



Public Libraries 2021: Netloan Customer Survey Results

February 2022

lorensbergs

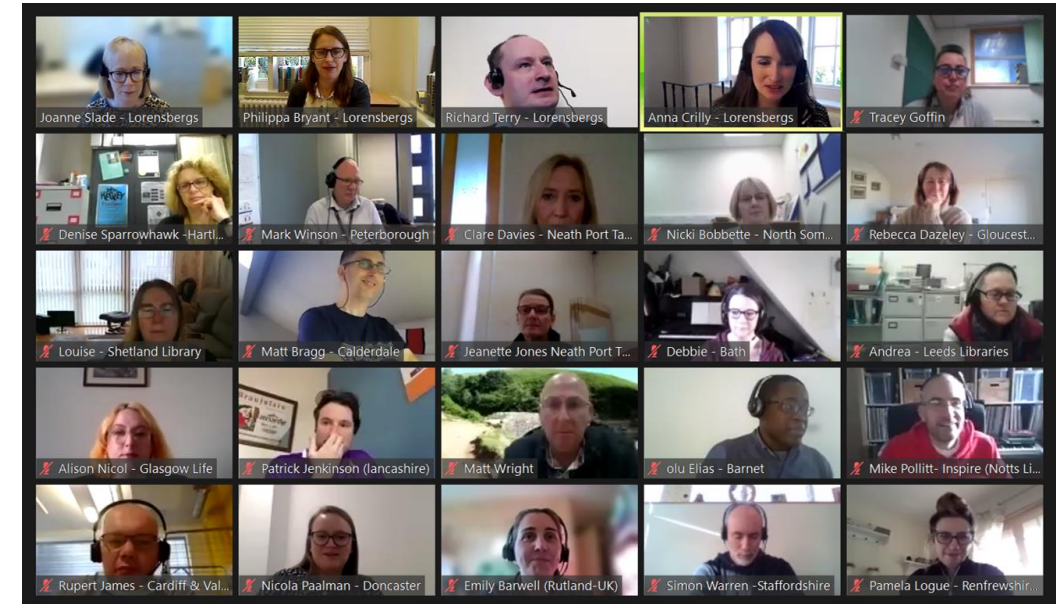


About the netloan customer survey



Each year, Lorensbergs carries out research to explore how library needs are changing and hear our customers' plans for their services in the year ahead. The 2021 survey was circulated to all netloan library customers. Over 70 public library authorities took part.

The initial survey findings are discussed and explored in the annual netloan user groups. In November 2021, these were attended virtually by over 130 delegates from nearly 80 libraries – the highest attendance so far in almost 20 years of holding these events.



The netloan portfolio of library solutions

Lorensbergs works closely with libraries to improve access to services and resources, via 24/7 online bookings. Our market-leading solution, **netloan** provides a comprehensive session management system for greater control and accessibility to library PCs, together with self-service print payment and release. A Wi-Fi print solution is also available, giving library users the opportunity to print from their smartphones, tablets and laptops via their netloan account for a holistic, modern way to use services.

Key findings



- Libraries continue to provide essential PC access to their users, a service of utmost importance to jobseekers and benefit claimants with 80% of libraries rating it essential. Post-lockdown, jobseeker PC usage is rising in a third of libraries
- Ability for users to print from PCs is considered important by 100% of libraries, with over 70% rating it essential
- Digital skills support from libraries has been increasing with over 90% providing it. Over 70% are providing help directly to library computer users, up from 40% a year ago. Providing more of this help is the second most common strategy for regaining footfall in 2022. PC usage by those with limited digital skills is already rising in nearly a quarter of libraries
- Over half of libraries are investing in more modern IT equipment or Wi-Fi printing in 2022
- 40% of libraries are planning a PC refresh, investing in the quality of the People's Network
- 20% of libraries are still working to increase their opening hours post-lockdown and 7% reported they were still to reopen branches

Key findings – continued

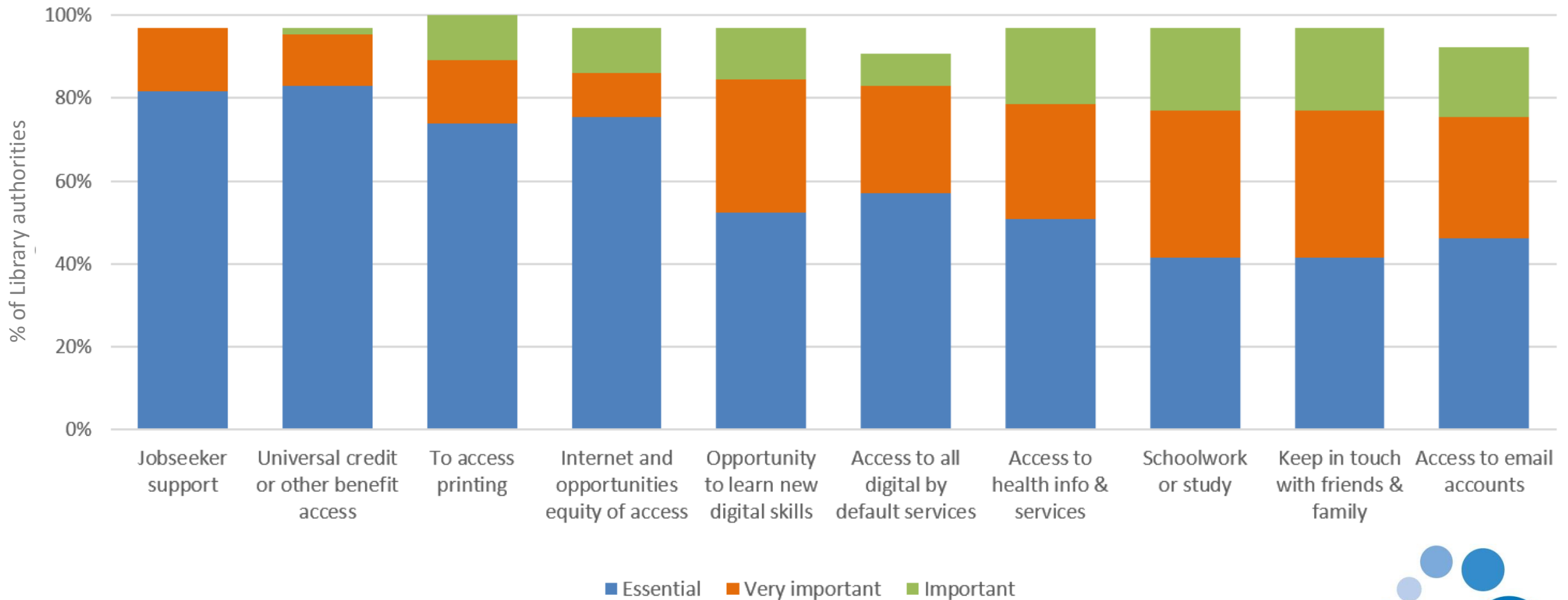


- People are gradually returning to libraries – nearly 70% of library authorities have at least 50% approx footfall compared to pre-Covid levels. User caution regarding Covid risks is reported as the biggest factor hindering faster return
- Top strategy in 2022 for increasing footfall is the introduction of new in-person events and groups
- Libraries plan more collaboration with other council departments to achieve greater digital inclusion. Adult and Community Learning, IT, Education, Employability and Communication departments most commonly work with libraries to this end. Future plans feature Housing, Health, schools and colleges, and other cross-departmental projects
- Over a third of libraries plan to begin new partnerships with other organisations or businesses – helping to support the local economy and increase the vibrancy of their town centres
- Self-service investment continues with more than 50% of libraries planning to introduce or expand kiosks. 25% plan to do this in 2022
- Over 25% of libraries have reduced or removed social distancing between PCs, and another 50% are planning to do so, increasing access to the People's Network

Current PC use and planned technology investments in libraries

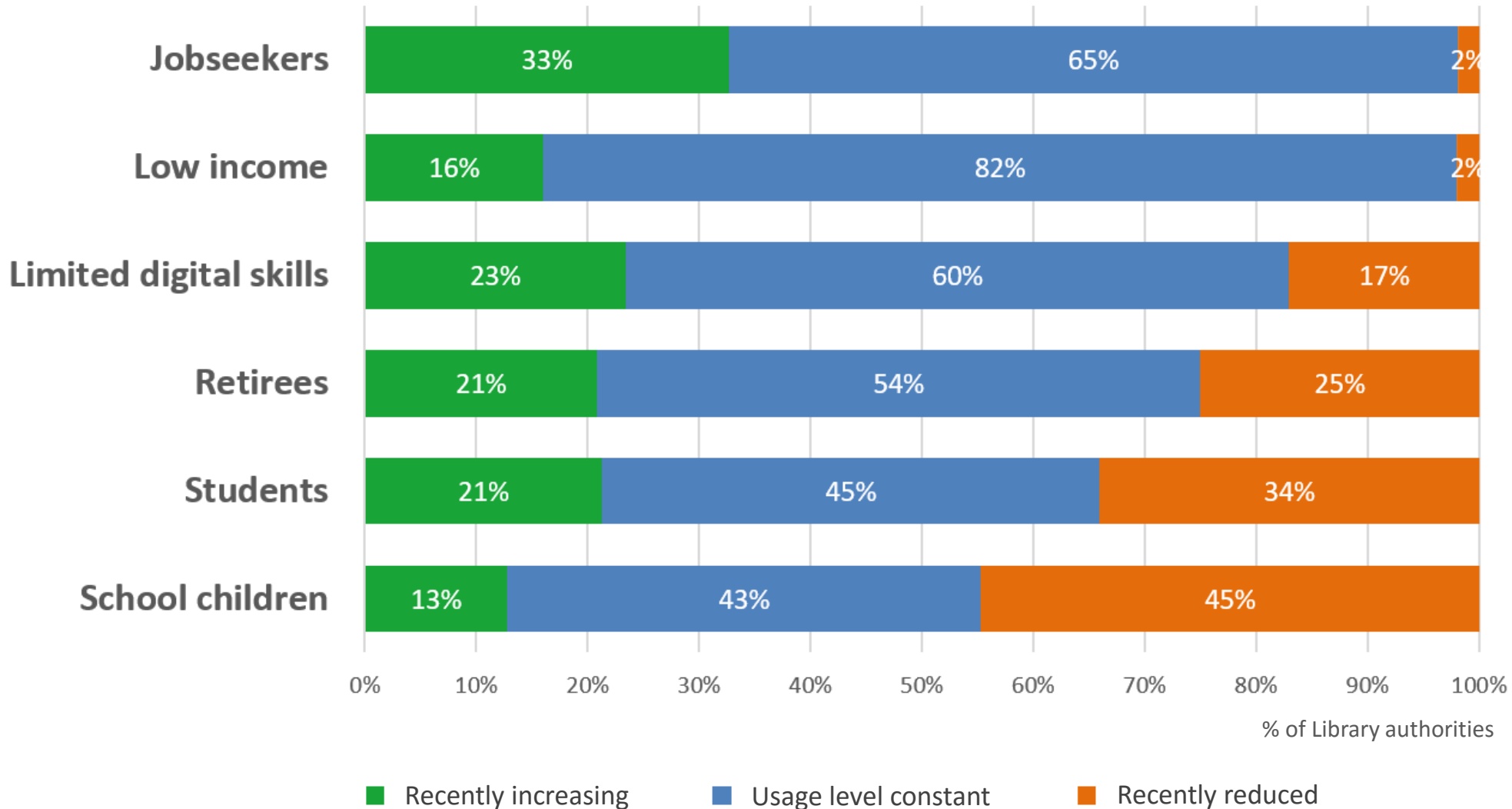


Importance of providing PC access: Top 10 rated reasons



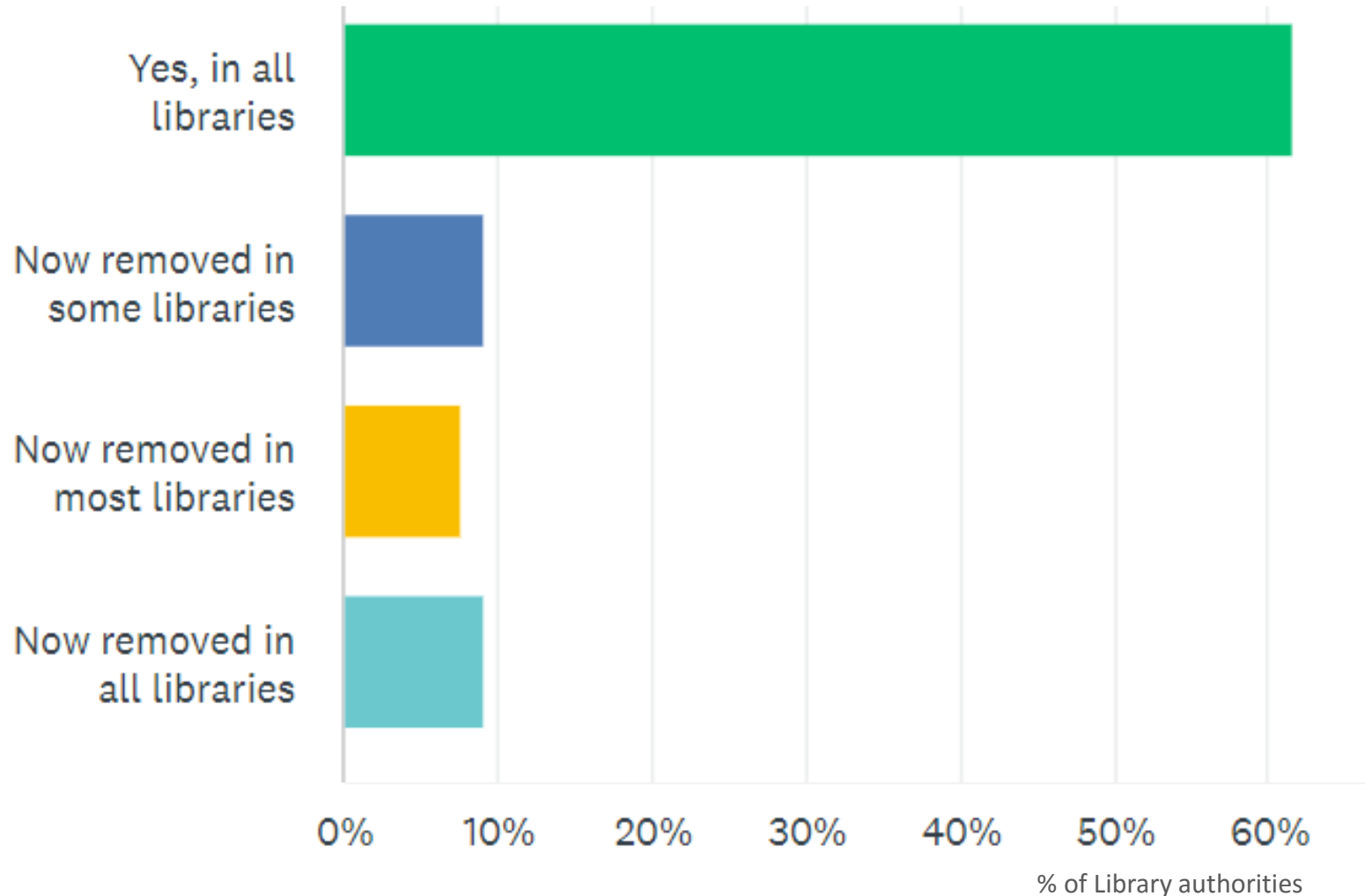
- Other important uses include career progression, relaxation/leisure and wellbeing, online shopping and bills, local new business support, best priced deals online and for learning coding.

PC user profile: Usage since libraries reopened



Social distancing between PCs

Q4 2021

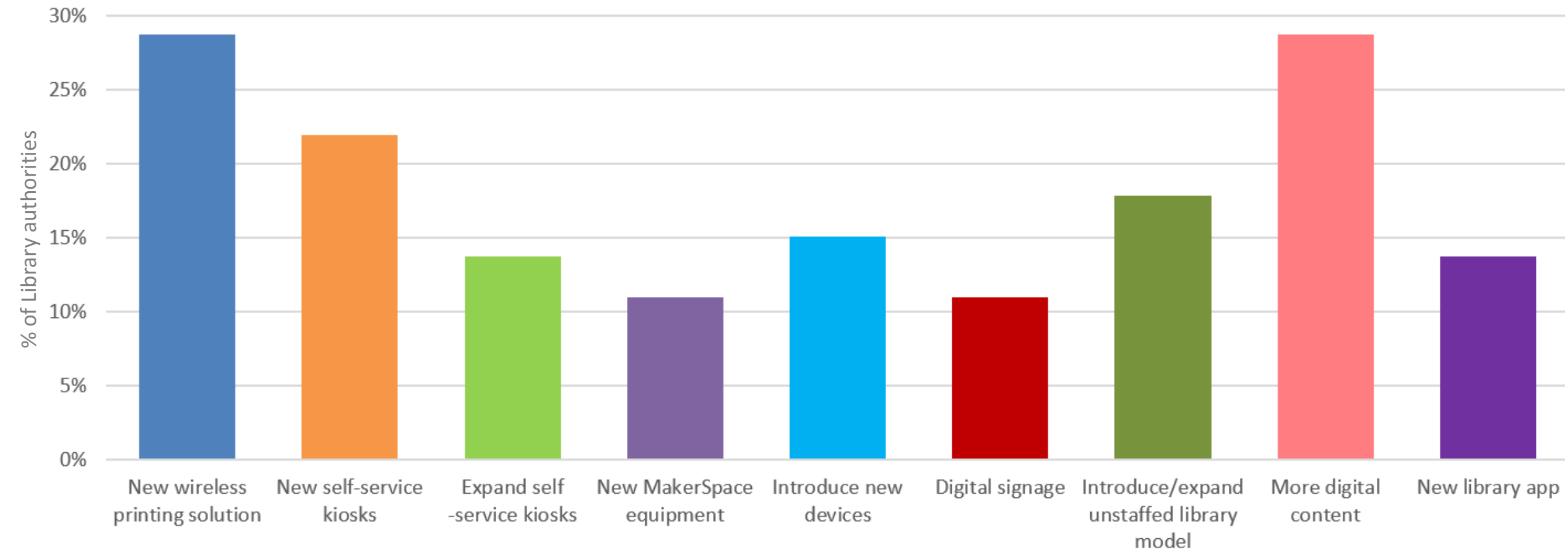


- Social distancing limits group work on PCs, impacting school children's use
- Over a third are planning to relax social distancing, increasing PC availability
- Nearly a fifth are planning to remove social distancing with all PCs becoming available
- 40% are planning a PC refresh, investing in the quality of the People's Network

Web browsers on library PCs

	Main or default browser	Also available
Chrome	63%	30%
Edge	46%	27%
Firefox	6%	24%
Internet Explorer	22%	29%

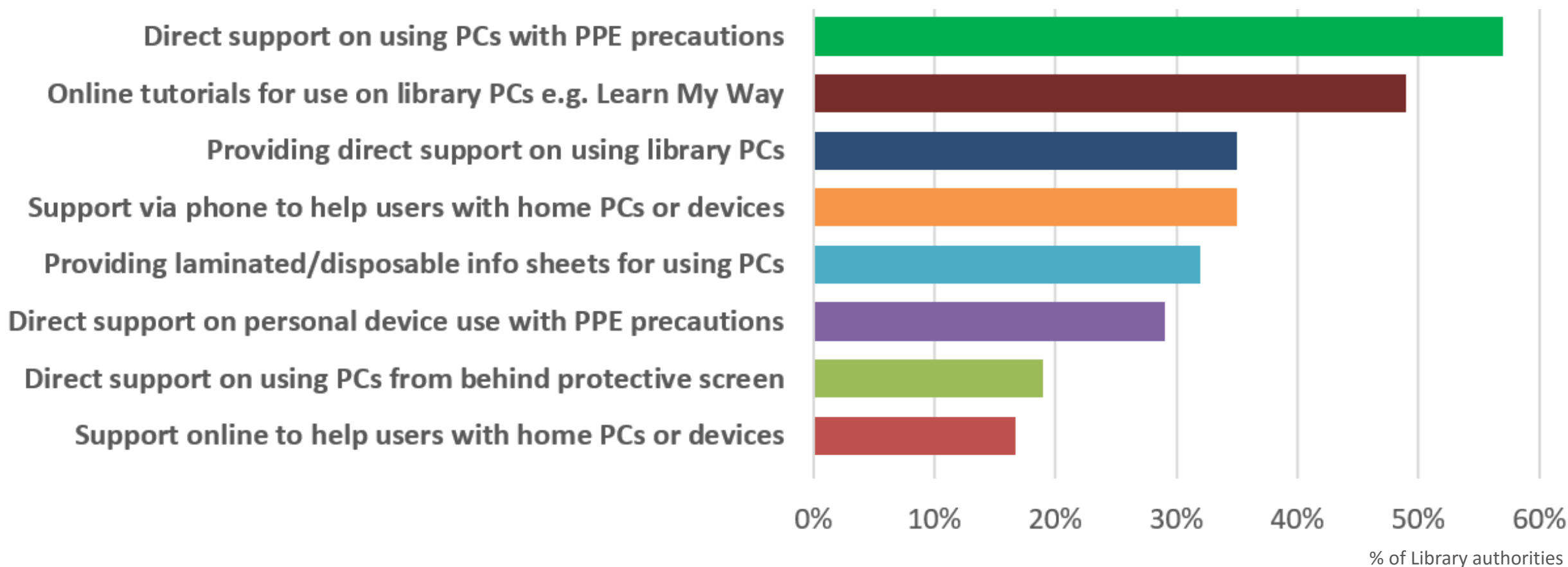
Library technology investment plans for 2022



Digital inclusion and support



Digital skills support provided by libraries



- **90%** of libraries offered digital skills support in Q4 2021
- **70%** of libraries providing help directly to library PC users

Libraries collaborate with other council departments for greater digital inclusion

Most common existing partnerships include:



Also mentioned:

Anti poverty	Leisure
Revenue & benefits	Licensing
Broadband team	Neighbourhoods
Children's centre	Planning
Civic services	Public health
Community hubs	Schools
Contact centre	Transformation
Customer services	Transport
Digital team	Volunteer co-ordinator
Economy team	Web team
Employment	Youth services
Finance	
Museums	

Library partnership developments



New or expanded partnerships for digital inclusion are being developed with:

- Adult learning
- Adults health and care
- Age UK
- Colleges and universities
- Community learning
- Community safety
- Currys PC World
- Customer services
- Digital team
- Economic development
- Health
- Housing
- Jobshop
- Lifelong Learning
- Literature festival
- Local businesses
- Major projects
- Public health
- Social services
- Youth services

Ambitions for new partnership development involve:

- Customer services
- District councils
- Enterprise and business support
- Further Education
- Health sector
- Local businesses
- Local community organisations and committees
- Mental health
- Schools
- Town centre management

Successful partnerships between libraries and other council departments



What helps most:



Also mentioned:

- Achievable goals
- Clear objectives
- Flexibility
- Funding
- Good project management
- People in post
- Proactivity
- Promotion of library successes
- Reliability
- Shared projects
- Sharing ideas
- Similar attitudes
- Supporting services arrangement
- Time to develop relationships
- Understanding community needs

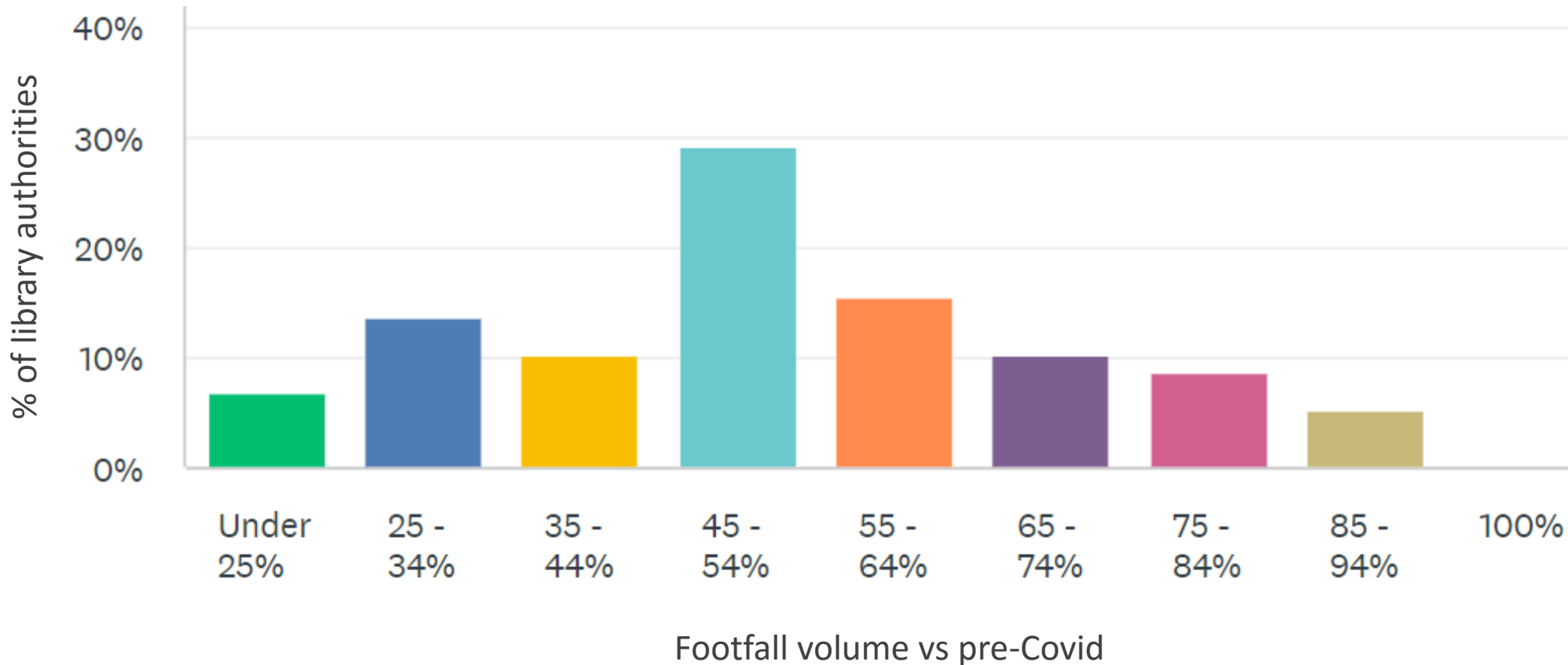
Footfall recovery in libraries



Footfall in libraries Q4 2021 compared to pre-Covid levels



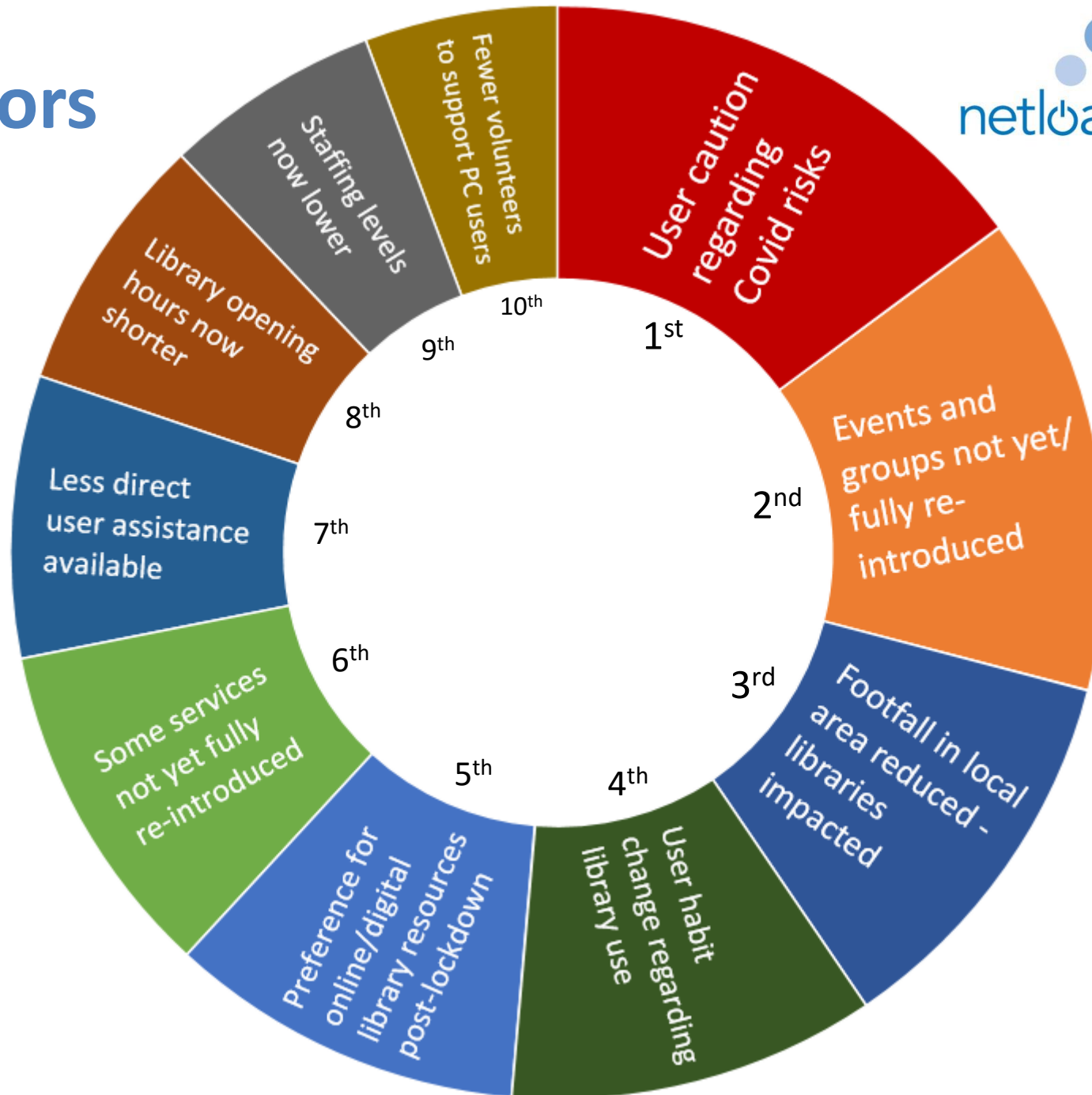
Almost 70% of library authorities have at least 50% approx footfall in comparison to before the pandemic



Main factors hindering footfall

Other factors include:

- Capacity and distancing guidelines restricting numbers allowed in building and group work at PCs
- Some libraries closed for refurbishment
- The need to book ahead to access library services
- Click and collect mitigating need to enter library



Top actions to support footfall recovery



Top 10 strategies in place Q4 2021

1. Reintroducing in-person events and groups
2. Reopening branches
3. More social media activity
4. Collaborating with other council departments
5. Working with other local organisations and businesses
6. Organising new in-person events and groups
7. Increasing digital skills support
8. Increasing opening hours
9. Investing in modern/faster IT equipment
10. Applying for funding for new initiatives

Top actions to support footfall recovery



Top 10 strategies for 2022

1. Organising new in-person events and groups
2. Increasing digital skills support for users
3. Library refurbishment projects
4. Local organisations and businesses collaboration
5. Applying for funding for new initiatives/programmes
6. Collaborating with other council departments
7. Introducing or promoting Wi-Fi print service
8. Investing in modern/faster IT equipment
9. Reprioritising or redesigning use of library space
10. Reintroducing in-person events and groups

Libraries shared ideas and initiatives for regaining footfall at the November 2021 netloan user groups.

A summary of the discussions can be found [here](#).

Footfall recovery strategies – comments



- To help restore former library user habits and attract new users, increased social media and marketing efforts are raising awareness of service availability and new initiatives:

“Increased content on social media platforms...more shared promotion/presence for libraries across Cultural Services marketing”

“New Instagram account which is proving successful for engaging with a different audience”

“We are back to normal in terms of opening hours and services... Still have people saying they didn’t know we were open”

“Investigating use of podcasts, TikTok and just introduced Mozilla hubs and escape rooms”

“We currently use Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. We use our local radio station for marketing”

- The re-introduction of events is an important strategy for regaining footfall but has been constrained due to health and safety

“Reduced numbers due to distancing guidelines so this impacts on the number of people who can attend”

“No group bookings allowed as yet so no digital clubs have returned to the libraries yet”

Footfall recovery strategies – comments continued



- Libraries are investing in new staff and resources to bring users back in:
 - “We've appointed a social media intern to support and develop our social media channels”*
 - “Introducing Wi-Fi printing and more study space for laptops/wireless devices”*
 - “New social media team to promote events/new stock/online resources etc. on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram”*
- Lots of funding applications are being made to ACE, SLIC, Scottish Government's Public Library Covid Relief Fund, Scottish Books Trust and CIL funding to support new programmes and ideas:
 - “Always on the lookout for funding sources, locally and nationally”*
 - “We will be making a funding bid in January to create a MakerSpace in our main library”*
- Key demographics of library users are exercising different levels of caution. There's a challenge in balancing the right levels of social distancing and service offer to suit all:
 - “Some of the more vulnerable customers are still preferring to receive a home delivery service”*
 - “Children are already mixing in schools so they are not so concerned about being in a public place”*

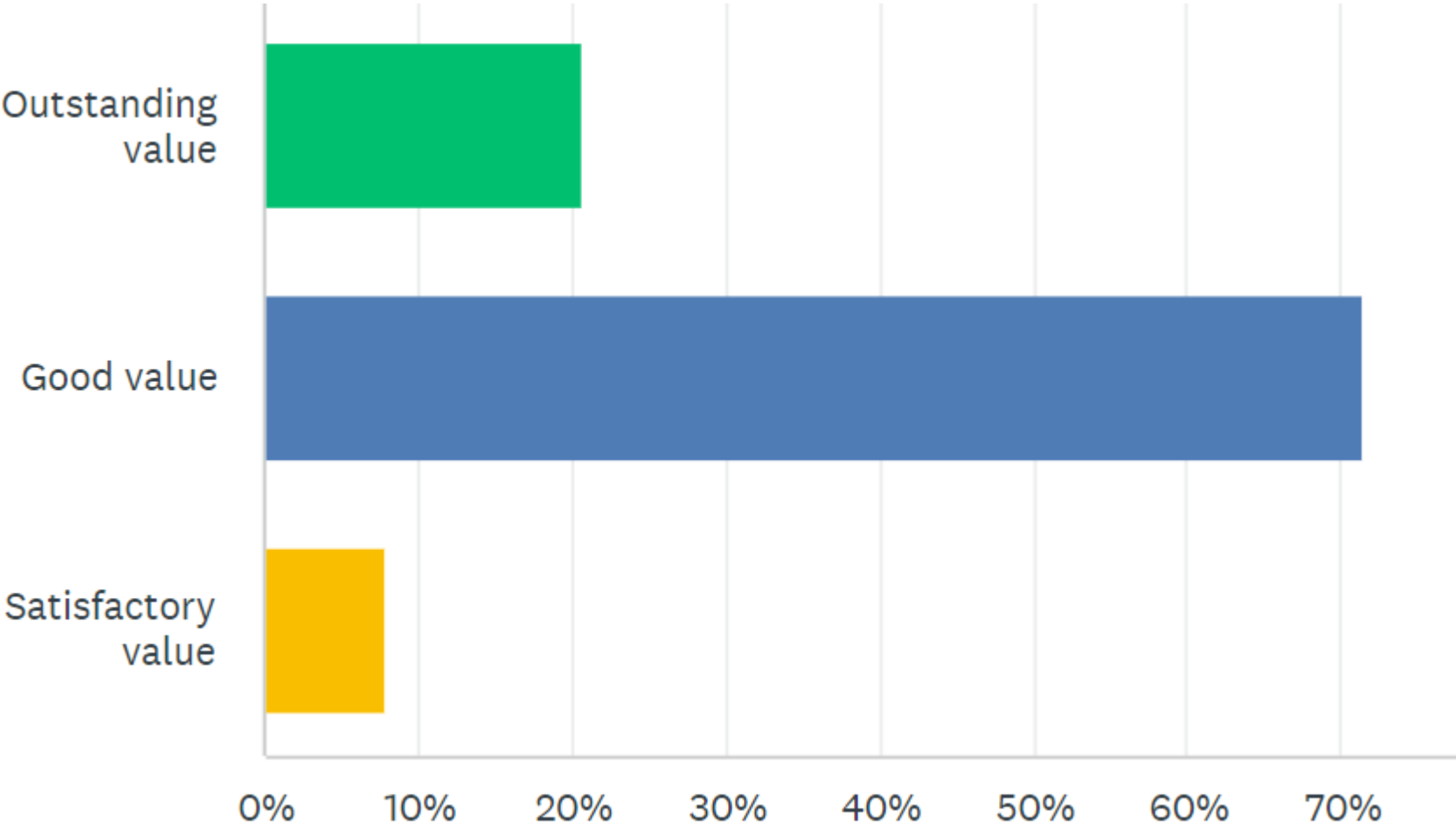


Lorensbergs' service

lorensbergs



Lorensbergs' customer service rating



Thank you to all our customers
who participated in this survey

The Lorensbergs Team

Any questions, please contact: enquiries@lorensbergs.co.uk

