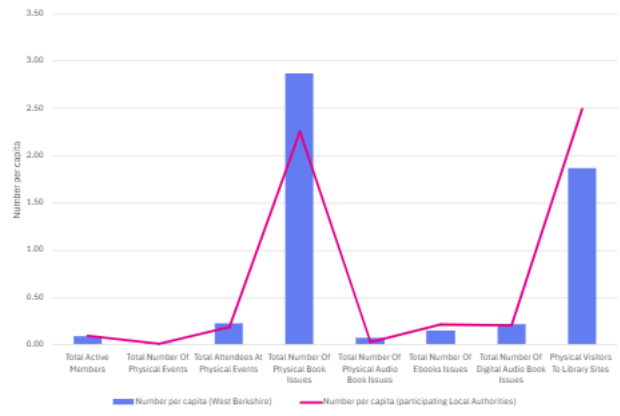


**Response to Query - The national library trend data would be provided for comparison with the picture in West Berkshire**

**Response to Query - The national library trend data would be provided for comparison with the picture in West Berkshire**

This comparison uses 2023/2024 data from the Arts Council on libraries and draws on the latest available figures from the DCMS Data Trends 2023–2024. These datasets represent the most up-to-date national picture for public libraries. Source: [Supporting libraries | Arts Council England](#)

To compare West Berkshire with the national trend, we compiled the total figures for each activity within West Berkshire. These figures were normalised by calculating per capita values based on the local population. We then assessed the percentage difference to determine how much higher or lower West Berkshire's figures are compared to the corresponding national figures.



This indicates that West Berkshire is performing above the national average in areas such as events, physical book issues, and e-audio issues. However, there are areas for improvement. Our eBook usage is currently below the national average, as are physical visits to library sites. To address this, we should focus on promoting eBook usage and encouraging more in-person visits to bring these figures closer to national trends.

## **Response to Query - The national library trend data would be provided for comparison with the picture in West Berkshire**

### **Comparison with Similar Local Authorities**

To assess performance, West Berkshire has been compared with the following authorities: Reading, RBWM (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), North Somerset, Portsmouth, North Lincolnshire, Walsall, and Swindon.

The comparison focuses on key measures of library usage:

- Total Active Members
- Number of Physical Events
- Attendance at Physical Events
- Physical Book Issues
- Physical Audio Book Issues
- eBook Issues
- Digital Audio Book Issues
- Physical Visitors to Library Sites

For comparison with other local authorities- we compiled the total figures for each activity across all authorities. Then calculated per capita values based on each authority's population. Using these figures, we determined the average per capita for each activity and then assessed how much higher or lower West Berkshire's figures are compared to the average, expressed as a percentage.

## Response to Query - The national library trend data would be provided for comparison with the picture in West Berkshire

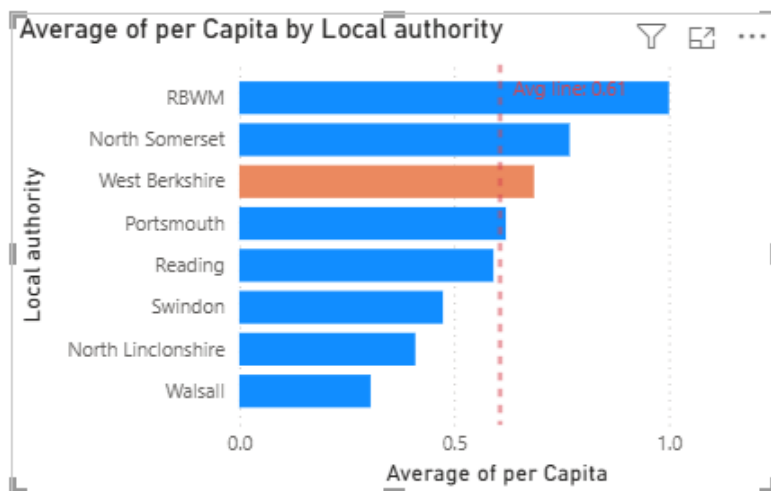
Using the average per capita library usage across these authorities, the following results were calculated.

Activity	West Berkshire	No. per capita (West Berkshire)	Portsmouth	No. per capita (Portsmouth)	Reading	No. per capita (Reading)	RBW M	No. per capita (RBW M)	Swindon	No. per capita (Swindon)	North Somerset	No. per capita (North Somerset)	North Lincolnshire	No. per Capita (North Lincolnshire)	Walsall	No. per Capita (Walsall)	Avg Number per capita	% Higher or lower from Avg per capita
Total Active Members	14,861	0.09	14,886	0.07	12,938	0.07	16,024	0.10	14,366	0.06	27,765	0.14	15,635	0.09	35,449	0.12	0.09	-3.16%
Total Number Of Physical Events	2,291	0.01	3,067	0.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,389	0.02	390	0.00	2,157	0.01	0.01	26.72%
Total Attendees At Physical Events	36,802	0.23	21,397	0.10	27,393	0.15	35,151	0.23	-	-	31,820	0.16	5,822	0.03	35,123	0.12	0.15	54.25%
Total Number Of Physical Book Issues	468,659	2.87	305,900	1.45	366,439	2.06	521,967	3.36	313,974	1.32	601,249	3.01	158,346	0.93	265,124	0.92	1.99	44.18%
Total Number Of Physical Audio Book Issues	10,978	0.07	5,613	0.03	3,449	0.02	2,584	0.02	4,702	0.02	9,027	0.05	3,197	0.02	5,350	0.02	0.03	131.61%
Total Number Of Ebooks Issues	23,476	0.14	18,673	0.09	28,333	0.16	21,735	0.14	30,239	0.13	34,337	0.17	25,059	0.15	5,608	0.02	0.12	15.31%
Total Number Of Digital Audio Book Issues	35,481	0.22	31,121	0.15	23,419	0.13	21,099	0.14	44,895	0.19	87,323	0.44	27,584	0.16	12,722	0.04	0.18	18.68%
Physical Visitors To Library Sites	304,314	1.86	643,409	3.06	276,000	1.55	468,325	3.02	270,004	1.13	434,287	2.17	321,602	1.89	344,818	1.19	1.98	-6.15%
Population	163,367		210,297		178,196		155,239		238,417		199,818		170,087		288,736			
Average Per capita		0.69		0.62		0.59		1.00		0.47		0.77		0.41		0.31	0.61	13.02%
Rank		3		4		5		1		6		2		7		8		

## Response to Query - The national library trend data would be provided for comparison with the picture in West Berkshire

### Summary of Findings

- West Berkshire ranks 3rd overall for average per capita usage among the authorities compared.
- The average per capita usage across all authorities is 0.61, while West Berkshire stands at 0.69, which is 13% higher than the group average.



### Key Highlights

- Physical Audio Book Issues: 131.6% above average
- Physical Book Issues: 44.1% above average.
- Physical Event Attendance: 54.6% above average.

### Areas for Improvement

- eBook Issues: Only 15.3% above average, indicating potential for growth in digital engagement.
- Active Members: Slightly below average (-3.2%). Note: This figure reflects members who borrowed physical books only; digital usage is excluded.
- Physical Visits: 6.1% below average.

This comparison provides a clear picture of where West Berkshire performs strongly and where there are opportunities to improve relative to similar authorities.