

Leisure Review Consultation

Final Report on the results of the Leisure Review Consultation, including the results of the extended consultation period from February to May 2023.

About this report

This report provides an overview of the feedback from the public consultation on the Leisure Review: Future Delivery Options.

The report contains the following sections:

- Overview of the public consultation process
- Report 1: Feedback from the consultation survey
- Report 2: Overview of other responses received

The Independent Research Report by Launchpad Research of the public drop-in information sessions and targeted focus groups is published separately ([January 23 cabinet report appendix](#)).

Overview of the public consultation process

A comprehensive public consultation process has been undertaken starting on 2 November 2022 and initially intending to close on 13th December 2022, however the closing date was extended to 20 December 2022 to allow more time for people to participate.

On 24 January 2023, Cabinet agreed that public consultation to inform the review will be re-opened for a period of at least three months, during which any new representations would be invited, particularly from the Birtley and Lamesley community and users of Birtley Swimming Centre.

This second phase of consultation ran from 7th February to 8th May 2023. There were several ways that residents were able to share their views including;

Web Page

A fully accessible web page was developed and launched with the “Listen and Translate” software tool, providing information and access to a survey to complete to provide views and comments on the Council’s proposal. In total, and until 8 May this webpage had over 4,500 views since its launch on 2nd November 2022. Supporting articles published in the news section of the Councils website had over 450 views.

On-line Survey

An on-line consultation survey was developed to identify the main impacts that closing some leisure centres would have on individuals. Respondents were able to identify which specific leisure centre they used and there was the opportunity to include free text to describe the impact in more detail. During the consultation period 8,588 (90.2% of all surveys) were submitted on-line.

Paper surveys

Paper versions of the on-line survey were made available at Gateshead Civic Centre, all leisure centres and Gateshead International Stadium together with a box for surveys to be returned, or a pre-paid envelope if residents wanted to take the paper survey away to complete and return by post. All respondents were able to request a version of the survey in an alternative format to meet their needs; whether this be large print, in a different language, braille or colour contrast for visual impairment. A large number of paper versions were also provided to the Jewish community. In total 931 (9.8% of all surveys) paper versions were returned and then inputted into the on-line system.

E Mail Correspondence

A shared email address, leisureconsultation@gateshead.gov.uk, was created for people to ask questions or provide views and feedback. In total there have been over 100 emails received via this email address, all of which have been replied to. Any views gathered this way were also fed into the consultation process.

Drop in sessions

A number of drop in sessions were held at various times of the day and at each centre as per table below:

Facility	Date	Time	Approx. no. of attendees
Birtley Leisure Centre	Friday 11 November 2022	10.30am - 12.30pm	15
Birtley Swim Centre	Saturday 19 November 2022	9.30am - 11.30am	14
Blaydon Leisure Centre	Thursday 10 November 2022	7.15pm - 9.15pm	25
Dunston Leisure Centre	Saturday 19 November 2022	12.30pm - 2.30pm	400
Gateshead Leisure Centre	Friday 11 November 2022	5.00pm - 7.00pm	200
Gateshead International Stadium	Thursday 17 November 2022	5.30pm - 7.30pm	7
Heworth Leisure Centre	Thursday 10 November 2022	12.00 noon - 2.00pm	9
Birtley Children's Centre	Thursday 2 March 2023	5.30pm – 7.30pm	15

The sessions were designed to enable residents and other stakeholders to call in and ask specific questions or provide face to face feedback. They were also attended by our commissioned market research company Launchpad who recorded the views and comments made by the attendees.

An additional drop-in session was held in Birtley community during the consultation extension.

Focus Groups

Launchpad held 4 focus group sessions which provided for more in-depth discussions with an average of 8 organisations per session, to gain more detailed knowledge of the impacts on those organisations and their users and to explore ways in which services could continue to be delivered without Council funding or intervention. The groups took place as follows:

Session	Date	Time	Location
Swim Clubs	23 November 2022	18.30 – 20.00	Gateshead International Stadium
Additional Needs	25 November 2022	10.00 – 11.30	Gateshead Civic Centre
Schools	29 November 2022	12.00 – 13.30	Gateshead Civic Centre
Jewish Community	29 November 2022	10.30 – 12.00	Bewick Centre

The focus group sessions targeted specific key stakeholder groups identified by the Council with a number of organisations/groups contacted to take part. No additional focus groups were held during the consultation extension.

Customer Services Team

The Council's customer services team were also fully briefed and equipped to complete phone surveys should anybody want to have their say in this way.

Communication and Promotion of the consultation

To ensure that all stakeholders, service users and Gateshead residents were aware of the consultation, the following activity was undertaken to raise awareness of the consultation:

- We sent emails to 21,000 leisure centre users for whom we had an email address and consent to marketing;
- We sent emails alerts to around 1,900 people who have previously registered an interest in consultations;
- We sent emails to all leisure service partners and wider stakeholders for whom we had an email address;
- A press release was issued with coverage across major news channels, ITV, BBC, Northern Echo and The Chronicle;
- A news article appeared in the December/Winter issue of Gateshead Council News, hand delivered to each household in Gateshead (approximately 90,000) and made available in Council buildings;

- We promoted the consultation via a news article on the home page of the Council's website for 2 weeks, in addition to the website content within the consultation pages;
- The Go Gateshead website had a banner on the home screen linking people to the consultation;
- We displayed posters in all leisure centres promoting in person and online consultation sessions including a QR code to make accessing the consultation quicker;
- Social media posts on Facebook and twitter were viewed more than 41,000 times.
- We promoted the consultation process in two editions of Gateshead Now (2 and 16 November 2022, 16 December), our fortnightly e-bulletin, which goes out to 35,000 subscribers
- Towards the end of the consultation process we issued reminders via our social media channels.
- The Leader, Deputy Leader and Director of Public Health gave press interviews on the Leisure Review and consultation process.
- During the consultation extension we promoted the consultation re-opening with a press release, which was covered by the majority of local media companies. We promoted it with social media posts on our corporate and Go Gateshead facebook and twitter and in 3 editions of Gateshead Now email (26 Jan / 9 Feb / 23 Feb 2023), and an article in Council News (Spring 23 edition).

Overview of responses received

- 9,519 responses to the main consultation survey, 7,419 in first phase and an additional 2,100 in the second phase
- Over 100 Emails, letters and comments received
- A set of letters from Save Leisure Gateshead, local campaign group
- A formal question asked at Council meeting on 24 November 2022 by Save Leisure Gateshead, local campaign group
- A letter from a local GP Glenpark Medical Practice, Dunston
- A letter and petition from St Philip Neri RC primary school, Dunston
- A letter from Occupational Therapists for Occupational Justice and Social Change (independent network of students and practitioners based in Newcastle)
- Meetings held with local MPs
- Meetings held at request of stakeholders to discuss individual leisure centres – Gateshead and Whickham Amateur Swimming Club, Swim Fun swim school, Orthodox Jewish Community leaders, Save Leisure Gateshead, Gateshead Community Leisure and Competition line UK (company who have a contract to operate Birtley LC)
- Letters received from 4 local MPs; Ian Mearns – Gateshead, Liz Twist – Blaydon, Kate Osborne – Jarrow and Richard Holden – North Durham
- 5 Petitions received including one from the second round of consultation from Birtley residents (936 signatures), supporting efforts to find a viable future for the Birtley Swimming Centre.
- 10 Freedom of Information requests related to the Leisure Review and Consultation.

Report 1: Feedback from the Consultation Survey

In total 9,519 responses were received to the Consultation Survey. This includes paper responses received by post or submitted at leisure centres or returned to the civic centre. All paper responses were added manually to the online responses so they could be analysed as a single set.

Not all respondents answered all questions in the survey. The number of respondents for each question is indicated in the charts/tables.

Coding Frameworks were used to help analyse verbatim responses to open questions within the survey. Participant responses were analysed for key points, and those points were assigned to a 'category' – a group of comments that are making a similar point. A participant's response to a single question can consist of several points. This enables us to quantify how many people are making a similar point.

A copy of the Coding Framework used will be published with this report.

Consultation Extension (Feb - May 23)

We received 2,100 additional responses during the consultation extension, 1,642 of these were from Gateshead residents and 1,607 were from Leisure service users.

Additional responses submitted for each Leisure Centre were as follows;

- Birtley Leisure Centre - 251
- Birtley Swimming Centre - 496
- Blaydon Leisure Centre - 267
- Dunston Leisure Centre - 306
- Gateshead Leisure Centre - 784
- Heworth Leisure Centre - 174

The age profile of those responding during the consultation extension was similar to that of the initial phase of the consultation. Initial / Extension = Under 25: 4% / 5%; 25 to 44: 39% / 42%; 45 to 64: 37% / 33%; 65 or over: 17% / 16%; Prefer not to say 3% / 4%

The profile of other characteristics was also similar, although there were slightly more responding whose day-to-day activities were limited because of a physical or mental health condition (28% in the initial phase versus 33% during the consultation extension). There were also far fewer responses from the Jewish community during the extension to the consultation (5% in the initial phase versus less than 1% during the consultation extension).

During the extension to the consultation 15% of all responses received (where a full postcode was provided within Gateshead) were from respondents in Birtley ward, compared with just 4% in the initial phase of the consultation. 10% of responses during the extension were from Lamesley ward, compared with 4% in the initial phase. Conversely there was a reduced proportion responding from Dunston Hill and Whickham East, from 9% in the initial phase to 4% during the extension. These shifts in response rate may be due to the change in leisure facility that appeared more

likely at risk of closure, from Dunston Leisure Centre in the initial phase, to Birtley Swimming Centre during the extension.

Respondent Profile

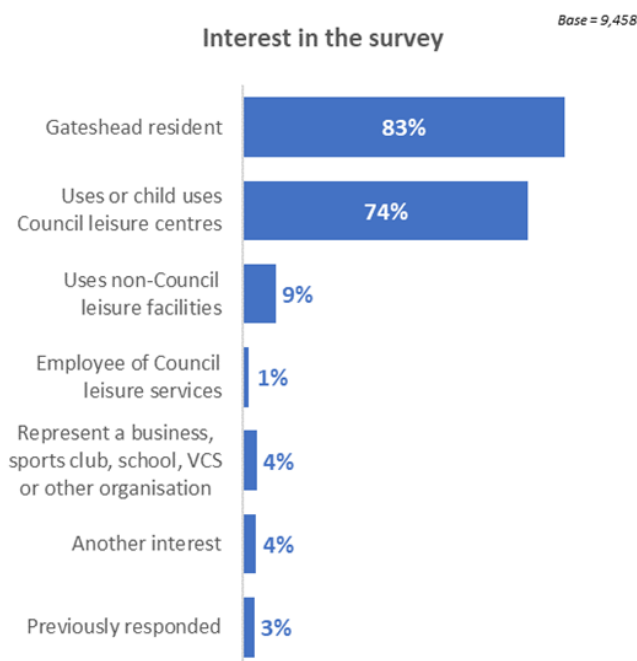
A summary of the demographic breakdown of all respondents is provided below:

- 60% of respondents identified as Female, 36% as Male, 4% preferred not to say.
- 19% of respondents identified as limited a little by their physical or mental health, with a further 10% limited a lot. The following conditions or illnesses were the top three reported; mental health, mobility and stamina or breathing or fatigue.
- 21% of respondents identified as care-givers
- 86% of respondents identified as heterosexual
- 88% of respondents identified as White British, 3% as White Other and 3% from Mixed, Black, Asian or Other ethnicities
- 83% of survey respondents (7,896) stated they were a Gateshead resident. 6,217 respondents answered the question asking for their postcode. Of these, 5,306 provided a full postcode that was also within Gateshead. A large proportion of responses came from people living in the wards containing the 2 leisure centres identified as most at risk (10% Saltwell and 6% Birtley). There were also large responses in Low Fell (10%) and Dunston Hill and Whickham East (8%). The remaining 911 respondents answering the postcode question either provided an incomplete postcode or a postcode outside of Gateshead. These could be out-of-borough Go Gateshead service users or a business / group or organisation / or individuals with an interest in our leisure service, or may simply be residents who did not provide their full postcode.
- Responses by age were 4% under 25, 40% aged 25-44, 36% aged 45-64, 17% aged 65 or over.
- 46% of respondents identified as Christian, 4% Jewish and 1% Muslim. 38% stated they had no religion or belief and 10% that they preferred not to say.

The full demographic breakdown of survey respondents can be found in the [About You](#) response charts attached at the end of the report. These questions were not mandatory so not all respondents provided personal information.

The table below presents an overview of the type of interest in the survey. People could indicate they were responding in more than one category.

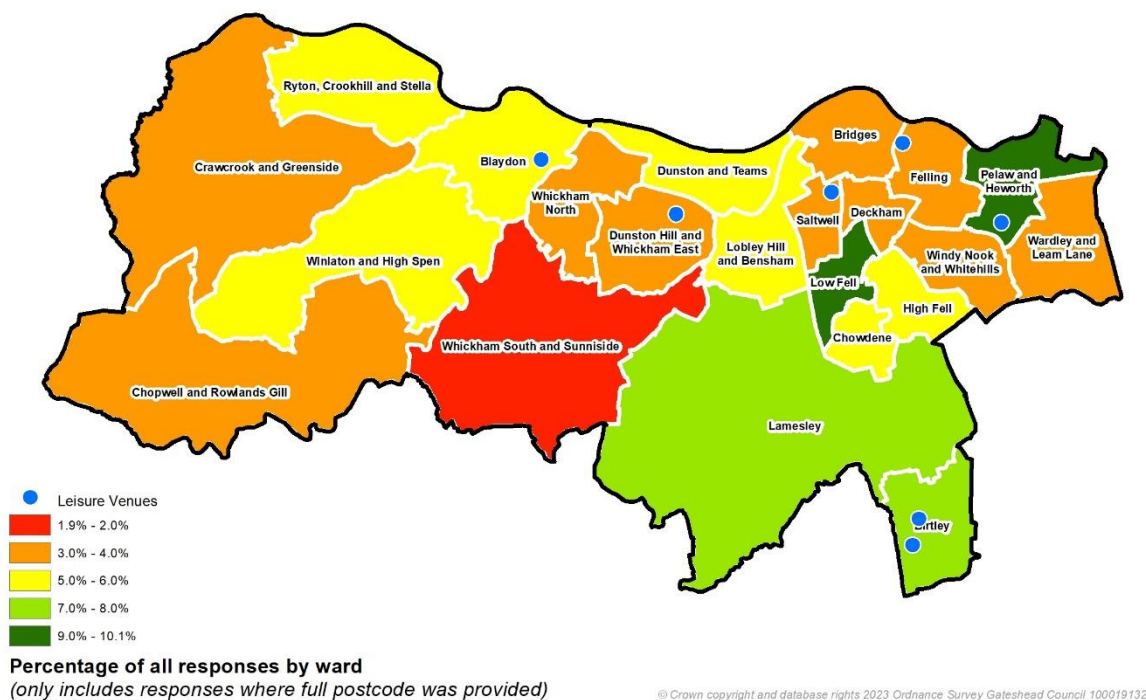
A. What is your interest in this survey? Please tick all that apply.



Of the 338 respondents who indicated another interest in the survey, a large proportion told us their interest was in the health and wellbeing of residents, on behalf of other family members, including children, who use leisure centres, they work in the health sector, have concerns on behalf of the local community, or work in or for a school.

Respondents representing 91 organisations indicated their response was the formal response of their organisation. A list of these organisations is attached as an appendix.

A map of survey responses by ward, including the location of each leisure facility or venue, is shown below (Note: Gateshead Stadium is also included on the map in the Felling ward for reference). The response rate per ward is a percentage of all those who provided a full Gateshead postcode (5,306).

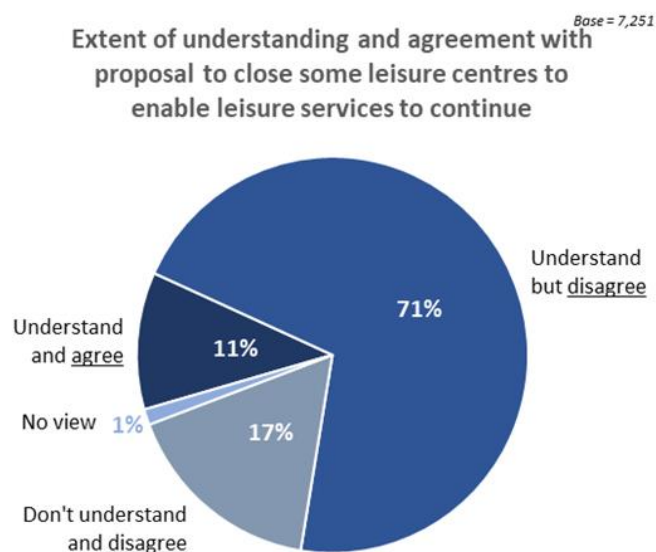


Map – leisure survey overall response rate per ward

Our Proposals

Our proposal to close some leisure centres across the borough will allow us to afford to provide a full and thriving leisure service in the remaining centres

C. To what extent do you understand and agree or disagree that the proposal to close some leisure centres will enable us to continue providing a leisure service in Gateshead in the future?



As shown in the chart above, the majority of respondents to this question (71%) understood but disagreed with the proposal to close some leisure centres. A smaller number (17%) did not understand the proposal but disagreed.

Analysis of the 6,071 comments explaining why respondents answered the question above in the way that they did shows the following themes emerge in order of the greatest number of responses. Many responses contained multiple points of view, so each comment have been coded into all categories they related to.

- Facility is needed locally (2,375) – some comments named a particular leisure centre as being vital to the local community / area
- Impact on health and wellbeing (2,337) – these comments refer to health and wellbeing benefits of leisure provision / negative impact closure would have on people's health and wellbeing or mental health. This can include reference to obesity levels increasing or costs to NHS in longer term.
- Negative comment made about Gateshead Council (1,150) - comments that refer to perceived poor performance / management by the council as a contributing factor to the current situation, including impact of delays to reopening leisure facilities during Covid-19.
- Impact on swimming (862) - comments that reflect concerns about the impact closure would have on people's ability to swim with a reduced number of public pools in Gateshead or the provision of swimming lessons as a key life skill.
- Important community space (612) - comments that refer to the leisure centres more generally as being important to the community, as a community space or local amenity.
- Impact on Travel time / cost (506) - comments that refer to concerns over people's ability to travel to alternative centres, whether for time constraints, due to lack of transport or due to increased costs of travelling further away.

A much smaller number of responses referred to accessibility issues, timing and opening hours, capacity of the remaining leisure centres to meet demand and affordability impact. 107 comments were made about equality issues relating to protected characteristics. Where they relate to a particular leisure centre at risk of closure they are included in the Integrated impact assessment (equality analysis) for that leisure centre.

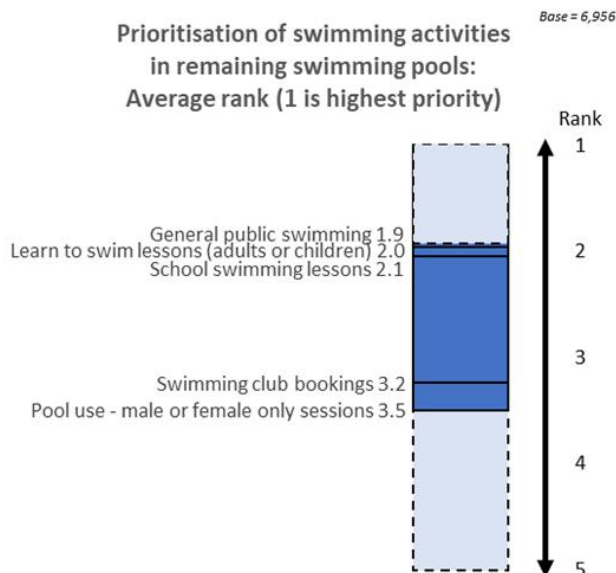
11% of respondents to this question stated they understood the proposal and agreed that closing some leisure centres now would enable provision of the remaining leisure service in Gateshead to continue. 401 comments made expressed support or agreed with the proposal to some extent. Examples of these are shown below:

"The closure of less well performing and outdated sites would be preferable to closing all sites"

"I know that consolidating services at existing locations into fewer locations will reduce the cost of offering those services. I can appreciate how leisure facilities will be hugely impacted by rising energy prices."

D. If one or more of the centres with a swimming pool closed, how should we prioritise the swimming activities we offer in the remaining swimming pools?

We asked respondents to rank the 5 types of swimming activities in order of priority from 1 to 5, where 1 is most important. We requested they only use each rank once. In the analysis of the question, we created average ranks of each swimming activity based on the responses given.



6,956 responses were received to this question. The average ranks show that the top three swimming activities are; General Public swimming, Learn to Swim lessons and School swimming lessons. These three all had average ranks of around 2 out of 5 with little difference between them.

Swimming club bookings and Pool use for male or female only sessions were on average a lower priority.

E. Do you have any alternative suggestions on how to ensure that we are able to continue to provide a leisure service in Gateshead in the future?

Analysis of the 4,534 responses made to this question shows that the top themes of alternative suggestions reported were;

- Expand or improve the existing offer at Go Gateshead leisure centres (983)
- Reprioritise Council expenditure – to support costs of the existing leisure service (911)
- Efficient Council – make efficiencies either across the Council and within leisure services to support Go Gateshead (615)
- Improved advertising and promotion of Go Gateshead (483)
- Invest in and refurbish or redevelop leisure provision (410)
- Seek External Funding (386)

Other response themes with smaller numbers included; increase prices (380) and to remain as is / do not close leisure centres (307)

Some themes referred to the proposal to seek an external provider to manage the Go Gateshead leisure service. Suggestions included; to partner with a specialist

leisure provider (242), to work with the private sector (147) or to seek a partner/ run the service independently (152).

Usage of Leisure Centres

Respondents were asked to indicate which leisure centres in the service they currently use or plan to use in the next 6 months, with a set of questions for each leisure centre indicated.



Birtley Leisure Centre

665 responses in total (including 414 responses from Phase 1) were submitted specifically for Birtley Leisure Centre. The full answer charts for Birtley Leisure Centre can be found at the end of this report.

In summary;

- 67% attend to use the gym, followed by 42% attending fitness classes
- 66% travel to Birtley by car, followed by 25% who walk to the leisure centre.
- 61% can travel to the centre within 10 minutes
- If they could not access Birtley leisure centre, 46% would visit a non-council leisure facility
- If Birtley leisure centre were to close, the most popular alternative Go Gateshead site to use would be Gateshead Leisure Centre, followed by Birtley swimming centre.
- The biggest impact of having to use an alternative site would be travel time (72%), followed by cost increase (55%) and having to change the time they visit (48%)
- The main reason for not using another council leisure centre was that it is not convenient or close (85%), followed by travel costs (47%).

Birtley Swimming Centre

1,219 responses in total (including 723 responses from Phase 1) were submitted specifically for Birtley Swimming Centre. The full answer charts for Birtley Swimming Centre can be found at the end of this report.

In summary;

- 89% attend to use the main pool, followed by 44% attending for the small/improver pool
- 67% travel to Birtley by car, followed by 25% who walk to the leisure centre.
- 61% can travel to the centre within 10 minutes
- If they could not access Birtley swimming centre 41% would visit a non-council leisure facility
- If Birtley pool were to close, the most popular alternative Go Gateshead site to use would be Gateshead Leisure Centre. Dunston, Birtley and Heworth Leisure centres were the next most popular alternatives and all with very similar average ranks.
- The biggest impact of having to use an alternative site would be longer travel time (75%), followed by having to change the time they visit (51%) and cost increase (50%)
- The main reason given for not using another council leisure centre was that it is not convenient or close (87%), followed by travel costs (43%).

Blaydon Leisure Centre

1,690 responses in total (including 1,423 responses from Phase 1) were submitted specifically for Blaydon Leisure Centre. The full answer charts for Blaydon Leisure Centre can be found at the end of this report.

In summary,

- 81% attend to use the main pool, followed by 41% attending the gym
- 85% travel to Blaydon by car, followed by 7% who walk to the leisure centre.
- 56% can travel to the centre within 10 minutes
- If they could not access Blaydon leisure centre 44% would visit another council leisure facility
- If Blaydon were to close the most popular alternative Go Gateshead site to use would be Dunston Leisure Centre, closely followed by Gateshead Leisure Centre.
- The biggest impact of having to use an alternative site would be travel time (80%), followed by having to change the time they visit (51%) and cost increase (48%)
- The main reason given for not using another council leisure centre was that it is not convenient or close (77%), followed by travel costs (32%).

Dunston Leisure Centre

2,202 responses in total (including 1,896 responses from Phase 1) were submitted specifically for Dunston Leisure Centre. The full answer charts for Dunston Leisure Centre can be found at the end of this report.

In summary;

- 79% attend to use the pool, followed by 40% attending the gym
- 72% travel to Dunston by car, followed by 21% who walk to the leisure centre.
- 57% can travel to the centre within 10 minutes
- If they could not access Dunston leisure centre 44% would visit another council leisure facility

- If Dunston were to close, the most popular alternative Go Gateshead site to use would be Blaydon Leisure Centre, closely followed by Gateshead Leisure centre.
- The biggest impact of having to use an alternative site would be longer travel time (74%), followed by having to change time they visit (51%) and cost increase (46%)
- The main reason given for not using another council leisure centre was that it is not convenient or close (74%), followed by travel costs (37%).

Gateshead Leisure Centre

3,562 responses in total (including 2,778 responses from Phase 1) were submitted specifically for Gateshead Leisure Centre. The full answer charts for Gateshead Leisure Centre can be found at the end of this report.

In summary;

- 69% attend to use the main pool, followed by 43% attending the gym
- 51% travel to Gateshead by car, followed by 39% who walk to the leisure centre.
- 61% can travel to the centre within 10 minutes
- If they could not access Gateshead leisure centre 39% would visit a non-council leisure facility
- If Gateshead were to close, the most popular alternative Go Gateshead site to use would be Dunston Leisure Centre, closely followed by Heworth leisure centre. However, all leisure centres were quite closely ranked as alternatives to Gateshead leisure centre, perhaps reflecting the central location of Gateshead.
- The biggest impact of having to use an alternative site would be travel time (77%), followed by cost increase (55%) and having to change time they visit (50%)
- The main reason given for not using another council leisure centre was that it is not convenient or close (83%), followed by travel costs (44%).

Heworth Leisure Centre

943 responses in total (including 769 responses from phase 1) were submitted specifically for Heworth Leisure Centre. The full answer charts for Heworth Leisure Centre can be found at the end of this report.

In summary;

- 72% attend to use the main pool, followed by 45% attending the gym
- 60% travel to Heworth by car, followed by 32% who walk to the leisure centre.
- 62% can travel to the centre within 10 minutes, and in fact half of those can travel to the centre within 5 minutes
- If they could not access Heworth leisure centre 40% would visit another council leisure facility
- If Heworth were to close the most popular alternative Go Gateshead site to use would clearly be Gateshead Leisure Centre. This is followed by Gateshead International Stadium.

- The biggest impact of having to use an alternative site would be travel time (77%), followed by cost increase (48%) and having to change time they visit (47%)
- The main reason given for not using another council leisure centre was that it is not convenient or close (77%), followed by travel costs (35%).

Table 1 – responses for individual leisure centres (highest % response given)

(Number of Respondents for each LC)	Birtley Leisure Centre (665)	Birtley Swimming Centre (1,219)	Blaydon Leisure Centre (1,688)	Dunston Leisure Centre (2,202)	Gateshead Leisure Centre (3,562)	Heworth Leisure Centre (943)
Q1 – Frequency of use or plan to use this LC?	53% weekly	60% weekly	58% weekly	55% weekly	59% weekly	50% weekly
Q2 – Usually visit centre with?	56% with family or friends	75% with family or friends	62% with family or friends	63% with family or friends	67% with family or friends	64% with family or friends
Q3 - Facilities and activities use?	67% gym	89% main pool	81% main pool	79% main pool	69% main pool	72% main pool
Q4 –Main method of travel?	66% car	67% car	85% car	72% car	51% car	60% car
Q5 – Usual travel time to centre?	34% 10 minutes	36% 10 minutes	40% 10 minutes	33% 10 minutes	34% 10 minutes	30% 5 minutes
Q6 – Where go if centre closed?	46% non council facility	41% non-council facility	44% another council LC	44% another council LC	39% non council facility	40% another council LC
Q7 – alternative council LC	Gateshead Leisure Centre	Gateshead Leisure Centre	Dunston Leisure Centre	Blaydon Leisure Centre	Dunston Leisure Centre	Gateshead Leisure Centre
Q8 – Impact of using another facility	72% longer travel time	75% longer travel time	80% longer travel time	75% longer travel time	77% longer travel time	77% longer travel time
Q9 – why not use another council LC	85% not convenient or close	87% not convenient or close	77% not convenient or close	74% not convenient or close	83% not convenient or close	77% not convenient or close

The responses given on impact of having to use an alternative site (Q8) across all 6 leisure centre sites were very similar in many respects, with some key differences, and are shown in **Table 2** below.

Leisure Site	Birtley LC	Birtley SC	Blaydon LC	Dunston LC	Gateshead LC	Heworth LC
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(No. Respondents stating they use the LC)	(141)	(396)	(659)	(872)	(1,097)	(322)
% of users saying cost would increase	55%	50%	48%	46%	55%	48%
% of users saying longer travel time	72%	75%	80%	75%	77%	77%
% of users saying need to switch transport mode	28%	20%	13%	18%	36%	31%
% of users saying no longer able to access independently	16%	9%	9%	10%	15%	6%
% users saying no longer able to do the sport/leisure activity they want to	38%	28%	27%	29%	39%	25%
% users saying would have to change visiting time	48%	51%	51%	51%	50%	47%

Similarly, the responses given to Q9 – reasons for not using another council leisure centre, were consistent across all 6 leisure centre sites. The top two reasons given being it is not convenient or close by, followed by impact on travel costs.

Impact of Potential Closure of local leisure centres

Respondents were asked to indicate the impact that a potential closure would have on them, their family and their ability to access leisure services or facilities, and any possible measures we could take to reduce any negative impact and make it easier for them to access leisure services and facilities.

Open text answers were given and coded into themes, with answers including multiple themes allocated to each relevant response category. A much smaller number of respondents completed this question (Q10) for each leisure centre.

Birtley Leisure Centre – 272 (additional 107 in phase 2)
Birtley Swimming Centre – 482 (additional 228 in phase 2)
Blaydon Leisure Centre - 667 (additional 96 in phase 2)
Dunston Leisure Centre – 879 (additional 92 in phase 2)
Gateshead Leisure Centre – 1,538 (additional 323 in phase 2)
Heworth Leisure Centre – 310 (additional 61 in phase 2)

This analysis summarises the themes emerging from Q10 for each leisure centre. In general, the comments we received from users across all 6 leisure centres were consistent, with some local variation.

With regards to impacts should a centre with a swimming pool close, respondents would be particularly concerned about their ability, or the ability of family members to go swimming, and for children and schools to access swimming lessons in order to learn a key skill.

Those respondents that use the leisure centres for non-swimming activities are concerned they will not be able to do the same activities in other locations or use other facilities easily.

Most of the comments made reflect concerns about the impact the closure would have on people's health and wellbeing, including the impact on the wider health system. Others point to the impact closure would have on their or other people's ability to engage in social activities, including loss of access to a safe space to socialise, build confidence and participate in sports. Various respondents point to the role leisure centres have as a community hub or indicate concerns about the wider impact on the community and local area if the facility were to close.

Many respondents indicate that closure of a leisure centre or swimming pool would lead to a reduction in exercise and physical fitness. Specific reasons for this include;

- the cost of travel or the cost of using alternative facilities (including private local ones) will impact them financially and/or would reduce their or others desire or ability to access leisure services

- The time or distance required to travel to alternative facilities (or lack of transport options) would reduce their or others desire or ability to access leisure services
- Concerns that alternative facilities would be less accessible (including for disabled users) or suitable for their needs.

A few respondents stated that they may or would stop undertaking leisure or physical activity if their local leisure centre were to close.

Specific impacts reported

A smaller number of respondents stated specific concerns about their leisure centre being the only one with particular leisure activities/ specialist facilities for example;

- soft play provision at Gateshead leisure centre
- the depth of the pool at Dunston leisure centre for specialist swimming activities such as synchronised swimming and diving
- single sex swimming sessions at Gateshead leisure centre

Minimising negative impacts

With regards to minimising the negative impact on people's ability to access leisure services in future, many respondents think or imply the negative impact can't be mitigated, other than by the centre staying open.

Many suggested effective mitigation would need to involve the provision of adequate alternative facilities in the local area or a complete replacement of the current facility.

Others suggested improving the quality and range of services offered by the other council leisure centres in Gateshead.

Various respondents suggested access would be improved by;

- measures to reduce the costs to users of using alternative facilities, including fees, travel costs, membership etc.
- measures involving the provision of transportation to alternative facilities
- extended centre opening times and fitness class times to maximise access
- improved pool access through longer opening hours, including full access to the public at weekends, early morning and in the evenings.

For all centres we received comments that indicate respondents are concerned the other leisure centres and facilities in the remaining leisure service do not have adequate capacity to deal with additional demand that closure of centres would bring.

Leisure Centres identified as at risk of closure

The impact of closure and some example comments given for the specific centres identified as at risk of closure at the end of the previous consultation period are detailed below.

Birtley Swimming Centre

Respondents stated that the impact of closure would be; negative physical or mental health (109), travel or transport (107), impact on learning to swim (82), exercise or fitness (54) or that costs would increase (53).

When asked what could be done to make it easier to access leisure if the centre closed, responses included; nothing (144), reopen/keep it open (141), improve transport (71) and extend opening hours (70).

“My children have SEN, we use the swimming clubs and lessons to channel excess energy after school. This helps them to regulate and better manage their behaviour. Not having their regular classes at Birtley and Heworth pools would massively impact their behaviour and mental health. This would also result in an impact on my own mental health.”

“Swimming club won't be available at other sites. The Birtley swimming club is immensely popular with long waiting lists.”

Gateshead Leisure Centre

Respondents stated that the impact of closure would be; negative physical or mental health (484), travel or transport (328), activity or facility not available elsewhere (286), may or would stop leisure (258) or impact on learning to swim (227).

When asked what could be done to make it easier to access leisure if the centre closed, responses included; reopen/keep it open (575), nothing (440), improve transport (268) and provide alternative facility (242).

“My children have attended holiday club activities at Gateshead Leisure Centre which are well organised and is the maximum journey I could undertake for these, if it closes they will not access these facilities at all so will miss out. My daughter has a peanut allergy and the Leisure staff are trained, private providers are not and refuse to accommodate her.”

“My mental health would be a lot worse and my 2 girls who have disabilities I wouldn't be able to take them to help them get better at swimming which I class as a life skill. My boys are getting taught there at school. I see familiar faces which I won't see anymore. It's the heart and soul of Bensham we really need it to be kept open”

Equality Data Comparison

Analysis of the About You survey information provided by respondents (demographic profile including data on protected characteristics) against known Gateshead comparative data (Census 2021) for all residents shows that;

- we received a larger response from females (60% of respondents) compared to population data of 51%
- we received a smaller response from under 25s (4% of respondents) compared to population data of 27%. This is to be expected where parents would complete a survey on behalf of their children who use leisure centres.
- we received a larger response from those limited by their health a little or a lot (29% of respondents) compared to population data of 22%

- we received a larger response from care-givers (21% of respondents) compared to population data of 15%
- we received a larger response from those who are of Jewish religion (4% of respondents) compared to population data of 1%

Full equalities data comparison charts are included at the end of this report including survey data on all respondents protected characteristics, where known.

Report 2: Overview of other comments received

We received over 100 comments in relation to the consultation via other channels, including the Leisure Centre Consultation inbox, phone calls to the customer service centre and emails, letters or Freedom of Information (FOI) requests made to officers or councillors.

The comments received are comparable with the feedback we have received via the consultation survey.

Included in this report;

- Exemplar Comments received via email, phone and letter
- Consultation responses
- Petitions received
- FOI requests

Comments from residents/individuals received via email, phone and letter:

Examples of personal comments made by individuals by email into leisureconsultation@gateshead.gov.uk

Please don't close my leisure centre I'm 70 years old and love going there – email

I am sad and so angry to hear gateshead leisure centre is at risk of closing. It has been and still is a massive part of our lives and community. Our local primary schools have their lessons there weekly. Local children have their sports clubs there and I myself not only use the gym for fitness but also to benefit my mental health. Any closures are going to be so harmful to people's fitness and well being. Hundreds of people are already upset by this awful news.

Questions received relating to the consultation process were responded to directly and added to the Frequently Asked Questions page online.

Requests to provide a paper copy of the survey into the mailbox were all responded to.

Consultation response received from groups or organisations

A letter and petition from the pupils of St. Philip Neri R.C. Primary School, Dunston submitted by the School Council, Health & Safety group and Eco Committee.

“We are writing to you to ask you not to close our local pool and leisure centre in Dunston. We are shocked and extremely disappointed and saddened to hear that our future health and wellbeing is threatened by this dreadful news.

We will be flabbergasted and heartbroken if you close our local pool. The pool is important to us, our future is important to us, our health is important to us.”

A letter from Richard Holden, MP for North West Durham, on behalf of a concerned constituent whose daughter uses Dunston Pool for Synchronised swimming.

A letter from Kate Osborne, MP for Jarrow, on behalf of concerned constituents focused on future of Heworth Leisure Centre.

A submission from Liz Twist, MP for Blaydon, on behalf of concerned constituents and local swimming clubs, focused on future of Dunston Leisure Centre and possible inclusion of sports hall at Birtley Leisure Centre. Submission includes recent examples of success provided by the local swimming clubs who use Dunston Swimming Pool – Gateshead and Whickham Amateur swimming club and Gateshead Synchronised Swimming Club.

A letter and follow up letter from Save Leisure Gateshead, local campaign group with a focus on Gateshead Leisure Centre

A letter from Glenpark Medical Practice, Dunston, on behalf of their patients who use the leisure and pool facilities at Dunston.

“We understand the financial difficulties facing Gateshead Council, but our concern is whether people will be able to afford to travel to alternative leisure facilities in Gateshead if Dunston Leisure Centre closes, and whether participation in physical activity will fall as a result. We wish to support Dunston Leisure Centre remaining open”.

An impact statement from the Jewish Community Council of Gateshead, with a focus on Gateshead Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool.

“The Gateshead Leisure Centre sits on the doorstep of the local Jewish community. Whilst the closure of the centre would deprive the community in a number of ways, it is the closure of the pool that gives the community as a whole cause for alarm. In summary, closure of the pool will: directly contribute to health inequalities, and deprive an entire community of the opportunity to swim.”

An anonymous submission attached to a paper survey analysing deprivation levels across Gateshead in relation to existing council leisure facilities, public transport costs and car ownership and local health levels. A further analysis of current pool timetables and peak usage.

A letter of support for Save Leisure Gateshead from Occupational Therapists for Occupational Justice and Social Change

“We are deeply concerned about plans to close or restrict access to some leisure facilities in Gateshead in terms of the detrimental impact this could have on its residents’ health and wellbeing. This is a short-term decision that risks a long-term negative impact on residents’ health and wellbeing and may place further burdens on health and social care systems in the future”.

10 FOI requests received from Save Leisure Gateshead and responded to.

5 Petitions received from;

- Save Leisure Gateshead (Online) – 1,859 signatures
- Michael Clark - Dunston Leisure Centre 1,827 signatures
- Dunston Leisure Centre (online) - 5,733 signatures
- Pupils of St Phillip Neri Primary School Dunston – 131 signatures
- Birtley Residents – 936 signatures

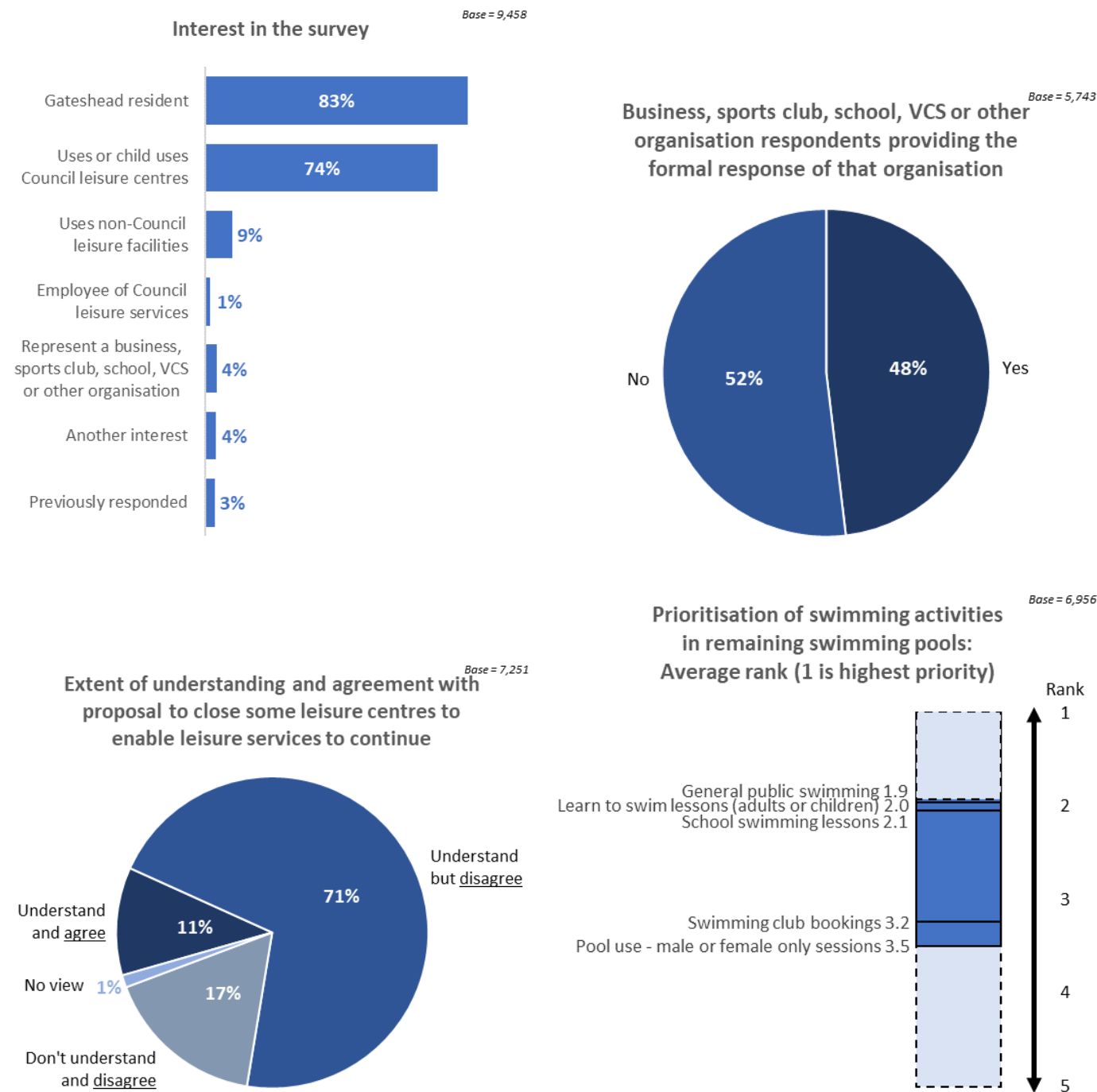
Appendix A: List of 91 organisations submitting formal response to the consultation

1313 Whickham Squadron RAF air cadets
21st Gateshead Scouts
39th Gateshead Scouts
A1 Asphalt & Tarmacadam Surfacing Ltd
Active Age North East
Ateres Girls High School
Ball Hockey UK
Bede Community Primary School
BEIS YAAKOR swimming
Beth Jacobs Youth Club
Birtley Amateur Swimming Club
Birtley Juniors FC
BIRTLEY TOWN FC
Blaydon Community FC
Blaydon swimming club
Bowes Belles WI
Bridges Medical Practice, Gateshead
Brighton Avenue Primary School
BSAC Tyneside 114
Carr Hill Community Primary School
Cedars Academy
Chopwell Primary School
Clover Hill Community Primary School
Community Centre carers group
company providing Supported Living to individuals with disability.
Dunston Hill Community Primary School
Dunston Squash Club
Emmanuel College
Fell Dyke Community Primary School
Felling Magpies
Front Street Primary School
Gateshead and Whickham Swimming Club
Gateshead Badminton Club
Gateshead Community Organisation
Gateshead FC Community Foundation
Gateshead Fell Cricket Club
Gateshead Green Party
Gateshead Harriers
Gateshead Jewish Boarding School
Gateshead Netball Club
Gateshead Parent Carer Forum
Gateshead Redheugh Boys Club

Gateshead Synchronised Swimming Club
GESHER
Gibside School
Go Gateshead
Grace College
Haskel School
Hetton Hall Holidays
HOLLY HOUSE
Jewish Community Council of Gateshead
Kaizen karate club
Kells Lane Primary School
Kelvin Grove Primary School
Keser Torah Boys School
Kibblesworth Academy
L'chu Vonim
Leam Lane community bowling club
Leam Lane Football
lesions centred
Life and limb puppets
Low Fell Running Club
Newcastle Eagles
NHS Strength & Balance Programme/ Pulmonary Rehab
North East Pets Limited
Northern Storm Korfball Club
Northumbria Police
Occupational Therapists for Occupational Justice and Social Change
Oxclose Badminton club
Riverside primary academy
Sacred Heart Primary school- Byermoor
Saltwell Harriers
Sara Jobling Consultancy Limited
Sheffield Knights and Hull Riverkings
Skills 4 work gateshead
South Street Community Primary School
Spa Physiotherapy Clinic
Sport camp Gateshead
St Aidans CE Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
St Oswald's Catholic Primary School
St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley
Stanley Stingers
SUNNISIDE SOCIAL CLUB
The Drive Community Primary School
Tiny Tigers
Wardley Primary School
Whickham Fellside YFC

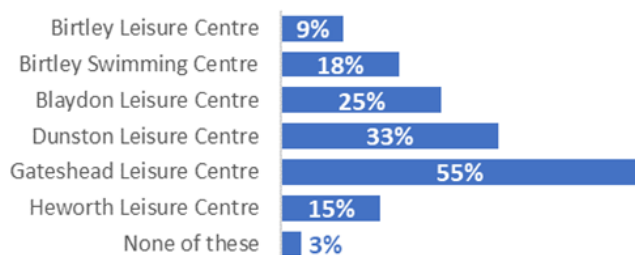
Whickham School
Windy Nook Primary School
Zayis Rannon

Appendix B – Final Leisure Survey Charts (open text response charts at end of report)



Leisure centres use or plan to use in next 6 months

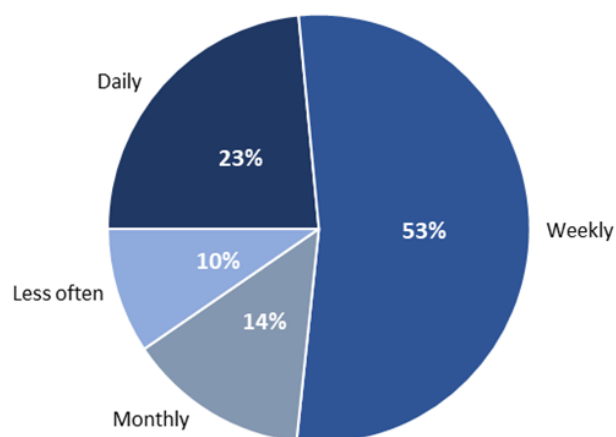
Base = 7,173



Birtley Leisure Centre

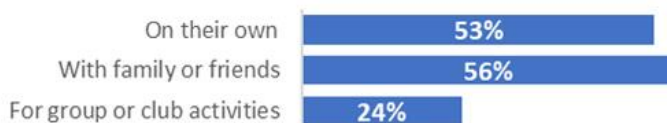
Birtley Leisure Centre Frequency of use (or plan to use)

Base = 665



Birtley Leisure Centre Usually visit centre...

Base = 663



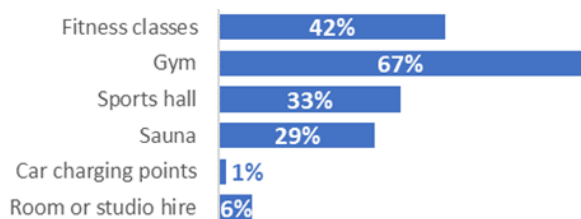
Birtley Leisure Centre Main method of travelling to the centre

Base = 661



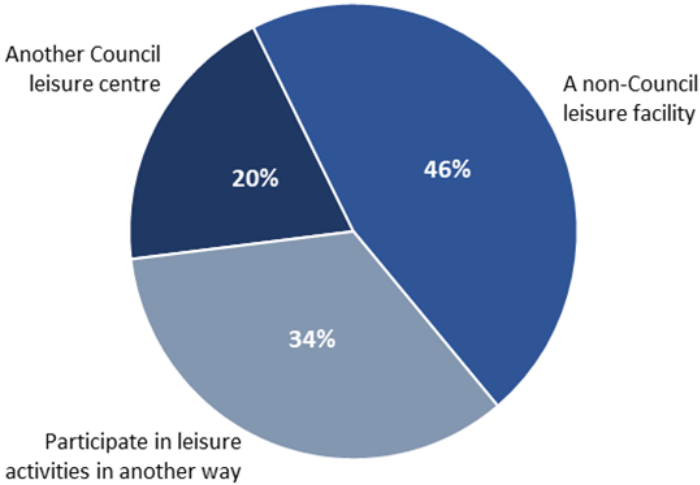
Birtley Leisure Centre Facilities and activities use

Base = 633



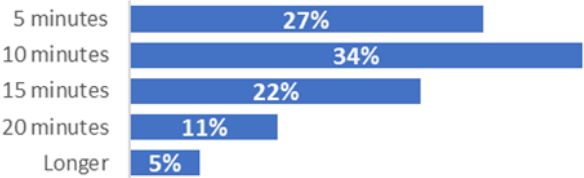
Base = 623

Birtley Leisure Centre
Where they would go if leisure centre closed



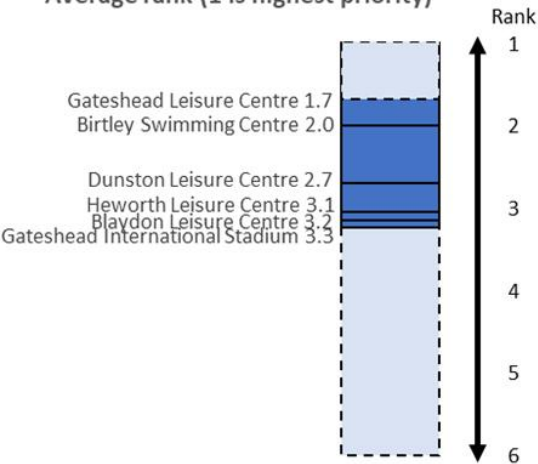
Base = 659

Birtley Leisure Centre
Usual travel time to centre



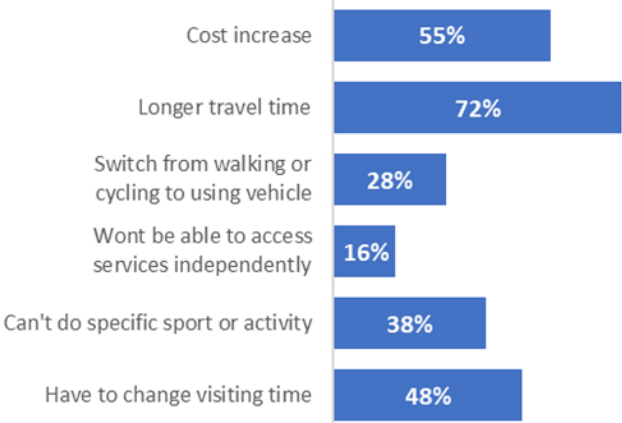
Base = 135

Birtley Leisure Centre
Prioritisation of alternative Council leisure centres would use:
Average rank (1 is highest priority)



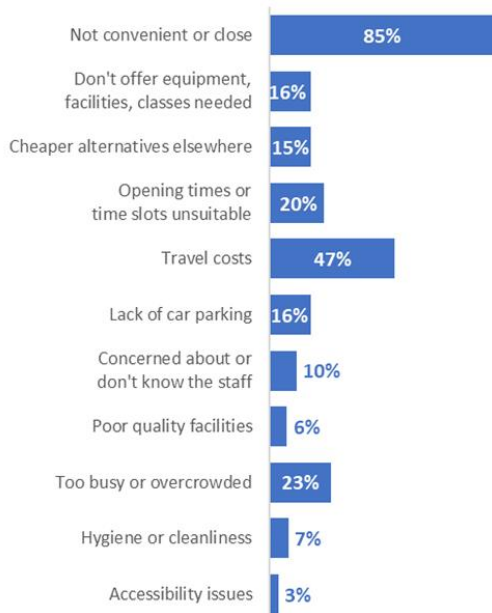
Base = 141

Birtley Leisure Centre
Impact of having to use another Council leisure centre or facility



Birtley Leisure Centre
Reasons would not use another
Council leisure centre

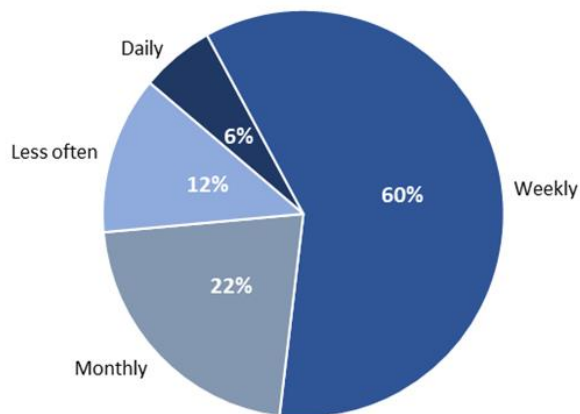
Base = 519



Birtley Swimming Centre

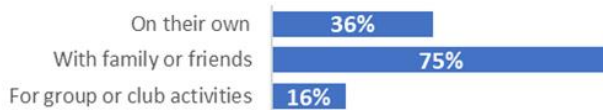
Birtley Swimming Centre
Frequency of use (or plan to use)

Base = 1,219



Birtley Swimming Centre
Usually visit centre...

Base = 1,210



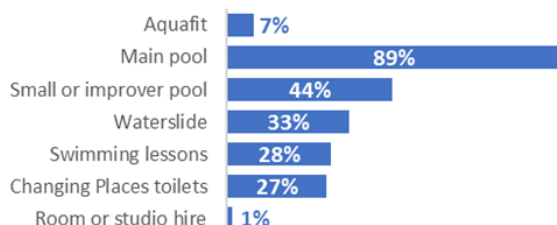
Birtley Swimming Centre Main method of travelling to the centre

Base = 1,212



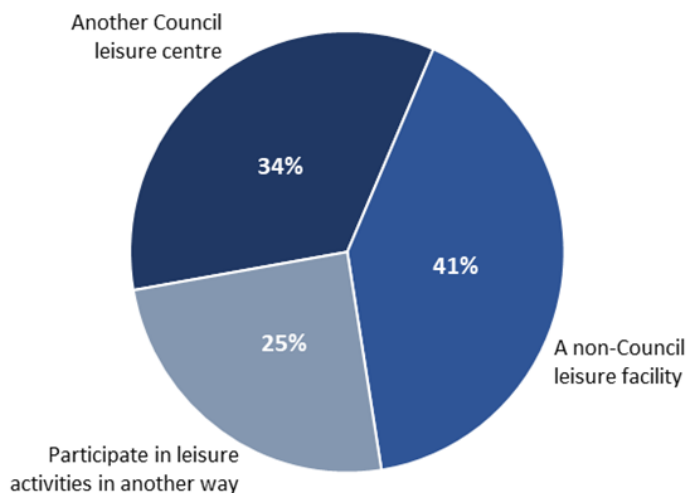
Birtley Swimming Centre Facilities and activities use

Base = 1,215



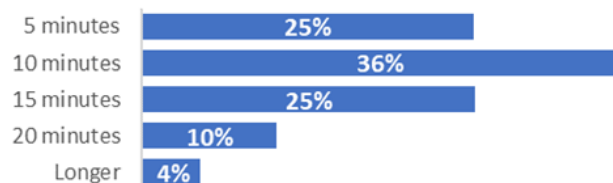
Birtley Swimming Centre Where they would go if leisure centre closed

Base = 1,144



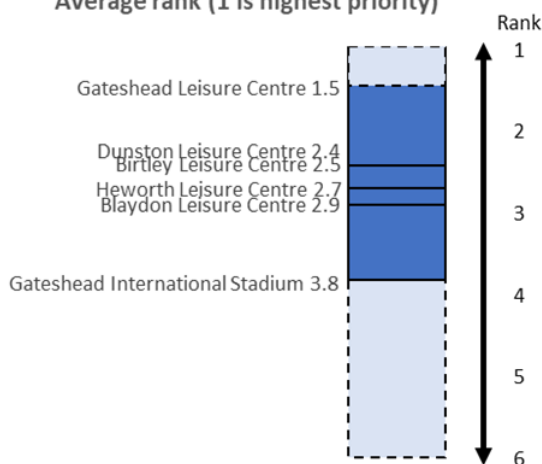
Birtley Swimming Centre Usual travel time to centre

Base = 1,214



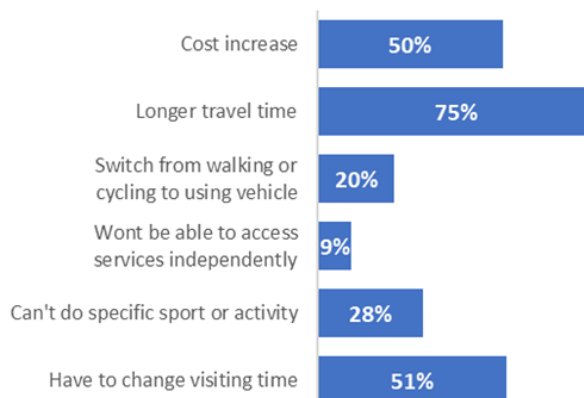
Birtley Swimming Centre Prioritisation of alternative Council leisure centres would use: Average rank (1 is highest priority)

Base = 411



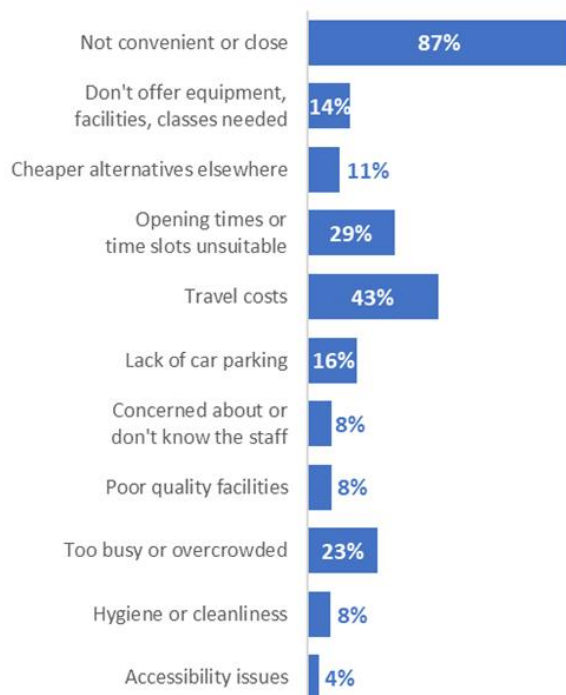
Birtley Swimming Centre Impact of having to use another Council leisure centre or facility

Base = 396



Birtley Swimming Centre
Reasons would not use another
Council leisure centre

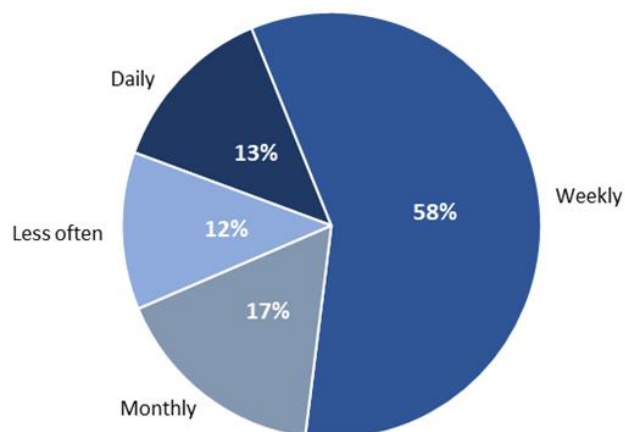
Base = 783



Blaydon Leisure Centre

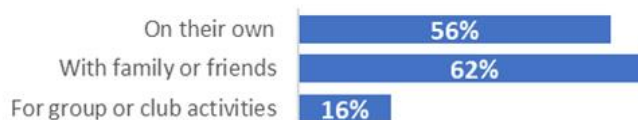
Blaydon Leisure Centre
Frequency of use (or plan to use)

Base = 1,685



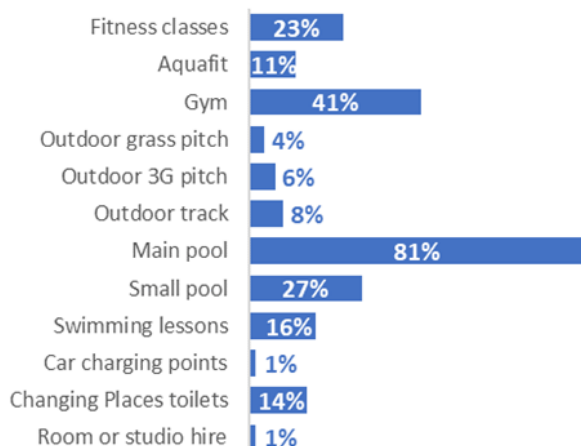
Blaydon Leisure Centre
Usually visit centre...

Base = 1,678



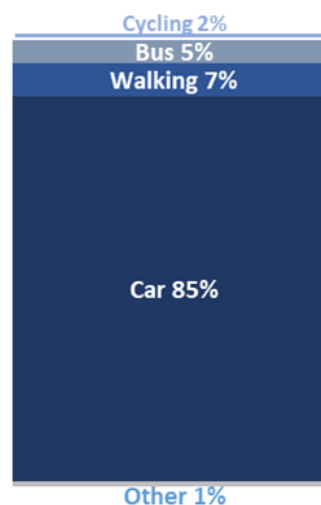
Blaydon Leisure Centre Facilities and activities use

Base = 1,688

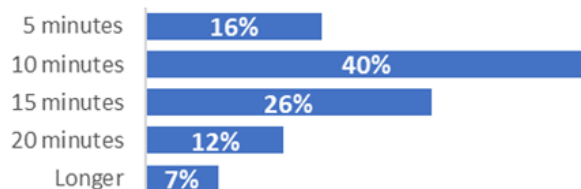


Blaydon Leisure Centre Main method of travelling to the centre

Base = 1,690

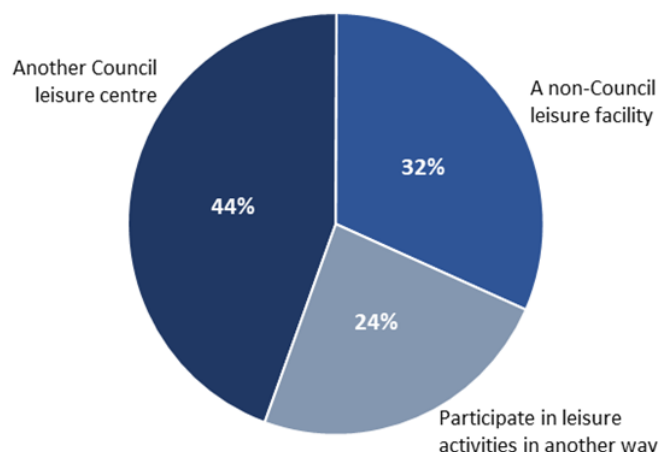


Blaydon Leisure Centre Usual travel time to centre



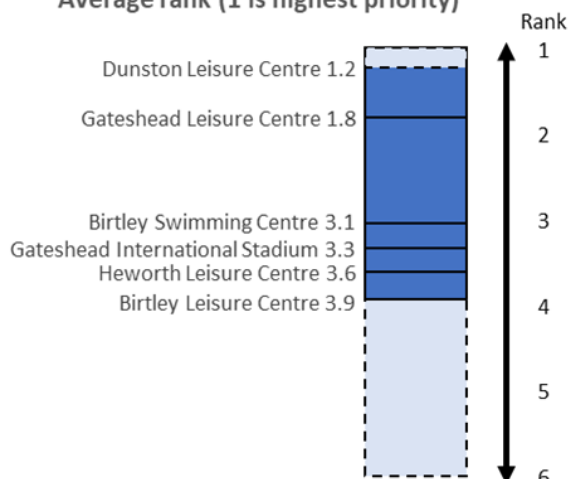
Blaydon Leisure Centre Where they would go if leisure centre closed

Base = 1,636



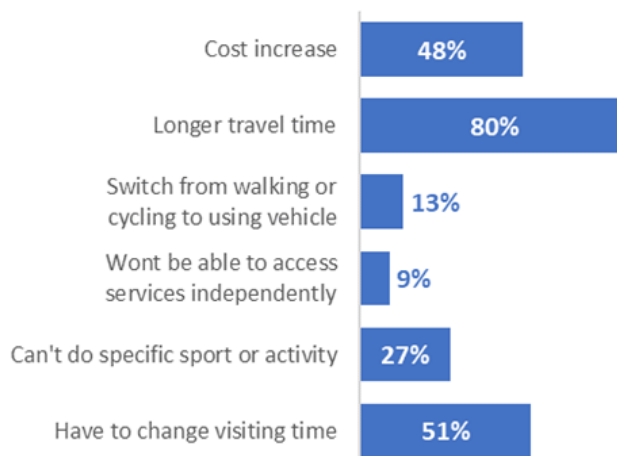
Blaydon Leisure Centre Prioritisation of alternative Council leisure centres would use: Average rank (1 is highest priority)

Base = 750



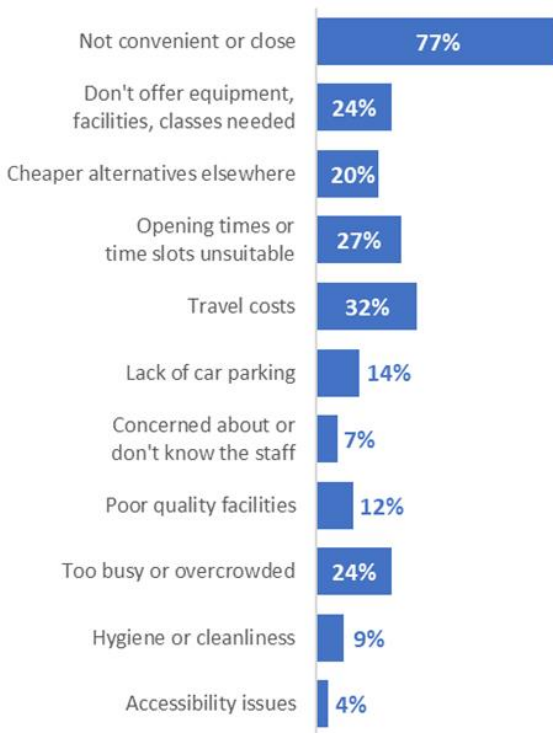
Blaydon Leisure Centre Impact of having to use another Council leisure centre or facility

Base = 659



Blaydon Leisure Centre
Reasons would not use another
Council leisure centre

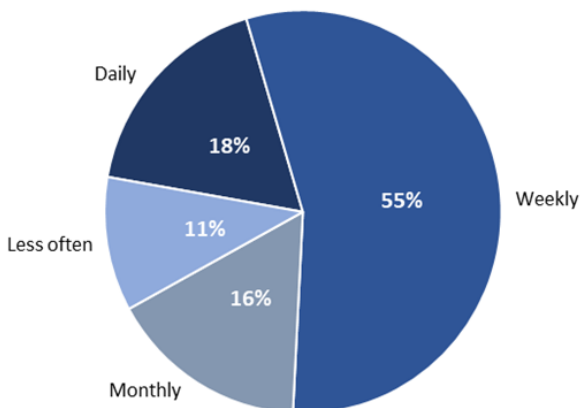
Base = 903



Dunston Leisure Centre

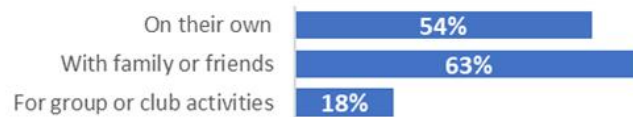
Dunston Leisure Centre
Frequency of use (or plan to use)

Base = 2,202



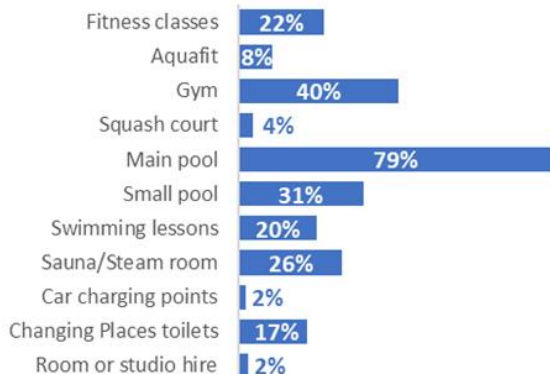
Dunston Leisure Centre
Usually visit centre...

Base = 2,182



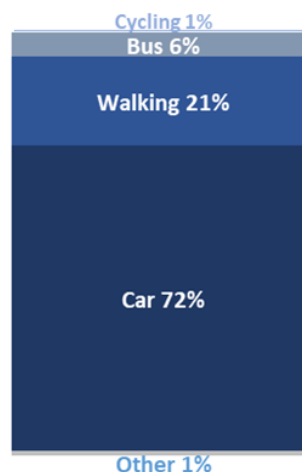
Dunston Leisure Centre Facilities and activities use

Base = 2,197



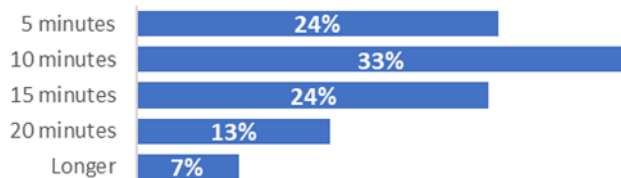
Dunston Leisure Centre Main method of travelling to the centre

Base = 2,195



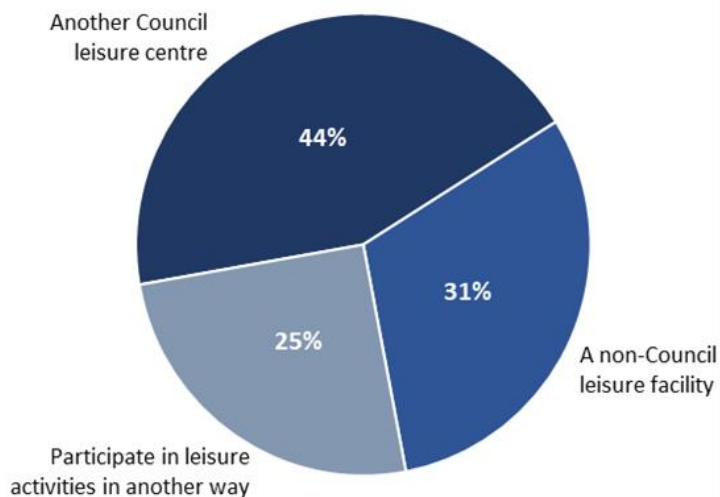
Dunston Leisure Centre Usual travel time to centre

Base = 2,194



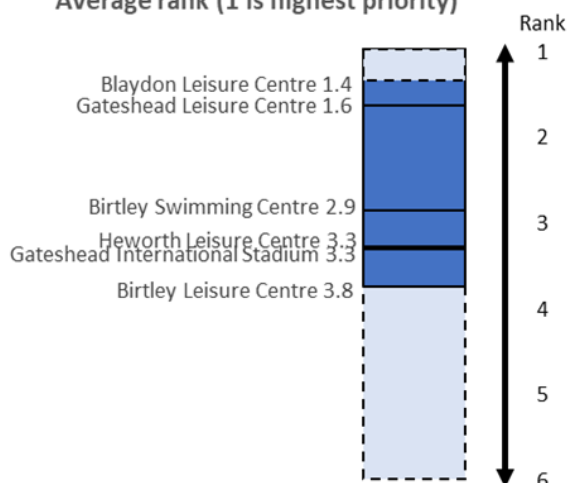
Dunston Leisure Centre Where they would go if leisure centre closed

Base = 2,065



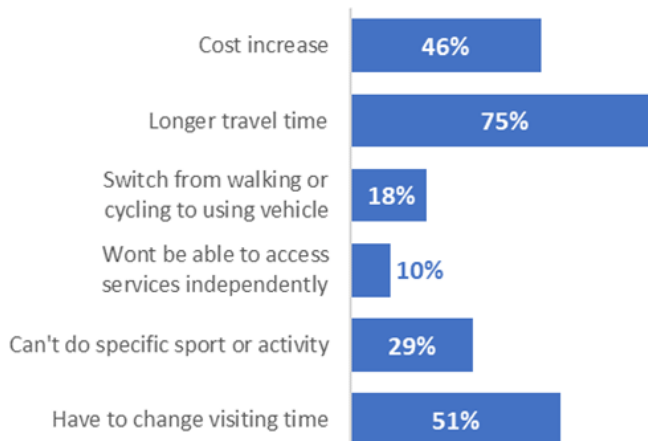
Dunston Leisure Centre Prioritisation of alternative Council leisure centres would use: Average rank (1 is highest priority)

Base = 943



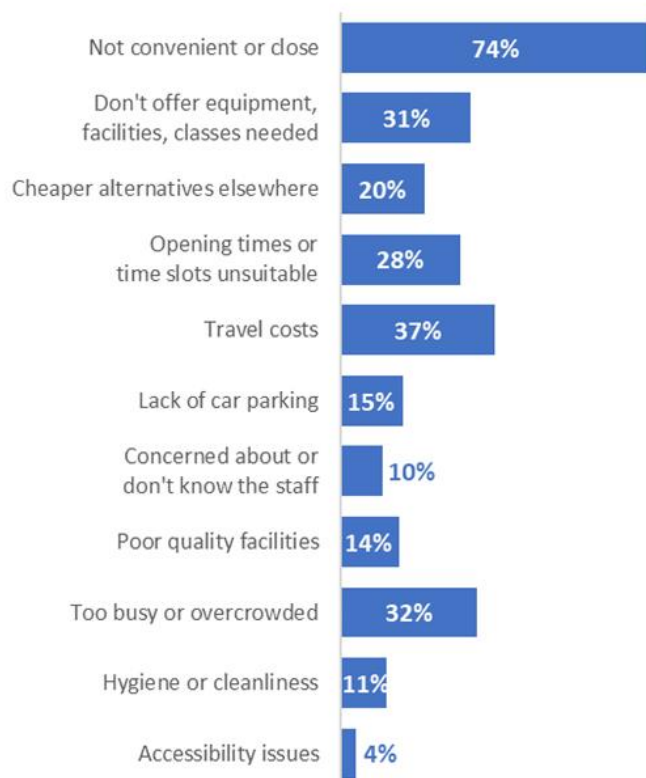
Dunston Leisure Centre Impact of having to use another Council leisure centre or facility

Base = 872



Dunston Leisure Centre
Reasons would not use another
Council leisure centre

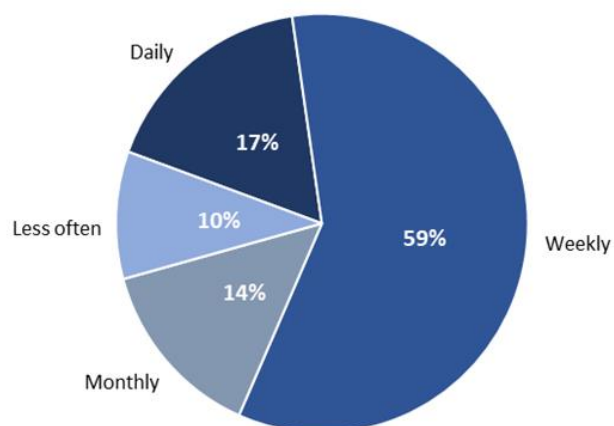
Base = 1,211



Gateshead Leisure Centre

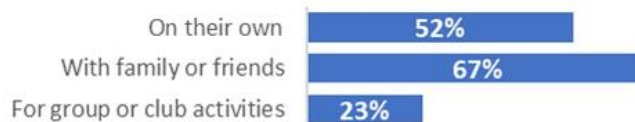
Gateshead Leisure Centre
Frequency of use (or plan to use)

Base = 3,560



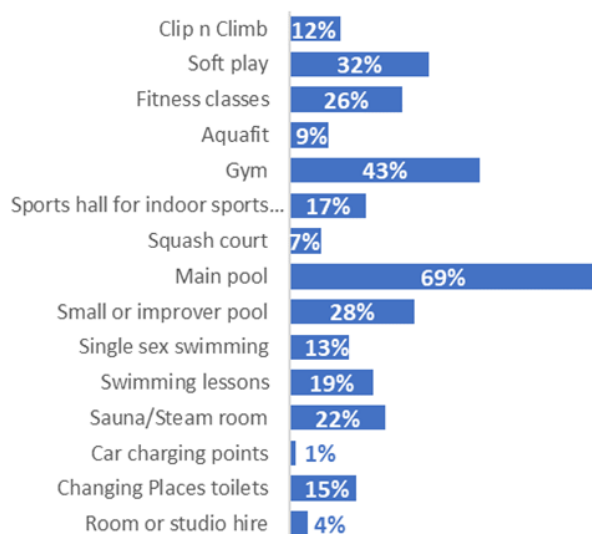
Gateshead Leisure Centre
Usually visit centre...

Base = 3,531



Gateshead Leisure Centre
Facilities and activities use

Base = 3,559



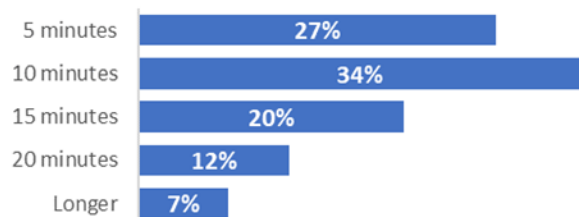
Gateshead Leisure Centre
Main method of travelling to the centre

Base = 3,562



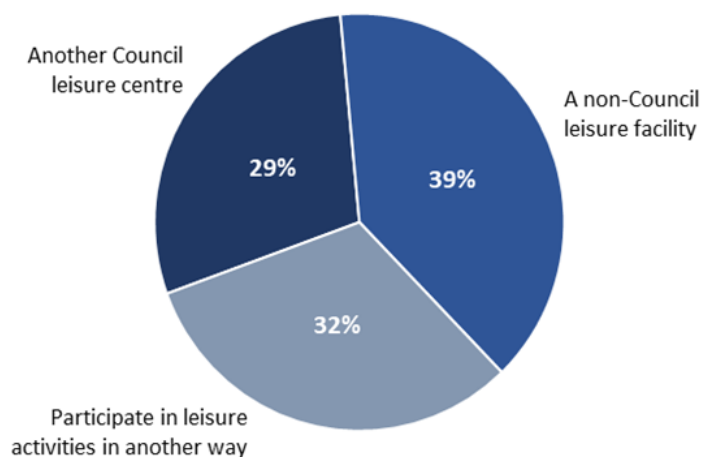
Gateshead Leisure Centre
Usual travel time to centre

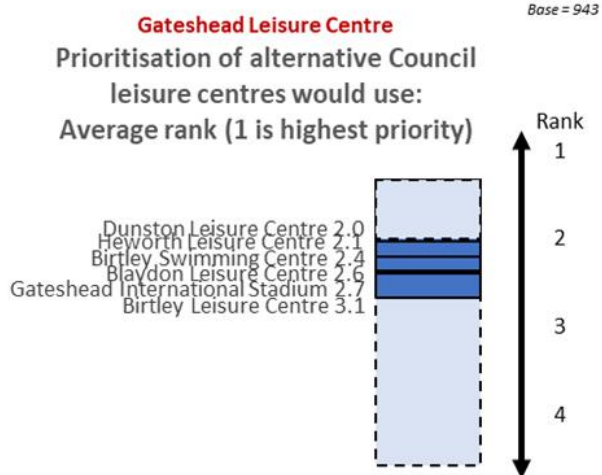
Base = 3,561



Gateshead Leisure Centre
Where they would go if leisure centre closed

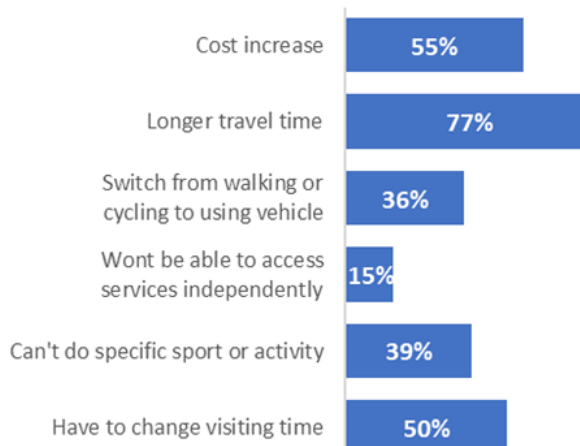
Base = 3,220





Gateshead Leisure Centre

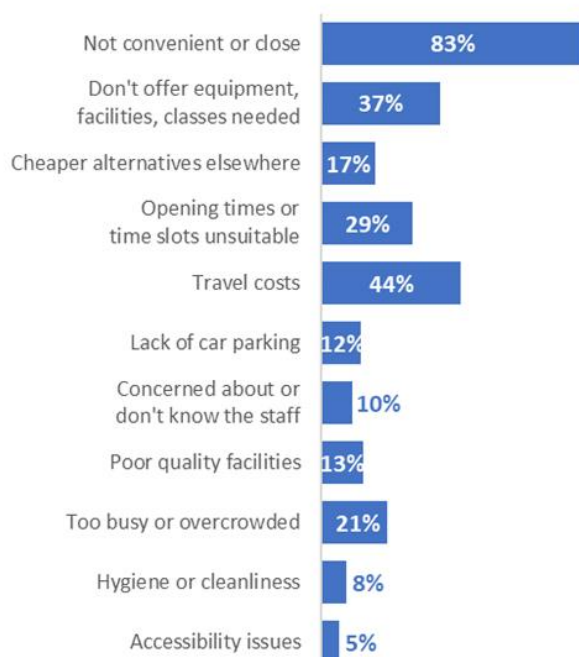
Impact of having to use another Council leisure centre or facility



Gateshead Leisure Centre

Reasons would not use another Council leisure centre

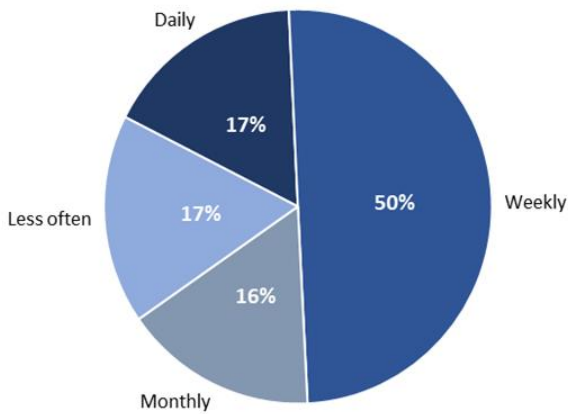
Base = 2,500



Heworth Leisure Centre

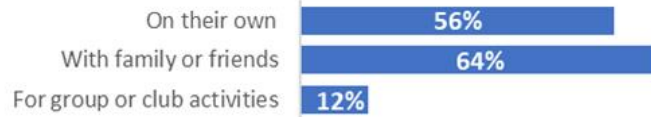
Heworth Leisure Centre Frequency of use (or plan to use)

Base = 943



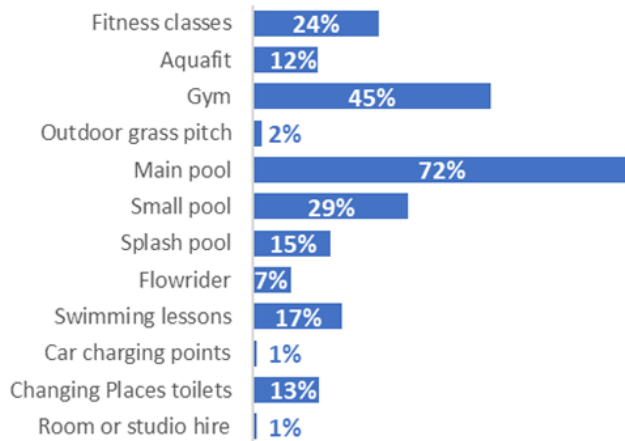
Heworth Leisure Centre Usually visit centre...

Base = 914



Heworth Leisure Centre Facilities and activities use

Base = 928



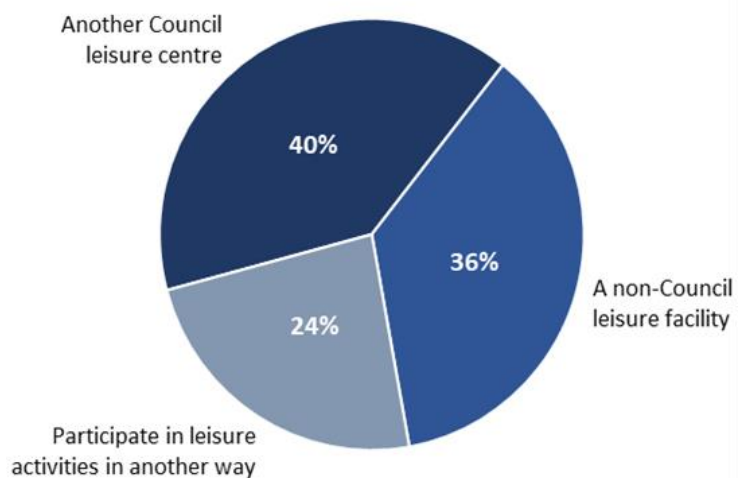
Heworth Leisure Centre Main method of travelling to the centre

Base = 928



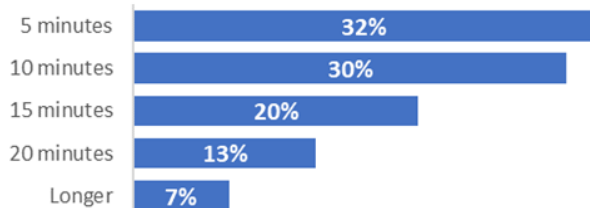
Heworth Leisure Centre Where they would go if leisure centre closed

Base = 900



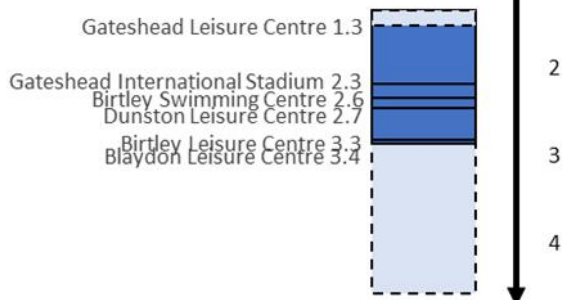
Heworth Leisure Centre Usual travel time to centre

Base = 928

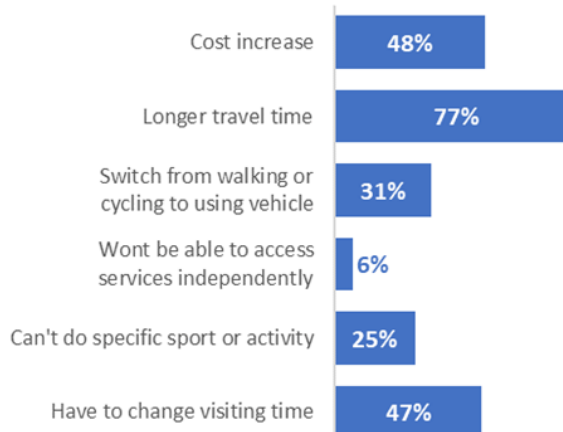


Heworth Leisure Centre
Prioritisation of alternative Council
leisure centres would use:
Average rank (1 is highest priority)

Base = 943

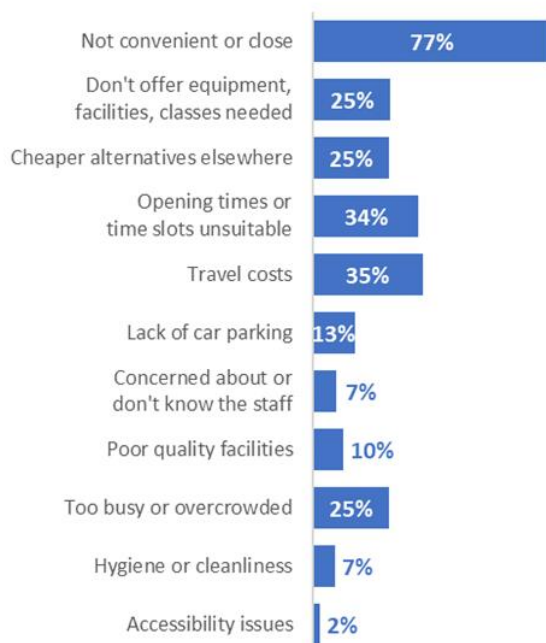


Heworth Leisure Centre
Impact of having to use another
Council leisure centre or facility

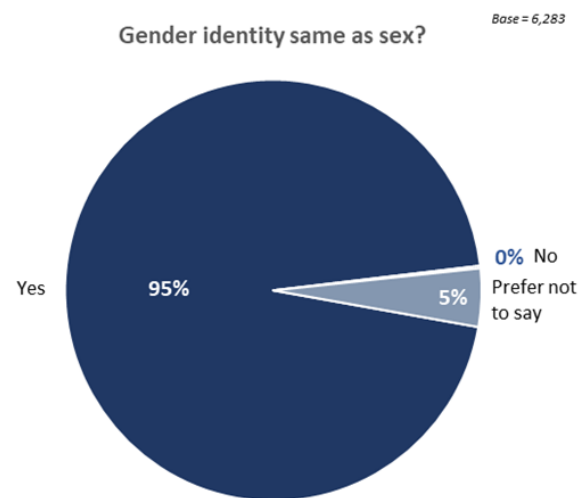
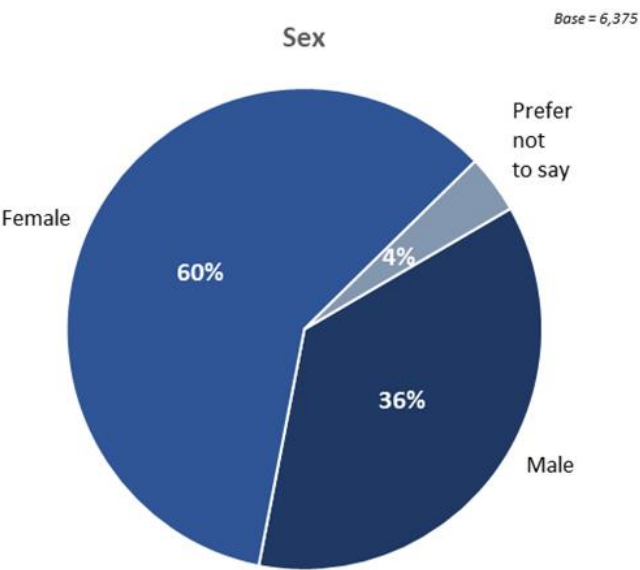


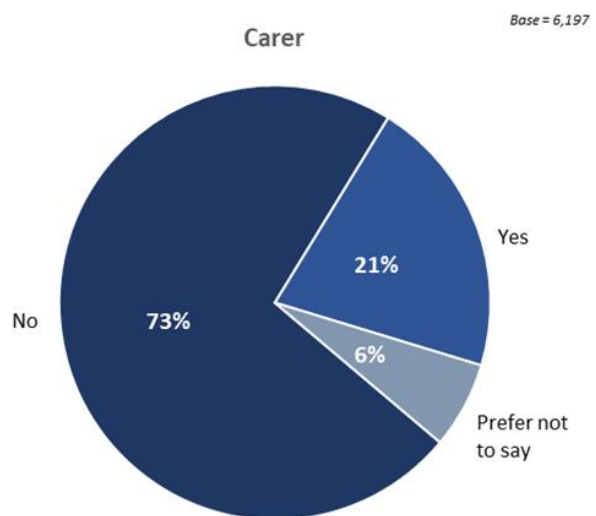
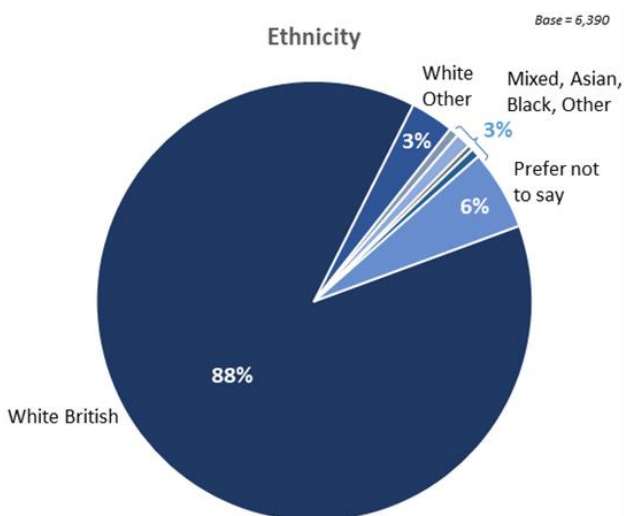
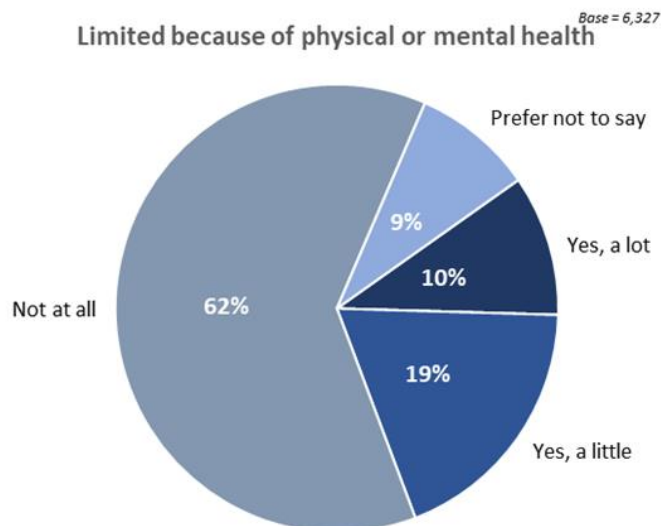
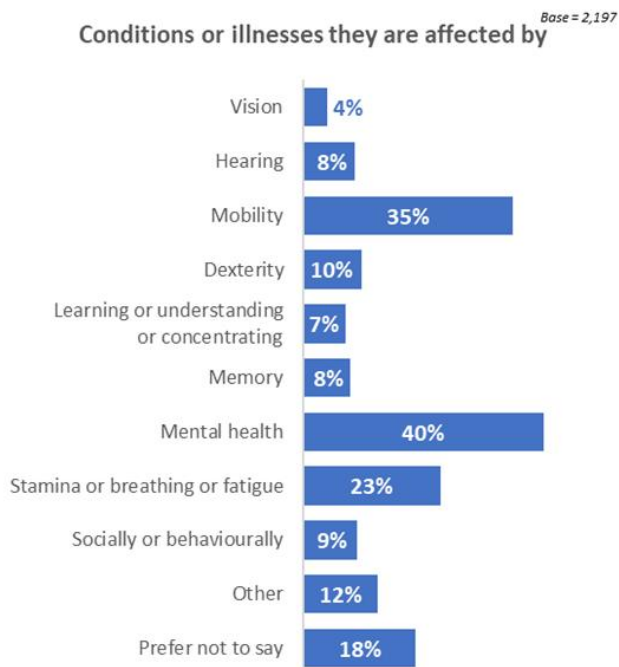
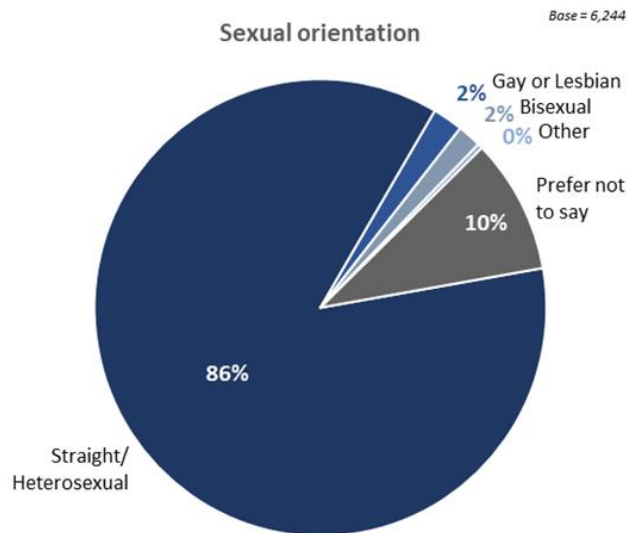
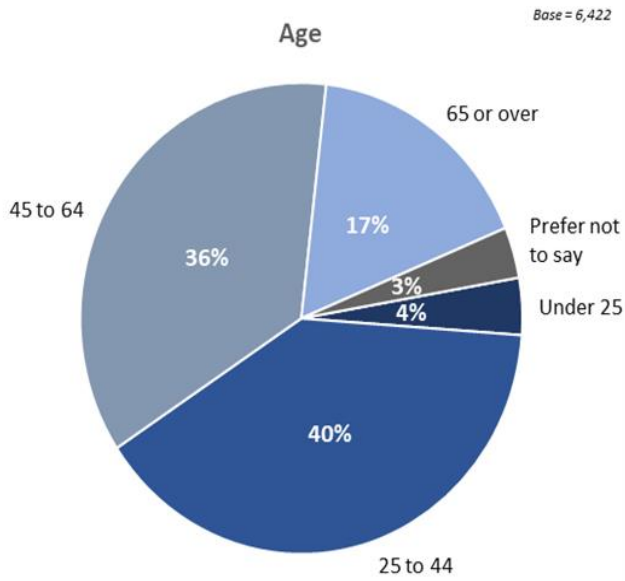
Heworth Leisure Centre
Reasons would not use another
Council leisure centre

Base = 550



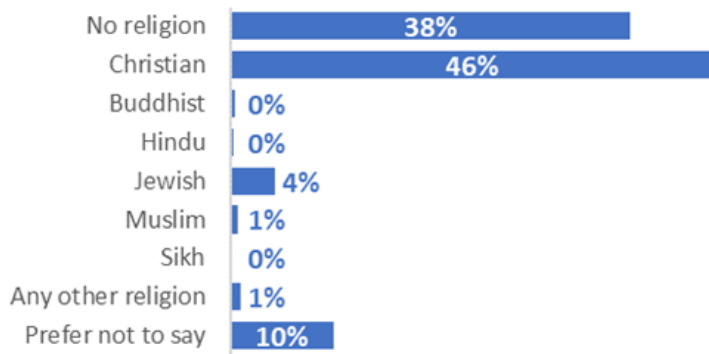
About You (Demographic) Charts





Religion

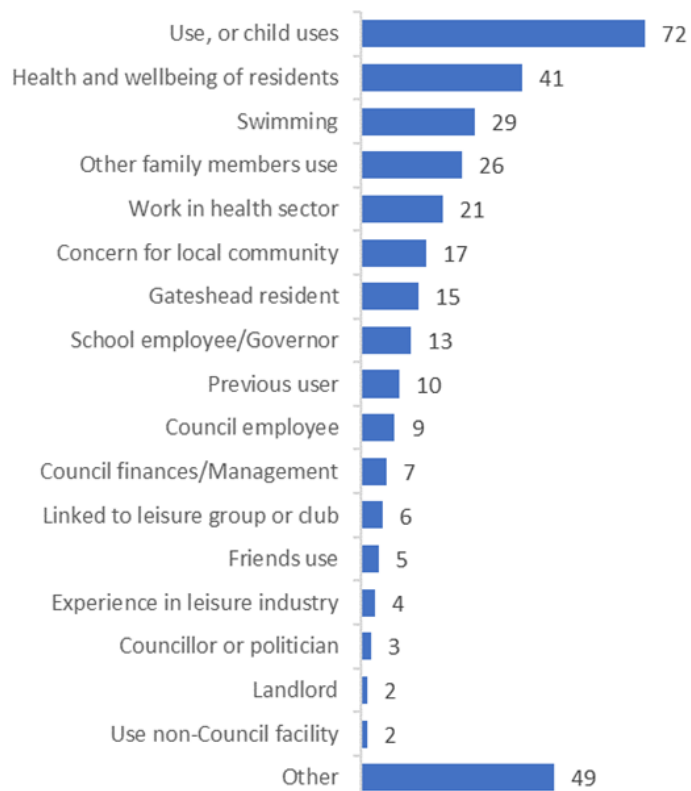
Base = 6,298



Open Text Comments Charts

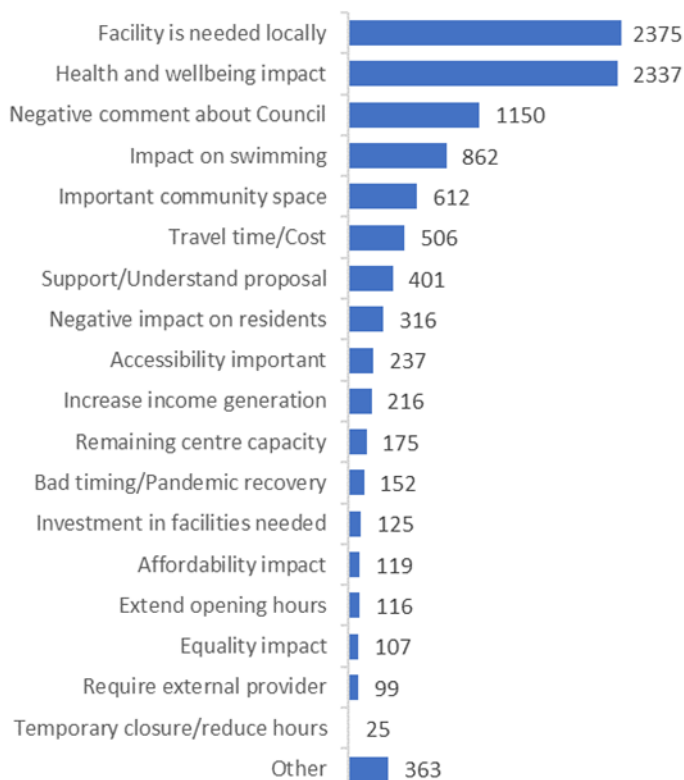
Interest in the survey (another interest)

Base = 337



Why agree or disagree with proposal to close

Base = 6,071



Alternative suggestions for provision of leisure services in Gateshead

Base = 4,534



Birtley Leisure Centre

Birtley Leisure Centre

Base = 4

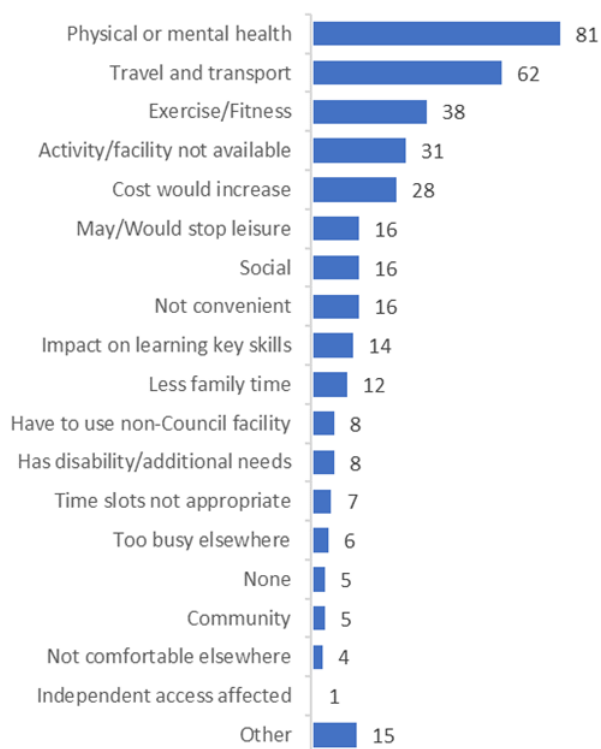
Main method of travelling to the centre (something else)



Birtley Leisure Centre

Base = 272

Other major impacts of leisure centre closure



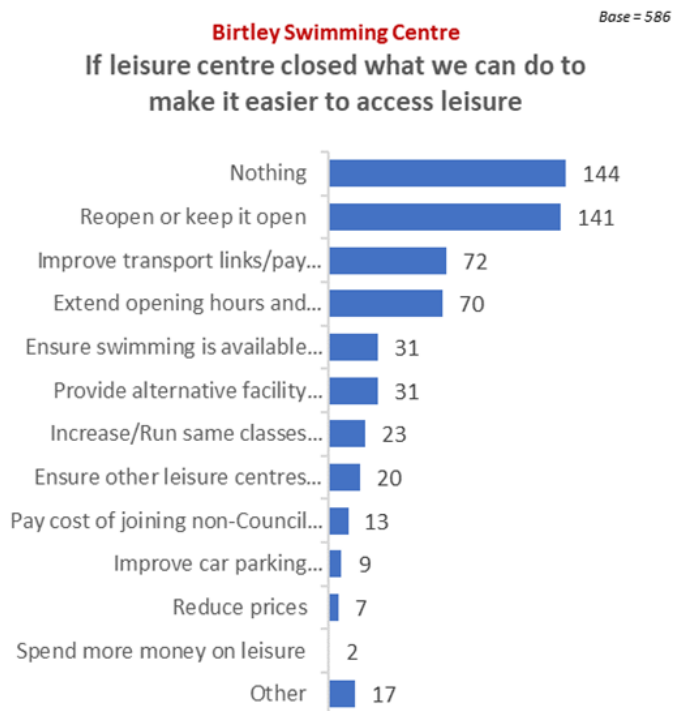
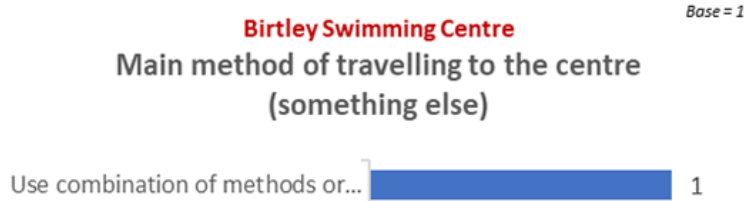
Birtley Leisure Centre

Base = 326

If leisure centre closed what we can do to make it easier to access leisure



Birtley Swimming Centre

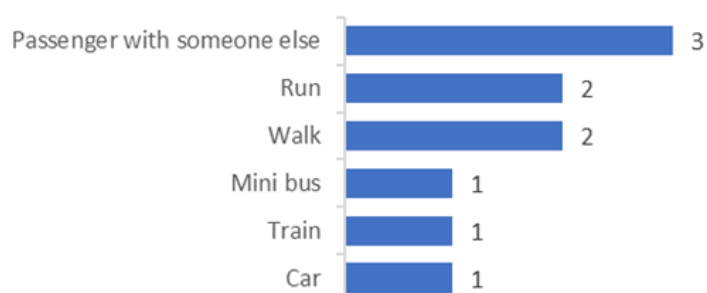


Blaydon Leisure Centre

Blaydon Leisure Centre

Base = 10

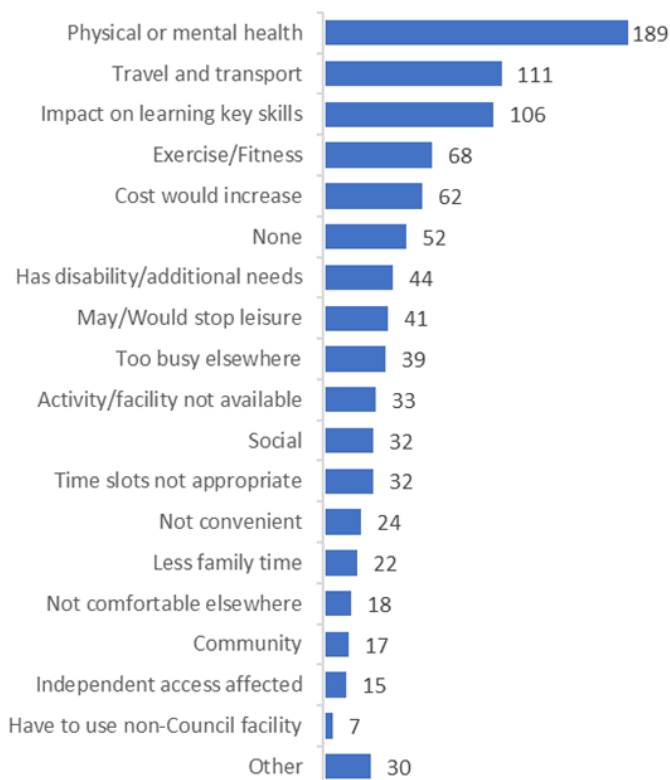
Main method of travelling to the centre (something else)



Blaydon Leisure Centre

Base = 667

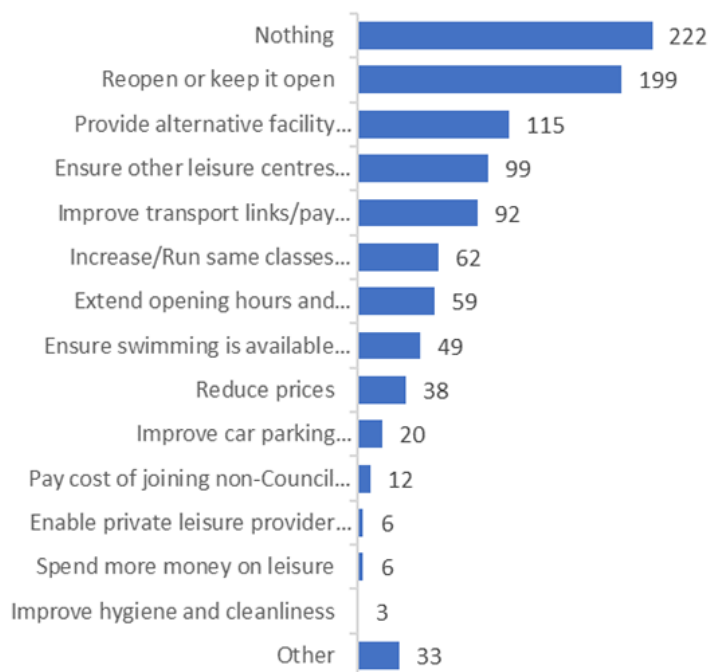
Other major impacts of leisure centre closure



Blaydon Leisure Centre

Base = 811

If leisure centre closed what we can do to make it easier to access leisure

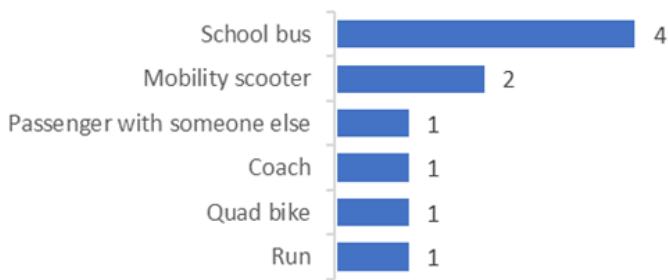


Dunston Leisure Centre

Dunston Leisure Centre

**Main method of travelling to the centre
(something else)**

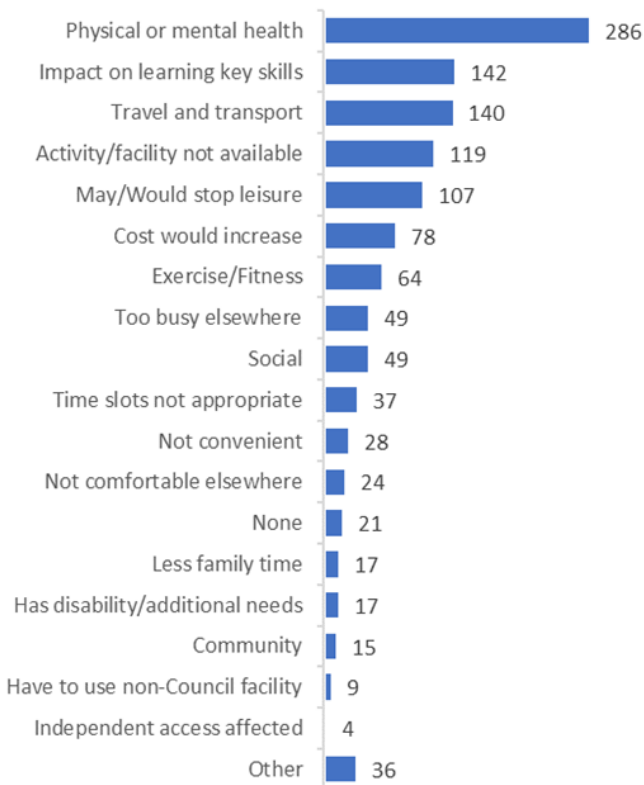
Base = 10



Dunston Leisure Centre

Other major impacts of leisure centre closure

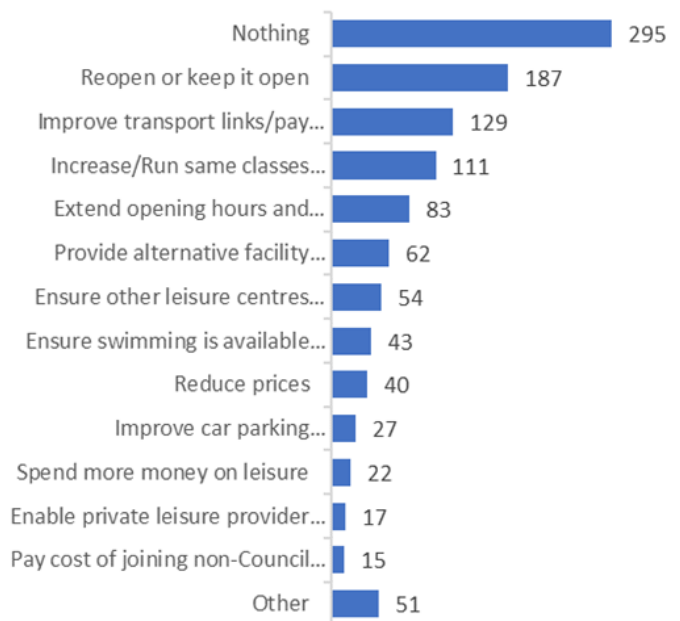
Base = 879



Dunston Leisure Centre

**If leisure centre closed what we can do to
make it easier to access leisure**

Base = 1,110

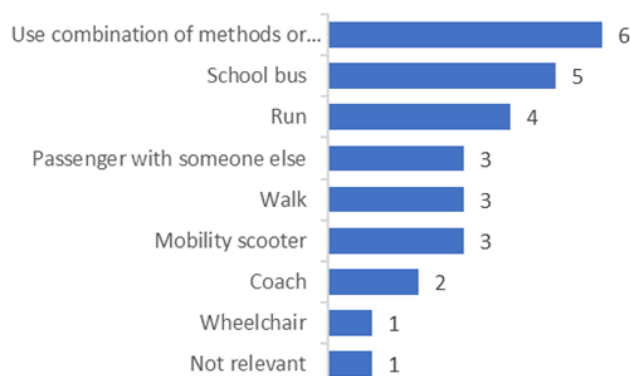


Gateshead Leisure Centre

Gateshead Leisure Centre

Base = 28

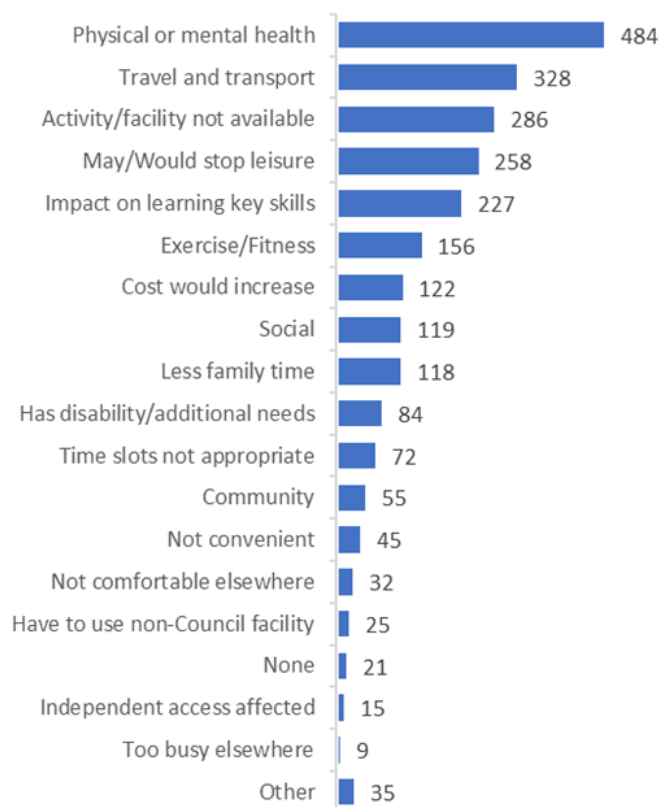
Main method of travelling to the centre (something else)



Gateshead Leisure Centre

Base = 1,538

Other major impacts of leisure centre closure



Gateshead Leisure Centre

Base = 1,860

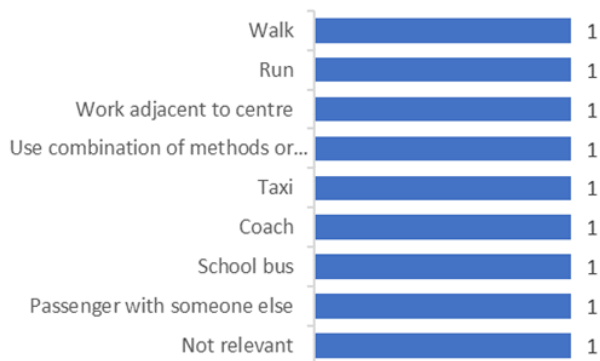
If leisure centre closed what we can do to make it easier to access leisure



Heworth Leisure Centre

Heworth Leisure Centre
Main method of travelling to the centre
(something else)

Base = 9



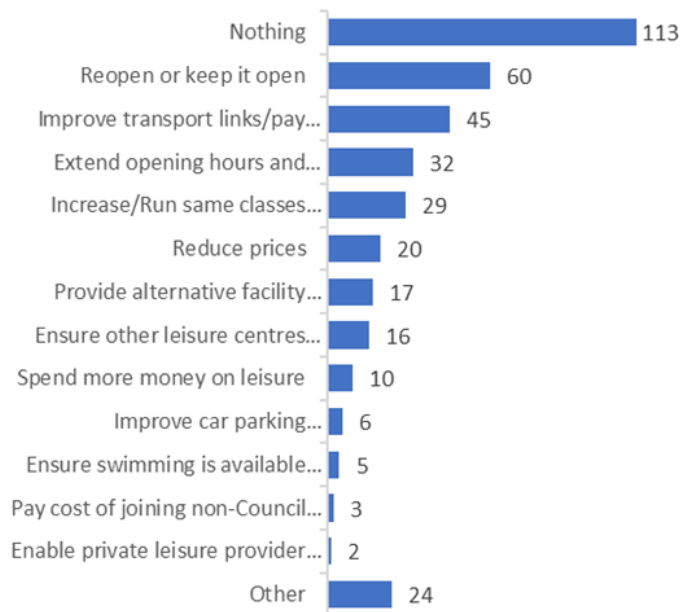
Heworth Leisure Centre
Other major impacts of leisure centre closure

Base = 310



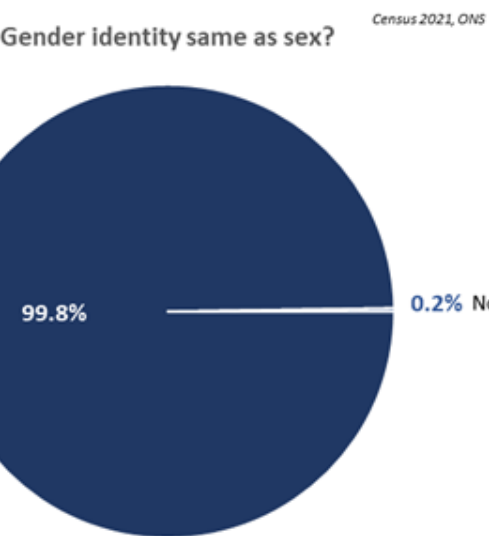
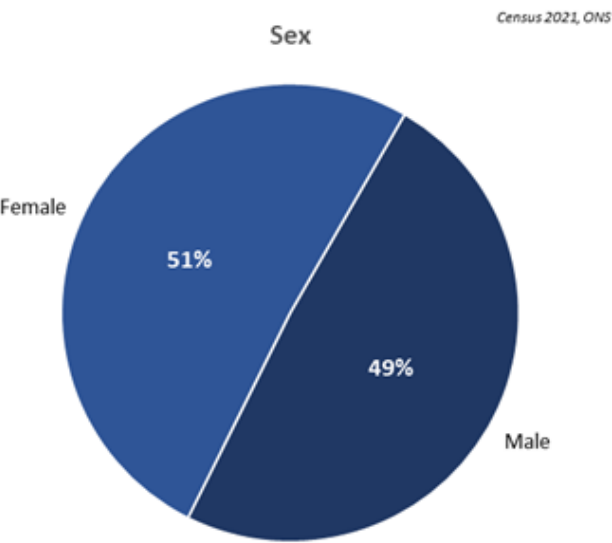
Heworth Leisure Centre
If leisure centre closed what we can do to
make it easier to access leisure

Base = 395

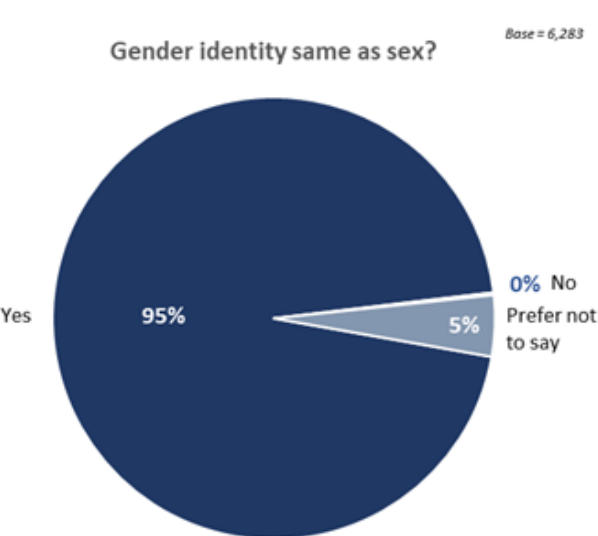
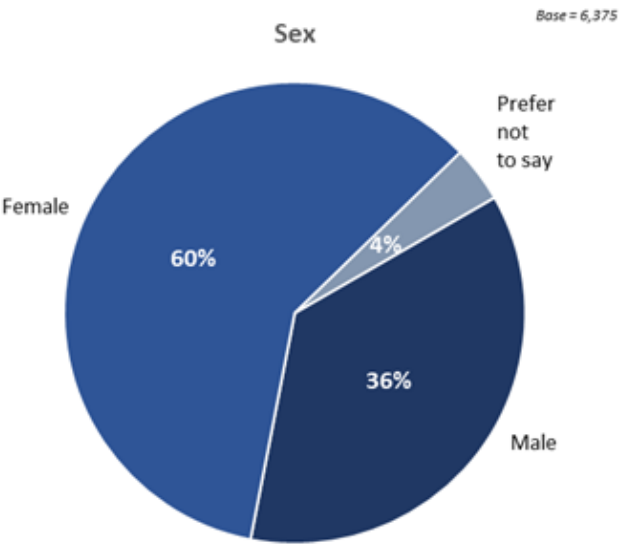


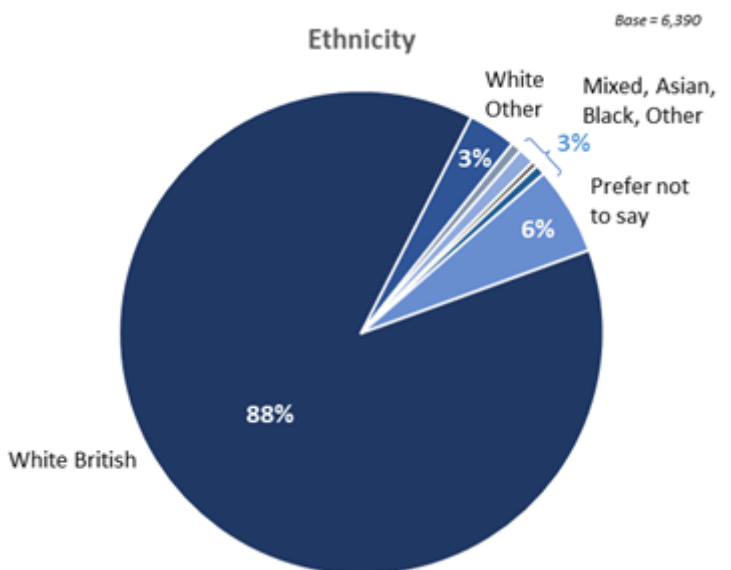
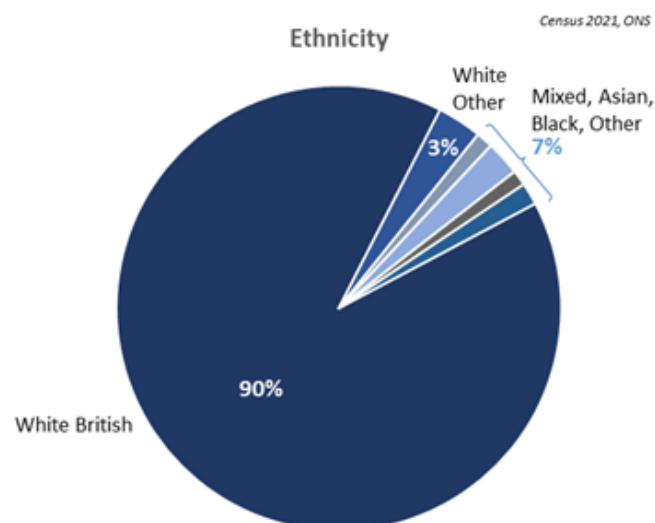
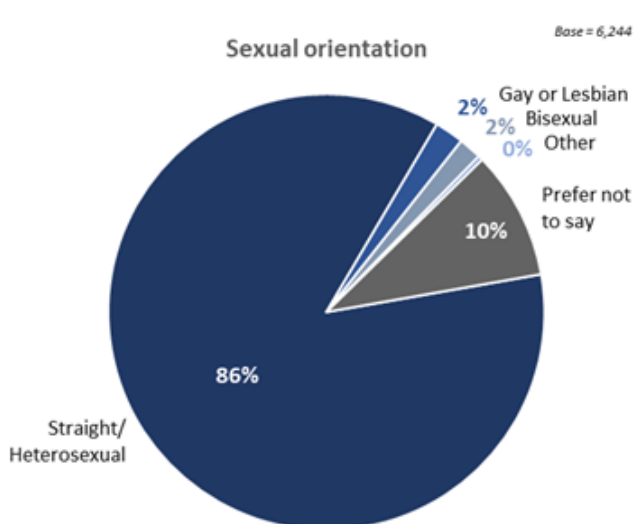
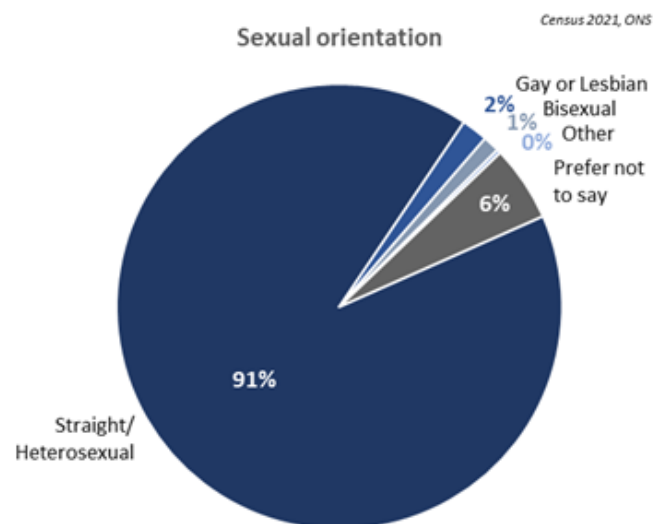
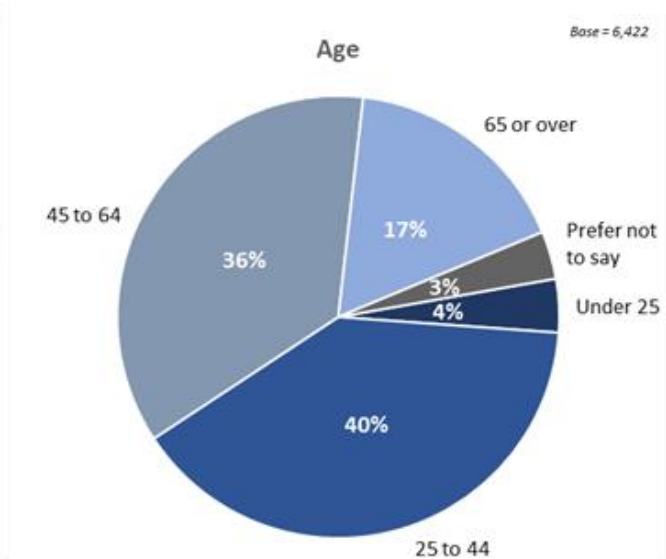
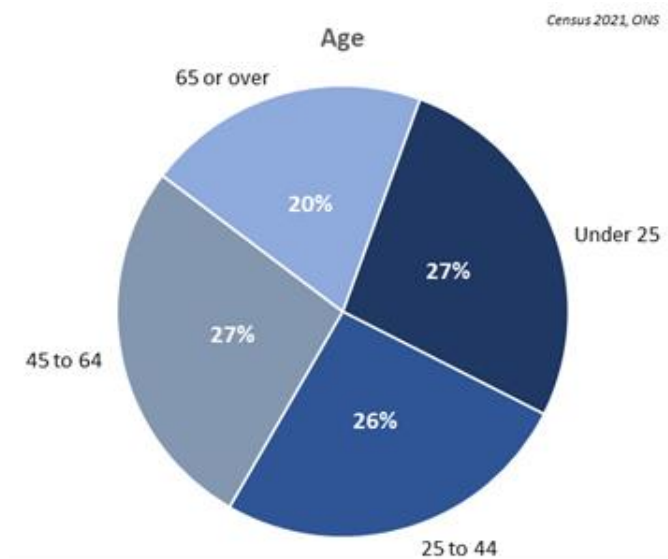
Appendix C – Equalities Data Comparison Charts

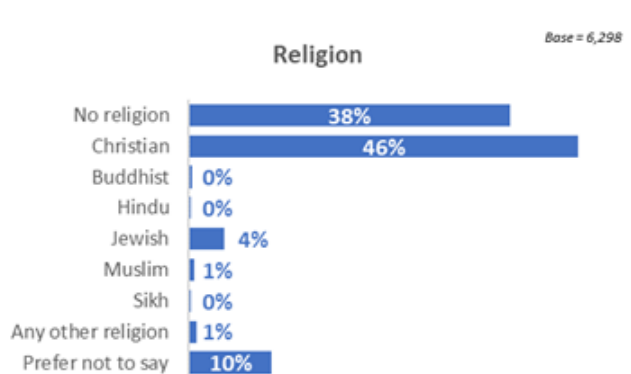
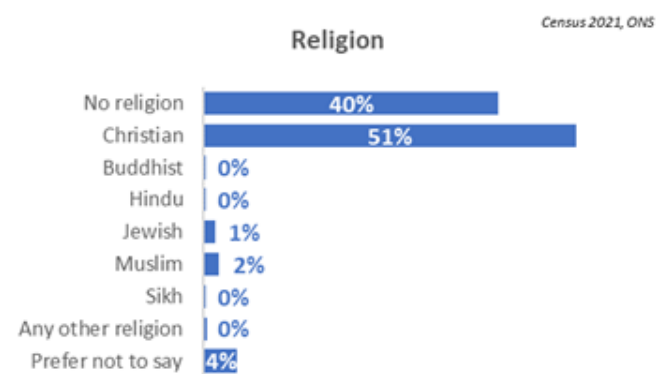
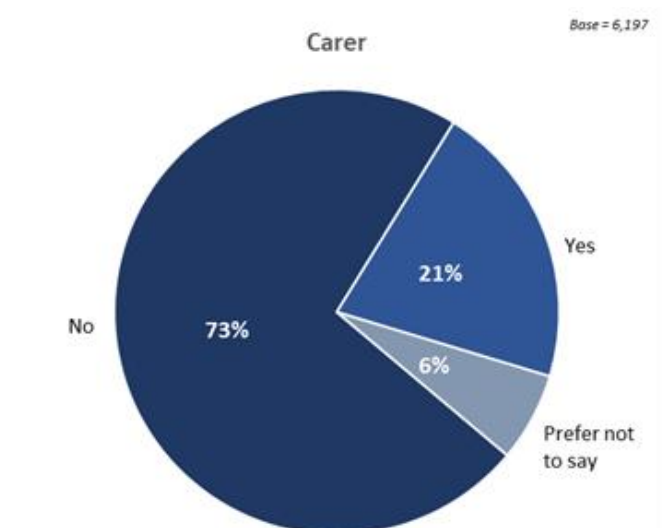
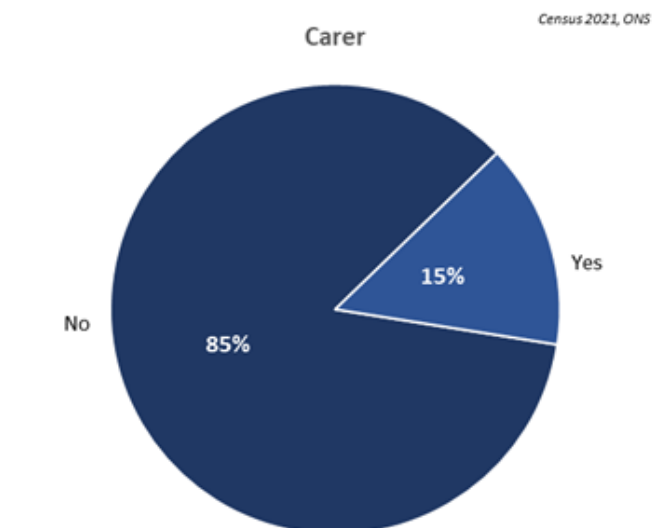
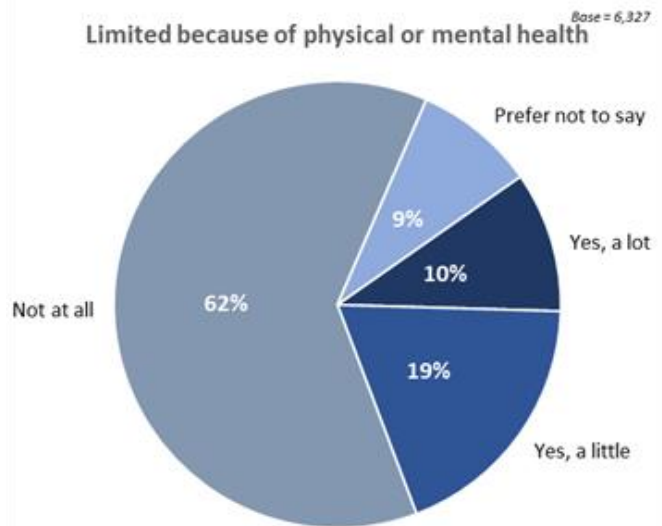
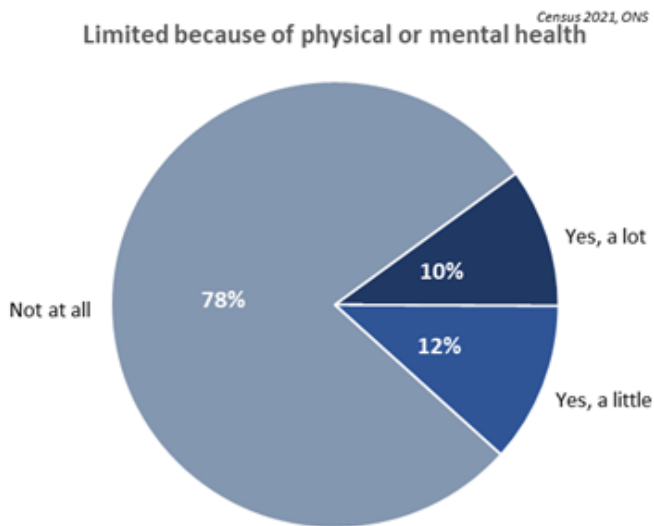
GATESHEAD POPULATION



SURVEY RESPONSES







Appendix D – Coding Framework (open text survey questions)

Description of the ‘categories’ used in analysis of responses to Open Questions

A. What is your interest in this survey?

I have another interest in the consultation

Use, or child uses	User of a Council leisure centre, or has a child who uses a Council leisure centre.
Health and wellbeing of residents	Are generally concerned about the health and wellbeing of residents of Gateshead.
Other family members use	Has another family member (not a child) who uses a Council leisure centre.
Work in health sector	Works in the health sector e.g. the NHS, mental health services, physiotherapist etc.
Concern for local community	Are generally concerned about the impact of leisure centres on the local community.
School employee/Governor	Works at or for a school, or is a school governor.
Previous user	Has used a Council leisure centre in the past.
Swimming	Has a specific interest in swimming activities.
Gateshead resident	Lives in Gateshead
Council finances/Management	Expresses an interest in use of funding, including Council Tax, by the Council.
Council employee	Is an employee of Gateshead Council.
Linked to leisure group or club	Is connected to a leisure group or club such as a swimming club, bowling club etc.
Friends use	Has friends who use Council leisure centres.
Councillor or politician	Is an elected member of Gateshead Council or is representative of another political party.
Experience in leisure industry	Work or have previously worked in the leisure industry.
Landlord	Is a housing landlord.
Use non-Council facility	Is a user of non-Council leisure facilities.
Other	Comments that cannot be classed in any of the above categories. For example, small numbers of respondents who are foster carers, considering moving to Gateshead, former residents of Gateshead, are concerned about other family members who do not necessarily use Council leisure centres, have family members employed by the Council, etc.
Unclear/Not applicable	Unclear/Not applicable [Not shown on charts]

C. To what extent do you understand and agree or disagree that the proposal to close some leisure centres will enable us to continue providing a leisure service in Gateshead in the future? Why do you answer that why?

Facility is needed locally	Comments about a particular leisure centre facility and its vital role in the local community.
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Health and wellbeing impact	Comments that refer to health and wellbeing benefits of leisure provision / negative impact closure would have on people's health and wellbeing or mental health. This can include reference to obesity levels increasing or costs to NHS in longer term.
Negative comment about Council	Comments that refer to perceived poor performance / management by GC as a contributing factor to the current situation, including impact of delays to reopening leisure facilities during Covid-19.
Impact on swimming	Comments that reflect concerns about the impact closure would have on people's ability to swim or the provision of swimming lessons as a key life skill
Important community space	Comments that refer to the Leisure Centres as being important to the community, as a community space or local amenity.
Travel time/Cost	Comments that refer to concerns over people's ability to travel to alternative centres, whether for time constraints, due to lack of transport or due to increased costs of travelling further away.
Support/Understand proposal	Supportive of council's approach or state that having some leisure facilities are better than no service. Understand the financial position and see no alternative.
Negative impact on residents	Comments that reflect concerns about the negative impact closure would have on individuals and the local area / local community in general
Accessibility important	Comments that reflect views that leisure provision should be accessible and provide an opportunity for all to participate.
Increase income generation	Comments that suggest generating additional income for Leisure Services including renting out space, bring-in franchises, parties, increasing corporate membership, increasing prices, improving promotion of services.
Bad timing/Pandemic recovery	Comments that suggest this is not the right time to be talking about closing leisure centres, coming out of Covid pandemic.
Remaining centre capacity	Concerns expressed over capacity of remaining leisure centres and pools if some facilities close, including comments about current capacity of some activities with limited numbers.
Affordability impact	Comments that indicate the cost of travel or the cost of using alternative facilities (including private ones) will impact them and / or would reduce desire or ability to access leisure services should the local centre close.
Investment in facilities needed	Comments that reflect views that GC should invest in leisure facilities, ie to make them more attractive to use, and/or should replace existing facilities if it is to close some
Require external provider	Comments that reflect/agree with Cabinet paper of partnering with specialist leisure provider either private sector or community partnership
Equality impact	Comments relating to impact on people with a protected characteristic such as age or disability and their access to services including requirement for male or female only sessions.
Extend opening hours	Comments suggesting opening hours should be extended at leisure centres
Temporary closure/reduce hours	Comments about the possibility of temporary closure or reducing opening hours.
Other	Comments that cannot be classed in any of the above categories. Only used if the comment forms all or a substantial part of the response

Unclear	Unclear [Not shown on charts]
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E. Do you have any alternative suggestions on how to ensure that we are able to continue to provide a leisure service in Gateshead in the future?

Expand/Improve offer	Comments that suggest that leisure centres should be managed/run better, run like business, longer opening hours, more activities/services should be offered, or the quality of services improved, better booking system, better staffing
Reprioritise Council expenditure	Comments that suggest that Council expenditure on other service areas can be switched to Leisure Services
Advertising/Promotion	Comments that suggest that usage can be increased through better advertising/promotion of service offer
Efficient Council	Comments which suggest that the Council should be run better/more efficiently, or Council tax should be raised
Increase prices	Putting up prices for services/activities/memberships or some groups
External funding	Comments which suggest that external funding should be sought including Government funding (including Levelling up Funding for Leisure Centres instead of the Quays), charitable grant or crowdfunding.
Income generation (non-price)	Comments that suggest generating additional income for Leisure Services including renting out space, corporate sponsorship, bring-in franchises, parties, increasing corporate membership, charging for parking (separate category for increasing prices)
Remain as is/Don't close	Remain as is or don't close
Redevelop/Refurbish/Invest	Comments suggesting leisure centres are redeveloped, rebuilt or refurbished, and more money is invested in leisure services
Limited closures	Comments which suggest closing one or more sites/services/activities or staggering opening times across sites to focus resources on other sites, reducing hours to keep services open
Reduce prices	Reduce prices for services/activities /memberships. Includes reductions for some groups.
Partner specialist leisure provider	Comments that reflect/agree with Cabinet paper of partnering with specialist leisure provider (not specifying private sector or not for profit)
Membership	Comments which suggest that there should be changes to membership arrangements (not solely increasing prices)
Private sector	Comments which suggest that leisure centres should be sold to or run by the private sector/privatised or in partnership with private sector
Other physical activity	Increase opportunities for physical activity other than leisure centre e.g. outdoors
Partnership/Run independently	Comments which suggest that ownership or operation of leisure centres should be independent of the Council but not specified what this should be
Community	Comments which suggest that leisure centres should be run by or in partnership with an organisation which benefits the community

	including community trust, charity or social enterprise, voluntary organisations, clubs
Energy efficiency	Reduce costs through energy efficiency
Use of volunteers	Comments suggesting use of volunteers to run leisure services
Partnership/Hub	Comments which suggest that Leisure Centres should be run in partnership with other statutory services e.g. NHS or neighbouring authority or as multi-service hubs
Transport	Suggestions around improving transport links to leisure centres
Supportive	Supportive of council's approach
Other	
Unclear/Not applicable	Including 'No' and 'see previous answer' [Not shown on charts]

Q4 (all leisure centres). What is your main method of travelling to this centre?

Something else

Car	Car
Coach	Coach
Mini bus	Mini bus
Mobility scooter	Mobility scooter
Passenger with someone else	Passenger with someone else
Run	Run
School bus	School bus
Taxi	Taxi
Train	Train
Use combination of methods or different each time	Respondent uses a combination of travel methods e.g. passenger in someone else's car to a centre and then bus home. Or, respondent changes their method of travel each time e.g. sometimes walk, but sometimes drive a car.
Walk	Walk
Wheelchair	Wheelchair
Work adjacent to centre	Work adjacent to centre
Other	Other
Unclear/Not applicable	Unclear/Not applicable [Not shown on charts]

Q10 (all leisure centres). If there would be any other major impacts on you or your family accessing leisure services or facilities, please briefly outline these below...

Physical or mental health	Impact on physical or mental health of respondent or their family.
Travel and transport	Travelling elsewhere to other Council leisure centres or non-Council facilities. This may include comments on uncertainty about how to travel elsewhere e.g. what bus routes are available. It may also include concerns about the impact of travel on the environment, distance to travel elsewhere, and the extra time required.
Exercise/Fitness	Impact on ability to exercise and potential to lose fitness.
May/Would stop leisure	Leisure centre closure would mean, or potentially mean, the respondent could not attend a leisure facility at all.

Cost would increase	Cost increases may be due to additional travel expenses, or extra expense of having to use non-Council leisure facilities.
Social	Impact on friendships made at the leisure centre or visiting the leisure centre is a source of social interaction for the respondent and others.
Activity/facility not available	The activity or facilities that respondents or family members use are not available or easily accessible elsewhere e.g. specialist pool facilities, swimming slide, ability to book basketball sessions on a regular basis, etc.
Have to use non-Council facility	Closure of the Council leisure centre would make it necessary to consider/join a non-Council leisure facility
Less family time	Time spent together in family activities would reduce.
Impact on learning key skills	The ability of leisure centre users to learn key skills such as amongst others, team sports, competitive leagues, and often swimming skills, would be impacted.
Has disability or additional needs	Closure would impact on respondent or family member with disability or additional needs.
None	Closure would have no impact.
Not convenient	Other centres are not convenient due to proximity or accessibility.
Time slots not appropriate	Other centres may not be open at a time respondent can access. This may be due to the respondent's work, school pattern or other commitments, or it may be because of reduced hours in other centres. Specific activities may also be limited e.g. public swimming sessions.
Not comfortable elsewhere	Respondent or family members do not feel comfortable elsewhere. This may be due to additional needs such as autism
Community	Impact on the local community.
Too busy elsewhere	Knock on effect of closure is potential overcrowding of other facilities.
Independent access affected	Impact on the ability for those with additional needs or for young family members to access a leisure centre independently.
Other	Other major impacts, including safety concerns, impact on business, feeling it will be detrimental to the local area, parking difficulties, ASB in remaining buildings, loss of employment, post-natal classes, environmental impacts, loss of swimming club etc.
Unclear/Not applicable	Unclear/Not applicable [Not shown on charts]

Q11 (all leisure centres). If this leisure centre closed what, if anything, could we do to help make it easier for you to access leisure services and facilities in future?

Nothing	Respondents stated nothing could be done.
Reopen or keep it open	Request not to close or to reopen the centre after it has closed (perhaps following improvements).
Improve transport links/pay travel expenses to other centres	Improve transport links such as bus routes, make public transport cheaper, increase frequency of buses, pay for transportation to alternative centres.
Provide alternative facility nearby in the area	Replace the centre closing with an alternative centre nearby.
Ensure other leisure centres remain open e.g. Gateshead	Ensure other leisure centres remain open. Gateshead leisure centre mentioned often.

Pay cost of joining non-Council facility/Reduce Council tax	Pay the additional cost of having to join a non-Council facility, make agreements with non-Council facilities to offset the extra cost, or subsidise this through reduction in Council tax.
Reduce prices	Reduce prices, including membership, at other leisure centres.
Improve car parking at remaining centres	Improve car parking facilities at remaining centres.
Increase/Run same classes and facilities elsewhere	Ensure that classes and facilities are available in remaining leisure centres. Includes increasing availability to counteract greater demand in less centres.
Ensure swimming is available at remaining centres	Includes not only pool availability but also activities such as public swimming, lane swimming, swimming lessons, public
Extend opening hours in remaining centres and ensure class times are suitable for children's ages	Extend opening hours, including requests for longer opening on weekdays and weekends both in the morning and the evenings. This includes requests to make sessions available at age appropriate times e.g. swimming lessons for children open for sufficient length of time to get to after school day ends.
Enable private leisure provider to use building e.g. gym	Enable a private leisure provider to use vacated buildings. Birtley gym was specifically named as it is already run privately.
Spend more money on leisure	Redirect funding from other services such as traffic management, transport, councillors, etc. into leisure services.
Other	Other suggestions to make accessing leisure easier including changing class size restrictions, investing in staff, making more badminton, squash and netball courts available, improving the contact/booking system, changing individual centre memberships to all centre memberships, returning to pre-covid levels of service, improving disabled access at leisure centre e.g. steps into pools, providing more outdoor activities in the local area, consideration of part-time opening, better managing overcrowding, etc.
Unclear/Not applicable	Unclear/Not applicable [Not shown on charts]

I. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Please tell us your gender identity

Questioning need to capture gender	Respondent questions the need to capture gender identity.
Non-binary	Non-binary
Female	Female

K. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Please tell us your sexual orientation

Pansexual	Pansexual
Questioning need to capture gender	Respondent questions the need to capture gender identity
Heteroflexible	Heteroflexible
Queer	Queer
Male	Male

Asexual	Asexual
Unclear	Unclear [Not shown on charts]