EQA (2010) on the other hand defines a person as being disabled “if a person (P) has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” (EQA 2010, s6 (1)). While it is not the purpose of this research to argue what is the correct terminology, it is considered important to be aware of it, and the term "disability" will be used in this paper as defined by the EQA (2010) with consideration of external factors affecting participation in society.

1.3: The Role of the Public Library in Provision of Services to Disabled People

Disability can take many forms including motor, cognitive and sensory. All of these can affect a person’s ability to read and therefore cause a "print disability" in addition to other symptoms. For example, a person with Multiple Sclerosis may be unable to hold a book, or a visually impaired person may be unable to read standard sized text. The library has a duty to cater to the needs of such individuals and ensure they have the same access to information as everybody else. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) have created a checklist to assist libraries in analysing their accessibility (Irvall and Nielsen, 2005). It includes guidelines as to the preferred layout of the library building as well as the services and resources that should be offered. The report also provides valuable advice concerning how to train staff to be aware of the needs of disabled people and highlights the need to converse with disabled people and/or their representatives. It is through this latter activity that libraries can truly ensure they are providing the resources and services that meet disabled peoples’ needs.

UNESCO (1994) advocate for a clear policy to be formed in the provision of library services to meet user needs. While a library might have its own policy or follow a regional one, national guidelines would ensure the same level of service is being provided across a country, especially with regards to

minority groups. Those national policies for disabled users that exist are low in number and relatively new. The Canadian Library Association (CLA) for example only approved its disability policy in 1997 while the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) adopted its' in 1998. The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), introduced its disabled user policy in 2001, acknowledging that "libraries play a catalytic role in the lives of people with disabilities by facilitating their full participation in society". While the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) lacks a specific policy about library access for disabled people, they have recently published their first national library strategy which may lead to more specific policies in future. Also, SLIC's (2007, p.22) guide "How Good is Our Public Library Service", advises libraries to consider what proportion of their learners are disabled people, if staff receive appropriate training to be able to assist such users, and if the library has assistive technologies to enable learning. In 2011 they also assisted in publishing the 'Six Steps to Library Services for Blind and Partially Sighted People', all of which highlights there is an awareness of the need to tailor library services in Scotland.

Many positive steps have clearly been taken, but there is still some way to go. For example, in the UK only 7% of books published are available in accessible formats, and consequently those with print disabilities are said to be suffering from a "book famine" (Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB), 2015a). In 2013 in an attempt to challenge this, the UK, along with many other countries, signed the Marrakesh Treaty which would allow international reproduction and distribution of accessible materials that would be exempt from copyright laws (World Intellectual Property Organisation, 2013). The European Union (EU) is yet to ratify the treaty however, meaning the UK cannot use it and print disabled people are still at a disadvantage. Despite such setbacks, the public library should still be doing all it can to make its services and resources available to disabled people, and the purpose of this research is to assess how well libraries in Scotland are doing this.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2:1: Introduction

Despite the prevalence of legislation, ethical policies and guidelines for providing a universally accessible service, the literature concerning service provision for disabled users suggests there is a big gap between what public libraries *are* doing and what they *could* be doing, and this is of international concern. 61% of the Scottish public use public libraries (SLIC, 2015, p.9) and the following literature review will allow consideration as to how this number can be increased by making the service more accessible to disabled people. In 2005 a special issue of the journal *Library Review* (54, 8) was published with a focus on the efforts of both academic and public libraries in Scotland to create more inclusive services for disabled people. In the editorial, Joint (2005, p.450) highlighted a genuine desire amongst librarians to extend their delivery of services rather than fearing recrimination for not imposing the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995). This edition provides a valuable insight into the attitudes of Scottish librarians and presents examples of good practice. For example, in discussing Glasgow's libraries, Beaton (2005) highlighted the provision of assistive technologies, accessible reading material and the piloting of signed tours of the Mitchell Library to allow hearing impaired people to take part. The issue with this paper however, as with much of the material available on this subject, is its age and the lack of follow-up material. It is now 2015 and the needs of disabled people in Scotland will have developed along with changes in disability and benefits legislation, advances in technology and the ever-increasing dependency upon the Internet as a provider of information. Consequently the 2005 paper may no longer be relevant, especially considering the implications of the recession and budget cuts across all local authorities. SLIC (2015, p.10) furthermore advises that Scottish public libraries may continue to feel budget cuts in future. For these reasons it is deemed an appropriate time to re-analyse the library services on offer to disabled people in Scotland and find out if libraries have continued with the good work despite the obstacles placed in front of them. In order to do this, newer literature from the UK and beyond must be considered in order to identify where gaps in service provision to disabled people still exist and what improvements have been made. This is also important considering that although there has been a slight increase in the amount of material published in this area in the last 5 years, there has been rather a lack of output both from Scotland and the UK as a whole. Due to the complex nature of this subject the section will be divided into the topics of: physical access; staff awareness and training; service provision; assistive technology; user awareness, and concerns raised by the literature.

2.2: Physical Access

Koulikourdi (2008, p.138) describes disability discrimination legislation as being “one of the most catalytic factors that affect library services for people with disabilities”. It is something that can guarantee a person to physically access a resource or service. In 1995 the UK’s Conservative government passed the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which placed a duty on service providers, and therefore libraries, to make “reasonable adjustments” where a physical feature placed a disabled person at a significant disadvantage (DDA, 1995, s.20 (2)). Such adjustments included allowing guide dogs onto premises or building a ramp to allow a wheelchair user access to a building. The DDA (1995) was updated in 2005 then replaced in 2010 with the Equality Act (EQA) which protects nine characteristics, including disability (EQA, 2010, s4). This latter act also calls for “reasonable adjustments” to be made, and these must be anticipated in advance of a disabled person using a service rather than requested (EQA, 2010, EN para 684). Though not enshrined in law, SLIC (2007, p.30) also advises libraries to assess their physical accessibility to ensure a quality service is provided.

Not all countries benefit from such legislation however, and countries that do can provide examples of good practice to those countries which have newer or no disability legislation in place. Bodaghi and Zainab (2012) and Todaro (2005), for example, used the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) in order to assess the accessibility of Iranian and Argentinean libraries respectively, with the former describing library building accessibility as "not considered good enough by either disabled users or architects" (Bodaghi and Zainab, 2012, p.241) and the latter that access to many library buildings was not "adequate" for disabled people (Todaro, 2005, p.260). While Nichols and Schnitzer (2015, p.20) make the important point that libraries should not just aim to comply with the law regarding accessibility issues but rather go beyond it, from the studies above it is apparent that legislation at least gives libraries something to aim for. Ethical guidelines such as those created by SLIC can also assist in ensuring every person can use the public library. For disabled people unable to visit the building, services such as mobile libraries or home delivery services can be offered. Public libraries could also follow the example of the Open University (OU) which provides a postal service of physical library resources to housebound students (Mears and Clough, 2015, p.74) and couple this with increased loan periods to allow the user time to read and return materials.

The accessibility of the physical library’s online equivalent is also increasingly important. There are more LIS studies in web accessibility than physical accessibility to libraries and although the online

library has become a distinct location as more services are made available through it (Hill, 2013, p.139), the ability to actually get into a building should not cease to be considered, especially as many disabled people will enter the actual library building in order to make use of its PCs and online resources.

Like any other group, disabled people have the right to be consulted when changes to building infrastructure and functions are being planned (Bodaghi and Zainab, 2012, p.247). Consulting with disabled people about their requirements should not be under-emphasised as they are the best source of information for how to create an accessible environment that best meets their needs (Chittenden and Dermody, 2010, p.94; Pereyaslavskaya, 2015). Pereyaslavskaya (2015) furthermore makes the important point that accessibility should not be a separate benchmark but rather a central part to all service provision. This highlights the point of not viewing disabled users as “other” but rather as deserving of the same treatment and access to services that other users receive.

2.3: Staff Awareness and Training

Attitudinal barriers can be considered to be equally problematic to the physical ones faced by disabled people (Bodaghi and Zainab, 2012, p.242; Todaro, 2005, p.253) and attending to them can be more important than providing the latest technology (Hull *et.al.* 2011, p.82). Negative staff attitudes could result in a disabled person feeling discriminated against or that their needs are not being adequately attended to, possibly resulting in the loss of library members. Lack of staff awareness about the needs of disabled library users and training in how to address them has been highlighted in many discussions (for example: Koulikourdi, 2008, p.142; Todaro, 2005, p.260; Vilar and Bon 2014, p.362; Wray, 2013, p.27). It is arguably Lewis (2013, p.231) who puts it most succinctly, stating library staff must feel comfortable in serving disabled users (as they should any other user group) and this is key to attracting disabled people into the library. If a staff member is uncomfortable because they do not know how to address someone in a wheelchair for example, they may shy away from serving disabled people, thus leaving those patrons feeling isolated. Also, if a disabled library user has one negative experience with a member of staff it can have a long term effect on that person’s perception of the library as a whole (Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015, p.22). This would be extremely unfortunate as frontline staff are in a unique position to create a positive impression of the library (Charles, 2005, p.454). Such potential scenarios advocate for awareness training to be offered to *all* library staff rather than just one designated person to ensure each library patron receives the same high level of service at any time they visit.

Library staff also have to contend with "invisible" disabilities such as chronic disease, cognitive disabilities and learning difficulties (Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015, p.18) and ensure people with these impairments also receive equal treatment. This may be difficult because under the Data Protection Act (DPA, 1998, s.2 (e)), a person's "physical or mental health or condition" is classified as sensitive personal data, and therefore does not need to be disclosed to a public body such as a library. It is here where staff awareness and a good attitude can be important, because if staff appear approachable users may express their needs to them. Such a relationship can be beneficial to both parties - the user is made aware of services and resources that may be applicable to them while the staff member gains experience in assisting disabled people and recognising the potential needs of someone from this demographic.

It may be daunting for staff to undergo training in disability awareness, however, if they learn how to perform sign-language or the colours of papers that work best for dyslexic people (Charles, 2005, p.454), these could be of significant value to the person being assisted. Training can be delivered in a number of ways including hiring professionals from charities or speaking to disabled people themselves about best practice (Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015, p.23). It may also be daunting for a librarian to take on the challenge of increasing staff awareness, but there are a number of resources to help them, many of which are online. The RNIB (2015b) for example provides an online beginner's guide to assistive technologies. The Reading Sight (2009) charity provides advice about how to make a library more accessible for people who are blind or visually impaired, including where to purchase large print, audio and Braille. It also gives tips about how to market accessible services and resources. The charity Share the Vision has worked in partnership with SLIC and the Society of Chief Librarians to produce a poster detailing 'Six Steps' libraries can take to ensure they are more accommodating to blind and partially sighted people (SLAINTE, 2011). The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD, 2015) provides training workshops to promote knowledge of learning disabilities, and in 2015 these include making information accessible to people with learning disabilities as well as an awareness raising course. Forrest (2007) looked at the effectiveness of library staff using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in order to learn about disability issues, and this could also be implemented to ensure all staff are being reached. This could be the result of collaboration between authorities. It could also serve a helpful purpose in allowing participating staff across all authorities to communicate with each other and share their experiences, as in the Forrest (2007) study. Working with others is advocated generally by SLIC (2007, p.25) who acknowledge that collaboration "can offer a wide range of opportunities for personal and social development".

Training does not have to be confined to the library building and it is advisable that some, if not all, staff should be involved in outreach projects (Lewis, 2013, p.231). This could take the form of visiting day centres, charities and local support groups. This will provide a double opportunity: to find out the needs of current and potential disabled users, and also to promote the services and resources currently available in the library. Outreach projects could also take place at support groups for parents and/or carers, or posters and fliers placed in GP surgeries for example, to attract people affected by disability but who are not themselves disabled, because as Wray (2013, p.27) states, people may be desperate for information but not consider approaching a library for health information. By encouraging these people to come to the library as well, a support network may be developed for them.

It is not enough to deliver a one-off awareness-raising session but rather training should be regularly updated as the needs of disabled people will change (as would anyone else's) due to legislation, advances in technology or personal situation for instance. Scottish libraries could follow the example of Ontario libraries which ensures training is part of the hiring process for both staff and volunteers (Chittenden and Dermody, 2010, p.95) as well as regularly updating it. This would tackle the point made by Burrington (2007 in Hull *et.al.*, 2011, p.82) in that any disability policy is useless unless every staff member is aware of it and how to implement it. This kind of awareness training should not be restricted to current service providers however and should be extended to be part of the curriculum for courses in Library and Information Studies (LIS), to ensure graduates are entering the workforce prepared and able to tackle barriers to information and resources (Lewis, 2013, p.234). This sentiment was expressed in a survey four years earlier of US librarians working for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, with 55.3% of respondents stating LIS students were not being prepared to meet the needs of disabled library users (Bonnici *et.al.*, 2009, p.521), suggesting an ongoing problem. Libraries should also consider employing disabled people (Wray, 2013, p.30; Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015, p.24). This would create a positive image of the library as a place for everyone. It could also ensure considerations are made for different people to use the library, its services and resources by talking face-to-face with someone who may have had problems accessing these in the past and with an understanding of how to make improvements.

2.4: Service Provision

UNESCO (1994) states that public library services are to be provided on the "basis of equality of access for all". To ensure this, libraries should consult with disabled users regularly to find out if

what they are doing meets their users' requirements, and consultation should also take place if changes to services or physical access are to occur (Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015, p21; Bodaghi and Zainab, 2013, p.247). It is also important to find out the ages of people with disabilities in a community to ensure that everyone is catered for. This latter factor should also be taken into consideration if a user has a lower developmental age than their physical one (Wray, 2013, p.27) to ensure they are not side-lined and that services exist that cater to them.

Disabled people have the same information needs as able-bodied people, such as queries about health, entertainment and job-seeking for example and Lewis (2013) has found that in her experience disabled people want to access the same kind of information their friends and family have been able to and also the same collections of materials. There may be an inclination to believe, especially in the era of reduced budgets, that materials should be purchased that will benefit the many rather than the few and that resources for disabled people will support their needs only. If one considers this properly however then it is not necessarily the case. Spoken word CDs for example, while helpful to people who are blind, visually impaired or struggle to hold a physical book, could also assist users who are newly arrived in Scotland and do not speak fluent English, thereby giving them an opportunity to listen to natural language. Similarly, low shelving allowing books to be reached by someone in a wheelchair can also be helpful to able-bodied people who are below average height. The provision of specialised rather than inclusive services may allow the labelling of disabled people as 'other' who cannot take part in activities with others. For example, Hyder and Tissot (2013) interviewed members of a reading group for visually impaired and blind users of a library in the UK, and found that while these people valued the group they also felt they were being discriminated against. They felt unable to join other reading groups for reasons such as meeting places that were difficult for them to get to and the library being unable to provide accessible versions of the texts being read. The library in question was using a volunteer service to convert books into spoken word, and so rather than have a separate group for visually impaired and blind people, a better course of action may have been to ask the volunteers to provide versions of the books already on the reading lists. That way, these people would have had the same choice as other library users to take part in any group they wanted. This method could be emulated across the country and is important so that disabled people are not side-lined but can actively take part in services of their choosing. This also falls in line with SLIC's (2007, p.15) advice that libraries should ensure materials are available in accessible formats and that access to their services complies with relevant legislation.

Participation in book groups can provide a supportive network, companionship and boost self-esteem and confidence (Walwyn and Rowley, 2011). The use of bibliotherapy or therapeutic book groups can be considered as a means of assisting people in dealing with any issues they face. For example, one participant of the Walwyn and Rowley (2011) study into therapeutic reading groups stated that reading the book *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* helped her understand her own health condition better by being able to identify with the lead character Christopher, who is Autistic. The study also found that such groups can be the first step to participating more fully in society (Walwyn and Rowley, 2011, p.311) and therefore can assist in removing barriers faced by disabled people.

Yoon and Kim (2011) argue that provision of reading materials in alternative formats is key to improving library services for disabled people. The DAISY standard is considered to be an ideal way to provide accessible information to people with print disabilities (Tank and Frederiksen, 2007, p.938). It was formed in 1996 to lead the transition from analogue to digital talking books and aims to ensure “the best possible reading experience with eyes, ears and fingers” (DAISY Consortium, 2015). Other options include Playaway talking books, large print and Braille texts. Libraries should consult with disabled users about collection development to ensure they have the same access to services and information as other people do. One of SLIC's (2007, p.15) performance measures to evaluate access to information is to assess how many hours mobile and outreach services are available to the public and to ask if there is a home delivery service if a mobile one is not available. While this is an important resource for many users, there will be disabled people across Scotland who are unable even to get to a mobile library, and so provision must be made so that these people can also access information. Attempts by the library to improve services for disabled people must be well marketed, otherwise they may go unnoticed. It is also important that users have an opportunity to give feedback about these efforts to ensure that needs are accurately being met (Chittenden and Dermody, 2010, p.95), because, as Hinton (2003 in Burke, 2009, p.50) states, public perceptions are important to the success of new policies.

Library catalogues are one of the most important tools to allow a patron to locate resources although traditional ones may not meet the needs of persons with visual disabilities (Kumar and Sanaman, 2015, p.247). A web-based catalogue however could change this by providing materials in an accessible, digital format meaning they can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Kumar and Sanaman, 2015). Bonnici *et.al.* (2009, p.519) also advocate for this, stating that with Internet access US libraries could create shared bibliographic data on a national level which would facilitate national

inter-library loans. If such a scheme was adopted in Scotland, library users with disabilities would have greater access to materials while libraries would be spending less than buying these outright themselves. This could also solve the earlier mentioned issue of book groups lacking sufficient material in accessible formats.

An important factor to consider in the provision of library services to disabled people is the use of volunteers. Koulikourdi (2008, p.142) highlights that in many countries they are essential for provision of many services, especially home delivery and outreach ones. While CILIP (2012b) also acknowledges the vital contribution played by volunteers, they also advocate that trained library staff *should not* be replaced by volunteers. Arts Council England (2013) found that in 2012 over 170 “community” (i.e. volunteer) libraries were in operation in England, accounting for 5% of all public libraries in the country. While Scottish libraries have been relatively unaffected by this, as budgets continue to be cut there is no guarantee they will not face the same fate. While the author is not attempting to undermine the contributions made by volunteers, concerns are raised as to how services for groups such as disabled people would continue to be provided without staff properly trained in the management of a library, as well as disability awareness.

2.5: Assistive Technologies and Web Accessibility

As society moves from being “manufacturing based” to “knowledge based” the ability to access online environments where so much of this knowledge is stored is crucial. The increased availability of computers and Internet access has also allowed for digital recording systems such as MP3s to become a preferred method of reading for those who cannot or do not want to use Braille or spoken word CDs (Yoon and Kim, 2011, p.384). The 2013 Scottish Household survey however revealed that approximately 39% of people in Scotland who do not use the Internet have some form of long-term health problem, illness or disability (Scottish Government, 2014). These people could benefit greatly from Internet access to find online support groups, health information and what their rights are for example. The public library therefore has a great opportunity to bridge the “digital divide”, actively target these people and assist them in developing IT literacy.

In order to do this, classes could be offered in how to use assistive technologies to access computers and online resources. The Bonnici *et.al.* (2009, p.520) study found that librarians believed that only through the purchasing of assistive technologies could libraries bridge the gap in the “digital divide”. Following the model of Todaro (2006, p.259) the term “assistive technology” is used to include all

kinds of hardware and software that assist people in using PCs despite an impairment, for example screen readers for persons who are visually impaired or large mice/trackballs to help people with motor impairments. Peters and Bell (2006) provide a list of the types of hard and software that could be adopted by a library and list their pros and cons as well as providing additional guidance. However, one technology will not suit all disabled users (Yoon and Kim, 2011, p.385) and it is of no use to purchase these materials (which also happen to be expensive) without first consulting disabled people to find out what equipment they require. Charles (2005, p.455) highlights that alongside awareness training, library staff must also be made aware of the hardware and software that disabled library patrons may use, also stating that not all staff should need to receive training in its use but just be aware of who to contact when a user requires assistance. It does not seem appropriate however that a disabled user should be made to wait for possibly an extended period of time for assistance in the case of trained personnel being unavailable, while anyone else would not be expected to accept the same treatment. This also seems to contradict what Charles (2005, p.458) herself states: “person first, disability second”. Having all staff trained in the use of assistive technologies would ensure that even part-time, evening and weekend staff will be able and comfortable in helping disabled users and also that a good service is consistently provided.

The provision of assistive technologies is undoubtedly critical in order for many disabled people to take part in and contribute to the knowledge society, but on their own will not ensure equal access to information (Kumar and Sanaman, 2015). The vendors of databases used by a library along with the library’s website designers must also be chosen carefully, as the products they produce are not always compatible with assistive technologies (Vandenbark, 2010). To assist with ensuring that vendors are listening to library’s and users’ calls for improved accessibility, libraries could follow the example of the OU. It gives feedback to its subscription service providers about accessibility of their resources to colour-blind, visually impaired, keyboard-only and dyslexic users (Mears and Clough, 2015, p.75). As a consequence, the OU will not purchase materials if they are inaccessible. This is an effective technique because not everyone with an impairment will disclose it, yet can still benefit from guaranteed accessibility (Mears and Clough, 2015). The increasing prevalence of digital libraries means physical access can also be extended to include presence in the online world. In the US for example, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act obliges a library’s electronic communications to aim to be compliant with the ADA’s (1990) website requirements (Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015, p.19). The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium aims to create internationally recognised guidelines for web accessibility and attempts to go beyond the requirements made under Section 508 (Vandenbark, 2010, p.25). For those librarians who are uncomfortable making decisions

themselves as to the accessibility of their library's website, there exist a number of online tools that can do this, including the WAVE Accessibility Evaluator Tool and Microsoft's "Accessibility Checker" for materials created with Office, and these issues are then relayed to the computer programmer (Pereyaslavskaya, 2015). The wide availability of such tools offers no excuse to libraries to not consider making their online versions universally accessible, and one could argue that making "reasonable adjustments" to ensure this is not an unreasonable expectation.

2.6: User Awareness

There is no point in making any of the changes noted above if nobody is informed about it. Koulikourdi (2008, p.146) states the population of disabled people in Greece consists of many "potential" users, a sentiment echoed by Lewis (2013, p.231) whose experience as a librarian has taught her that many disabled people are unaware of exactly the kind of services that their local library can offer them. SLIC (2015, p.14) furthermore highlights the library service is "being misunderstood and under-used by individuals, groups and communities who could benefit from it". This could be caused by a number of factors. One example may be a lack of staff awareness about the range of services and resources that a library offers and how they are delivered. This issue could potentially be greater amongst part-time staff that do not work in a library on all the days it is open and therefore not see first-hand all that is on offer. This may also be the case when using volunteers to deliver library services. If they are performing essential functions such as a home delivery service then it is of great importance that they not only receive awareness training about the needs of disabled users but also of what the public library offers. Even if a patron is unable to visit the physical library they may have access to its' online equivalent and be able to use services there. Other reasons for lack of user awareness may include a lack of targeted marketing or the user being on the wrong side of the "digital divide", and therefore not able to look for this information themselves. Vilar and Bon (2014, p.364) state "librarians must be proactive" in ensuring disabled people use the public library. Consultation with disabled people in the library and out-with it, targeted marketing along with trained and informed staff are therefore key to ensuring the library attracts as many disabled people as possible and provides a suitable environment in which to meet their diverse needs.

2.7: Concerns Raised by the Literature

The literature encountered has raised a number of concerns:

- The needs of disabled library users and analyses of the services and resources available to them is relatively under-researched in comparison to other areas of LIS interest. Where studies have taken place, there is much repetition in the recommendations made for improvement. For example, Bonnici *et.al.* (2009) found that librarians believe LIS students are not being taught how to deal with issues concerning disabled people and this was repeated by Lewis (2013) suggesting nothing has changed. Similarly, staff attitudes were highlighted as being potentially problematic by both Todaro and Charles respectively in 2005, and the implications of this have been addressed again almost a decade later by Vilar and Bon in 2014. While the answer to the latter issue may be a result of the studies taking place in different countries with different opinions of and legislation regarding disability, it also suggests that previously made recommendations are not being implemented.
- The author has encountered little scholarly discussion about services offered to disabled people in public libraries in the UK. The journal focusing on Scottish libraries is useful, but is pre-recession and pre-EQA and therefore the extent to which these have impacted Scottish service provision and planning is unclear. While it may be coincidental that there is something of a dearth of material concerning UK libraries since the recession began, concerns are raised that services for this user group have been somewhat neglected as a result of budget cuts.
- Many of the articles encountered (for example: Chittenden and Dermody, 2010; Nichols and Schnitzer, 2015; Bodaghi and Zainab, 2012) advocate for cooperation and consultation with disabled people and/or their representatives and other external organisations, suggesting this is not general practice. Librarians must ensure this is not the case when it comes to actual provision of services and ensuring the accessibility of the physical and online libraries. Lewis (2013, p.235) however believes that if librarians were asked if they believe equal access to information exists they would probably say 'yes' but disabled people would probably say 'no', again suggesting previous recommendations are being ignored.
- Most of the material encountered focuses on physical disabilities and there is little on impairments such as Autism, memory loss, or learning disabilities. It is only recently that discussion in these areas is beginning to surface (for example: Wray, 2013; Vilar and Bon, 2014). These impairments present different challenges for both the librarian and library user, which highlights the importance of the previous point that disabled people or external

organisations need to be consulted in order to guarantee that the needs of this user group are being adequately met.

- What is perhaps the most significant concern is the lack of involvement of disabled people themselves in the LIS research, and Burke (2009) and Hill (2013, p.141) are the only researchers to have acknowledged this. Bonnici *et. al.* (2009, p.515) conversely state that LIS literature is "replete" with studies concerning the perspective of library users with physical disabilities, however, in the literature addressed above this is not the case and rather the viewpoint of the researcher is generally the only one considered. This is the justification given for Bonnici *et.al.* (2009) to only survey librarians, and while this is of course important, it is users themselves who must be placed at the heart of provision otherwise there will be no library to attend to. It does not seem appropriate for LIS researchers to draw conclusions as to the effectiveness of library services and accessibility without actually speaking to the people concerned.

The prevailing issue throughout is the lack of input from disabled people themselves in the research and in the delivery of library services. Non-disabled people can only assess accessibility to a certain extent as they cannot fully comprehend the needs of and challenges faced by disabled people. This is made even more difficult if LIS students are not provided with necessary training to meet the needs of this user group and are entering the workforce unprepared. The prevalence of legislation and ethical guidelines to ensuring access to disabled people provides a baseline for libraries to aim to, and through active consultation with and promotion to disabled people about their service they can create a universal environment in which all people can fully participate. Libraries in Scotland, and the UK as a whole, are currently in a position whereby they can provide a model of good practice to other countries based on the availability of guidance from the government to increase accessibility, the attempts in popular media to "normalise" talking about disability, and also earlier examples of inclusive thinking in the pre-recession and pre-EQA era which can be built upon and extended to meet user requirements.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1: Introduction

Based on the concerns raised by the literature review, the following observations have been formed:

1. A gap exists between what librarians and disabled people consider to be an accessible library.
2. The literature has highlighted that disabled people are rarely included in LIS research, and many articles recommend including disabled people in discussion about changes to library buildings, services and resources which suggests it is not currently common practice.
3. Legislation such as the DDA (1995) and EQA (2010) force service providers to consider the accessibility of their service but there is a misunderstanding of what constitutes universal accessibility. Also, while organisations may use the law as a basis to improve accessibility this is not the same as creatively thinking and being proactive in promoting accessibility to disabled people.
4. The attitudes of library staff towards disabled people can be problematic due to factors such as fear of causing offence or being unaware of how to speak to disabled people. A communication barrier may be said to exist with the result that the needs and wants of disabled people are not being adequately heard and addressed.
5. The lack of national guidelines with regards to disabled library users has the result of an inconsistent service being provided across Scotland.

These observations however are based on the literature review alone, and as previously stated, the majority of discussion encountered is not Scotland or even UK-specific. The aim of the methodology was to assess whether the above remarks are justified and involved analysing service provision and seeking the opinions of disabled people as well as librarians. The methodology consisted of three parts: Freedom of Information (FOI) requests sent to all of Scotland's local authorities; a self-completion survey sent via email to librarians, and a self-completion survey placed on the Facebook and Twitter pages of two Scottish disability awareness organisations. A positivist standpoint has therefore been adopted, comprising of a deductive theory, an inductive strategy and with objectivist considerations in mind, which are fundamental aspects to quantitative research (Bryman, 2012, p.36). The research is descriptive about the current level of services offered to disabled people in Scotland and the opinions of both librarians and disabled people regarding this, thus can be

considered positivist (Bryman, 2012, p.27). The experiences of librarians and disabled library users will be affected by the policies and procedures set by their local authority and over which the majority of these people have no control, and so this takes into account the objectivist standpoint (Bryman, 2012, p.32-33). The study is deductive as observations about the Scottish public library service and its accessibility have been highlighted as being of concern and in order to deduce their significance they must undergo scrutiny by means of collecting and analysing relevant data for the authorities that finance and control them, the people who implement policies and the recipients of the service (Bryman, 2012, p.24). Finally, the research method is inductive as the relationships between the initial observations and the findings of the data collection and analysis will be inferred, and the accuracy of the observations will be confirmed or denied (Bryman, 2012, p.24). The three-part methodology of data collection via FOI requests, a self-completion survey for librarians and a self-completion survey for disabled people will allow conclusions to be drawn as to the current level of accessibility to Scottish public libraries guaranteed by local authorities and the opinions of and challenges faced by librarians and disabled people. It will also allow discussion as to whether or not the observations outlined above are justified.

3.2: FOI Requests

FOI requests were sent to each of Scotland's 32 local authorities, which manage public services such as education, public libraries and social care. Each authority is governed by a council which is independent from the Scottish government (Scottish Government, 2015). This method was similar to a self-completion survey, and a high response rate was guaranteed because under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA, 2002, s.1.16), public authorities must provide answers to requests within 20 working days or give reason for not doing so. This was therefore considered the best means of attaining reliable and up-to-date data. As Scotland is a small nation it was possible to send questions to every authority meaning there was no need to sample, and this was beneficial in that a perspective of the country overall could be gathered. The FOI requests asked for authorities to provide copies of disability policies if they existed, and if the authority offers staff training in disability awareness issues and at what level, staff training in the use of assistive technologies and at what level, a home delivery service and accessible reading materials. The answers to these provide insight into the level of library service provision to disabled people, whether local authorities go beyond the requirements set by the EQA (2010) and whether materials and services can be accessed by all. Any policies provided were analysed to observe if they address the issues raised by the literature review, for example if it is the authority's policy to consult with disabled people with

regards to service changes. They were compared to distinguish commonalities and differences in practice, and examples of good practice are highlighted as recommendations to be employed by all authorities. The answers to the additional questions were compared between authorities to provide insight into the level of accessible service provided by each authority individually and across Scotland as a whole.

3.3: FOI Data Analysis

The FOI requests returned quantitative and qualitative data comprising of nominal variables which cannot be ranked in any way (Pickard, 2007, p.252). The quantitative data consisted of the number of authorities which provide each of the resources enquired about, and also the number of resources which each individual authority provides. This data has been presented on a simple bar chart and compound bar chart respectively (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). The use of graphs makes these comparisons easier to understand than using text description alone (Bethlehem, 2009, p.322). These frequency distributions have been included because they are essential to any study (Davis, 2007, p.121) and in this particular research give an indication of service provision across Scotland as a whole. Most authorities provided comments in addition to the 'yes/no' answers requested, and these provided qualitative data which was input to the NVivo software programme. This allowed a thematic analysis to take place which is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2012, p.578). The material was grouped into the broad categories of: disabled users policy; staff awareness training; staff training in assistive technology; home delivery service, and provision of accessible materials, to correspond with the requests sent to the authorities as this was the specific data asked for. The data was then sub-themed based upon repetition of topics and display of similarities and differences, which are among methods recommended by Ryan and Bernard (2003 in Bryman, 2012, p.580). A summary of comments was also provided, following the example of Walwyn and Rowley (2011, p.307). These themes and sub-themes are presented in a frequency table (Appendix 1). This allows discussion to take place as to where authorities display similarities and differences in their practice. Some authorities provided only 'yes/no' answers and so this slightly restricted the overall analysis of service provision in Scotland. It should be noted here that each authority has been assigned a number at random and none have been named in the findings.

3.4: FOI Reliability, Replication and Validity

Reliability, replicability and validity are among the most important criteria for evaluating social research (Bryman, 2012, p.46). Reliability is concerned with the ability to retest the method (Pickard, 2007, p.21). Local authorities must by law provide answers to FOI requests or reasons for not doing so, and this alone proves it to be a reliable tool. The answers provide an overview to the attitude of the authority and their commitment to ensuring their services are accessible. This will have implications for the people delivering policies and those using the service. The measurement of how many authorities in Scotland provide the resources enquired about, and how many of the resources each individual authority provides could be repeated in future. As public libraries in Scotland receive their funding from local authorities, service provision is likely to change depending upon the economic situation of the country as a whole, and the measurement used can assess change. This also ensures the study is replicable. Internal validity is ensured because it is possible to infer relationships between what is being implemented at a regional level, the challenges and attitudes of librarians ensuring the library's success and the experiences and opinions of the recipients of the service. In the comparison of all three datasets the FOI answers were considered to be the independent variable which will have an effect upon what the librarians can do and also upon the library experience of disabled people, and both of these groups are the dependent variables who will feel direct result of any change in the independent variable (Pickard, 2007, p.21). External validity is ensured because the results can be generalised to the wider context of Scotland as a whole because of the large response rate.

3.5: Surveys

While the FOI responses provided insight into the attitudes of the Scottish authorities as a whole regarding accessibility, it was considered necessary to enquire about the specific opinions of and challenges faced by librarians in implementing these policies and also of disabled people who are recipients of the service. Self-completion surveys were chosen as means of attaining insight into this. It was decided to conduct two surveys: one for librarians (Appendix 2) and one for disabled people (Appendix 5). Surveys are a popular method of data gathering (Koulikourdi, 2008, p.140) and were considered appropriate as a large number of people could be questioned at once and their answers compared. This was also useful considering two distinct groups of people were being questioned. In a study of LIS literature between 2000 and 2010, Hill (2013) found that when surveys were employed they were used more to accumulate information on the type of service and resources libraries

provide to disabled people rather than what users need and want, or perceptions of disability issues by people working in libraries. The FOI requests serve the former purpose, and the surveys were used to serve the latter two. The intention of the surveys was to acquire a nation-wide perspective of both librarians and disabled people in Scotland, and considering the large geographical area surveys removed the need to consider financial and time constraints that may have caused problems if interviews or focus groups were employed (Bryman, 2012, p.233). It also eliminated the need to find locations that were easily accessible to and convenient for people to travel to. Both surveys were delivered online which allowed access to be provided to a large group of potential respondents (Bethlehem, 2009, p.277). The opinions of both librarians and disabled people are important when discussing accessibility. Librarians have an ethical duty to provide an equal service to all citizens (CILIP, 2012c) but also have to contend with restrictions placed on them by their employers. No user group should have to suffer on account of this and in order to ensure this it is important that library users are given an opportunity to speak out about their needs so that consultation and cooperation can take place. The challenges faced by both groups therefore need to be understood. As previously noted disabled people are rarely included in LIS research and possibly discussion of library provision. The barriers faced by disabled people such as lower academic achievement and the perception of them as being "vulnerable" leads the author to consider that their opinion is not sought because of perhaps a fear they are not capable to provide it or of causing offence, with the result that the issue is ignored or handled with "kid gloves" rather than getting to the core of the matter. Both surveys were descriptive in nature looking at attitudes towards and experiences of public libraries in Scotland in order to establish trends and/or patterns that could be generalised to the entire population (Pickard, 2007, p.96).

The surveys were created using the Qualtrics software program and the accessibility of both was tested before they were released. This was an important consideration due to the topic and intended audience. For this reason the font used was Verdana which is simple in design and also larger than other fonts, which increases accessibility (WebAIM, 2013). Also, the colour of the text was designed to be both attractive to encourage participation (Dillman *et.al.* 2009 in Bryman, 2012, p.237) but also easy to read, and so high contrast colouring was used (W3C Web Accessibility Initiative, 2014). The design of the answer format to the questions - multiple choice and text entry - are also accessible and the provision of question numbers ensured that screen readers could read export tags (Qualtrics, 2015).

Participants for each survey were selected using purposive sampling as they were believed to be "typical" of the population being studied (Davies, 2007, p.57). The survey for librarians was sent via email to a JISCMail group concerning UK public libraries. Databases such as this are a good tool as generally they only have current contact details of their members which prevents surveys being sent to non-working email addresses (Best and Harrison, 2009, p.417). Although the group was concerned with issues over the UK as a whole the survey was distributed to 1182 people and it was anticipated from this that a good response rate would be acquired. Mangione (1995, p.60-1 in Bryman, 2012, p.235) states that a response rate of at least 60% is needed for findings to be considered "acceptable". It was not anticipated that 60% of the almost 1200 subscribers would respond due to factors such as the geographic focus of the study, personal interest or time constraints, but it was also not possible to find out from the mailing list exactly how many of the subscribed librarians worked in Scottish public libraries and send the survey to them alone, and therefore a response rate of lower than 60% was not considered to be problematic. It was important to set this inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to get the most accurate and relevant data in relation to the study (Fink, 2003, p.35) and Pickard (2007, p.99) states that it is better to perform a thorough analysis of a smaller sample than a chaotic one of a large sample. From this list the survey was noticed by individuals and organisations who offered to promote the survey themselves, which was an unexpected advantage to using the web as a platform to launch the survey. One organisation also suggested posting it to a different list which is Scotland-focused. The emails contained an anonymous survey link to ensure that personal data such as names and email addresses were not collected. Responses were also anonymised so that IP addresses were not collected. Keeping the surveys confidential and not tracking details was hoped to increase participation, as suggested by Fink (2003, p.45).

Participants for the survey for disabled people were recruited using convenience sampling, which is a means of acquiring data in a convenient manner to the researcher (Davis, 2007, p.55). Although the method of convenience sampling presented limitations (Davis, 2007, p.63), which will be discussed later, it was the only means by which volunteers from across Scotland with different impairments could be gathered as the author does not have access to a support group for example that would return a number of results. A link to the survey was placed on the Facebook and Twitter pages of the disability organisations UPDATE Disability Information Scotland and the Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF), who also placed a link to the survey in their e-newsletter. These organisations therefore acted as "gatekeepers" and were chosen because they are working towards removing barriers to information for disabled people and ensuring full inclusion in society (UPDATE

Disability information Scotland, n.d; SDEF, 2012). It was hoped that the source of the survey would be trusted as these organisations were willing to promote it. This was a key consideration because the survey asked people to convey experiences and opinions and it was essential to acquire participants' confidence that the data they provided would be treated respectfully in order that they would provide what was requested (Pickard, 2007, p.73). This was similar to the method employed by Koulikourdi (2008, p.140) who uploaded a survey to a disability forum. The use of social media rather than a forum was chosen as content is updated daily and it was thought people would be checking social media more regularly than a forum or website page. The survey was open to all disabled people regardless of impairment to try and gather a variety of opinions and experiences to discuss. The 'prevent indexing' option on Qualtrics was used to avoid search engines finding the survey and this was an attempt to ensure that only relevant persons answered the survey. The survey link and responses were again anonymous to prevent collection of personal details.

The surveys contained both closed and open questions, and focused on changes and requests made since the implementation of the EQA (2010). Closed questions were employed because if all the questions were open the survey would have been time-consuming and possibly off-putting to potential respondents (Bryman, 2012, p.247). These questions had a fixed answer- set of either *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree*, or *Yes, No or Don't Know*. The options of *Don't Know* and *Neither Agree nor Disagree* were included for instances where the participant had not previously considered the question or did not want to respond (Best and Harrison, 2009, p.426). Closed questions were advantageous because they are quicker to answer than open questions and it was assumed the survey for librarians was sent to employment email addresses and so the recipients would have had work commitments to attend to. For the survey concerning disabled people it was acknowledged that some respondents may have faced physical difficulties in answering many open questions. Furthermore, when self-completion surveys are employed the researcher cannot be present to advise about the meaning or how to answer the questions, and so closed questions with a fixed response set are easier to administer and answer (Bryman, 2012, p.233). The majority of closed questions were followed by requests to provide reasons and this gave respondents an opportunity to justify their answer and convey any positive or negative experiences. Open questions were also used to allow respondents to highlight issues the author had not considered (Bryman, 2012, p.247) and they are useful to examine feelings, opinions and values of an individual or a group (Fink, 2003, p.62). It was decided to limit the number of open questions to five for the librarian survey and four for the survey for disabled people (and one of these only asked for any additional comments or suggestions), because while the answers could

provide depth and variance the closed questions could not, it was recognised that respondents may lack the time and/or desire to write many answers (Bryman, 2012, p.234).

3.6: Survey Data Analysis

The surveys provided an insight into how accessible Scotland's public libraries are perceived to be by both librarians and disabled people and what challenges are faced by each group. The closed questions allowed for the collection of quantitative data and will allow discussion as to how many people agree or disagree with the statements and questions posed by the author. It had been considered to give a scoring to these answers that would be combined to form an aggregate score about the overall accessibility, however, it was thought this may undermine any responses that deviate from the average or give credit to answers which were either *Don't Know* or *Neither Agree nor Disagree* and therefore it was decided individual analysis was more appropriate. The number of respondents who selected each of the potential responses for each question have been presented on simple bar charts (Appendixes 3 and 6) to allow visual comparison (Pickard, 2007, p.261). The additional comments provided to support the fixed response answers, along with the answers to the open questions, will be used to allow discussion of the data presented in the bar graphs. The answers to the open questions will again undergo thematic analysis and be presented in frequency tables for each survey (Appendixes 4 and 7). A deductive approach has been taken in discussing these themes as they were pre-selected (Fink, 2003, p.72) to correspond to the themes of the literature review. The surveys will be discussed individually under the headings of: physical access; staff awareness and training; service provision; assistive technologies and web accessibility, and user awareness, as per the literature review as the surveys were designed to include at least one question covering each of these topics. The findings of the surveys will be compared to the data of the FOI requests in a contingency table (Appendix 8) to infer if there are relationships between the decisions of authorities at a regional level and the particular opinions of and challenges faced by librarians and disabled people at an individual level. This will allow discussion as to where Scottish public libraries are currently succeeding in serving disabled people and enable recommendations for improvement to be made. It will also allow conclusions to be drawn as to whether or not the observations formed by the author are justified.

3.7: Survey Reliability, Replication and Validity

The email survey sent to librarians is reliable in that it was sent only to practising librarians and as policies and budgets may change due to nationwide considerations, this will also have an impact upon the requirements and expectations of the librarians, allowing the research to be repeated. This survey has internal validity because it is possible to infer relationships between the FOI data and the responses of each survey (Pickard, 2007, p.21). It also has external validity in that similar pressures with regards to budgets are being felt across the UK, and concerns raised by librarians in Scotland may be similar to those in other parts of the country, especially in places where the use of volunteers is increasing. The inclusion of text entries for people to support answers to the fixed choice questions allowed a distinguishing of positive and negative attitudes and it was important that this difference could be observed to ensure the surveys' validity (Fink, 2003, p.50).

The survey aimed at disabled people is reliable in that disabled people were asked to provide opinions and examples of experiences about issues that directly affect them rather than the researcher analysing accessibility without this input. Again the survey can be repeated as policies and budgets change to assess the impact upon those using the service. It is valid again for the ability to infer relationships between the data of both surveys and the FOI responses, and also because concerns raised by disabled people in Scotland may be similar to those felt by people in other parts of the UK or even further afield. The surveys placed no restriction upon impairment or location in Scotland and therefore have external validity as the results can be generalised to a wide context of Scotland as a whole (Pickard, 2007, p.21).

3.8: Ethics Approval

Before the surveys were sent out, ethics approval was granted by the Computer and Information Science Department of the University of Strathclyde. Email confirmation of permission to provide links to the survey for disabled people on the Facebook and Twitter pages of the disability awareness organisations was granted before the survey was posted online. The organisations were also emailed a copy of the questions and participant consent form in advance to guarantee they were comfortable with what was being asked of potential participants. In return the organisations were provided with the results of the survey. The surveys asked for thoughts, opinions and feelings, all of which can be regarded as sensitive material, and for this reason data was treated confidentially with no personal details being collected although respondents were informed that their answers may be

quoted. Completion of the survey was voluntary and a consent form was provided at the beginning of each survey to state this. The consent form was the only question where a forced response was used and this was to ensure that participants gave informed consent, meaning that they understood to what they were agreeing and the conduct they could expect from the author (Pickard, 2007, p.74). Respondents were informed that all data would be held securely on devices accessible to the author only.

3.9: Limitations of the Research

Burke (2009, p.47) states that all researches face limitations in their studies which must be addressed. Although the FOI requests provided insight into the attitude of the authority as a whole, issues are raised into the depth of the response that can be provided as it is not guaranteed that librarians themselves would be answering FOI requests. The email to librarians did not request work locations out of respect for privacy, although it would be useful to compare attitudes and challenges in different regions of the country. An issue with using surveys generally was that some were only partially completed, meaning there may be bias to some of the questions (Bethlehem, 2009, p.210). One limitation of the survey for disabled people, as a result of convenience sampling, was that there was no way to tell if disabled people themselves were answering the questions. Although the use of social media was beneficial in that a large number of people could be informed about the survey there is no way to tell how many people who saw the survey then completed it. Participation was also restricted to those who have Internet access and this may be problematic due the high number of disabled people in Scotland who are on the wrong side of the digital divide. Despite these limitations however the methodology adopted was successful in that a large number of people from across Scotland could be questioned at one time. The collection of quantitative data allowed for a general understanding to be developed about current issues and situations, while the qualitative data provides a rich personal insight into the experiences and opinions of library policy makers, practitioners and patrons.

Chapter 4: Data Findings

4.1: FOI Requests

The aim of the FOI requests was to gain insight into the library services and resources offered to disabled people across Scotland. Each of the 32 local authorities was asked to provide answers to the following questions:

- Do your libraries have a disabled users policy? If 'yes', please provide a copy.
- Are library staff provided with training about disability awareness? If 'yes', at what level?
- Are library staff provided with training in the use of assistive technologies? If 'yes', at what level?
- Do your libraries provide a home delivery service to housebound people?
- Do your libraries provide materials in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille and spoken word CDs?

All of Scotland's public authorities replied to the FOI requests giving a response rate of 100%.

Although the questions facilitated the use of 'yes/no' answers and gathering of quantitative data, 97% of the respondents provided additional comments to at least one question to assist in discussion of this data, which has been summarised in Table 1 (see Appendix 1).

Figure 1.1 demonstrates how many of the resources enquired about are provided by Scottish local authorities across the country as a whole. While on first appearance it may look as though Scottish authorities are ensuring accessibility to their public libraries, upon consideration of the additional comments provided, this is not entirely the case. Even within the grouping of 'disabled' people there are some impairments that are catered to better than others. While this is perhaps unavoidable, not only to this user group but to any because of the difficulty in providing a truly universal service (Usherwood, 2007, p.100), service provision and accessibility should be as consistent as possible to all user groups at any public library location. To draw conclusions as to whether or not this is the case in Scotland, data has been divided into the topics of the questions asked in order to discuss individual findings which will then give an overview to nation-wide practice. This will also allow for conclusions to be made as to whether the earlier observation that the lack of national guidelines concerning disabled library users is leading to an inconsistent service being provided.

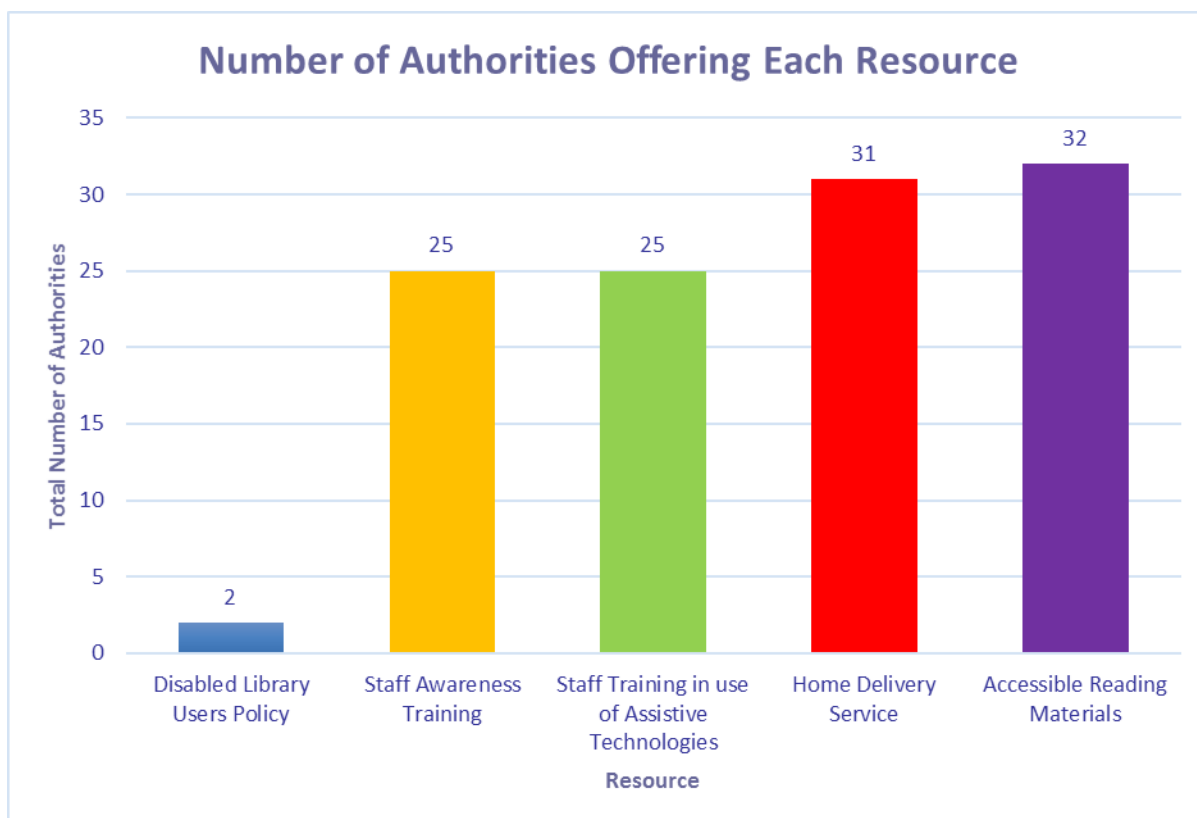


Figure 1.1: Number of authorities providing each of the resources enquired about through FOI requests

4.1.1: Disabled Library Users Policy

Only 2 of the respondents (6%) have a specific policy in place concerning disabled library users. On the one hand the absence of policies is not surprising considering the lack of national guidelines regarding this user group. On the other hand, the prevalence of resources and services that can assist disabled people – such as 100% provision of accessible reading materials – suggests that universal access to information is a key consideration of Scotland’s public libraries. 38% of respondents mentioned adhering to a general Equalities Policy which applies to the authority as a whole. These have not been included as disability policies however because they are not distinctly about disability or libraries and therefore concern is raised that individual needs may be glazed over rather than adequately addressed. Nevertheless it is encouraging to report an awareness amongst the local authorities of the requirements set by the law. One authority also has a charter concerning disabled people and their carers and this was the only mention of carers in the responses. This is an area that has the potential to be extended in the case of a disabled person requiring assistance from

a carer in order to use the library service, and also in developing support or providing materials relevant to carers.

6% of authorities reported that they are working with SLIC's Digital Champions Group to create a policy. The 'Digital Champions' scheme is a partnership with the Scottish Government to increase participation and ability in using digital resources (Scottish Government, 2013). This is an unsurprising venture considering the earlier mentioned transition to the "knowledge-based" society and the reliance on the Internet as a source of information. What is surprising is that this does not take into account other factors affecting the accessibility of a library, such as the physical layout of the building and staff attitudes. While the need for guaranteed PC and Internet access is now undoubtedly essential, so too are the ability to get to the PCs in the first place and have empathetic staff to provide assistance if it is required.

Physical access to the library building was mentioned by several authorities. 13% stated that their building access was compliant with the DDA (1995), again highlighting an awareness of relevant legislation. Only one authority however rightly acknowledged that buildings must be accessible both internally and externally, and demonstrated this awareness by stating that if any classes offered by the library were felt to be held in inaccessible locations they would be moved. While this is the attitude that would ideally be prevalent in all libraries, it is perhaps unrealistic due to budget cuts or lack of council-owned available space for example. Conversely, a different authority stated that council buildings and services adhere to the EQA (2010) but yet only some libraries have accessible toilets, which raises concerns as to what other obstacles are faced by disabled people using libraries in that area. Additionally, only 9% of authorities reported following the 'Six Steps' programme which aims to make libraries more accessible for blind and visually impaired people (SLAINTE, 2011), which suggests that despite the prevalence of guidelines to assist with accessibility, they are not being widely made use of.

Perhaps the most important and least surprising finding from this data was the lack of reported consultation with disabled people to ensure an appropriate service is delivered. Only 6% of authorities stated doing this, and one referred to this as applying to the council as a whole and not specifically to libraries. A different authority reported provision of an area disability profile to ensure services are designed with this group in mind, and while this is better than nothing it is not as good as directly speaking to disabled people about their needs, because as stated earlier, disabled people

themselves are the best people to provide guidance about their requirements and expectations from the public library.

The inconsistency in responses about policies concerning disabled library users suggests there will be inconsistency in service provision. 94% of the respondents do not have a specific policy and this may prove problematic in ensuring the needs of disabled library users are met. While some authorities have demonstrated an awareness of disability legislation and guidelines to increase accessibility such as the 'Six Steps' programme, that more authorities did not report conforming to these suggests that public libraries can be doing much more to increase their user-ship amongst disabled people. Furthermore, public libraries must meet user's long-term needs (Usherwood, 2007, p.65) and so the implementation of such policies should be considered, and not regarded as a quick-fix but rather a means of providing a life-long and effective service. The high number of Equalities policies is indicative of attempts to provide a truly inclusive library, however, in order to be truly successful the individual characteristics covered by the EQA (2010, s4) must each be taken into account and considered accordingly.

4.1.2: Staff Awareness Training

78% of respondents provide disability awareness training of some kind to their staff, which is positive considering the concern raised in the literature review that staff attitudes may prove problematic in delivering a sound library service to disabled people. 47% of authorities reported delivering general disability awareness training to all frontline staff. Although such training may lack the specificity of training designed to cover individual impairments, a general approach may ensure that all users are equally attended. 28% of respondents reported providing equality and diversity training in addition to training about disabilities, and this is useful as disabled people can be faced with multiple barriers depending on their age, race or gender for example (United Nations, 2006), which are also protected characteristics under the EQA (2010). 16% of authorities provide equality and diversity training alone. These have not been included in the total number of respondents providing awareness training because although they have been stated as containing elements of disability awareness, as with the equality policies mentioned in the previous section, concern is raised that impairments may be glazed over and the needs of disabled people not adequately addressed without specific training. 6% of authorities stated that training is offered in relation to specific services offered at the library rather than a general awareness package. While this is useful to ensure the successful delivery of that service, by being unaware of the needs of people with

similar or multiple impairments a section of potential users of that service may be disqualified and not recognised as eligible for it.

41% of authorities offer staff awareness training in specific disabilities. The most common of these is in awareness about blindness/visual impairment which is offered by 28% of authorities. 19% offer training in Alzheimer's/dementia awareness, which may be regarded as a response to the growing global health crisis of this impairment (Alzheimer's Association, 2015). 19% of authorities offer training in deaf awareness and/or British Sign Language (BSL) and this latter training is important because it offers staff an opportunity to communicate with users who have difficulty with this. This sentiment is echoed by the 9% of authorities that offer training in communication difficulties or in the use of Makaton. That staff are being taught to use these sign languages means that the public library can be accessible to people who may struggle to talk to others, and this is a great opportunity to ensure the needs of disabled people are met. Also, when considering service provision, this means that either specific services for disabled people can be delivered or universal ones can be more inclusive, for example children's story-times in Makaton, or local history talks being signed for members of the audience who require it. It is acknowledged that it may not be possible to deliver such training to every member of staff due to their own interests or ability to learn a different language for example, and in this circumstance it is arguably acceptable to have specific staff members trained to a higher level than others. 22% of authorities offer specific disability awareness training in multiple impairments which is beneficial to ensure that people with different impairments receive the same dedicated and specific service. While it would be advantageous that every library staff member in every authority receives specific training in individual impairments in anticipation of different peoples' needs, it is noted that this may again not be realistic due to budget constraints for example.

A surprising insight from the FOI requests is the lack of consultation with specialists – internal or external to the council – in the delivery of disability awareness training. Only 16% reported using organisations such as the NHS, RNIB or local organisations and no mention was made of asking disabled people themselves to speak to staff. Furthermore, only 9% work in collaboration with other council departments to deliver training. 22% of authorities deliver awareness training through online environments. None however specified whether these were created by the council themselves or by specialist agencies. The level of training offered to staff therefore appears disjointed, and may be inconsistent across the council services as a whole as well as across Scotland.

The variance in staff training in disability awareness suggests that, like the variance in policies concerning disabled library users, staff awareness fluctuates across Scotland. While 41% of authorities provide training in specific disabilities, 16% offer equality and diversity training alone and 22% offer no training whatsoever, which to the author suggests that disability is not adequately addressed in these regions. If staff are not trained to be aware of differing user needs and expectations, then the idea of a universally inclusive public library cannot be realised.

4.1.3: Staff Training in the Use of Assistive Technologies

The high number of authorities - 78% - providing some kind of staff training in the use of assistive technologies is not surprising considering the earlier mentioned transition to the knowledge society. The level of training however greatly varies across Scotland, with some frontline staff being provided with only handbooks when software is updated while in other authorities staff are trained in the use of individual technologies. 63% of respondents reported provision of training for all staff in the technologies available in their branches. While it is advantageous that all staff receive this training, it is likely that the technologies provided in each branch vary so again an inconsistent service may be being delivered. Only 6% of authorities reported that they have provided or are about to provide training in tablets and e-readers, which is unexpected considering the number of libraries that provide e-reading materials, which will be discussed later. 13% of authorities train at least one member of staff to a higher level than others, meaning they can provide additional support and guidance to staff and library users. Although the author stated in the literature review that a preferred method would be to have all staff trained to the same level, having one person in a more authoritative position is arguably beneficial in the case of staff still being uncomfortable or unsure about how to use the technologies even after training, and to schedule follow-up or additional training for staff who need or want it.

A surprising finding from these responses is that there is a greater - though not universal - level of collaboration in the delivery of training in assistive technology. One quarter of respondents state they work in collaboration with local or national organisations, and this is encouraging as these people will not only have technical expertise but also an understanding of the potential challenges faced by disabled people when using technology. One authority furthermore stated that staff training is delivered by a visually impaired person, who will understand first-hand the type of queries and issues a disabled person may have. 6% of authorities identified that training is delivered by council employees in different departments while a further 6% stated that training has been

delivered as part of a project sponsored by SLIC. It is encouraging to be able to highlight the input from a national body as this could provide the basis for national policies and procedures to be developed and implemented.

It is also interesting to note the specific advantages for disabled people that were highlighted by the authorities. 6% offer users one-to-one training in using assistive technologies, while one other highlighted the use of a tutor specifically for blind and visually impaired people undergoing the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) and ECDL Advanced courses. One authority also stated that their website is compliant with W3C standards, meaning that it is accessible to disabled users. That these examples have been highlighted by the authorities demonstrates awareness that provision of assistive technologies is only one of several steps in ensuring access to PCs and the online world. On the other hand, 6% of authorities keep assistive technologies in a central location and loan them out to other branches as required. While this might be a means of keeping budgets down while still meeting the needs of library users, there is concern that a person requiring an assistive technology will have to wait for longer to access a PC than a person who does not require this assistance, and therefore puts the disabled person at a disadvantage. That said, it is undoubtedly better that an authority provides a limited number of technologies than none at all and is perhaps understandable in the current economic climate.

The prevalence of assistive technologies and staff training in their use across Scotland suggests that ensuring access to PCs and the online world is a priority for local authorities. The increased level of collaboration in this area is positive and displays a consideration of the particular challenges that may be faced by disabled people in using technology. Nearly two third of respondents reported providing training to all staff in the use of technologies in their branches which means that a reliable service is provided to all people requiring assistance at any time they use the library. On the other hand, 22% of authorities responded 'No' when asked if they provide staff training in the use of assistive technologies, meaning that a large number of disabled people using public library PCs are still placed at a disadvantage.

4.1.4: Home Delivery Service

Every authority bar one provides a home delivery service of reading materials. This is a significant figure as it allows housebound people to access information and literature. Only 19% of authorities however explicitly stated that library staff members consult with disabled people about their reading

needs and preferences, and therefore the extent to which disabled people are involved in selecting their reading material is not clear. Significantly, 28% of authorities reported the use of volunteers, most commonly the Royal Volunteer Service (RVS), in the delivery of reading materials to housebound people. The home delivery service can be regarded as essential as it may be the only means by which a housebound person can access reading material, but if this service is largely delivered by people without training in librarianship then there is the possibility that reading needs are not being catered to accordingly. Someone that does not work in the library furthermore may be unaware as to the other services on offer to disabled people, both in the physical and online libraries, and therefore an opportunity is missed to increase user-ship of these. There is also a possibility that volunteers will not have undergone appropriate disability awareness training and therefore may not understand the potential needs of disabled people. The work and value of volunteers should not be undermined and that almost one third of respondents stated use of them highlights their contribution and importance. It should also be acknowledged however as potentially problematic - firstly, if authorities cannot provide universal awareness training to their staff then it is realistic to expect the same to be said of volunteers, and secondly as volunteers are not paid for their time then it is unreasonable for an authority to expect them to undergo additional training without remuneration.

6% of authorities reported taking advantage of the Royal Mail's 'Articles for the Blind' scheme in which books and audio materials can be delivered free of charge to blind people (Royal Mail, 2015). This is similar to the practice of the OU mentioned earlier, and should be considered by more authorities as a means of delivering materials to people who cannot visit the physical library building or who perhaps do not want to make use of the home delivery service. 6% of authorities also reported delivering books to care homes and community centres, and this low number is actually surprising when it is considered that many of these people are likely unable to visit the library themselves. 16% of authorities reported providing a mobile library service, which is beneficial for people who are not housebound but who may struggle to get to the library.

The almost nationwide provision of a home delivery service indicates that libraries are trying to ensure access to information for all members of the community regardless of whether or not they can visit the library building. The level of input from disabled people in their reading choices is however unclear, with only 19% of authorities stating that library staff speak to disabled people concerning their reading needs and preferences. That the service exists however is certainly a positive indication of the attempts to ensure access to literature, and is a promotion of inclusive

activity as it gives recipients a chance to contribute to the knowledge society by giving them access to information and reading materials. On the other hand 13% of authorities admitted that there is a variance in the level of this service across the region and that not all residents can benefit from it, and it is perhaps here that the use of volunteers can be justified in order to challenge this.

4.1.5: Accessible Reading Materials

100% of respondents reported that they provide reading materials in accessible formats such as large print and spoken word CDs. This is a noteworthy figure because as previously stated only 7% of reading materials in the UK are published in accessible formats (RNIB, 2015a). It is interesting to note the prevalence of e-reading materials with 41% of authorities providing e-books, e-magazines or e-audiobooks which can be accessible because people can alter the print size to suit their own needs for example. While this is beneficial, it may be an under-used service because as previously stated only 6% of authorities provide staff training in tablets and e-readers, and furthermore only one authority has stated that they loan out e-readers for users of their home delivery service. This is an area that can be greatly expanded especially considering the wide prevalence of staff training in assistive technology which could be tailored to include these devices, and also the SLIC Digital Champions Initiative. Also, provision of e-reading reading reduces the need for people to use a home delivery service and gives them alone control over their reading choices.

It is a worth noting the lack of readily available Braille material in Scotland's public libraries. 19% of authorities have no provision at all for Braille and only 15% said they can provide it on request. A further 6% however stated they can direct people to other organisations, and while this is helpful and better than a complete lack of provision, it is still another hurdle for a blind person to deal with before acquiring the material he/she wants. Only 9% of authorities stated that they take part in the RNIB's 'Make a Noise in Libraries' fortnight which aims to promote the need for accessible reading materials for blind and partially sighted people (RNIB, 2015c). Two of these authorities also take part in the 'Six Steps' programme mentioned earlier. The low number of participants in both programmes however again highlights an under-use of resources that can assist in making a library more accessible. One authority also provides a reading group specifically for people who are blind or visually impaired, and is the only authority to mention such as service. The lack of accessible reading materials available to this group however means that they discuss books by genre rather than specific titles as most other reading groups would. 6% of authorities provide "talking newspapers" and one of these relies on volunteers to record an edited version of the local news which is then

delivered by post using the previously mentioned Royal Mail concession. These authorities demonstrate that there is a lot that can be done to make services accessible to disabled people through provision of accessible reading materials, and that this can be used to raise awareness about the needs of disabled people.

The nation-wide availability of accessible reading materials demonstrates a consideration of the needs of disabled people in acquiring information. Almost half of respondents reported providing e-reading materials which offers a double opportunity: provision of accessible reading materials and also an entrance into using technology and accessing online resources which may assist disabled people in other parts of their lives for example when searching for health or entertainment information. There is still a large number of authorities however who did not report providing these e-materials, and so a potential market may be being missed.

4.1.6: Discussion

From the answers to the FOI requests alone it appears that public libraries in Scotland are making great efforts to ensure that their buildings, services, collections and resources are accessible to disabled people. As has been highlighted several times however, this service provision is inconsistent across the country, thus agreeing with one of the observations of the author. Figure 1.2 below demonstrates this by displaying the number of each of the resources enquired about that each authority provides.

Only one authority provides every one of the resources and this is concerning as it means that disabled people cannot expect to have the same resources available to them across the country. Only two authorities have a specific policy concerning disabled library users and it is thought that if this were rectified so that all authorities had such a policy then the inconsistency in service provision could also be rectified. Several authorities have indicated that they cooperate and collaborate with organisations such as the NHS and RNIB in delivery of training to staff, and there is also some reliance for this on local organisations. This is a good practice as it entails that people with technical expertise, relevant experience and understanding deliver reliable information to library staff that can assist them in providing a service that meets the needs of library users. Only two authorities mentioned that they consult with disabled people and only one other stated that a disabled person is involved in the provision of training to staff. This is an area that has great potential because as previously stated, disabled people themselves are the best sources of information about what they

need and expect from the library. Disabled tutors furthermore will understand the specific challenges faced by disabled people the non-disabled people cannot fully appreciate. The use of disabled people in the training of library staff and users will also promote the library as a place for everyone.

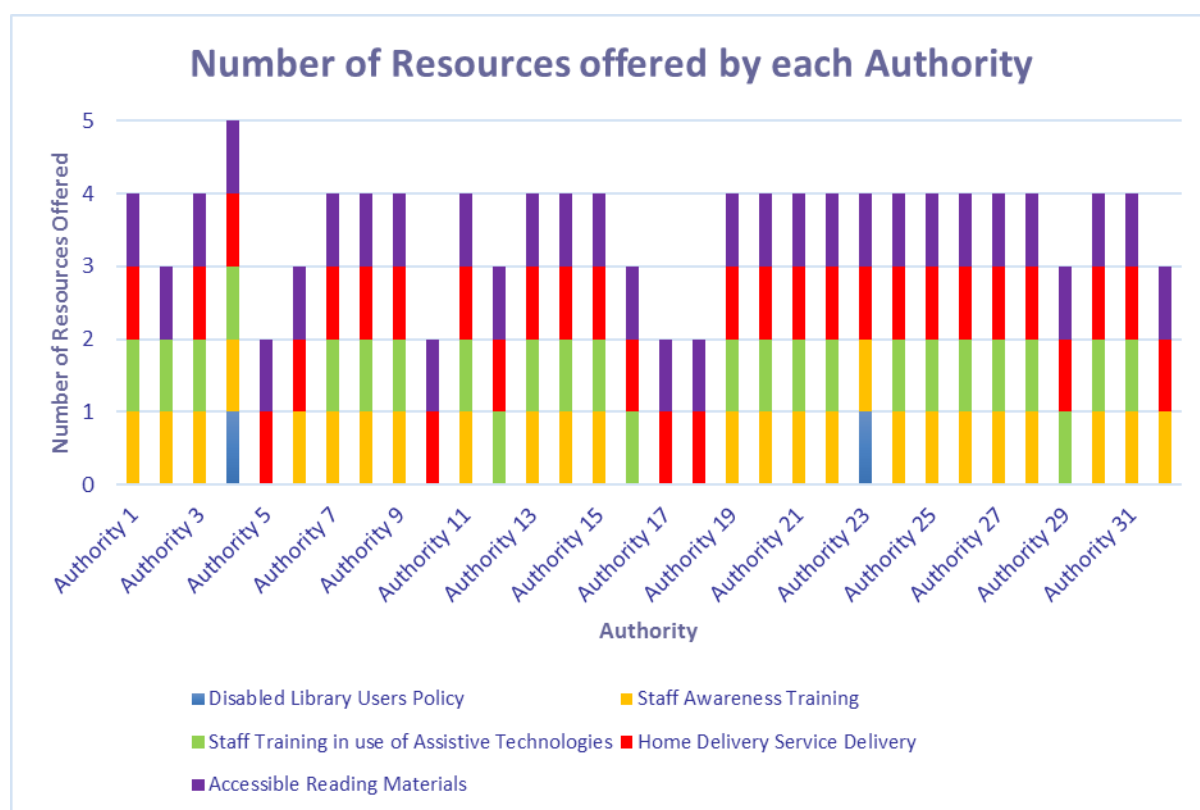


Figure 1.2: Number of resources each authority provides.

The FOI responses have shown that legislation such as the DDA (1995) and the EQA (2010) provide a basic level at least for service providers to aim for in ensuring their accessibility. Several authorities made reference to these acts and while it is encouraging to note that awareness is displayed about the law, this should not be the only consideration and rather libraries should aim to go beyond this. Many authorities have demonstrated that they have, for example by providing a range of assistive technologies and prevalence of accessible reading materials, but that 97% of authorities do not provide at least one of the resources enquired about suggests that there is still much room for improvement thus supporting number 3 of the author's observations. On the other hand, there was no one authority that did not provide fewer than two of the resources, and so although the public library service across Scotland may not yet be entirely accessible, it would appear that they are on their way.

These discussions are based on the responses to the FOI requests alone, and as has already been highlighted they may not have been answered by librarians implementing the service who could have provided additional details to what was provided. The responses however provide a great insight into the attitude of the authority as a whole. The opinions of librarians and disabled people themselves must now also be considered to judge if they are in line with what has been stated above, and where similarities and differences in opinion occur.

4.2: Surveys

The aim of the surveys was to gather the opinions of both librarians and disabled people about how accessible they feel Scotland's public libraries are, what can be done to improve this, and also the particular challenges faced by each group. The response rates for the surveys varied greatly, with 58 respondents for the survey for librarians and 3 respondents for the survey for disabled people. The total number of respondents to the surveys was 61 and this is a far greater number than could have been collected if interviews or focus groups had been employed. Despite the low participation in the latter survey, the responses and comments provided have been included for discussion as they are still important and to not include them would undermine the time and opinions of the participants. It is acknowledged however that these responses may not be representative of disabled people across Scotland, and the following discussion is generally focused on the responses provided by librarians. The low response rate has indicated how difficult it is to secure access to disabled people in order to question them about their needs and wants from the public library, and this was also mentioned in the survey for librarians. Although no personal details were asked for, some librarians stated to which authority they belong, and while these have not been named in the discussion it is important to highlight that responses were received from both rural and urban areas giving a perspective from across the nation. The following discussion will allow conclusions to be made as to where Scotland's public libraries' strengths and weaknesses are in serving disabled people and for recommendations to be made for improvement. It will also allow for consideration as to whether the concerns of the author that disabled people are rarely included in discussion about service provision, staff attitudes are problematic, and that there is a gap between what librarians and disabled people consider to be an accessible library, are justified or not.

4.2.1: Physical Access

When asked if their organisations had taken steps since the implementation of the EQA (2010) to ensure their library building is accessible to disabled people, 59% of librarian respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. While this is a positive statistic it does not necessarily mean that the organisations concerned have provided universal access to their libraries, and several restrictions have been highlighted that prevent this. 14% of respondents cited structural constraints such as the age of a building as a reason and 26% of librarians reported that requests had been made to their organisation to improve access to the library building, including requests for ramps and accessibility doors. A further 5% put lack of universal access down to budget cuts. This latter factor largely affects service provision and accessibility, as will become apparent. Budget and building structure are interlinked however, and it is not necessarily possible to separate them. One librarian for example stated that their organisation could not justify provision of a lift to allow wheelchair users to access upper floors due to the cost. Budget restrictions may therefore prevent service providers from fully complying with the law. That said, a duty is placed upon libraries to ensure that even if a person cannot access all or part of a physical library building they can access the services elsewhere, and it is here where home delivery and online library equivalents become important.

Contrary to the findings of the FOI requests it would appear that disabled people or organisations representing them are consulted more frequently than was anticipated. 31% of librarians reported consulting with disabled people and/or disability organisations when changes are made to the library building. This is an interesting finding and is suggestive of an unwritten policy regarding consultation with these groups. One librarian however expressed a difficulty in gaining access to this group and said that when disability forums were contacted about library accessibility they were not interested. This places librarians in a difficult position, because while they have to ensure that the library service is accessible, if outreach programmes do not generate responses then guesswork has to take place which may have implications for service provision, budgets and accessibility.

When asked the best way to ensure the accessibility of a public library, physical access was highlighted by librarians and the respondents of the survey for disabled people, suggesting this is an issue still requiring adequate address. 14% of librarians highlighted the need to provide enough space within the library, easy access and appropriate entrances, and these were also noted as being important to the respondents of the survey for disabled people. Sadly however it appears that such improvements are restricted by budgets, with 19% of librarians stating that this is the biggest

challenge in meeting the needs of disabled people as it affects the accessibility of the library and the services on offer.

The area of physical access has raised some interesting points about the challenges faced by disabled people and librarians, and it is positive to note that the respondents of both surveys seem to be on the same wavelength. It is also positive to report the higher level of consultation with disabled people and organisations regarding changes to physical access than was anticipated, and is perhaps indicative of the concerns of librarians in ensuring as many people as possible can access the library. On the other hand, the comments indicating a difficulty in accessing disabled people mirror those of the author in conducting this research. The intention of providing a survey for disabled people was to seek opinions directly from this group, but the low response rate has made this difficult. This suggests it may be better to go through an organisation but, as stated by one librarian, this may undermine good relations because the library's contact is indirect.

4.2.2: Staff Awareness and Training

Staff awareness training is considered by many librarians to be an important feature of good service, with 59% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it makes staff and volunteers feel more comfortable in serving disabled people. Reasons for agreement include that it helps library staff to understand the specific challenges faced by disabled people and to reduce stigma. This corresponds well to the responses of the FOI requests, which indicate that 78% of local authorities offer awareness training of some kind to their employees, suggesting a correct course of practice. 10% of respondents however indicated that current staff training is not sufficient and must be carried out more frequently as most staff do not come into contact with disabled people on a daily basis. Again however this is likely affected by budgets.

Both respondents to the survey for disabled people stated that staff in their local library are helpful and one also stated that having friendly, welcoming staff is one of the best ways to create an accessible environment. This sentiment is echoed by the librarians, with 19% highlighting good staff attitudes as a key consideration in supplying an accessible service. These results suggest that staff attitudes are perhaps not as problematic as the author anticipated as there appears to be a real encouragement of staff awareness training and consciousness of the potential good it can do. Also, 26% of librarians reported consulting with disability organisations or disabled people themselves in delivering staff training. One librarian furthermore reported a request from library users to

implement dementia awareness training, which has been done. One respondent has again highlighted however that despite trying to work with disabled people about staff awareness training, no interest was generated, again highlighting a problem. Another respondent further noted that their manager sees lack of demand as lack of need, and therefore the librarian is given the difficult task of generating interest and thereby making user needs obviously visible to force service providers to listen and make changes. This is a crucial point because if current and potential library users are not vocal about their needs, they may not be addressed.

4.2.3: Service Provision

No librarians strongly agreed with the statement that all their library services could be equally accessed by disabled and non-disabled people alike. The reasons supporting this varied, although the first to be highlighted should be that different people face different barriers and therefore it is not possible to ensure universal access to every service. For example, as one librarian stated, blind people cannot read a newspaper or book so therefore those resources are not available to them. This emphasises however the need to provide an alternative service or resource if the original one cannot be accessed. Some of the other restrictions reported can be considered as obviously unwelcome such as collections being housed on upper levels without lift access, lack of large print titles and poor access to digital collections. These issues were perhaps put most succinctly by the two respondents who stated that while libraries do their best, they could still be doing more to improve access.

19% of librarians stated that budgets affect their ability to provide accessible resources, and for one respondent this was coupled with a negative attitude from a senior staff member:

“I asked the librarian in charge of buying for the book group collections in my organisation if there was any way to ensure that there was a large print and an audio copy of each title within the collection as I struggled to find titles suitable for one group I ran that had a member with very poor eyesight. I was told no, as the money spent on each one of those could easily buy another two or three sets of books, and there wasn’t enough demand”.

This example is perhaps typical of what is taking place in organisations across Scotland and is a difficult one to resolve: while it is understandable that purse strings are being tightened in order to save money, if there is an obvious need for a resource that is not being met then this could be

regarded as the library failing its users. On the other hand, if a request is made for a resource that is subsequently not used there may be reluctance to purchase specialised materials in future.

The question of whether specific services just for disabled people should be provided raised some thought-provoking points. 19% of librarians believe they should be provided only if they are requested by a group of disabled people themselves or are essential to their needs, for example, one librarian reported that a sensory story-time was provided by their organisation for children with profound physical and mental disabilities. Pros of specific services included introducing disabled people to what else the library offers and also that it may be less intimidating for them to use the library if they are surrounded by people who are empathetic to their situation. On the other hand, this may result in incorrect interpretations being made of disabled people as 'other' and of non-disabled people as lacking in understanding or empathy for people with impairments. By offering both inclusive and exclusive groups the library gives disabled people the choice afforded to others about which services they want to make use of. 7% of librarians stated that rather than providing specific services existing ones should be tailored so that individual needs are met. This can apply to library users generally and not specifically for disabled people, and is best summed up by one librarian who stated "the spirit of the act [EQA, 2010] is to encourage and enable all members of society to engage in activities independently and on an equal footing as far as can be practically achieved". Ideally, this is what should be happening. Also, the segregation of one group may lead to the segregation of others, and therefore the ideal of the universal library can never be achieved. One librarian furthermore stated that "whatever we provide should be in response to the needs of the service users, not what we as Library Services think should be provided". This again emphasises the importance of consultation and the need to give disabled people a choice in the services that they make use of.

4.2.4: Assistive Technology and Web Accessibility

The ability to access online resources was earlier stated to be of utmost importance considering the transition to the knowledge society. It would appear however that this is an area in which libraries struggle to keep up. On the provision of assistive technology 10% of librarians highlighted that while they try to do their best it is again an area in which they need to make improvements. There is also an issue with the number of technologies being available at any one time and this again is affected by budget. One librarian reported that their organisation was asked to provide two products to assist visually impaired persons, and found that after consulting with the RNIB only one could be provided

due to costs and provision of other products. The same librarian also reported that “We have also been in the position of providing accessibility software requested by customers in specific locations only to find they have made no use of it subsequently”. This again presents a dilemma – the EQA (2010, EN para 684) requires that service providers anticipate the needs of disabled people and provide suitable materials to assist them, however, if these resources are not being used they are eating up large sections of budgets that could have been directed elsewhere. However, lack of use may be due to a non-understanding or lack of comfort enquiring about these technologies, which advocates for staff training in both awareness issues and use of assistive technologies.

One librarian reported that in one of their library’s reading rooms the only option for people requiring assistive technology is to use ‘speak aloud’ software, although this only works on those websites that have purchased it. This raises another point, that if a website has not been designed to be compatible with assistive technology then the library cannot provide access to it. Only 22% of respondents were able to agree or strongly agree that their organisation consults with the library’s website designers to ensure their website is accessible and only 16% could agree that their organisation consults with database vendors to confirm they are paying for accessible services. This means that a large number of libraries are not taking the steps to ensure their online materials are accessible, which is additionally problematic considering the extent of the digital divide and also for patrons who cannot access the physical library building.

One librarian commented that while assistive technology is provided it is not made use of, and though this may be down to lack of interest it may also be due to a lack of understanding about how to use the technologies or that the library even provides this service. This ties into the issue of user awareness, which will be discussed later. It may also arise from staff member’s inexperience in using these technologies or of them too being aware that the library provides this service. Three librarians reported that their organisation trains library users in assistive technologies through the RNIB. This is perhaps an example of best practice as disabled people will trust the source of this training and by entering the library can learn what else is on offer to them. This will result in a double positive: library staff will see their resources being used and needed, while disabled people will be able to use the library with the assistance of empathic personnel if such help is required.

4.2.5: User Awareness

There was wide variance on the extent to which librarians agreed their organisation made disabled people aware of the resources and services available to them. 7% recorded using the organisation's website, which is accessible to disabled people. Another 5% promote through local organisations. Worryingly, 7% of respondents state that their organisation employs no specific literature or promotion of services to disabled people. This may not be restricted to this user group alone, as one librarian highlighted "I think that we could be better at raising awareness and marketing our range of services generally, not just specifically to disabled people". Only one librarian reported that their organisation uses the local media in order to promote its services. This is an area that could be expanded. People in any area will be interested to know what is going on there and local media can serve as the source of information for this. Also, websites for local newspapers are increasingly being supplied with content by local users (Burrell, 2014) and so if library staff or volunteers can add to these websites then news can be shared with people who are perhaps not library members but would benefit from the services and resources offered. For library members who make use of a 'Talking Newspaper' service, updates regarding events and resources could be included in this. This also follows the advice of one librarian who suggested "Create the WOW factor and make better use of the resources that we have...small changes can have big impact!" The public library is an important part of any community and to ensure its' continuing importance it must make visible its' efforts to serve the public.

12% of respondents reported difficulty in contacting disabled people in order to inform them about the services they offer. 10% also raised concerns about demonstrating to disabled people, as with any other group, that the service offered at the library is better than any offered elsewhere. If librarians cannot get to disabled people themselves they may be able to contact them via disability organisations who may in turn be able to provide the contact with disabled people, and this has proved beneficial for one organisation whose librarian stated "This partnership has meant that we are able to consult with people with disabilities who currently use our libraries, and those who don't". This practice can therefore provide valuable insight into what is currently keeping disabled people using the library, while also allowing an opportunity to discover what would make more members of this group take advantage of the public library.

4.2.6: Discussion

The prevailing issue throughout the survey analysis is that budgets are affecting the extent to which librarians can serve members of the public with disabilities. It proves to be a difficult dilemma because librarians cannot focus just on providing materials and resources for one group of users, and yet also cannot exclude one particular group. Many of the recommendations made by librarians to attract disabled people to the library or ensure an accessible environment are unfortunately restricted by budget, for example having convenient opening hours or services specifically for disabled people, both of which would require additional staffing and/or increased awareness training. The inconsistency in agreement in such instances as whether library services are equally accessible to all and attempts to make disabled people aware of all the services on offer to them again suggests an inconsistent service is being provided. This is also evident in that the level of consultation and collaboration with external organisations and/or disabled people varies, as does ability and willingness to acquire specialised materials.

It has not been possible to determine if there is a wide difference in the opinions of librarians and disabled people about the accessibility of Scotland's public libraries due to the low response rate of one of the surveys. It is encouraging however that librarians can identify both where they are succeeding and where improvements need to be made within their organisation. From the survey responses it would appear that librarians are full of good intent and ideas to improve the accessibility of their service, yet are restricted by forces beyond their control, such as the age of buildings and budgets. Such instances highlight the need for collaboration not only amongst librarians but also between council departments and with external organisations who can provide advice as to best practice. By working in isolation there is only so much that can be achieved, but through collaboration multiple perspectives can be considered and needs addressed.

In order to further discuss the strengths and weaknesses currently displayed by Scottish public libraries and to make recommendations for improvement it is necessary to compare the survey results with those of the FOI requests. This will allow distinction to be made between what is being implemented at a regional level and what is being experienced by librarians and disabled people at an individual level.

4.3: Relationships between FOI Responses and Survey Results

In order to make recommendations for the improved accessibility of Scottish public libraries it is necessary to compare the results of the FOI requests and the surveys in order to highlight both positive and negative aspects for consideration. Several relationships can be inferred from the results, as demonstrated in Table 4 (Appendix 8).

The lack of policies specifically concerning disabled people means an inconsistent service is being provided across Scotland. While 19% of authorities reported that their buildings are compliant with either the DDA (1995) or EQA (2010), 26% of librarians reported that their organisation had been asked to improve the accessibility of some aspect of the library. Also, 67% of respondents to the survey for disabled people highlighted problems with physically accessing their library. As noted above physical access has been highlighted by both librarians and disabled people as key to creating an accessible library, suggesting written policy must be provided to ensure it.

The prevalence of staff awareness training appears to be a good practice as 67% of disabled people reported staff in their local library display good attitudes and awareness while 59% of librarians agreed it made staff feel more comfortable in serving disabled people. The issue with the training however is that it is not regularly updated and refreshed which is potentially problematic as most library staff will not serve disabled people on a daily basis. This therefore advocates for regular training of all staff members to ensure an equal service is provided to all library users.

78% of local authorities train staff in the use of assistive technologies, however it is believed by 10% of librarians that this is an area in which they could do better. As mentioned previously, not all staff are trained to the same level and also the number of authorities that do not provide any training means that many disabled people are being placed at a disadvantage.

There is lack of agreement amongst librarians and disabled people about the extent to which all library services are accessible by all. While 97% of authorities use a home delivery service to transport reading materials to housebound people, access within the library is restricted for reasons such as housing collections on upper levels without lift or ramp access. Marketing and promotion of services have been highlighted as being inadequate, suggesting that even where the authority is providing an accessible service it may not be being used as widely as it could be. This affects such good practice as the 100% availability of accessible reading materials across Scotland. If the public

do not know about a service they will not make use of it and this may lead to the earlier problem of a belief that there is not enough demand for a resource or service to be introduced or extended.

Consequently, while Scottish public libraries are making attempts to ensure their accessibility and display a number of strengths, there are weaknesses which need to be addressed in order to ensure that the ideal of a universal library becomes more attainable. To this end a number of recommendations shall be made to assist Scotland's public libraries in achieving this.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

5.1: Discussion

The above analysis of the FOI responses and survey results has confirmed concerns that an inconsistent library service is being provided to disabled people across Scotland. While some authorities have displayed an acute awareness and desire to improve the accessibility of their libraries, others have not whether this is through budget restrictions, lack of understanding or perhaps desire to do so. There is inconsistency furthermore in the extent to which disabled people are involved in discussion about services and how to improve accessibility. Many organisations have demonstrated an awareness of and response to the DDA (1995) and EQA (2010) and made adjustments in order to comply with these, but examples have also been highlighted that refute this. Lastly, the analysis has highlighted that there generally appears to be a good awareness amongst frontline staff about the needs of disabled people and attempts to increase this, however, 22% of authorities do not offer any staff awareness training and so a large section of the Scottish population are at a disadvantage. It has not been possible to determine the extent to which a gap exists between what librarians and disabled people consider to be an accessible library due to the low response rate of the survey for disabled people. It is possible however to report that librarians in Scotland have displayed a desire to remove barriers to information and an understanding that in order to do so disabled people or organisations representing them must be consulted to offer guidance in how to achieve this. As a consequence, the author sets out a series of recommendations in order to improve the accessibility of Scottish public libraries and ensure a consistent service is provided to disabled people regardless of where and when they choose to use the library.

5.2: Recommendations

It is the author's strong belief that national guidelines similar to those of the ALA, CLA and ALIA be created and implemented. The provision of such guidelines will give all public libraries the same objectives and will furthermore clarify to service providers exactly what their duties are. The guidelines must furthermore be specific to libraries because as highlighted earlier, where policies concern every service provided by a local authority there is concern that individual needs are not adequately addressed. The policy must be designed by librarians because it is they who understand what the library can and cannot realistically achieve. Frontline staff must also be able to contribute as it is they who will be in contact with the library users. In combination with the EQA (2010) such a

policy will leave no excuse for accessibility not to be guaranteed to the very best of the service providers' abilities and taking into account restrictions posed by age of buildings and reduced budgets.

As part of these national guidelines, the following should be included:

- All libraries must conduct Equality Impact Assessments on their current services, resources and collections to ensure their current provision is as accessible as is possible.
- Regular consultation with disabled people with a range of impairments, both current and non-library users, should take place to determine if local authorities are meeting the needs and expectations of disabled people and what can be done to improve access. Where this is not possible disability organisations should instead be contacted to provide this information. Libraries must demonstrate they have responded to the consultations, for instance, by following the example of good practice set out by one authority who will move any classes held by the library if anyone feels they are in an inaccessible location if this is possible.
- Only one authority has mentioned carers. This is a related user group and there is potential for services to be provided to ensure that they too get something from the library. Carers should be consulted in service provision, and consideration should be made to the potential for services in which carers need not be present or can take a back-seat role in order to offer them some respite. Services specifically for this user group should also be considered, for example, drop-in sessions offering advice and support or just an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, alongside book displays relevant to their needs.
- Compulsory disability awareness training should be given to all library staff, whether in a frontline or behind-the-scenes role. Libraries should actively work in partnership with each other and with disability organisations to establish the kind of needs and expectations of disabled people and identify the best ways in which staff can assist with these. Each staff member should receive the same training, preferably in individual disabilities to raise awareness of specific challenges. Attempts should also be made to follow the example of the authorities in which at least one staff member is trained in the use of British Sign Language (BSL) or Makaton, so that people with communication difficulties are also served by the library. This will not only ensure that all disabled people receive the same level of service regardless of which library they use but also means libraries are adhering to the EQA (2010) by anticipating needs in advance of contact with disabled people. Also, nation-wide collaboration could allow for a nation-wide forum in which staff can communicate with each

other as in the Forrest (2007) study. This will allow the sharing of both positive and negative experiences, and examples of best practice.

- A high number of public authorities indicated that library staff receive training in the use of assistive technologies. Only two offer training in tablets and e-readers and only one loans them out to housebound people, while almost half of authorities supply e-reading materials. Assistive technology training should again be compulsory and extended to include training in tablets and e-readers, which can be extended to library users. This will allow more people to take advantage of online resources. The examples of authorities using the RNIB is perhaps the best scenario as users will trust the source of the training and also be able to experience for themselves what the library can and does offer. Libraries must also consult with website designers and database vendors and emphasise that what they produce must be compliant with W3C standards and compatible with assistive technology, otherwise the library will find an alternative provider.
- Most public authorities offer a home delivery service of reading materials to housebound people, although the universality of provision within single authorities varies. This needs to be addressed so that every person who is not able to access the library building can still use its resources. It is here too where staff training in and loaning out of e-readers and tablets can be beneficial as it means that housebound people can be equipped in order to use an online library and its services. The example of one authority using volunteers to record a weekly edit of the local news should also be extended across all authorities so that the entire community is informed of local events. The use of volunteers appears to be vital in delivering the housebound delivery service, and while they can assist in addressing the inconsistency of the provision of this service, authorities should also proceed with caution and regard their use as a means of extending rather than replacing the library service.
- All of Scotland's local authorities offer accessible reading materials. It would appear however that multiple copies of a single accessible title are difficult for an individual library to come by due to budget restrictions, lack of published accessible material and perceived lack of demand. This has implications for multiple requests of a title and to providing access to inclusive reading groups. For these reasons a nation-wide catalogue and inter-library loan system is recommended which both library staff and users can access. This will result in the nation-wide sharing of resources and increase the number of accessible titles. As highlighted by one librarian in the survey, there is currently no legal deposit library for accessible materials in Scotland, and so public libraries should also collaborate with disability organisations that create and hold these kind of materials to create this catalogue and

encourage use of its resources. If libraries and organisations combine efforts and resources they can create a more universal service and inclusive society.

- Marketing and promotion of materials has been cited as an area in which libraries need to improve generally. As well as using resources specific to the library such as its' own posters and social media pages, local resources should also be made use of such as newspapers, radio and local online forums. This means that promotion of services and events can be extended to disabled and non-disabled people alike who are current and non-members of the library, and make the whole community aware of what is happening in and offered by the library.

Many of the above recommendations may be considered overly ambitious considering current budget restrictions, but if libraries actively cooperate with each other and with external organisations who specialise in disability then a shared pool of resources, talent and funding can be created. This will not only prove beneficial for each organisation but also for disabled people themselves who will be presented with well-informed and trained staff, inclusive services and accessible resources, and this can only have positive consequences overall. Through adoption of these methods it is anticipated that public libraries in Scotland can eradicate the concerns raised by the author, provide a consistent service across the nation and promote the ideal of a universally accessible library that can be used as a model for libraries in other countries.

5.3: Areas for Future Research

This research has provided insight into the level of service provision to disabled people in Scotland and the accessibility of Scottish public libraries. Due to the low response rate of the survey for disabled people however additional research needs to be conducted to ascertain if the conclusions of the author align with the opinions and experiences of disabled library users. It has been noted that different impairments are catered to at differing levels within Scottish public libraries, and it would be useful to ask people with different impairments if they feel they are adequately served by their libraries. The concerns of librarians in Scotland are likely to be similar to those of librarians in other countries, or at least within the other UK nations, especially where use of volunteers is increasing, and so it would be useful to extend the geographic scope of this study to determine the wider UK situation. Similarly the same FOI questions could be sent to authorities across the UK to compare the practices of each nation and to confirm or deny the internal validity of this study.

5.4: Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to analyse the services offered to disabled people in Scotland and to gather the opinions of both librarians and disabled people about how accessible they feel Scottish public libraries are. The quantitative data obtained through the FOI requests has demonstrated that an inconsistent service is being provided, and while many authorities have displayed an active response to the EQA (2010), others have not. Similarly, the qualitative data from these responses also indicates the varying levels to which service providers are willing to go to ensure that their service and resources are accessible. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the surveys supports these findings, and also provides insight into individual challenges that are unfortunately widespread problems such as the restrictions caused by budgets. A number of recommendations have been made in an attempt to challenge these issues, with the most important considerations being the implementation of a national policy regarding disabled library users and also regular consultation with disabled people or organisations representing them to ensure their needs are being met. Though adoption of these measures it will be possible to remove some of the barriers to information faced by disabled people, assist in moving towards the idea of the universal library and therefore allow disabled people to fully participate in and contribute to the knowledge society.

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Appendix 1: Table 1-Thematic Analysis of Additional Comments Provided to FOI Requests

<u>Category</u>	<u>Sub-category</u>	<u>Summary of Supporting Comments</u>	<u>Frequency of Mentions</u>
Disabled Users Policy	Equalities Policy	Follow general council rather than library policy.	10
		Compliant with EQA (2010).	2
		Area disability profile to ensure council services planned with disabled people in mind.	1
	Physical Access	Building access follows guidelines of the DDA (1995).	4
		Participation in 'Six Steps' programme.	3
		Participate in RNIB's 'Make a Noise in Libraries' fortnight.	3
		Buildings must be accessible internally and externally.	1
	Consultation with external organisations/ persons	SLIC Digital Champions project.	2
		Consultation with disabled people when discussing service provision and planning – one of these was not specific to libraries but to council as a whole.	2
		Contact with Disability Access Panel.	1
Staff Awareness Training	General Awareness Training	General training for all front-line staff.	15
		Equality/diversity training plus disability awareness.	9
		Equality/diversity training only.	5
		Training in relation to specific services offered by the library, rather than general awareness training.	2
	Training about specific impairments	Blindness/visual impairments training.	9
		Specific training in multiple impairments.	7
		Deaf awareness/British sign language (BSL) training.	6
		Alzheimer's/Dementia awareness training.	6
		Autism awareness training.	3
		Communication/Makaton training.	3
		Dyslexia awareness training.	3
		Staff receive higher level of training depending on role.	3
		Invisible impairments awareness training.	1
	Mode of delivery	Training delivered through online modules.	7
		Use of external partners-NHS/RNIB/local organisations.	5
		Training offered by other units in the Council.	3

		Staff undertake accredited courses.	1
Staff Training in Assistive Technology	Training given to all staff	All staff trained in technologies at their branch.	20
		Have received/will receive e-reader/i-pad training.	2
		Carried out as and when required.	1
	Mode of delivery	Training from external organisations - national or local.	8
		Staff receive training from members of council.	2
		Training delivered as part of project sponsored by SLIC.	2
		Handbooks given to staff when software updated.	1
		Training in assistive technology provided by a person who is visually impaired.	1
	Training of certain staff	Designated staff member with higher level of training.	4
		No compulsory training and staff opt to undergo formal training.	2
	Designated central space for technology	Technology kits kept at central location and loaned out as required.	2
	Training for library users	Users can receive one-to-one training in the use of assistive technologies and can be referred from community libraries.	2
		Tutor in ICT for blind and partially sighted people taking European Computer Driving License (ECDL) and ECDL Advanced courses.	1
	Library website accessibility	Website compliant with W3C standards.	1
Home Delivery Service	Use of Volunteers	Delivery of books in collaboration with volunteers – most commonly the Royal Volunteer Service (RVS).	9
	Involvement of library staff	Library staff discuss book choices and material preferences with users, volunteers deliver books.	6
	Mobile libraries	Deliver books to housebound people who are on their route.	5
	Variance in service	Home delivery service provided to most but not all parts of the region.	4
	Postal delivery	Postal delivery of materials to blind/visually impaired people.	2
	Care homes and community	Books delivered to residents in care homes and community centres.	2

	centres		
Provision of Accessible Materials	Braille	No provision at all of Braille materials.	6
		Can be provided on request/through inter-library loan.	4
		Braille printing facilities offered.	2
		Users directed to other organisations such as the RNIB.	2
		Funding given to local organisation to purchase materials through RNIB lending service.	1
	E-books/e-audiobooks	Reading materials provided in e-formats which can be magnified on the users' device.	13
		E-readers can be made available for home delivery users if necessary.	1
	Talking newspapers	Provided on CD at library.	1
		Volunteers record edited version of weekly news from a local newspaper onto cassette and post to subscribers.	1
	Reminiscence packs	Created for people with dementia.	2
		In collaboration with the NHS.	1
	Specific services for disabled people	Take part in RNIB's 'Make a Noise in Libraries' fortnight.	3
		Reading group for visually impaired/blind people -no budget to order accessible texts for all members so instead discuss by genre.	1

Appendix 2: Survey for Librarians

Section 1: Please select the answer which most closely represents your opinions and/or experience, or provide the specific details requested.

1. Since the implementation of the Equality Act (EQA) in 2010 my organisation has taken steps to ensure the library building is accessible to disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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2. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.
3. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010, has your organisation consulted with disabled people when changes have been made to the library building infrastructure, service provision, purchasing of assistive technology and/or collection development?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

4. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010, has your organisation been asked to improve the accessibility of the library building, services, provision of assistive technology or collection by a disabled person(s)?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

5. Disability awareness training given to frontline staff and volunteers makes them feel more comfortable when serving disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

7. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010 has your organisation asked disabled people to speak to staff about disability awareness issues?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

8. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010 has your organisation asked representatives from disability charities to speak to staff about disability awareness?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

9. My organisation collaborates with members of external organisations (such as the NHS, RNIB etc.) to ensure that the library is providing services to meet the needs of disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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10. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

11. My organisation offers library services, assistive technologies and collections which meet the specific needs of disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------------------------	----------	-------------------

12. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

13. All services provided by the library can be accessed equally by all disabled and non-disabled people alike.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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14. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

15. My organisation consults with the library's website designer(s) to ensure the website is accessible when assistive technologies are used.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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16. My organisation consults with the vendors of databases used by the library to ensure they are accessible when using assistive technologies.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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17. My organisation is proactive in making disabled people aware of the library services, collections and assistive technologies available to them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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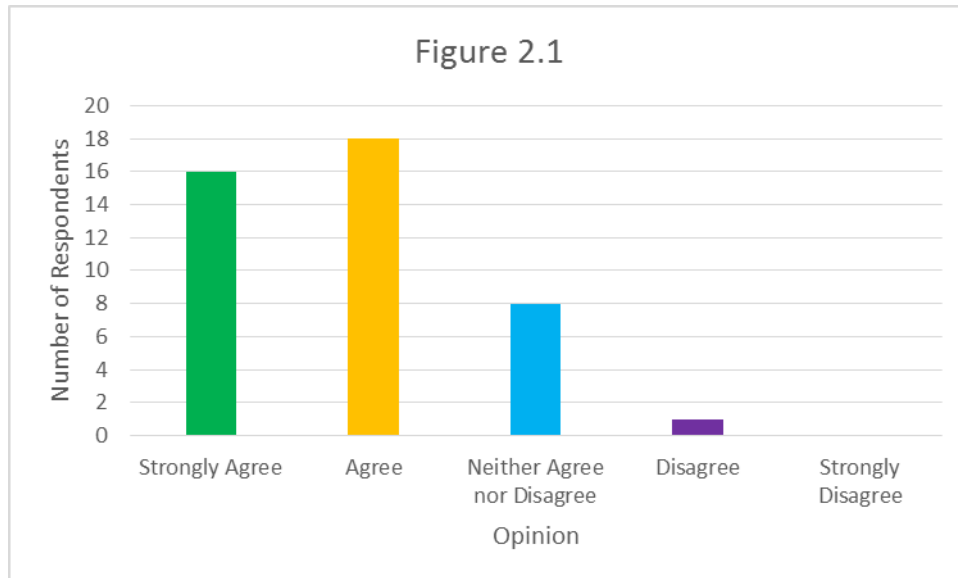
18. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

Section 2: In the following section please give your own opinions in answer to the questions.

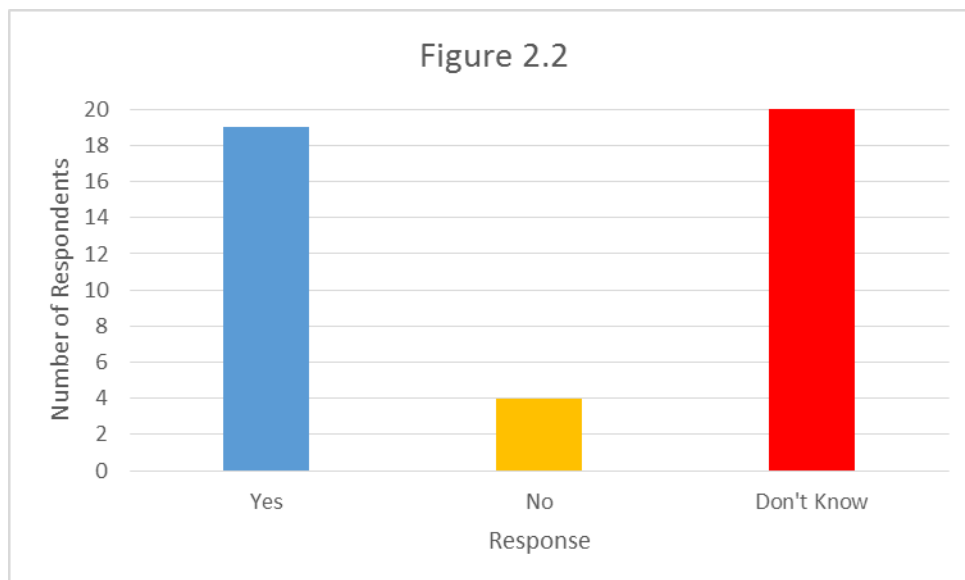
1. What do you consider to be the biggest challenge in ensuring the needs of disabled library users are met?
2. What do you consider to be the biggest challenge in attracting disabled people to the library who are not already library members?
3. What do you think is the most important thing a library can do to create an accessible environment?
4. Do you think that libraries should offer services specifically for disabled people alone? For example, reading groups only for people who require a book to be provided in an alternative format, or story-times only for children who have a lower developmental than actual age. Please provide a reason for your answer.
5. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Appendix 3: Quantitative Data from Survey for Librarians

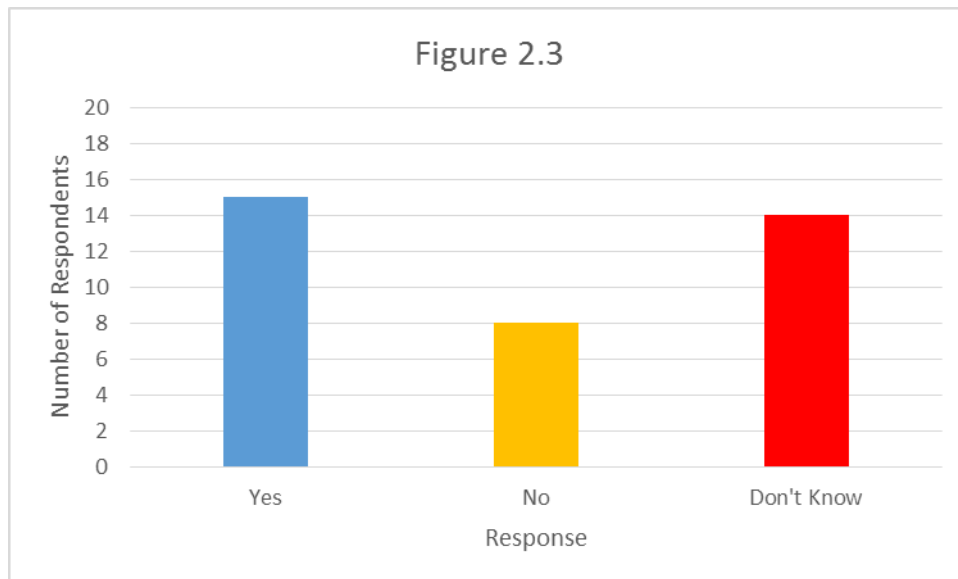
1. Since the implementation of the Equality Act (EQA) in 2010 my organisation has taken steps to ensure the library building is accessible to disabled people.



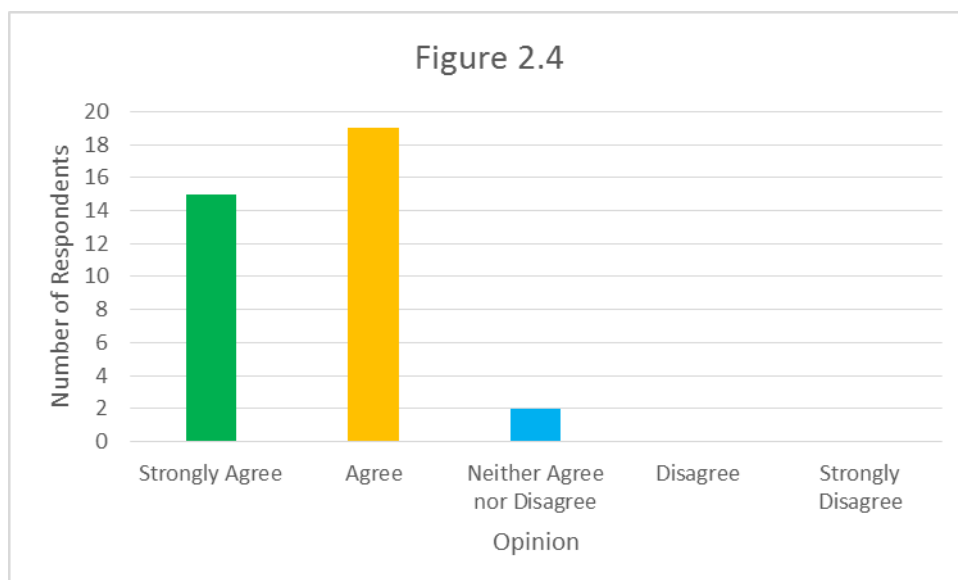
2. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010, has your organisation consulted with disabled people when changes have been made to the library building infrastructure, service provision, purchasing of assistive technology and/or collection development?



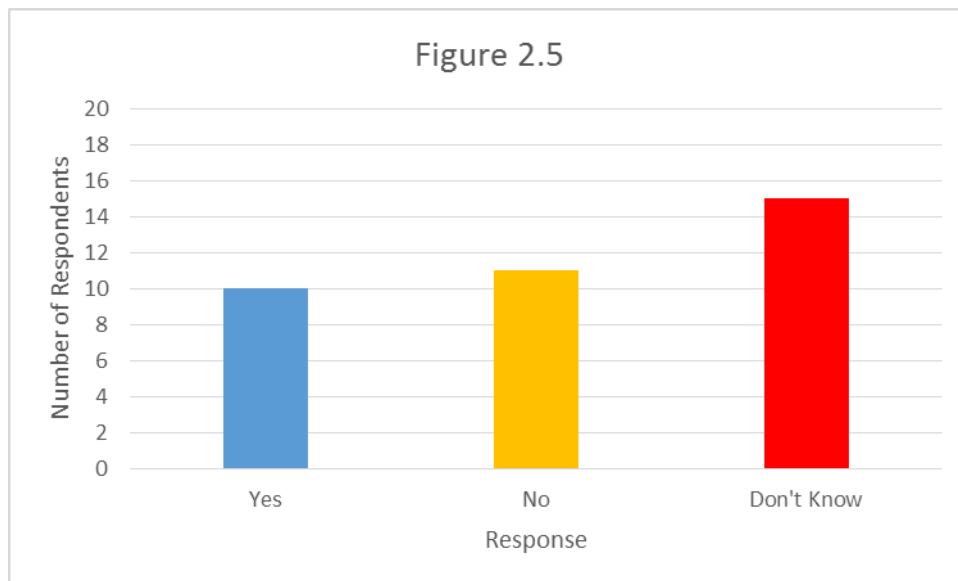
3. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010, has your organisation been asked to improve the accessibility of the library building, services, provision of assistive technology or collection by a disabled person(s)?



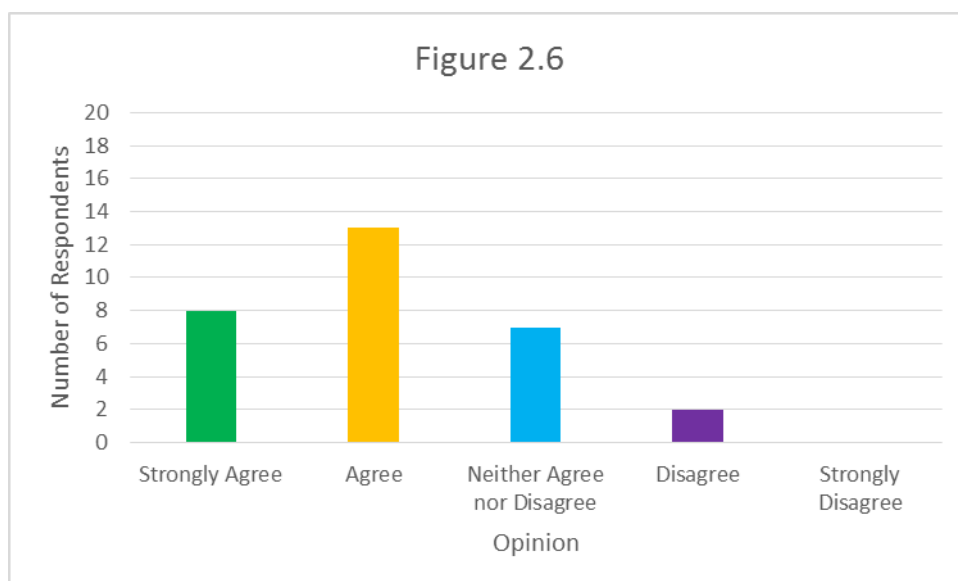
4. Disability awareness training given to frontline staff and volunteers makes them feel more comfortable when serving disabled people.



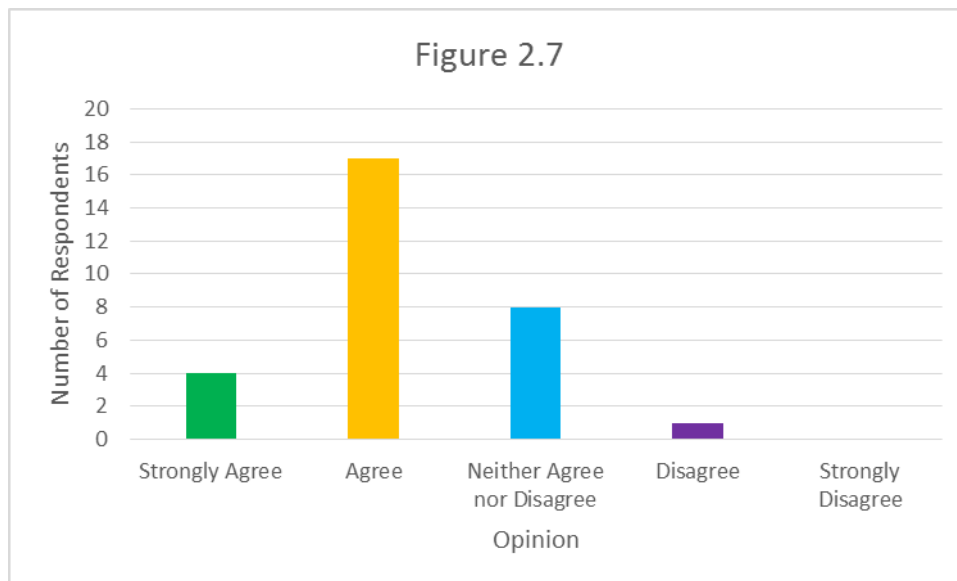
5. Since the implementation of the EQA in 2010 has your organisation asked disabled people to speak to staff about disability awareness issues?



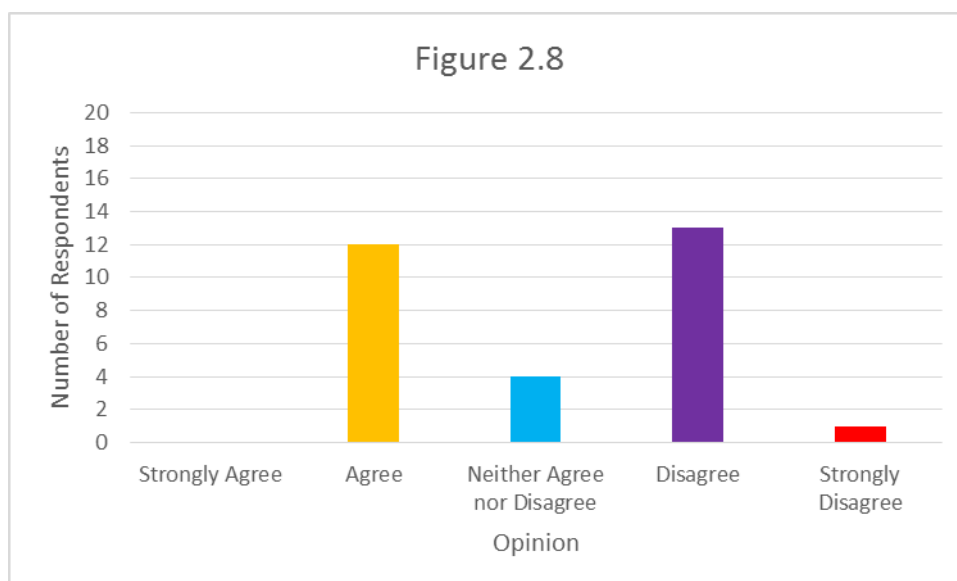
6. My organisation collaborates with members of external organisations (such as the NHS, RNIB etc.) to ensure that the library is providing services to meet the needs of disabled people.



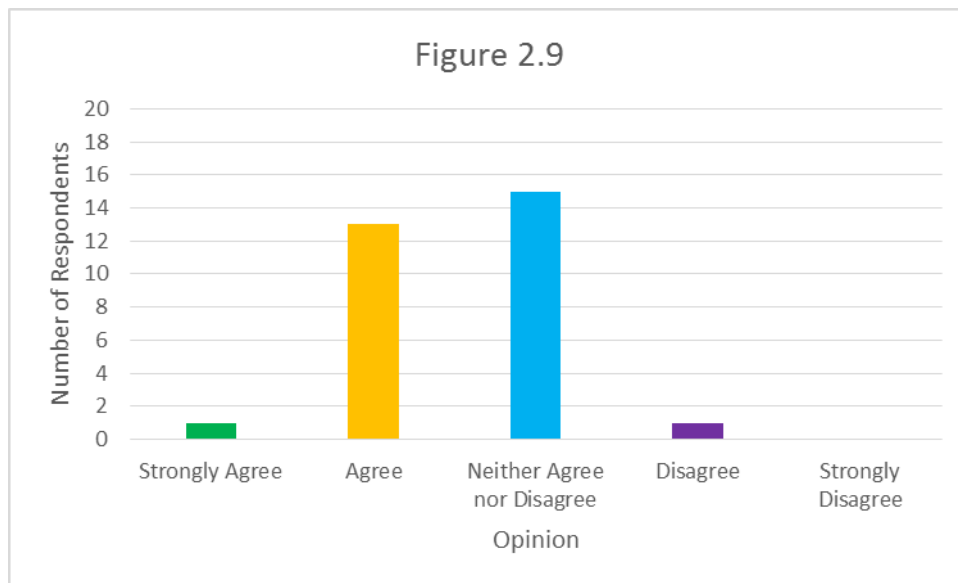
7. My organisation offers library services, assistive technologies and collections which meet the specific needs of disabled people.



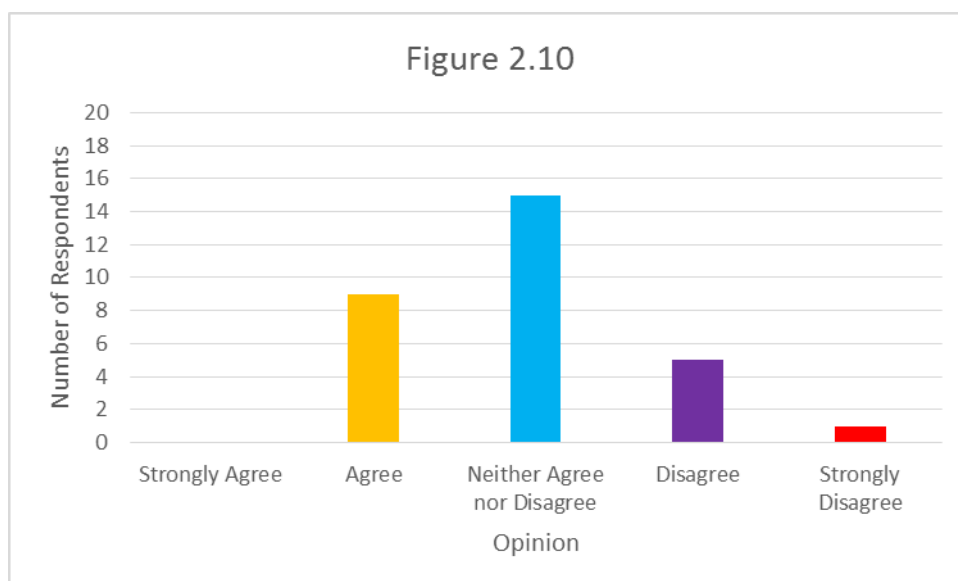
8. All services provided by the library can be accessed equally by all disabled and non-disabled people alike.



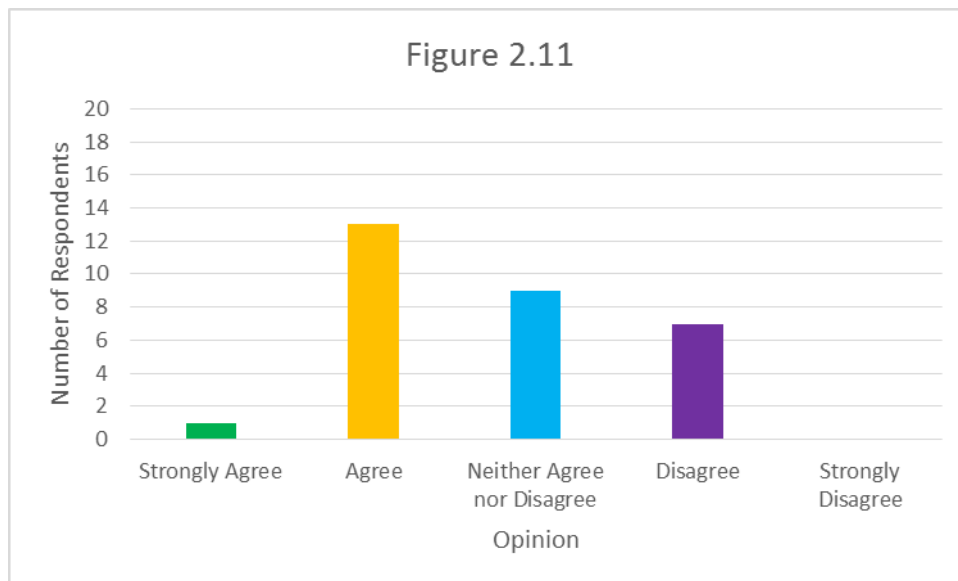
9. My organisation consults with the library's website designer(s) to ensure the website is accessible when assistive technologies are used.



10. My organisation consults with the vendors of databases used by the library to ensure they are accessible when using assistive technologies.



11. My organisation is proactive in making disabled people aware of the library services, collections and assistive technologies available to them.



Appendix 4: Table 2-Thematic Analysis of Additional Comments Provided in Survey for Librarians

Theme	Sub-theme	Summary of Comments	Frequency of Mentions
Physical Access	Full access to library buildings restricted.	Caused by age of building/structural constraints.	8
		Caused by budget constraints.	3
		Building technically accessible but street in front is cobbled so difficult for a wheelchair user.	2
		No adaptations made since EQA (2010).	2
		Ignorance of organisation.	1
		Require assistance to access building.	1
	Compliance with legislation.	Buildings which have been refurbished/built since EQA implementation are compliant.	5
		Buildings previously refurbished to be compliant with DDA (1995 and 2005).	3
		No mention of EQA (2010) to library staff.	1
		Involved union to get necessary changes made to building.	1
		Organisation has access to funding to assist with this.	1
		Equality Access Audits carried out to ensure accessibility.	1
	Examples of Changes	Accessible doorways.	2
		Full wheelchair access	1
		Introduction of 'dementia friendly' signage.	1
		General awareness improved.	1
		Lifts installed.	1
		Disabled toilets.	1
		Ramps installed.	2

	Consultation when changes to building.	Consult disability organisations. Work with disabled people. Consultation about self-service kiosks. No interest from disability forums about changes to accessibility. Library users and non-users consulted.	9 7 2 1 1
	Requests from disabled people to improve building access since implementation of EQA (2010).	Accessibility door. Ramp access. Entrance to be kept clear as parked cars often block it. Riser desks for wheelchair users. Lift to upper floors.	2 1 1 1 1
Staff Awareness and Training	Importance of delivering disability awareness training to staff.	Makes staff feel more comfortable/confident in serving disabled people. Makes staff more understanding of specific challenges faced by disabled people. Provides practical advice. What is taken from training depends on the individual-not everyone will get something positive out of it. Should work with trusted persons/organisations to deliver training. Reduces stigma. Reduces staff fears of causing offence. Mandatory for all front-line staff.	3 3 3 2 1 1 1 1
	Consultation to deliver staff awareness training.	Work with national/local organisations. Attempts to work with disabled people but they do not respond to posts placed on forums.	5 1

		Training delivered by people with learning disabilities.	1
		Dementia staff awareness training requested by library users.	1
	Regularity of training.	Must be regularly updated as not all staff will serve disabled people on a daily basis.	4
		Has not been delivered for many years.	1
		Not enough opportunity for this training.	1
Service Provision	Consultation with external organisations to ensure appropriate services provided to disabled people.	Partnership takes place but organisations not specified.	4
		Consultation with RNIB.	3
		Consultation with local organisations.	3
		Unsure of value of partnership-whether really assists disabled people or just paying lip service.	2
		Consultation with NHS.	2
		Collaboration restricted because of budget restrictions.	1
		Consultation to support Dementia, Cancer etc. rather than disability.	1
		Partnership with ENABLE Scotland to give volunteer opportunities to people with learning disabilities.	1
	Consultation to ensure appropriate collections provided.	Participate in 'Six Steps' programme.	1
		Consultation with NHS about mental and wider health conditions.	1
	Consultation when changes made to service provision/collections.	Consult with disabled organisation to ensure services are accessible.	1
		Collections not developed specifically with disabled people in mind.	1
		Consult with disabled people about accessibility of collection (VIP and	1

		e-books).	
	Accessibility of services/collections.	<p>Collection/services on upper level without life access/emergency routes for wheelchair users.</p> <p>Difficult to make everything equally accessible because different people have different requirements and face different barriers.</p> <p>Libraries do their best but could be doing better.</p> <p>Restricted by budget.</p> <p>Accessible services and collections provided but no-one makes use of them.</p> <p>Collections not always developed with disabled people in mind.</p> <p>Many titles not in large print.</p> <p>Need to improve digital access to Special Collections.</p> <p>Mobile library may not be accessible.</p> <p>Cannot guarantee, would require Equality Impact Assessments.</p> <p>High and roller-type shelving.</p> <p>One library not accessible, but services can be accessed in other libraries, via Internet or outreach services.</p> <p>Only open to public by appointment.</p> <p>Most rather than all services are equally accessible.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
	Provision of services/collections that meet specific needs of disabled people.	<p>Large print books.</p> <p>Hearing loss/aid clinics.</p> <p>Audio books.</p> <p>Healthy reading section.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>

		E-reading materials and music.	1
		Signed story sessions.	1
		Sensory story sessions for children with profound physical and mental disabilities.	1
		Basics offered but unsure as to what else available.	1
		Talking Newspapers.	1
Assistive Technology and Web Accessibility	Requests from disabled people to provided assistive technologies.	Text-to-speech software.	3
		Different brand assistive technology.	2
		Software for visually impaired people.	1
		Provision of assistive technology.	1
	Consultation when purchasing assistive technology.	Consult with disabled people.	4
		Consult with AbilityNet.	1
	Training in use of assistive technology	Computer/tablet/assistive technology classes run by RNIB for users.	3
		Consult external organisation to train staff in digital accessibility.	2
	Provision of assistive technology.	Libraries do best they can but could do better.	6
		Is provided but no one makes use of it.	2
		Larger libraries have additional technologies.	1
		Difficult to keep up because changes so quickly.	1
		Not all library PCs have assistive software.	1
		Need to couple provision with training and monitoring.	1
User Awareness	Promotion of services specifically to disabled people.	Use website which is fully accessible.	4
		Promotion through disability groups.	3

		No specific literature/promotion.	2
		Promotion to all users needs to be increased/better.	2
		Organisation talks about doing this but no evidence in actions.	1
		Attempts to promote but disabled forums receive no comments.	1
		Use of local press.	1
		Promotion in past but not recently.	1
		Promote services but not assistive technology.	1
		Only advertise events, not services or resources.	1
Challenges in Meeting Needs of Disabled People	Budgets	Restricted funding means stock acquisition and building refurbishment are restricted.	11
	Physical Access	Lack of disabled parking spaces.	1
		Distance from public transport stops.	1
		Lack of toilets.	1
		Outdated interiors.	1
	Diversity of impairments.	Wide range of needs.	4
		Difficulty in finding out needs of disabled people.	3
		No one solution for all impairments.	2
		Keeping up-to-date with requirements.	2
		Have to deal in generalities.	1
	Digital access.	Digital divide already an issue and libraries need to address this.	1
	Contact with disabled people.	Need to ensure challenges being addressed are what disabled people actually require.	2
		Finding out who and where disabled people are, especially if they do not belong to an organisation.	2

	Staff attitudes.	Regular, compulsory training of staff needed	2
		Management restrictions.	2
		All people regardless of disability need to be treated the same.	1
		Equal access to services needs to be guaranteed.	1
Challenges in Attracting Disabled People to the Library who are not Already Members	Physical access	Building needs to look obviously accessible, welcoming and promoted as such.	3
		Consideration of disabled people e.g. shelving that can be reached by someone in a wheelchair, lift access etc.	2
		Distance from public transport stops may be problematic.	2
		Knowing needs of disabled people.	1
		Opening Hours.	1
	Digital access	Availability of online resources needs improved.	1
	Staff attitudes	Not labelling people but rather treating them as individuals with different needs.	1
		Knowing how to treat disabled people.	1
	Service provision	Convincing disabled people they will get an offer at the library that they will not get elsewhere.	6
		Making people aware of changing resources offered by library.	2
		Finding out exactly what non-users want and then providing it.	2
		Perception the library does not hold the resources disabled people need.	2
		Many disabled people have access to things they need but visit library for company.	1
		Good range of stock.	1

		Community engagement activities.	1
	Contact with disabled people.	Difficult to access disabled people to inform them about library.	7
		Contact with external organisations can assist in delivering relevant requirements.	1
		Disability forums not interested/do not respond to contact.	1
		Targeted marketing and promotion.	1
Most Important Considerations in Providing an Accessible Environment	Physical Access	Providing lots of space, easy access and appropriate entrances.	8
		Provide aids such as trolleys with baskets for people to put their reading choices in them.	2
		Convenient opening hours. Ensure equality of access is embedded in service provision and not just an add-on.	2
			1
		Computer kiosks at which people can stand or use a wheelchair at.	1
		Consider shelving-not all the way to floor.	1
	Staff Attitudes	Friendly, helpful and welcoming staff trained in awareness issues.	11
		Creative thinking, listen to disabled peoples'/organisation's requests and display serious consideration in improving service.	7
		Talk to other libraries to discuss good and bad practice/experience.	1
		Offer 1-to-1 support if required.	1
		Technological support.	1
	User Awareness	Make the accessible library visible to the community.	1
		Provide information in a range of formats.	1
	Recommendations for improved	RNIB giant print books should be available in legal deposit libraries	1

	accessibility.	and preferably public libraries to ensure access.	
		Extensive auditing and fining of organisations that do not comply with legislation.	1
		Make better use of existing resources.	1
Services Specifically for Disabled People	Should be provided.	Only provide if requested/essential to needs of user.	11
		Introduces people to library and other services offered which are inclusive and to other library users.	3
		Should be provided but difficult due to reduced staffing levels, training needs and opening hours.	3
		Can be confidence-boosting.	2
		Resources to allow inclusive services cannot be provided because of management decisions with regards to budgets - e.g. one series of large print/audio book titles costs the same as two or three sets of standard-sized print books.	1
		Whatever is provided - inclusive or separate services - should be in response to user feedback and not based solely on judgment of librarians.	1
		Reduces intimidation of library.	1
		Provided if come as organised group.	1
	Shouldn't be provided.	Should integrate with other library users.	6
		Tailor services to meet individual needs e.g. provide accessible formats of reading group titles.	4
		Encourages stigma.	2
		Should not label people.	1

Appendix 5: Survey for Disabled People

Section 1: Please select the response which you feel best describes your opinions and/or experience, or provide the details requested.

Please note:

The term 'building' is used to mean both externally and internally.

The term 'service' is used to categorise facilities such as home delivery of reading materials, beginner's computer classes and reading groups.

The term 'collection' is used to categorise all library reading materials such as books, magazines, e-books and spoken word CDs.

The term 'resource' is used to categorise the PCs, assistive technologies (both hardware and software) and online websites/advice/tutorials provided by the library.

1. My local public library building is easy for me to access.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

2. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.
3. Since 2010, have you had to ask your local public library to make a change to the building, a service, a collection or a resource to make it more accessible to you?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

4. Since 2010, have you been consulted when changes have been made to your local public library building, services, collection or resources?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

5. My local public library creates a welcoming environment for disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

6. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

7. The staff in my local public library display a positive attitude when serving me.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

8. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

9. The staff in my local public library display a good awareness about the potential needs of disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

10. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

11. Since 2010, have you been asked to speak to staff at your local public library about disability awareness issues?

Yes	No	Don't Know
-----	----	------------

- If respondent selects 'yes' they will be asked to provide details in the next question.

12. All the services offered by my local public library are equally accessible to all disabled and non-disabled people alike.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

13. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

14. My local public library offers services, a collection and resources that meet my specific needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

15. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

16. I have the same access to PCs and the Internet in my local public library as anybody else.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

17. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

18. My local public library provides assistive technologies (such as screen readers and adapted keyboards) that meet my specific needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

19. Staff in my local public library are able to assist me if I have problems using assistive technologies.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

20. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

21. The online resources offered by my local public library, such as newspapers and local history information, are easy for me to access.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

22. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

23. My local public library makes people aware of the services, collection and resources on offer to disabled people.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-------------------------------	----------	----------------------

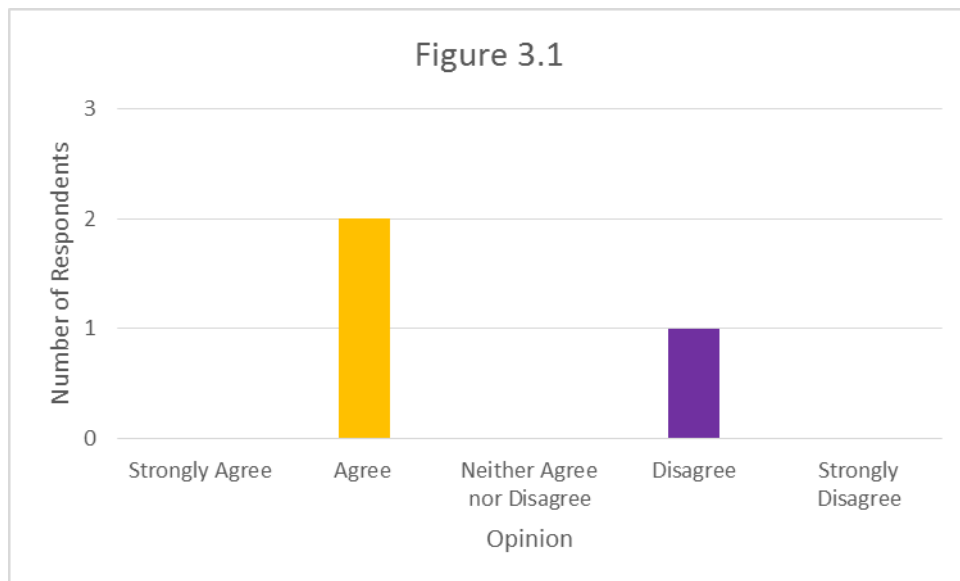
24. Please provide a reason or any further comments you have on this question.

Section 2: In the following section please give your own opinions in answer to the questions.

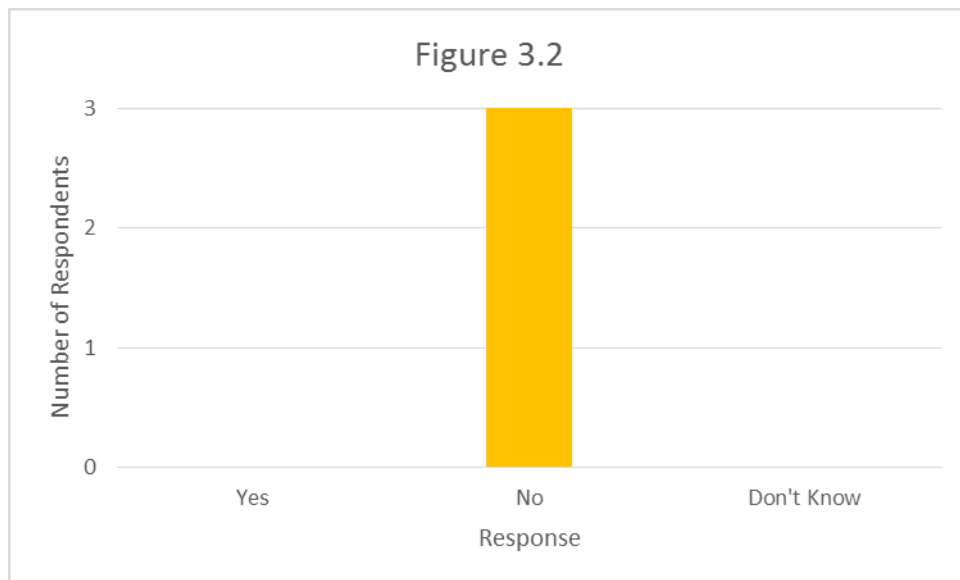
1. What do you feel is the most important thing(s) a library can do to create an accessible environment?
2. What do you feel are the most important services, collection and/or resources a library can provide for disabled people?
3. Do you think that libraries should offer services specifically for disabled people alone? For example, reading groups only for people who require a book to be provided in an alternative format, or story-times only for children who have a lower developmental than actual age. Please provide a reason to support your answer?
4. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Appendix 6: Quantitative Data from Survey for Disabled People

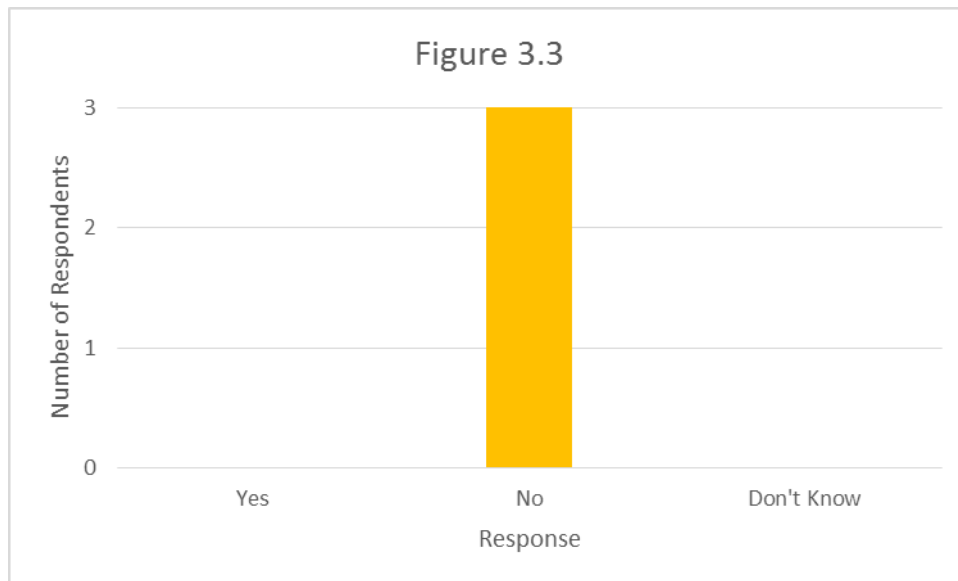
1. My local public library building is easy for me to access.



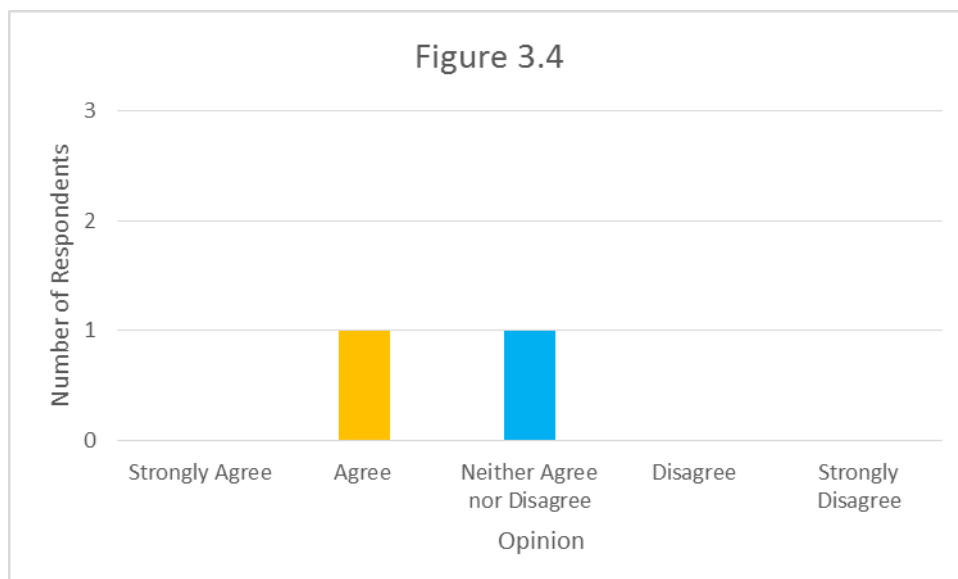
2. Since 2010, have you had to ask your local public library to make a change to the building, a service, a collection or a resource to make it more accessible to you?



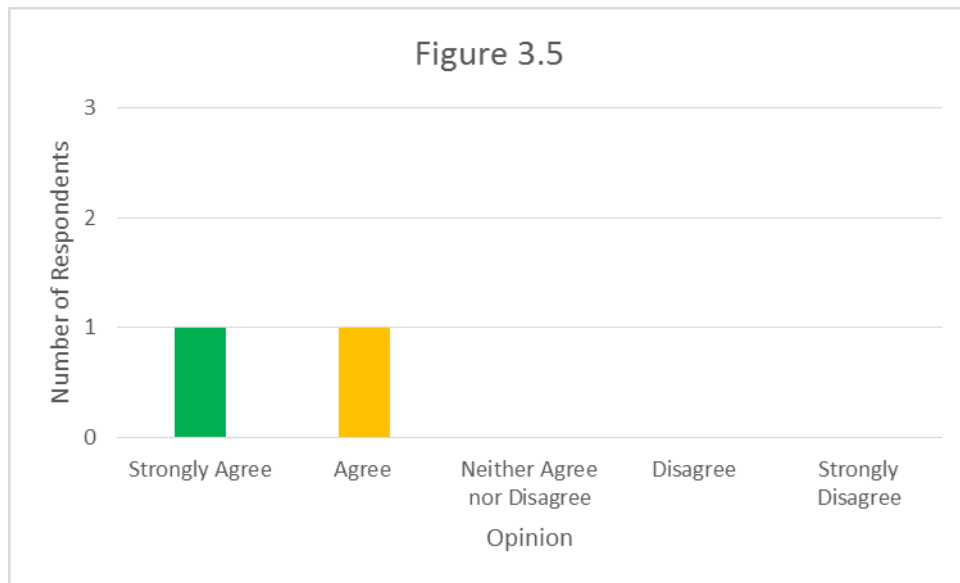
3. Since 2010, have you been consulted when changes have been made to your local public library building, services, collection or resources?



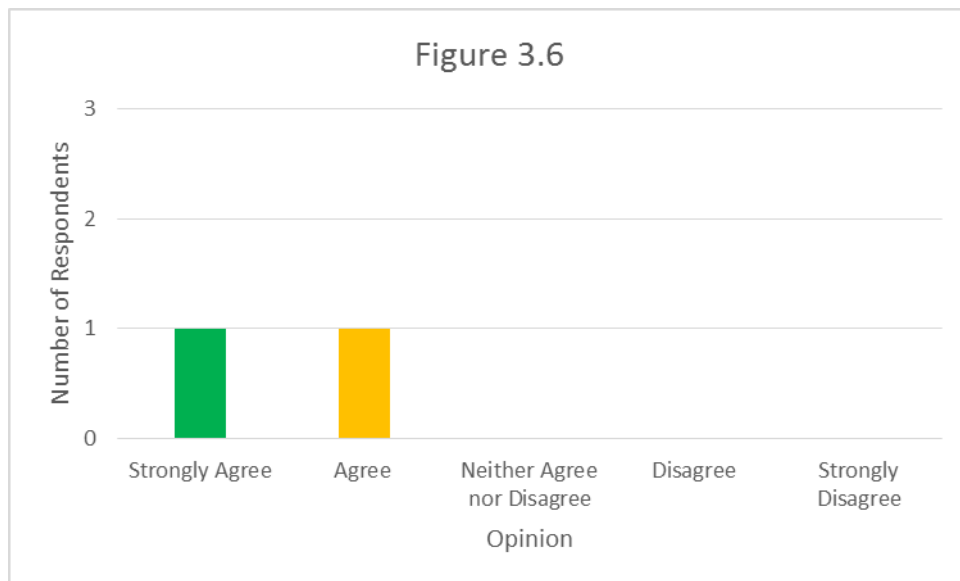
4. My local public library creates a welcoming environment for disabled people.



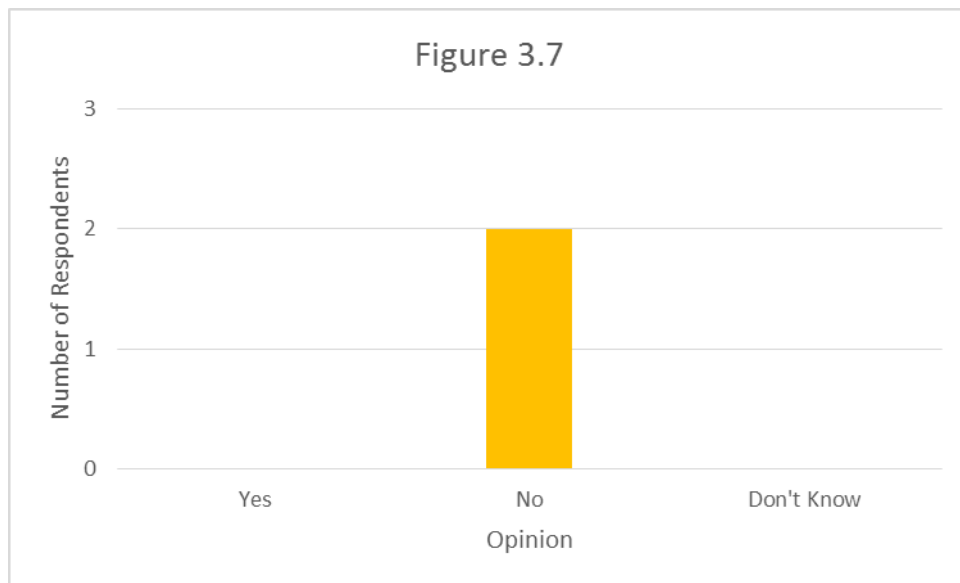
5. The staff in my local public library display a positive attitude when serving me.



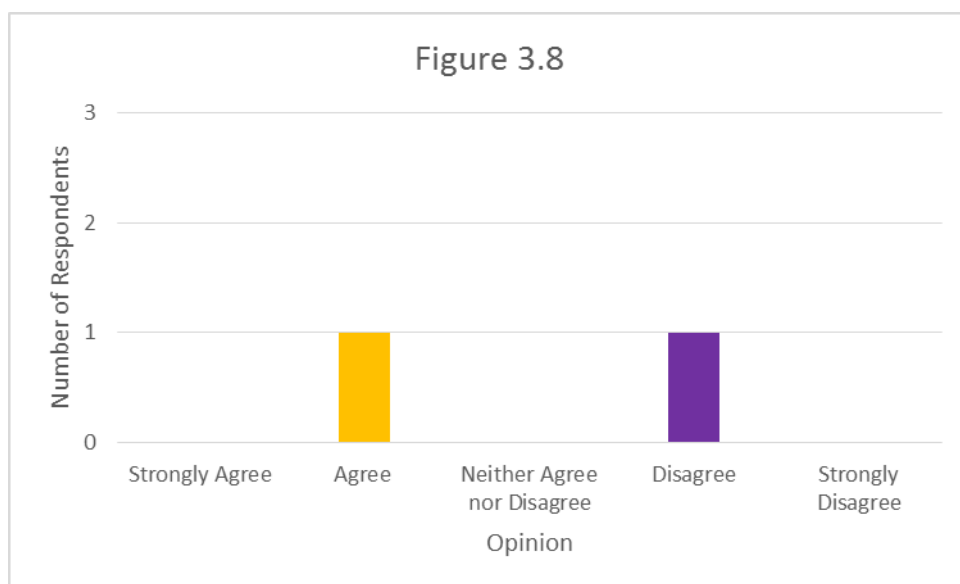
6. The staff in my local public library display a good awareness about the potential needs of disabled people.



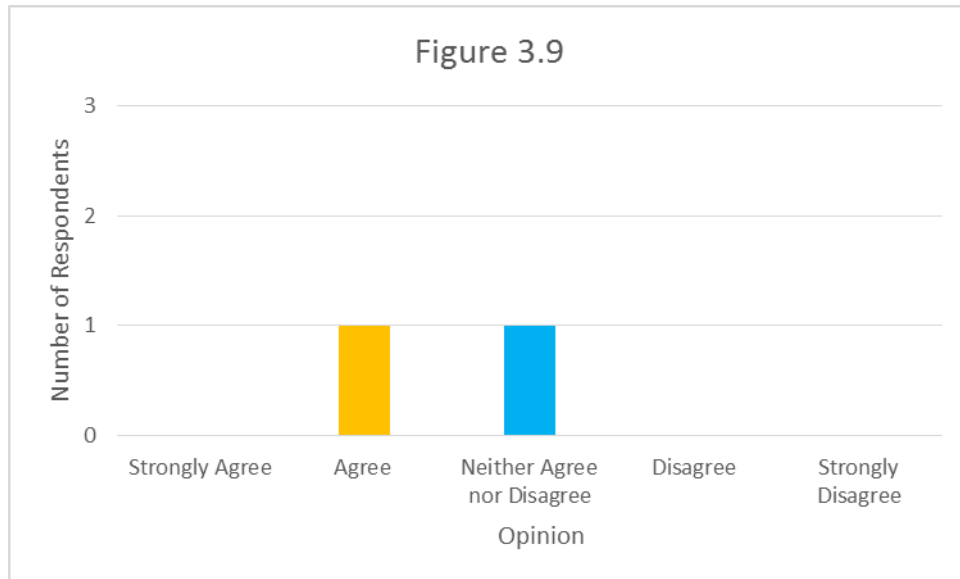
7. Since 2010, have you been asked to speak to staff at your local public library about disability awareness issues?



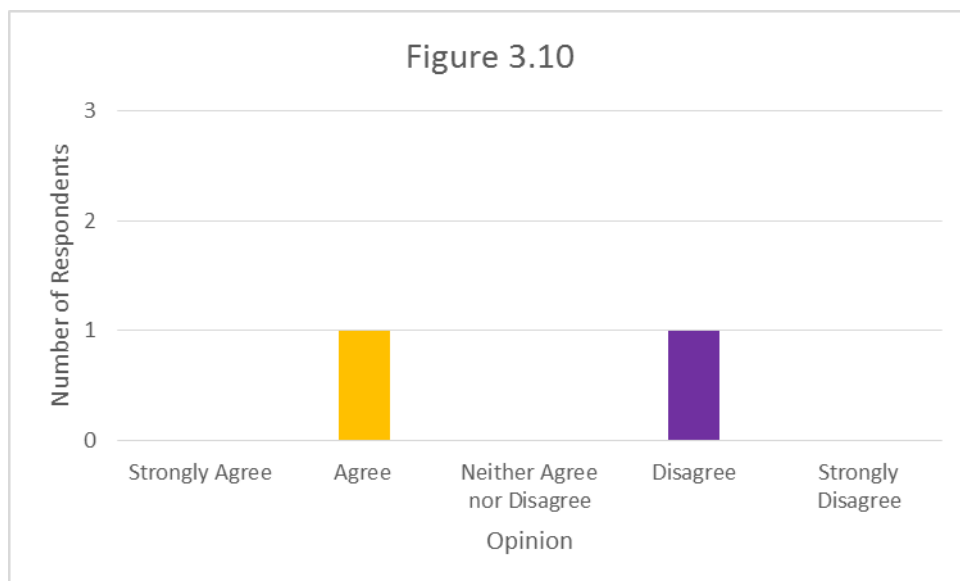
8. All the services offered by my local public library are equally accessible to all disabled and non-disabled people alike.



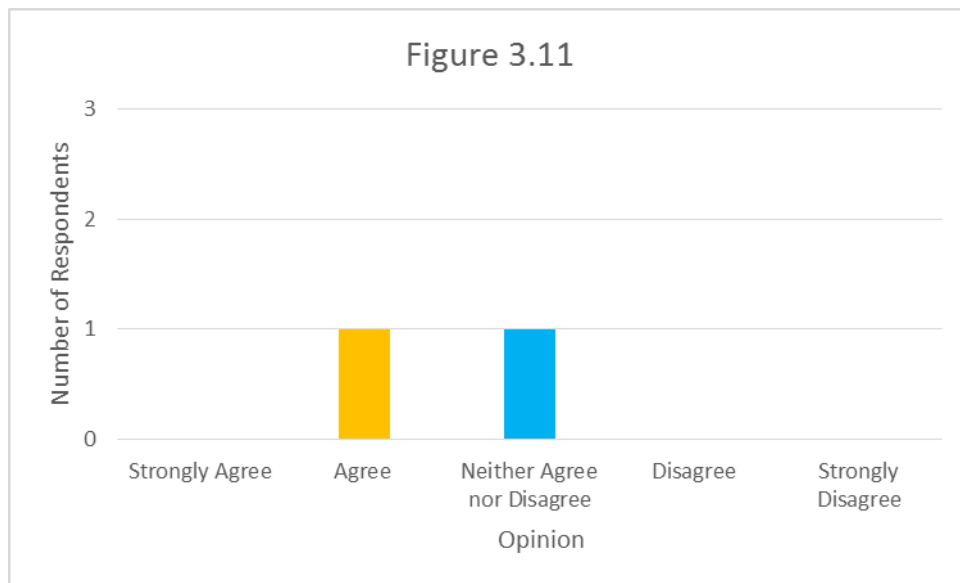
9. My local public library offers services, a collection and resources that meet my specific needs.



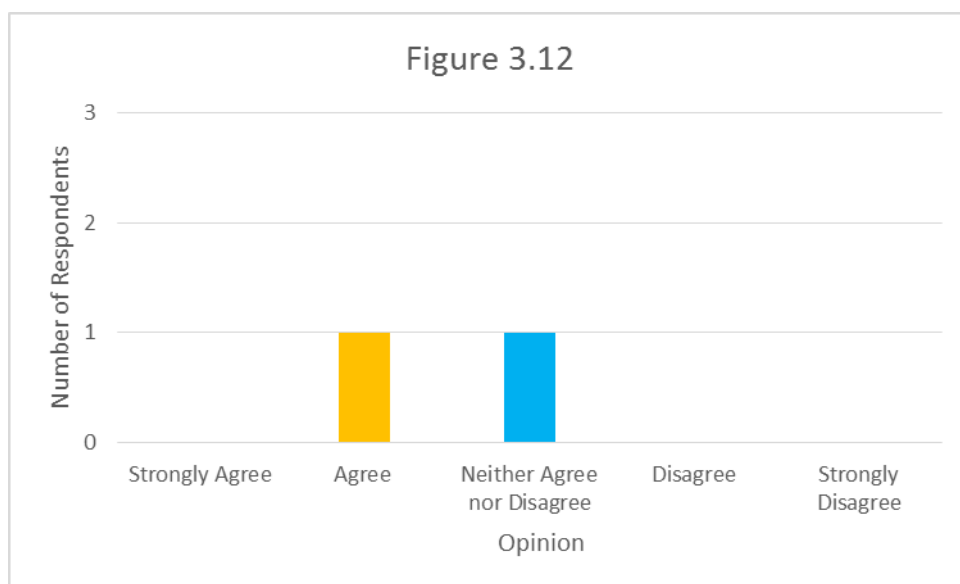
10. I have the same access to PCs and the Internet in my local public library as anybody else.



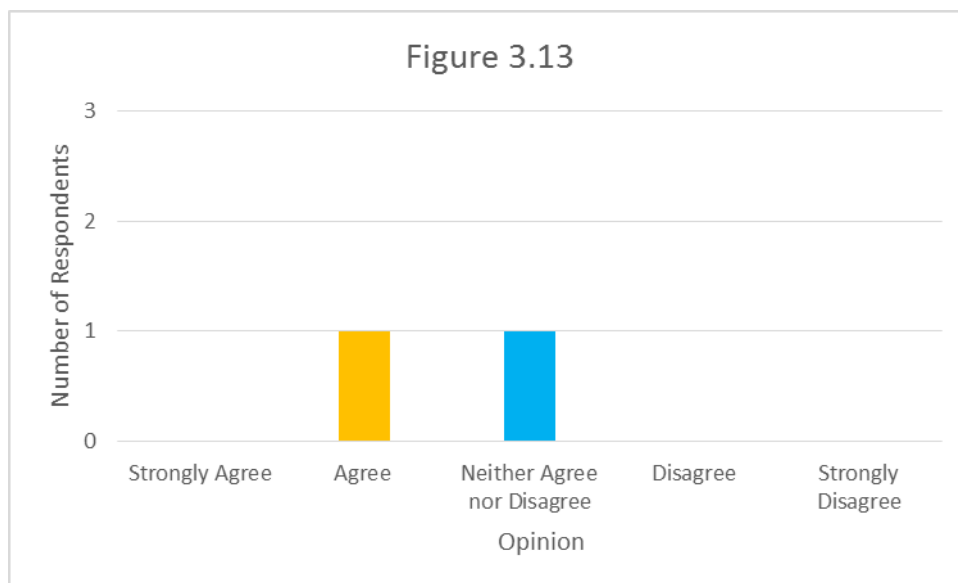
11. My local public library provides assistive technologies (such as screen readers and adapted keyboards) that meet my specific needs.



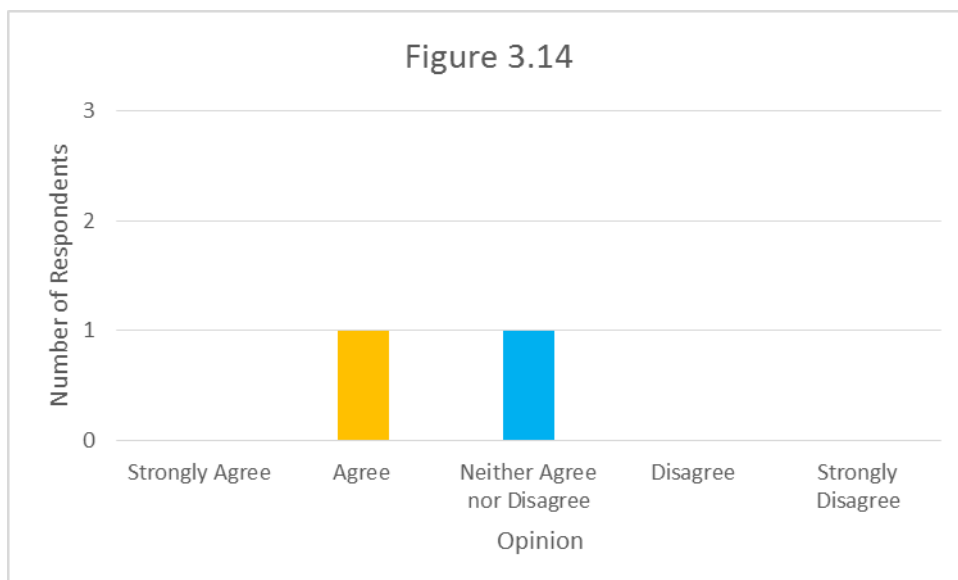
12. Staff in my local public library are able to assist me if I have problems using assistive technologies.



13. The online resources offered by my local public library, such as newspapers and local history information, are easy for me to access.



14. My local public library makes people aware of the services, collection and resources on offer to disabled people.



Appendix 7: Table 3-Thematic Analysis of Additional Comments Provided in Survey for Disabled People

Theme	Sub-theme	Summary of Comments	Frequency of Mentions
Physical Access	Ease of entering library building	Simple because library is on ground floor.	1
		Complicated because ramp access is at back of building which means additional walking which can be problematic.	1
	Best way to create an accessible environment.	Building not fit for purpose.	1
		No steps or heavy doors at main entrance.	1
		Ground floor access.	1
		Disabled toilets.	1
		Wide aisles.	1
Staff Awareness and Training	Staff attitudes	Helpful staff.	2
		Helps to read text on books because user has trouble with this.	1
		Friendly staff who welcome everybody one of best ways to ensure library is accessible.	1
Service Provision	Universal access to services.	Meetings not held on ground floor and lack of lift so difficult for people to access.	1
		Universal access to events one of best ways to ensure library is accessible.	1
Assistive Technology	Universal access to resources.	Some PCs on upper floor so difficult to access.	1

Appendix 8: Table 4-Relationships between FOI Responses and Survey Results.

FOI Requests	Survey for Librarians	Survey for Disabled People
<p><u>Disabled Users Policy</u></p> <p>Provided by only 2 authorities.</p> <p>19% stated compliance with EQA (2010)/DDA (1995) for accessible buildings.</p> <p>6% reported consultation with disabled people.</p>	<p><u>Physical Access</u></p> <p>26% asked to make building more accessible.</p> <p>14% report ease of access and wide spacing key to accessible service/environment.</p> <p>14% state disabled people difficult to reach/not interested about changes.</p>	<p><u>Physical Access</u></p> <p>67% reported problems with access.</p> <p>67% report physical access key to accessible environment.</p> <p>100% reported no consultation about changes to building, services, resources or collection.</p>
<p><u>Staff Awareness Training</u></p> <p>Provided by 78% of authorities.</p> <p>25% reported consulting with other council departments and/or external organisations</p>	<p><u>Staff Awareness and Training</u></p> <p>19% believe important for accessible service.</p> <p>59% strongly agree or agree makes staff more comfortable.</p> <p>10% reported needs regular updating/currently not enough opportunity for this.</p>	<p><u>Staff Awareness and Training</u></p> <p>67% reported good staff attitudes/awareness.</p>
<p><u>Staff Training in Assistive Technology</u></p> <p>Provided by 78% of authorities.</p> <p>41% consult with other council departments/external organisations/SLIC/disabled person.</p>	<p><u>Assistive Technology and Web Accessibility.</u></p> <p>10% state could be doing better.</p> <p>24% state organisation consults website designers.</p> <p>16% state organisation consults database vendors.</p>	<p><u>Assistive Technology and Web Accessibility.</u></p> <p>33% disagree about equal access to PCS and online resources.</p>
<p><u>Home Delivery Service</u></p> <p>97% provided home delivery service</p>	<p><u>Service Provision</u></p> <p>24% disagree or strongly disagree universal access to services/resources.</p>	<p><u>Service Provision</u></p> <p>33% agree equal access to services.</p>
<p><u>Accessible Reading Materials</u></p> <p>Provided by 100% of authorities</p>	<p><u>User Awareness</u></p> <p>28% need neither agree or disagree, or disagree that organisation proactive in marketing services.</p>	<p><u>User Awareness</u></p> <p>33% neither agreement nor disagree about effective promotion of services.</p>