City, University of London

How have lockdown measures affected library services and usage, and what changes to library services should be carried forward to the "new normal"? A case study of the libraries at City, University of London.

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Abstract

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of life and work and meant altering or developing new processes to meet those changes and continue to deliver services. This has also been the case within academic libraries, who although were already largely shifting towards digital collections, found they had to pivot and change to continue to deliver services to students.

Aim

This study aims to quantify how library usage changed at City, University of London libraries, to explore how these changes affected library staff and students, and to identify if any changes that took place as a result of lockdown measures should be continued when normal service can resume.

Method

Library usage analytics data from the lockdown period were reviewed, and compared to past three years' data. Transcript data from the library's online chat application was quantified and reviewed. A previous survey of students at City that had been carried out by the library was analysed and the answers coded. Seven semi-structured interviews were carried out with different members of staff at the libraries at City.

Results

The research showed that many of the existing trends in library usage, such as reductions in print circulation and usage of CityLibrary Search were accelerated by the lockdown measures. Although print and library spaces were used less than in previous years, they are still a vital space for some students and for library staff. The new measures that were introduced, or existing ones that were prioritized, have made the library service a more well-rounded one, and better for students overall.

Conclusion

Although this is only a case study of one university library and did not include a bespoke survey of library users, it demonstrated the effects of lockdown on some key parts of library usage and services, and how these changes were perceived by staff, and to a lesser extent, students. It also provided recommendations for how the service could work going forwards, incorporating some of these new services or changes of focus.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals: CILIP

City, University of London: City

Click & Collect: C&C

Confidence interval: CI

Frequently asked questions: FAQs

Personal computer: PC

Library and Information Science & Technology Abstracts: LISTA

Information and Communications Technology: ICT

World Health Organization: WHO

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1. Introduction

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, it was declared a global public health emergency of international concern in January 2020, and as a pandemic in March 2020 (WHO, 2021). In an attempt to mitigate the spread of the virus, governments around the world initiated lockdowns and other restrictions, in the UK these measures were brought into effect in March 2020 and they required that universities close their physical premises (França, 2021). These closures have significantly disrupted higher education with reports estimating that closures to campuses and learning being moved online has affected "1.7 billion students in 192 countries" (Shi *et al.*, 2021). For many, these changes were unprecedented, as the University of Cambridge (2020) noted, "The University was no longer open to students, staff or visitors, for the first time since the Great Plague in 1665".

1.1. Research focus and value

The lockdown measures that started in 2020 have had a significant effect on academic libraries and on how users access information, resources and services. From users not being able to access physical collections or space within libraries, click & collect (C&C) and web-chat services being introduced and collection strategies being more heavily focused towards digital and e-resources (Bosch *et al.*, 2021; Limpitlaw *et al.*, 2020; Rafiq, M. *et al.*, 2021).

To better understand the implications of lockdown measures on the library, it's important to also quantify how these changes affected library usage. To identify the key areas of change, provide insight into the experiences of users and to help effectively plan library services going forward. Learning from this period of enforced distanced learning will be crucial for library services, as it potentially becomes the norm for universities to provide hybrid online/in-person courses (Enis, 2020).

This paper looks into how lockdown measures affected library usage at the libraries at City, University of London (from here referred to as City). This involves descriptive analysis of usage trends in areas such as items borrowed, enquiries and page visits

using data from LibInsights and an evaluation of chat enquiry logs looking into type and quantity of enquiries, data from LibWizard. These findings are supplemented with interviews with members of library staff and an existing survey carried out by City students to also gauge their experiences of the lockdown measures, and their opinions on what services worked well and should be carried forward to the new normal.

1.2. Research aim and objectives

The overall aim of this investigation is to explore the impact of lockdown measures on library usage at the libraries at City.

The specific objectives of this investigation are to:

1. Identify what the key areas of change in library services and usage were as a result of lockdown measures.
2. To critically evaluate the extent of change in those areas and implications for the library and users.
3. To explore members of the library staff's views on the effect of lockdown measures and what services they would want to see carried forward.
4. To formulate recommendations based on the usage data, staff and user opinions and the literature review as to what those services should be and how the library could work going forward.

1.3. Scope and definitions

The aim of the study is to look at library usage data from March 2020 - March 2021, compared with the same periods from the past three years, to determine how usage has changed and identify trends. The findings will then be considered with respect to the literature review, interviews with library staff and surveyed students to provide recommendations for the service going forward.

This research takes the form of a case study of City's libraries; Northampton Square, Business and Law Libraries. The more limited scope of a case study allows the project to go into more detail about the institution, however it does limit the extrapolation of any potential findings to other libraries.

The lockdown measures referred to in this paper are those implemented by City. These included shifting from in-person to online support for students, C&C services for books that can no longer be browsed in person, quarantining returned items and limited study spaces that have to be booked in advance (City, University of London, 2021). The "new normal" that is referred to in the title and within this proposal is referencing what library services will potentially look like once lockdown measures are lifted.

Library usage data is examined from the 12 month period from when lockdown began in March 2020. The data came from LibInsights and LibWizard respectively and was provided by City. Usage data includes enquiry volume by type and volume in person and/or online, FAQ views by month, online chat service enquiries by volume and type, number of items borrowed by month, and number of CityLibrary search page visits by month.

The literature review for this study considers university libraries within and outside of the UK. This is because, at time of writing, the majority of the literature reviewed on the effect of lockdown measures on academic libraries has come from the USA, and although different countries have had different lockdown measures the responses from libraries have been broadly similar.

Interviews were conducted with members of the City library staff to gauge their opinions on how library usage and services have been affected by the lockdown measures, and what aspects they think worked well and should be carried forward into the future. The results of the interviews are also intended to bring more qualitative insight to results of usage data.

2. Research Methods

The purpose of this paper is to explore and quantify the impact of lockdown measures on library usage at City. The research was carried out using a mixed-methods approach of a literature review and a case study of City's libraries. This study consists of both quantitative and qualitative data, including library analytics data, interviews with library staff and student feedback provided from an existing survey. This chapter will outline and explain the overall research strategy as well as each research method, why a particular available data set was chosen and the framework for the subsequent analysis. This section will conclude with a discussion of any limitations or potential ethical issues within the study.

2.1. Research Strategy

Case studies can be simply defined as a research method where a single example is studied in great detail with the purpose of providing "a holistic account of the case and in-depth knowledge of the specific through rich descriptions situated in context" (Pickard, 2013, p.102). This research method was deemed appropriate for this study partially for convenience purposes, as a current student at City the researcher was more easily able to get access to the case being studied, but also because the research purpose fulfilled Yin's (2018) criteria for the use of case studies; the research questions are "how" or "why" questions, the researcher has little or no control over behavioural events, and the focus of the study is a contemporary phenomenon. In an effort to make the findings of the study more relatable to other institutions, it was decided to carry out an instrumental case study, where the purpose of the research is to investigate a particular phenomenon and the case being studied becomes the vehicle for that investigation, rather than being the primary focus (Pickard, 2013).

The choice was made to use a mixed-methods approach to allow for the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to address the same research questions. This was deemed necessary due to the potential fallibility of the data collection techniques in isolation. Library analytics alone can be limiting, as data on what happened or what was used does not necessarily indicate how it was used, what

the experience was and do not regard non-library users (Pickard, 2013). Furthermore, the use of interviews with only a small number of participants with individual perspectives cannot be expected to fully describe the situation and can potentially be affected by human fallibility or potential bias (Yin, 2018). However, the triangulation of these two data collection techniques, combined with the literature review, will be able to inform the findings of each individual data set.

The findings of each of these methods have been synthesised to answer the relevant research questions and to inform the overall conclusion. How each research method relates to the research objectives is shown in Figure 1.

2.2. Literature review

Rationale

The purpose of the literature review was to see what studies had already been carried out on this topic, and to identify any potential gaps in the research (Pickard, 2013). As this is a case study, the literature review cannot directly contribute to the fulfillment of research objectives, instead the findings are intended to inform them by helping to provide questions for the interviews with library staff as well as context for the overall conclusions reached and recommendations given (Yin, 2018).

Method

Relevant literature was identified using sources such as the City library catalogue, Web of Science and LISTA, as well as university blogs and industry sites such as CILIP and Ithaka S+R. The focus of the review was only on literature specifically about academic libraries and COVID-19. In the relevant databases searches were made using the keywords academic library OR academic libraries OR university library OR university libraries AND pandemic OR covid-19 OR coronavirus. At first the search was limited to articles from the UK, however it quickly became apparent that the majority of the literature on the subject came from outside of this area. The decision was made to expand the search, as the lockdown measures were largely similar, regardless of geographic location.
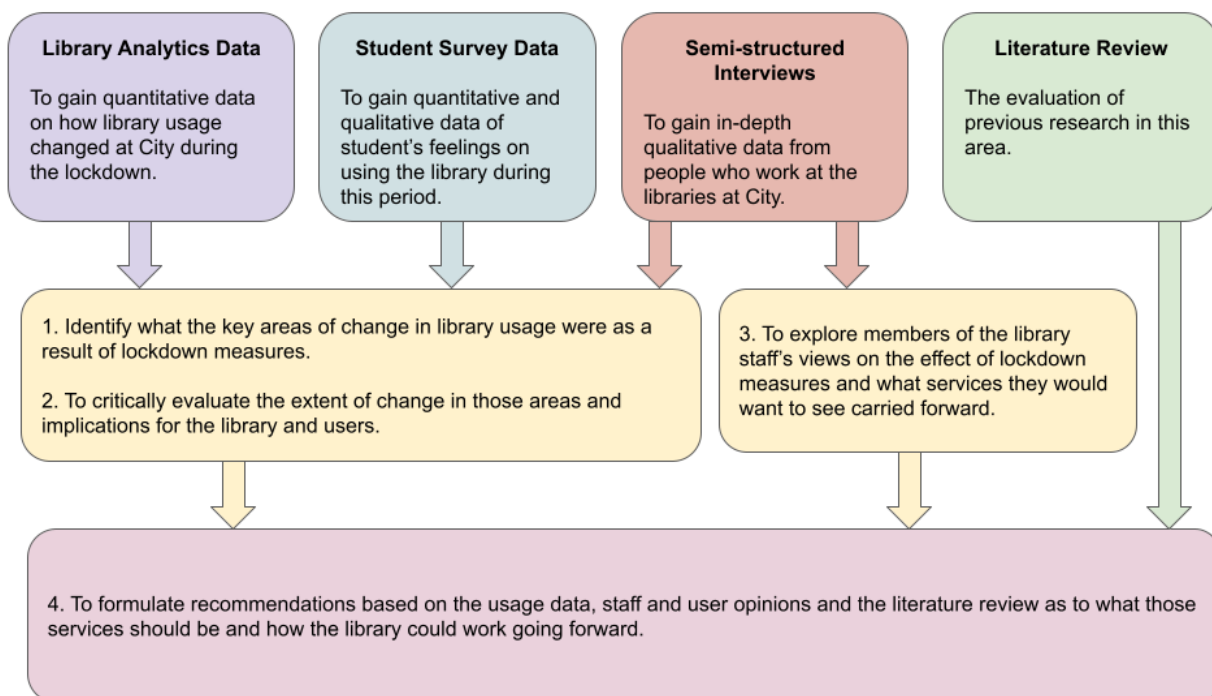
Figure 1: Relationship between research methods and objectives.

Pieces were selected for review if they were able to provide insight towards any of the research objectives; if they cited a change to library services as a result of lockdown measures; if they cited library staff or users' views on the effect of lockdown on services; if they utilised library usage or analytics data; or if they highlighted any other emerging issues that warranted further exploration in the interviews with staff. Once deemed relevant to the research, Pickard's (2013) evaluation and critical analysis framework was used to record each piece of literature.

Framework for analysis

Once the literature had been recorded and analysed using Pickard's framework, the key findings were then linked and mapped to each other either by their relevance to a particular research objective, or by any of the other trends that had emerged from the research. Conclusions were drawn based on these findings, and these in turn helped to inform the interview questions for library staff, contextualise the library analytics data and overall conclusions of the study.

2.3. Library data

2.3.1. Library analytics data

Rationale

The purpose of using analytics data was to gain insight into how staff and students used the library during the pandemic and identify any trend changes. The benefit of using analytics data is that it offers "a direct and immediately available record of what people have done: not what they say they might, or would do; not what they were prompted to say; not what they thought they did" (Pickard, 2013, p.257). Furthermore, as several years worth of data is available, it also facilitated the study of the case across several different points in time, in what Yin (2018) calls a longitudinal case study. The library analytics data is therefore focussed on meeting research objectives one, two and four.

Method

The data to be analysed came from LibInsights and was made available by City in a dashboard. To get a better idea of user trends over time and potentially how they changed during the pandemic, data from March 2020 - March 2021 was compared with the previous three years' data. To avoid the risk of making the research fit the data that was provided, only the data that is relevant to answering the research questions was used. The raw data was then downloaded from the dashboard into Microsoft Excel to be tabulated and analysed.

Framework for analysis

All the data was tabulated and then represented by an appropriate graph for the kind of data on display. Descriptive statistics such as the mean average, median, mode and standard deviation were utilised to help present the quantitative data and identify any trends in user behaviour (Biggam, 2015). To measure if there was statistically significant difference between the compared years' data, a two tailed dependent t test was used. It was decided to use this test as it is more powerful than the independent t test and even though it is likely that different groups of people made up the data that was provided, as

it all came from the same case, they are still associated with each other in a meaningful way (Frey, 2016). This analysis of variance was calculated using an online calculator from Social Science Statistics (https://www.socscistatistics.com/). These findings were also complimented by measuring the percentage change between the different years' data.

2.3.2. Library transcript data

Rationale

The purpose of using the library transcript data was to help flesh out the data on the number of online enquiries to also see what types of enquiries were being made. It was also an opportunity to see if the types of queries being raised had changed during the lockdown and to gain insight into the library experiences of staff and students during this period. The findings from this dataset help to inform research objectives one, two and four.

Method

The raw data from LibAnswers was provided by City, however, as this contained identifiable information about staff and students it was held on the university's password protected Microsoft OneDrive account. From there the data was anonymised and the types of enquiries coded using the library's in-person enquiries criteria. Once the original data was anonymised, it was deleted from OneDrive. A back-up of the anonymised file was kept on the researcher's personal, password protected computer. All copies of the data files are to be deleted once this paper is submitted.

Due to the fact that there were a large number of entries to be manually anonymised and coded, and there was limited time in which to carry out this research project, the decision was made to only look at two snapshots of data, and compare them to the same period from the previous year. The two weeks that were chosen were the weeks with the most enquiries, Teaching Week 3 of the undergraduate autumn term in October; and the week with the median number of enquiries, Teaching Week 2 of the undergraduate spring term in February. If time had permitted, it would have been

beneficial to code all of the data for the year, however, the snapshots still provided enough data to get a sense of the enquiry changes.

Framework for analysis

Once the data had been coded, descriptive statistics were utilised to analyse aspects of user enquiries e.g. wait times, chat times and message counts. The results were tabulated and put into appropriate graphs to help identify changes. The proportion of query types was also calculated and demonstrated as a percentage. The potential findings from the data were informed by the chat transcripts, which helped to give context as to why these changes occurred and also the student experience of using the library during lockdown.

2.3.3. Library survey data
Rationale

Similarly to the transcript data, the purpose of the library feedback survey data was to help gain insight into the student experience of using library spaces during the pandemic. The findings are also focussed on research objectives one, two and four. Although it would have been preferable to carry out my own student survey, due to time constraints this wasn't feasible. Therefore, this existing dataset that had been gathered by City was used.

Method

In September 2020, City library allowed students to work in the library again for the first time since March. Study spaces had to be booked in advance, the booking slots lasted for three hours and could only be booked a maximum of four times a week. The 1,625 people who had engaged with the booking services during the period 28/09/20 - 30/10/20 (dates inclusive) were contacted to ask if they would be happy to do a follow-up survey. Of that number, 345 people agreed to be surveyed, and 113 surveys were completed. There is an assumption that respondents only completed the survey once, though this cannot be known for certain as responses were anonymous. The survey consisted of five questions (Appendix D) with multiple choice responses, and a

free text box for other comments. The summaries of the findings, as well as the raw data and open responses, were shared with the researcher by City. This data was then reviewed, tabulated and analysed.

Framework for analysis

Due to the nature of the questions being asked, percentages were used to quantify the "proportion of people responding in a particular way to each question" (Denscombe, 2017, p.281). These response summaries were then put into appropriate graphs to help illustrate the findings. This quantitative data was also informed by using the qualitative data from the open responses, these provided greater insight into the experiences of students in the library during the pandemic.

2.4. Interviews
Rationale

The aim of carrying out interviews was to gain insight from library staff at City on the effect of lockdown measures on library services and usage, and also to add qualitative data to help corroborate or challenge the findings from the data analysis. The interviews were used to inform all the research objectives. Semi-structured interviews have been deemed the most suitable form for case studies by Yin (2018, p.98) because "you are intruding into the participants' world rather than the reverse". Giving the interviewee more agency in the direction the interview took was hoped to facilitate covering areas that the interviewer potentially had not considered but also to reflect the participants' relativist perspectives on the objectives of the study.

Method

As recommended by Pickard (2013), an interview topic guide was developed with a checklist of all the key areas that needed to be covered, potential follow up questions if needed, as well as a framework for how the interview would take place (Appendix H). This was to ensure that the research aims were addressed and the findings of the data analysis explored. The interview framework was first to find out about the interviewees' role and their feelings on how it was affected by the pandemic; then to explore changes

to library services and usage; and finally, whether there had been any changes that had occurred to their role or the library service as a result of the pandemic that they would like to see continued when or if normal service can resume. Under the guidance of Biggam (2015), the interviews made use of "open ended questions to encourage meaningful responses" (p.263) but also left room to ask more questions if something emerged that was of interest.

A pilot study was carried out to test the suitability of the interview structure and the questions. The interview worked well and was able to address all the research objectives effectively. However, although the pilot interview did not result in any formal changes to the interview process, it was beneficial for the researcher to develop their interview technique as they had never carried out an interview before. As the pilot was carried out with a member of City library staff, the findings from the interview have also been incorporated into the study.

An introductory email was circulated to staff at City to find volunteers to be interviewed (Appendix G). From this, six people replied to say that they would be interested in taking part in the research, and as they all worked in different job roles and in different libraries at City, it was deemed that all would be suitable for interview. A second email was then sent to them outlining further information about the study as well as the participant information sheet (Appendix E) and consent form (Appendix F). Once these forms were signed and returned, a suitable time was found for the interviews to take place. All interviews took place over Microsoft Teams and were recorded. Under the advice of Yin (2018) on shorter case study interviews, they all took place in under an hour and assumed a conversational manner. Every effort was taken by the interviewer to ensure that the way questions were articulated didn't elicit biased responses. Once the interviews were transcribed and anonymised (Appendix I), the recordings were deleted.

Framework for analysis

The transcripts were analysed using advice from Biggam (2015) and Pickard (2013). The interview data was broken down into themed subsets, some of the themes had

already been identified through the data analysis and the literature review but others emerged from the interviews themselves. The interviewees' comments were then compared, contrasted and synthesised into a rich picture of the experiences and opinions of library staff during this period.

2.5. Limitations of the study

A limitation of this research is that because of the specificity of the study, the findings will not necessarily be applicable outside of the particular case (Biggam, 2015). However, although this is a valid concern for the findings of any case study, this limitation has been acknowledged and addressed in the research objectives and the findings are not attempting to be generalisable.

Furthermore, the crux of this research is the analysis of library analytics data. Using these datasets can have potential limitations as they "cannot give an explanation of why users are doing what they do, nor how satisfied they are" (Bawden & Robinson, 2012, p.313), they don't take into account non-users of the library and "a researcher may use particular statistics primarily because they are available", rather than because they are suitable (Pickard, 2013, p.258). Triangulation of different research techniques was used to address the first limitation. Unfortunately, in regards to non-library users, it was beyond the scope of this study to survey these people. Finally, to the point of only using datasets that are available rather than ones that are relevant, the researcher ensured that all the data that was selected to analyse was relevant to the research objectives that had been set, rather than changing the direction of the research to fit what data was available.

In contrast to this, another key part of this study was the use of semi-structured interviews with library staff. These interviews consisted of a small sample of staff and so perhaps cannot be considered as a complete representation of how library staff at City viewed the effects of lockdown measures. However, this potential limitation of the sample size was mitigated by having as diverse a representation of staff as possible for this small research project. Furthermore, with interviews of this nature there is also the

possibility that interviewees' responses could be biased or inaccurate due to poor recall (Yin, 2018). However, as there was not a feasible way to audit the accuracy of all the interviewees' responses in this study, they are taken as truth or at least the true opinion of the respondent.

2.6. Ethical concerns

All participants in this study were over 18 and were not considered to be part of a vulnerable group. This study did not pose any ethical concerns. City's ethical guidelines were followed (Appendix C). For the interviews, all participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form (Appendices E & F). However, there was the potential concern that as the interviewees are from a named institution it would be possible to identify them. For this reason, any thing within the transcript that could be used to identify the participant was redacted. While someone who has a knowledge of the library staff could potentially identify them, as they had been informed of the nature of the study and no sensitive information was revealed, this was deemed low risk.

Permission was received from the university for the use of library analytics data, LibChat transcripts and their own previous questionnaire data for this study. However, the decision was made by the researcher to not include any quotations from students, as although they had consented to City to use their data, they had not specifically consented for use in this study.

There is also potential room for bias from the researcher's perspective, as I am a student at City. However, I have not worked at City, nor do I have an existing relationship with anyone who works there. Due to these considerations, the potential for bias was also deemed to be low risk.

3. Literature review

This literature review explores the effects of lockdown measures on university libraries, with the aim of identifying gaps in research in this area and to help inform the objectives of this paper. As previously stated, as the focus of this paper is the case study of the libraries at City, the findings of the literature review are for contextual and comparative purposes, rather than fulfilling any of the research objectives in their own right. However, the review will address the research objectives within the wider literature; beginning with a review of the general effects of lockdown measures on university library staff, services and usage, as well as evaluating any instances within the literature where these changes have been quantified. This will be followed by a review of how collection strategies have changed during the pandemic, and other trends that emerged from the literature. These sections will also take into account the views of university library staff and users and any learnings from this period. The review will conclude with a summary of the key trends and the current landscape of the literature in this area as well as the justification for this study and how it aims to advance the understanding of this disruptive period.

3.1. Working operations

A trend that emerged from the literature reviewed was the changes made to the working patterns of library staff necessitated by lockdown measures. Operations and services that were usually carried out in-person, or were a hybrid of in-person and online delivery, shifted to virtual-only with the majority of library staff working remotely and for reduced hours (Carbery *et al.*, 2021; Iglesias, 2020; Mbambo-Thata, 2021). As well as physical buildings being closed, access to print collections were limited or eliminated entirely, and collection strategies shifted to expand digital offerings. However, some libraries still had a small number of staff work on-site to assist with services that could not be carried out remotely, such as checking on the status of the library spaces and processing book returns and interlibrary loans (Walsh & Rana, 2020; Mehta & Wang, 2020). These observed trends are also supported by Tolppanen's (2021) survey of access of library services during the early stages of the lockdown where 83.5% of respondents indicated that the physical library was closed to patrons; 14% remained

partially open with reduced hours or reduced building spaces available; and only 2.5% indicated that their library remained open without a reduction to either hours or spaces. Although it seems surprising that any libraries were still open during the initial months of the pandemic, these were likely libraries with largely physical collections that still needed to be accessed at this time and could not be replicated online.

Furthermore, there is a divide in the literature in regards to how straightforward it was for libraries to switch to virtual working, services and instruction. Institutions that already had an established distance learning offering or staff that were accustomed to remote working were well placed to pivot (Enis, 2020; Walsh & Rana, 2020). This was also noted in Rysavy & Michalak's (2020) paper on managing their library team while working from home, as their services and collections were nearly all virtual and they had existing tools that allowed their staff to communicate and collaborate, they were able to provide a continuity of service. However, for those institutions without these operations in place they were forced to "reinvent themselves and evolve an entire suite of online services" (Marzoukou, 2020, p.270). Facilitating these changes has also been made more difficult as the previous years have been a time of budget and staffing constraints for academic libraries (Frederick & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020).

However, regardless of how easily library staff could pivot services to virtual environments, it is clear from the reflections of those working during this time that for many it made working conditions difficult, reduced the effective fulfillment of job responsibilities and collaboration between staff, and also had a negative effect on mental wellbeing (Mehta & Wang, 2020).

3.2. Click & Collect

Kargbo's (2020) case study of the University of Southampton's response to lockdown cited a survey that found that out of 741 students from across UK universities 76% of respondents said they preferred printed textbooks over their electronic counterparts. The same survey also found that lecturers rated physical textbooks as the best for "concentration, educational outcomes, and ease of annotation and note-taking" (Kargbo,

2020, p.228). These findings were echoed by Shi's *et al.* (2021) study on the impact of the pandemic on Chinese college students' information behaviour and library needs, where some students noted that extended periods of reading on a screen had led to vision issues. It is arguably for these reasons, and to help ensure access to physical materials and collections that many university libraries introduced C&C services that allowed print books to be checked out and returned safely for users and library workers (Bosch *et al.*, 2021). One paper noted that university libraries in Sweden took further steps to ensure access to physical collections by sending books to borrowers' homes and paying for the postage to have them returned (Temiz & Salelkar, 2020). Although book delivery services may not be feasible for all university libraries, it is clear from the literature reviewed that the C&C services were widely implemented and have proved to be popular (Nejdl & Lewis, 2020).

3.3. Returning to the library

As previously noted, in Tolppanen's (2021) survey of access of library services during the early stages of the lockdown, around 2.5% of libraries surveyed remained open even at the height of the pandemic. One such library was the Northern Arizona University Cline Library, which was declared as an essential service and was allowed to keep its doors open to students. A case study of this library was carried out that reviewed who was accessing the library buildings. This study revealed that a steady flow of people continued to use the library "and suggests that students across disciplines relied on the library building as a place of research and discovery and corroborated the importance of the library in their academic success" (See, 2020, p.24). Although case studies are often not generalisable, further research in this area would be beneficial to see if this was more widely the case among other libraries that remained open during this time.

By the summer of 2020, many libraries that had previously been closed to students began to reopen their doors, however, with new safety and social distancing measures in place. From the literature reviewed this consistently meant that limitations were imposed on the number of people who could be in the building, furniture and study

spaces were reduced to increase space between patrons, one-way systems were introduced, plexiglass was put up to protect staff and additional cleaning was carried out (Koos *et al.*, 2021; Köppen & Lücke, 2021; Temiz & Salelkar, 2020). It has been noted that even with the growth of digital services, library spaces continue "to be an essential element within the university, not only to access its collections, but also due to issues related to the development of the university community" (Martínez-Cardama & Pacios, 2020). This notion seems to be supported by the surveyed literature, which cite student and lecturer preference for physical books over electronic alternatives (Kargbo, 2020; Shi *et al.*, 2021), the difficulty for staff to collaborate and work effectively remotely (Hudson-Vitale & Waltz, 2020; Mehta & Wang; 2020), services that fall through the cracks or cannot be easily replicated digitally and the findings that access to a library is important for academic success (See, 2020). Future research into these areas would be beneficial to see if reduced or limited access to library spaces affected academic success and the wellbeing of students and staff.

3.4. Digital focus

However, even with the noted importance of library spaces for universities, a key development that emerged from the literature was the need for libraries to improve their digital services in order to facilitate distance learning, provide access to collections and to act as an information point. These digital offerings were crucial when libraries were closed, but also for those who could not, or did not feel comfortable accessing the physical spaces once they had reopened. As noted in papers by Enis (2020), Nejdl & Lewis (2020) and Cohn & Hyams (2021), the library website, which was important at the best of times, became the sole presence of the library. Sites were restructured to highlight e-resources and online services and library catalogues search functions were altered to promote online items. From the literature reviewed and the data on this subject from Temiz & Salelkar (2020), digital services generally didn't need to be created to service distance learning, but instead, existing services just became more vital and visible. This finding is also supported by Shi's *et al.* (2021) study, which reported from the students surveyed, that they lacked a clear understanding of the library's online resources and services or that subscription databases are part of the

library online resources. Shi *et al.* argues that more must be done by libraries to promote and raise awareness of their digital services, and it seems that the lockdown measures, by necessity, have given university libraries that opportunity.

On the other hand, although in some libraries the pandemic allowed existing digital services to take centre stage, there were still some in-person services that needed virtual alternatives. The ability to respond to user queries is a crucial aspect of university library services, although many libraries already had online chat services in place, several papers from the literature cited that libraries launched online chat services for the first time (Cohn & Hyams, 2021; Nejdl & Lewis, 2020). It is perhaps unsurprising that these services increased in popularity during the lockdown period, Mehta & Wang (2020) noted that before the lockdown very few reference questions were asked virtually, and this shift was also evidenced at the University of Toronto libraries which reported a 50% increase in demand for online support (Walsh & Rana, 2020).

However, despite the growing popularity of this digital alternative, several papers revealed that overall reference requests had dropped significantly from the previous year (Mehta & Wang, 2020). Howes *et al.* (2021) in their case study of a university library adapting to remote services found that "during the shut-down the total number of reference requests fell to around 44% of the requests received during the same period in 2019 and have not greatly increased since the Library reopened" (p.37). In contrast to this, literature search requests significantly increased in popularity, with the library team receiving nearly as many requests during the first four months of working remotely as it did in all the previous year. Although this is only one case study, it would be interesting to see if this trend was observed by other institutions, as shifts in demand may be down to the effects of lockdown measures, but may also be partially attributed to lack of student awareness of these services.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, with the dangers of misinformation around an infectious disease the "role of academic librarians in helping students to develop information, digital and media literacy skills" so that they can independently select,

access and use credible sources of information arguably became even more important (Martzoukou, 2020, p.271). So these functions of providing training as well as information literacy classes also needed to be adapted to a remote-only context. This largely involved holding training sessions using video conferencing software, or in some cases, library staff would create short videos to help educate library users (Gotschall *et al.*, 2021; Howes *et al.*, 2021). It was observed in several papers that in the the past these technologies weren't readily utilised due to the lack of time, budget or staff skills to bring them to fruition (Doug, 2021; Lindsay *et al.*, 2021; Mashiyane *et al.*, 2020).

However, when there was no other alternative, they were quickly adopted and they proved to be popular and effective. Holding training sessions online led to a reported increase to the numbers of those attending, as one member of library staff reported, "we've delivered more training sessions, to larger groups of people (in fact our numbers more or less doubled)" (University of Cambridge, 2020). The findings of Koos *et al.* (2021) evidenced that the online training videos and sessions attracted more attendees than the pre-pandemic in-person sessions. Although it was noted in one paper that these online alternatives lack "the warmth of in-person consultations" (Nejdl & Lewis, 2020, p.19), from the literature reviewed they have been well received and will continue to be used even when in-person services can resume. This period of evolution by necessity may have accelerated improvement to library services in the long run, as Martzoukou (2020) argues, these types of changes may have taken years to materialise otherwise due to "logistic, operational or bureaucratic hurdles" (p.267). Further research will be necessary to determine whether these new services continue once in person training can resume, but from the current findings it is demonstrably a more effective medium for reaching larger numbers of students.

3.5. New collection direction
University libraries with largely digital collections reported little interruption to their users' accessing library collections. However, for hybrid libraries, or those with a predominantly print collection, the lockdown measures meant having to alter their collection strategies to focus on providing digital resources for students who could no longer access their

collections (Howes *et al.*, 2021; Limpitlaw *et al.*, 2020). Although portions of collections exist only in print, for those that did have digital versions, library staff worked on acquiring more digital resources as well as access to databases and other online collections (Carbery *et al.*, 2020; Limpitlaw *et al.*, 2020). This change to more digitally focused collection strategies was observed in the Ithaka S+R US Library Survey which found that the "percentage allocated to print resources... has steadily decreased while the percentage allocated to electronic versions of these resources has continuously increased" (Frederick & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). It seems likely that the lockdown measures have accelerated the transition in some libraries towards electronic resources, with Bosch *et al.* (2021) going further to predict that the pandemic combined with decreased library collections budgets means that in 2022 "libraries will undoubtedly drop print subscriptions" entirely (p.22).

Furthermore, an often cited reason why university libraries aren't able to provide enough e-books for every student or access to every database and collection, is because of the cost. The pandemic then exacerbated this problem (França, 2021). Fortunately, many publishers and journals eased licensing restrictions, extended free trials to databases or made more of their resources available (Carbery *et al.*, 2020; Shi *et al.*, 2021). Although this was beneficial in helping to ensure that students had access to resources that they needed, it was only a temporary solution to an ongoing problem. The benefits to the widening of open access during this time was reflected in the literature, however, so was the restrictive nature of current acquisition models that prevent access to information. The free access was only temporary, and library budgets will struggle to continue to access all the materials that users may now expect (Enis, 2020). As was observed by Morriello (2020), "The coronavirus outbreak shows us how science could progress in giant steps if it was always open. Now the time has come to follow this road".

3.6. Mental health

In contrast to this, an interesting theme that also emerged from the literature was the need for libraries to provide additional services to help with mental well-being. During

this time, students were widely reported to be experiencing increased feelings of anxiety and isolation (Bladek, 2021). Cox & Brewster's (2020) study on library support for student mental health in the UK before and during the pandemic found that libraries can positively contribute to student mental health by creating leisure reading collections, having designated spaces for contemplation, as well as holding events such as dog petting sessions. Although many of these activities are tied to the physical library, many universities adapted and provided other resources, including promoting materials for leisure, and holding online events and discussions to try and replicate the well-being benefits students could normally get from being in the library (Nejdl and Lewis, 2020; Rysavy *et al.,* 2021).

3.7. Issues of access

If the response of academic libraries to lockdown measures from the literature was to be simply summated, it would be the necessary adapting of services, collections and library work to focus on digital alternatives. Although this was arguably the only way that studying could continue during lockdown, as Enis (2020) noted in their paper, "the current crisis has revealed that many students are left behind when courses are moved online" (p.29). An observation that was echoed by Ajibade & Mutula (2021), Mbambo-Thata (2021) Kargbo (2020), Sales *et al.* (2020), and as Mehta & Wang (2020) noted, with the shift to working from home, a digital divide was also observed among some members of library staff. Although there have been some noted benefits to digital services, they make access to ICTs and an internet connection a necessity, which is not a reality for many (Enis, 2020).

Furthermore, the LJ Academic COVID-19 Response Survey 2020 found that the majority of universities expect that they will retain an online component to courses when in-person classes start again (Enis, 2020). This means it is likely that any additional or altered services that were introduced during lockdown will need to be retained to help facilitate virtual learning. If this is the case, more will also need to be done to help some students bridge the digital divide, and this could potentially come from libraries, with the lending of ICTs as well as wifi hotspots (Mehta & Wang, 2020).

3.8. Summary and emerging issues

The literature review has shown that lockdown measures were disruptive for academic libraries, their staff and for students. With the majority of physical locations closed, and the operations and services that could continue forced to move online. There was an evident divide between libraries that already had digital collections and services in place, and those that had to adapt quickly in the changing circumstances. However, the complete shift to virtual working was generally regarded as detrimental to staff mental wellbeing and their ability to fulfill their job responsibilities.

Another notable finding from the review was the importance placed on access to physical spaces and collections. This was not just because digital copies are not available for all items, but also because of reported student and faculty preference towards using physical items. This led to many libraries introducing new C&C or book delivery systems to continue access. Furthermore, data collected from when libraries could reopen showed that there was still a continued steady use of library buildings. As well as this, feedback from both staff and students cite that being able to access the building was seen as beneficial for success in both work and study.

However, even though importance was still placed on physical collections and spaces, it was clear from the literature that lockdown measures demonstrated the necessity of digital collections and services. From restructuring websites, introducing online chat services and providing training over video conferencing software. Although many university libraries had these digital services in place before the lockdown, they became vital during the pandemic, their usage largely increased or even surpassed their in-person alternatives, and a general lack of knowledge of academic library's digital services within the student population was exposed. It is clear that going forward some of the digital services that emerged are more effective and should be continued, but also that more needs to be done to advertise these services to students.

This new digital focus also spread into collection management, with access to physical items limited, more time and budget was allocated into acquiring e-resources. Although the general trend in academic library collections has been shifting away from print towards digital, it was cited several times within the literature that lockdown had sped up that process. The need for students to be able to access research was also recognised by publishers who lifted some licensing restrictions to make more of their resources open access. However, as was noted in the literature, this was only a temporary measure and more must be done in the future to ensure that access to information is not limited by big deal acquisition models.

Similarly, as well as citing the importance of digital libraries it was also apparent within the literature that shifting the majority of services and collections online creates access barriers to those without appropriate ICTs or wifi. This is a prevalent issue, and with many surveyed universities stating that they intend to keep some online learning going forward, the libraries will have to follow suit and retain the new virtual services they introduced during lockdown. Some suggestions for how libraries can help mitigate this divide was also found in the literature, such as by lending students devices and wifi hotspots.

3.9. Justification for research

The literature review demonstrated the significant effects of lockdown on library services and usage and that, as the dust settles, there is still much that needs to be analysed and reviewed. Although the majority of the reviewed literature is beneficial to the research objectives of this paper, little so far has been based on usage data, but has instead been focused on personal experiences. Those that have brought in library analytics or surveyed staff and students have been of relatively small sample size, only focused on a limited area of usage, and are predominantly from institutions outside of the UK. As previously stated, the pandemic has necessitated a shift in library services and usage, and as many of these changes may become permanent, any further data to help understand its effect and help plan for the future will be beneficial. However, although this study will have greater relevance to UK institutions that are currently

underrepresented in the literature, the findings and data revealed should help provide insights and comparisons for other institutions as well.

4. Description and analysis of library data

The library analytics data was taken from a LibInsight data dashboard provided by City. Datasets were used that could help with objectives 1, 2 and 4 of the study. These datasets are; the number of items borrowed, number of CityLibrary Search page visits, number of FAQ page views and number of LibAnswers enquiries. This chapter provides an overview and analysis of these datasets, and relates them back to the appropriate research objectives. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and any emerging issues that were identified.

4.1. Items borrowed

The number of items borrowed data looks at the number of physical items that were borrowed across City libraries. The dataset compares items borrowed from March 2020 - February 2021 with the same time period from the previous three years.

Unsurprisingly, with access to the library's physical collection restricted there was a statistically significant drop in the number of items borrowed compared to the previous year[1]. Though it is worth noting that once items could be borrowed again that many people made use of the C&C service to borrow items, and although the numbers were reduced, the peaks and troughs of borrowing trends remained consistent with previous years.

This data potentially supports several findings from the literature review. Firstly, that surveyed university staff and students have a preference towards physical documents and books over their digital alternatives; so even with limited access to the library, with students distance learning and the concern over travelling to campus they are still willing to come to the library to borrow physical items. Secondly, the licensing of e-resources is very expensive and often restricts the number of people who can access them at any one time, or, there may not be a digital version of a required item. For this

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[1] For all *t* test calculations, see Appendix K.

reason, students may need to come to campus to borrow physical items because the e-version of it is unavailable or does not exist.
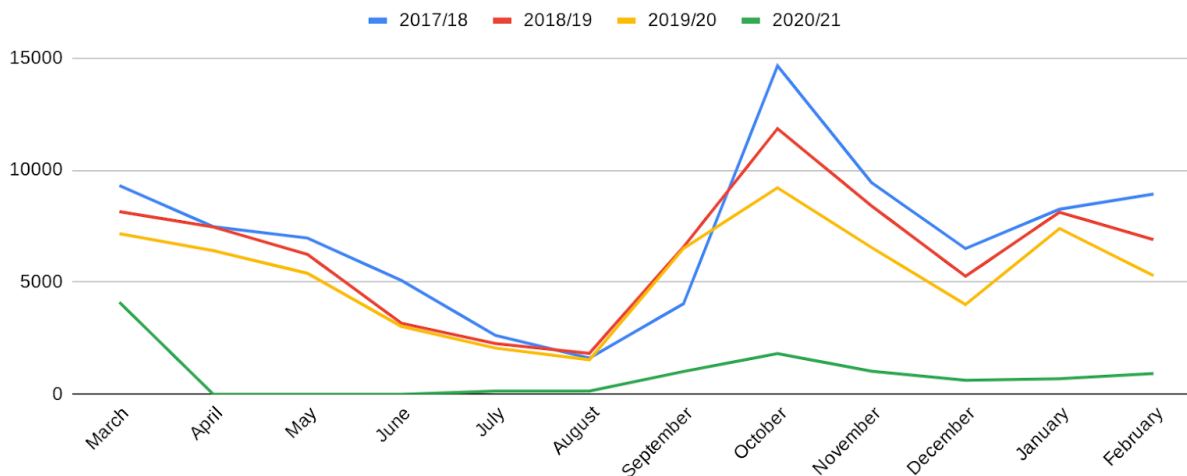
Figure 2: Number of items borrowed.

Table 1: Analysis of number of items borrowed.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total number of items borrowed	84932	76266	64598	10531
Year on Year % increase or decrease		-10.2%	-15.3%	-83.7%
Mean	7077.7	6355.5	5383.2	877.6
Median	7225	6737.5	5906	661.5
Standard Deviation	3516.5	2873.6	2311.4	1161.5
Statistically significant increase or decrease		No	Yes	Yes

On the other hand, when comparing the data to previous three years, the number of items borrowed has been decreasing steadily, with there being statistically significant decreases between the years 2018/19 and 2019/20 and a 10.2% decrease between the years 2017/18 and 2018/19. This data suggests that physical items are becoming less popular among students and would likely correlate with an increased use in digital items. Future research will need to be done to see how these numbers look once normal service can resume within the libraries at City, but it may be that this has brought

about a change in how students access information and sped up the process of the library collection being a digital one. If this is the case, it would have significant implications for collection strategies and library spaces. What is clear, however, is that physical collections were still utilised and will likely continue to play an important part in university libraries for reasons of access, availability and preference.

4.2. CityLibrary Search page visits

The CityLibrary Search page visits looks at the number of visitors to the CityLibrary search page (https://libraryservices.city.ac.uk/), which acts as a gateway to the library's digital services; including searching the catalogue, accessing databases, library guides, research support, reading lists, customer support and information on adjustments to services as a result of COVID-19. The dataset compares page views from March 2020 - February 2021, with the same time period from the previous three years.

Similarly to the items borrowed data, the numbers for CityLibrary Search page visits have also been steadily decreasing. However, although the reductions have not been by a statistically significant amount (Table 2) it is still interesting to note that during the lockdown, when the library's digital services and collections were arguably of increasing importance that there was not an increase, statistically significant or otherwise, on the previous three years' numbers.

The literature review could offer some explanations as to why these numbers might be in decline, from a reported decrease in student enrollment numbers as a result of the pandemic (Kovacs, 2021) to several surveyed universities citing that students lack an awareness of the library's digital offering and instead look for the same resources elsewhere. The CityLibrary Search page is also a gateway to other pages, so it may be that more students are taking different routes to get to the same destinations, such as through direct links from Moodle or by using external search engines to find information.

CityLibrary Search page visits
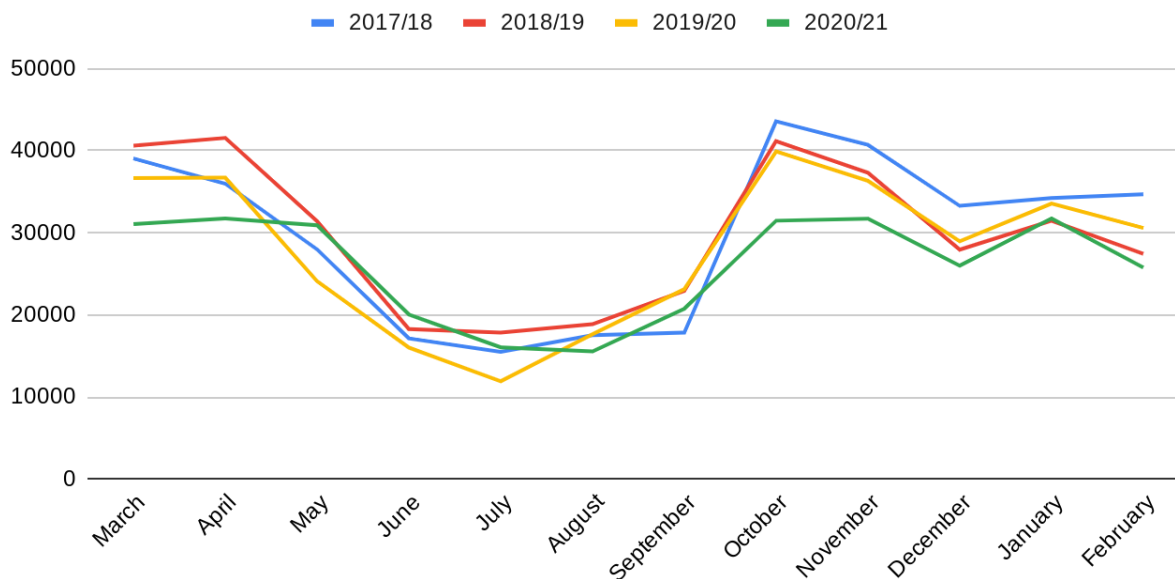
Figure 3: CityLibrary Search page visits.

However, although these are only speculative explanations as to why there may have been a decrease in visitors, this data does suggest that student's information seeking behaviours are becoming increasingly less dependent on the library, if this is the case, more must be done to advertise library services to students, and to teach information literacy skills for utilising a digital library.

In contrast to this, although the data for 2020/21 matches the overall peaks and troughs of visits from previous years (Figure 3), the standard deviation is much smaller (Table 2). This implies that although there was a slight drop in overall visitors to the page, it was visited more consistently than in previous years.

4.3. FAQ page views

The FAQ page views data shows the number of visitors to the City frequently asked questions page (https://libanswers.city.ac.uk/) which provides answers to common questions and queries that users might have about the library and its services. The dataset compares page views from March 2020 - February 2021, with the same time period from the previous three years.

Table 2: Analysis of CityLibrary Search page visits.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total	357687	356950	335708	312961
Year on Year % increase or decrease		-0.2%	-5.9%	-6.7%
Mean	29807.3	29745.8	27975.7	26080.1
Median	33775.5	29686	29791	28467.5
Standard Deviation	10223.5	9036.7	9289.5	6395.9
Statistically significant increase or decrease		No	No	No

In contrast to the items borrowed and CityLibrary Search data, the visits to the library FAQ have been increasing across the four year period being analysed for this study. There were statistically significant increases in the periods of 2018/19 and 2019/20 (Table 3) as well as a slight increase during the lockdown period. Although the increase during the pandemic is less significant than in previous years, the standard deviation of the data for that period is much smaller. This implies that the page was being used more frequently and more consistently during the pandemic.

Although it would be understandable to expect a more significant increase in visits considering the circumstances of the lockdown period and the need for students to get up to date advice on using the library, it is interesting that this is an area of growth when the other analysed areas are in decline. This may be because a link to the FAQ page is embedded on the CityLibrary Search page, as well as on the results pages when you search the collection, making it more visible to those who browse the library's online catalogue. But it may also speak to the information seeking behaviours of the library's users, and that FAQ pages are effective ways to answer user questions and queries. With this potentially being the case, and that it is a growth area in the library's digital offering, it's important that these pages are continuously reviewed, updated and utilised to help users and promote library services.

FAQ page views by month
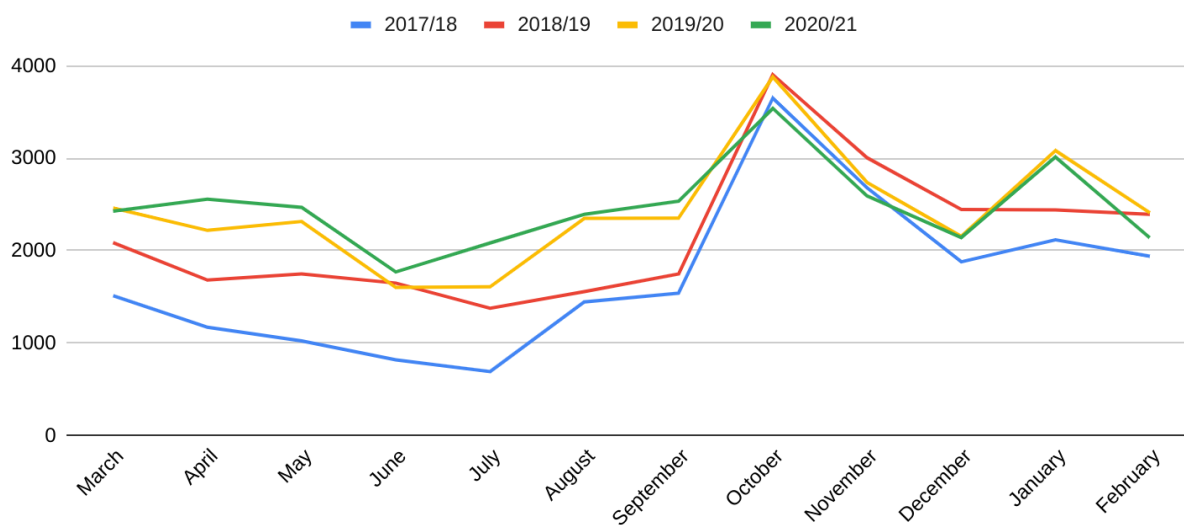
Figure 4: FAQ page views.

Table 3: Analysis of FAQ page views.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total	20480	26049	29185	29676
Year on Year % increase or decrease		27.6%	12.03%	2%
Mean	1706.7	2170.8	2432.1	2473
Median	1527	1918	2352	2449.5
Standard Deviation	836.1	725.3	612.8	459.9
Statistically significant increase or decrease?		Yes	Yes	No

4.4. LibAnswers enquiries

The LibAnswers Online enquiry data looks at the number of user enquiries made using the online help desk portal. The dataset compares page views from March 2020 - February 2021, with the same time period from the previous three years.

For the three years prior to the pandemic, LibAnswer enquiries had been steadily decreasing, with even a statistically significant decrease between the periods of

2018/19 and 2019/20 (Table 4). This could possibly be explained by the growth in visits to the FAQ pages, that users seeking answers to queries using the library website are more disposed to use these pages over speaking to a member of staff. However, the lockdown period saw the number of enquiries increase by 116%, with them peaking at the beginning of the academic year of 2020/21 (Figure 5). This spike in user activity is also responsible for the standard deviation of the year's data being much larger compared to previous years.

This increase in enquiries was perhaps to be expected, with in-person alternatives at the library no longer possible, students pivoting to a new study environment and with the rules around accessing library spaces and services changing as the year progressed. However, it is notable that unlike the other datasets analysed, that user enquiries have shown a reversal in user behaviour rather than continuing an existing trend.
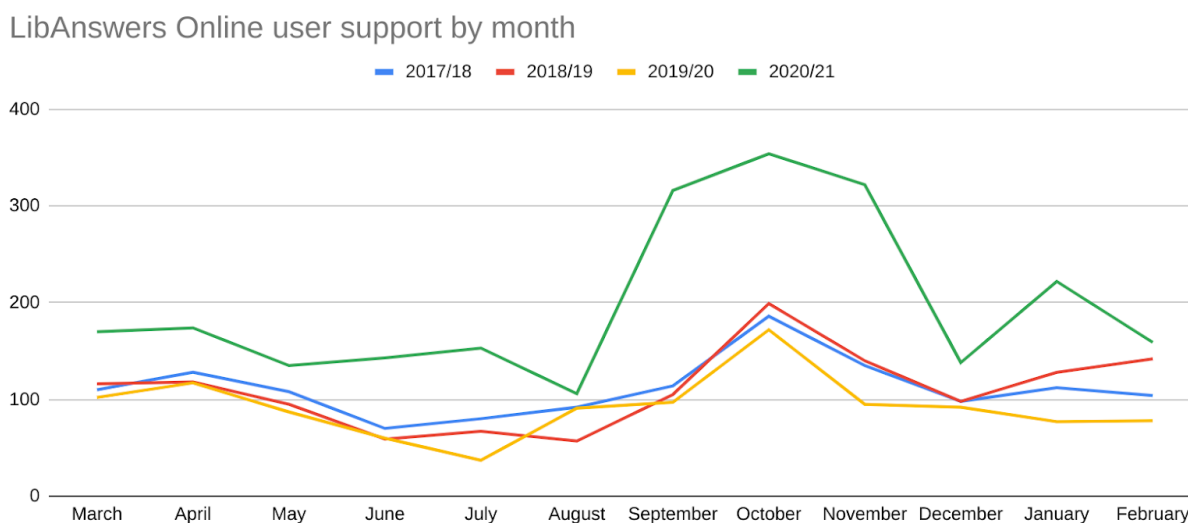
Figure 5: LibAnswers Online user support enquiries by month.

Similarly to the FAQ page views data, this shows that the number of queries being raised by users through the website increased during this period, and in doing so highlights the importance of the library's website and staff in performing this function. Furthermore, if distance learning becomes more common, as suggested by the literature review, then it is likely that this service will continue to play an important part in

library user services. Further research will need to be done to see if the number of enquiries continue to rise, or if they fall back down to pre-pandemic levels.

Table 4: Analysis of LibAnswers Online user support enquiries.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total	1337	1324	1105	2392
Year on Year % increase or decrease		-0.97%	-16.54%	116%
Mean	111.4	110.3	92.1	199.3
Median	109	110.5	91.5	164.5
Standard Deviation	29.7	40.4	32.6	84.3
Statistical significant increase or decrease?		No	Yes	Yes

On the other hand, what is interesting to note is how these numbers for LibAnswers enquiries compare with the recorded in-person enquiries for the same time period. Before the pandemic online user enquiries had been decreasing, whereas in-person enquiries had been on the rise (Table 5)[2]. This suggests that even with the noted decline in the borrowing of physical items users were increasingly making use of the knowledge of library staff on campus.

Due to lockdown measures, the decision was made to stop recording in-person enquiries, so there is not a data set for the period 2020/21. It is safe to assume that the number of in-person enquiries would have been significantly reduced. However, even with the missing dataset, a comparison of the total number of in-person enquiries for 2019/20 - 2020/21 with the total number of LibAnswers enquiries for the same period shows that nearly 97% of the recorded enquiries were made in-person (Figure 7). This also means that there have been substantially fewer user queries made during lockdown when compared to the previous years' data. Are these lost queries those that relate more to the physical library space and materials and so were less applicable

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[2] Only partial data was available for the period of 2017/18. Missing data points have been replaced by 'n/a' and any descriptive statistics for the period have been developed using only the available data.

during this period? Are they being answered by the FAQ pages? Or, are these questions going unasked, and thus unanswered?

Total in-person enquiries by month
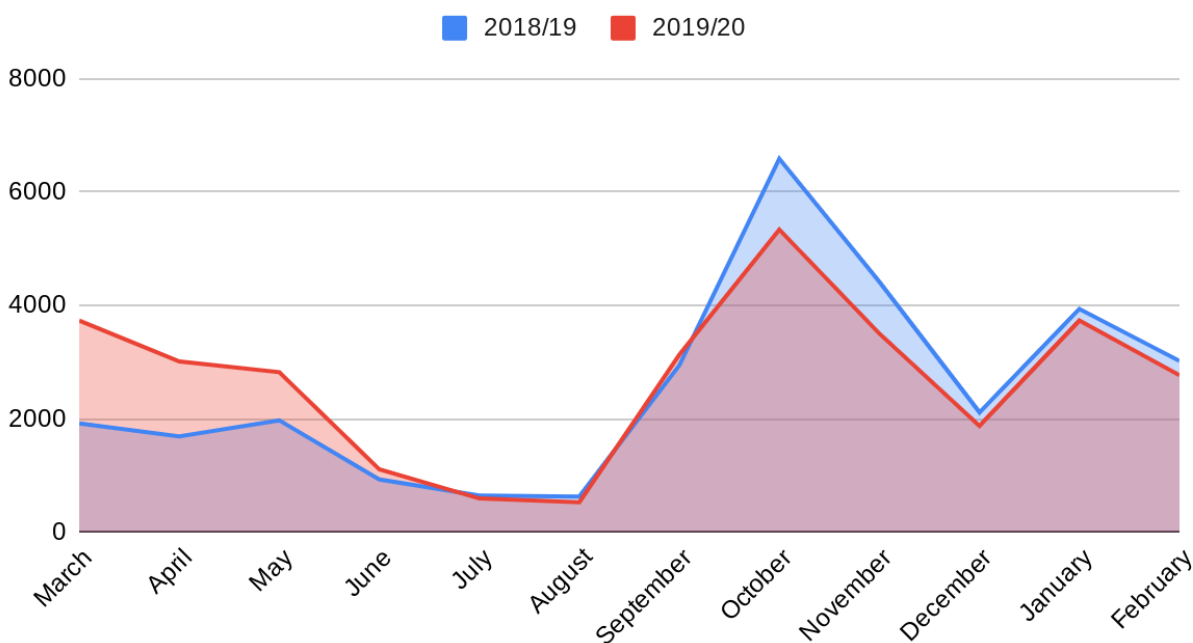
Figure 6: Total number of in-person enquiries for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Further research will need to be conducted to see how in-person numbers change once users are able to more freely access the physical library and its services again. However, this suggests that they are likely to recover, and although LibAnswers has been crucial for answering user queries during lockdown, in-person inquiries will probably become the dominant form of inquiry once normal service can resume.

Table 5: Analysis of the total number of in-person enquiries.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total	n/a	30805	32163
Year on Year % increase or decrease	n/a	n/a	4.40%
Mean	2295.3	2567.1	2680.3
Median	2191	2042.5	2918
Standard Deviation	1275.9	1750.2	1427.3
Statistical significant increase or decrease?	n/a	n/a	No

Comparison of online-and in person enquiries
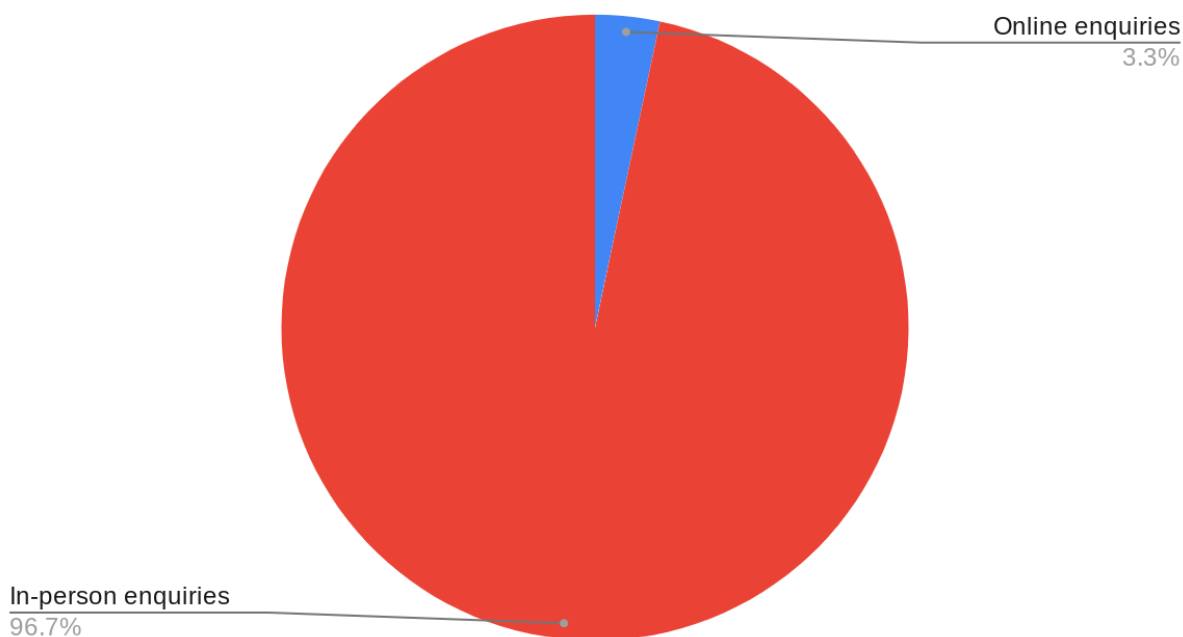
Figure 7: Comparison of the total number of online and in-person enquiries for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

4.5. Summary and emerging issues

The library analytics data has been beneficial in quantifying the changes in user behaviour during the pandemic. In many cases, such as in the number of items borrowed and visits to the CityLibrary Search and FAQ pages, the lockdown measures accelerated or continued existing trends. Whereas, online user enquiries, which had

been in decline, significantly increased. This suggests that the library was already equipped with the digital services to meet the demands of users during lockdown. However, the comparison between in-person enquiries from previous years suggests that in the future, even if the online chat function becomes more prominent, it is unlikely that it will become the dominant form of enquiry. In contrast to this, although the number of print resources borrowed did recover slightly once C&C services were introduced, the significant reduction in the use of the physical collection may have implications for the future collection management strategy.

Although this broad data is helpful in identifying potential trends in library usage, it doesn't speak to the types or quality of use. The transcript data from LibAnswers as well as the study space questionnaire will help to provide further insight into the experience of library users and the kinds of enquiries being made. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews with library staff will help to add qualitative insight to the observed trends.

5. Description and analysis of LibAnswers enquiries

The LibAnswers transcript data looks at the enquiries made by users on the City library website. The data focuses on objectives one, two and four of this study and aims to provide more detailed quantitative data on the types of queries being raised by users during the pandemic, and how they compared to previous years. The chapter provides an overview and analysis of the transcript data, the findings are then related to the research objectives alongside specific examples of enquiries received. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and emerging issues.

5.1. Total number of enquiries

Due to the quantity of user enquiries made and the time necessary to anonymise and code each enquiry it was not feasible to analyse the entirety of the transcript data from March 2020 - March 2021. The decision was made to look at two snapshots within this time period and compare it to the same period from the previous year. The week with the most enquiries, Teaching Week 3 of the undergraduate autumn term in October; and the week with the median number of enquiries, Teaching Week 2 of the undergraduate spring term in February. As already evidenced from the LibInsight data, the total number of enquiries using this platform significantly increased during the pandemic, and this was also the case for the snapshots that are reviewed in this chapter, that increased year on year by 159.4% and 156.3% respectively (Figure 8).

5.2. Timings and message counts

The transcript data also provided information on how long users had to wait before their initial inquiry was answered, the duration of their interaction and the number of messages that were exchanged between the user and the member of staff.

In comparing the wait times between the 2019/20 and 2020/21 period, as the number of enquiries increased by over 150% it would follow that the wait time for customers also increased. However, this was not the case, with wait times being reduced by 71.2% on mean average in October and by 16.4% in February (Figures 9 & 10). This could suggest that as online queries became the more dominant form of enquiry, that more

staff were posted to handle these questions and a concerted effort was made to answer online queries quickly.

Total enquiries
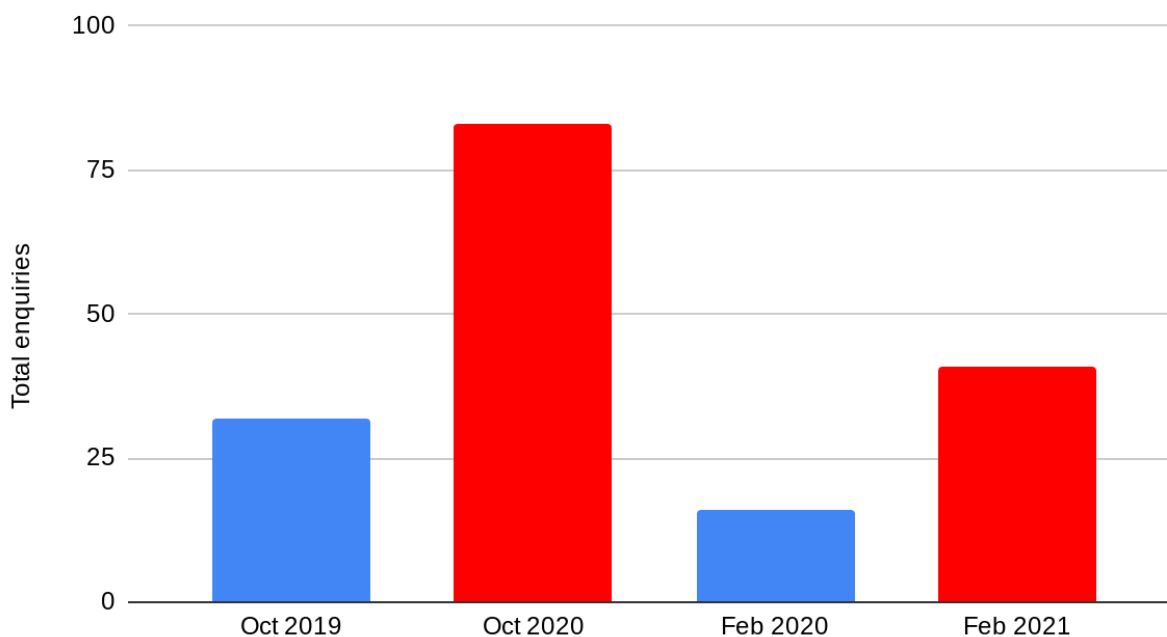
Figure 8: Total number of LibAnswers Online enquiries.

However, in looking at the data for October 2019, the median wait time is similar to that of October 2020 but the standard deviation is much greater. There are in fact just a few outliers that pushed the mean average wait time up for October 2019. Therefore, although wait times on the whole didn't drastically change, the service did become more reliable and consistent.

Figure 9: Analysis of wait times for October 2019 and 2020.

Anderson *et al.* (2021) in their paper found that user consultations had become more complex during the pandemic. Looking at the duration and the number of messages sent during an enquiry can provide some insight into the general complexity of the enquiries being raised. However, the results from this do not support this conclusion, as the mean average duration of enquiries was reduced in both October 2020 and February 2021, and the mean average message counts are nearly identical in the comparison of October 2019 and 2020 and increased in February 2021 when compared to February 2020 (Figures 13 & 14). Although this does not necessarily mean that enquiries were less complex during the pandemic, it does imply that the online enquiry service was more efficient, and was on average able to reply to and resolve queries faster than in the previous year.

Wait time (seconds) - February year on year comparison
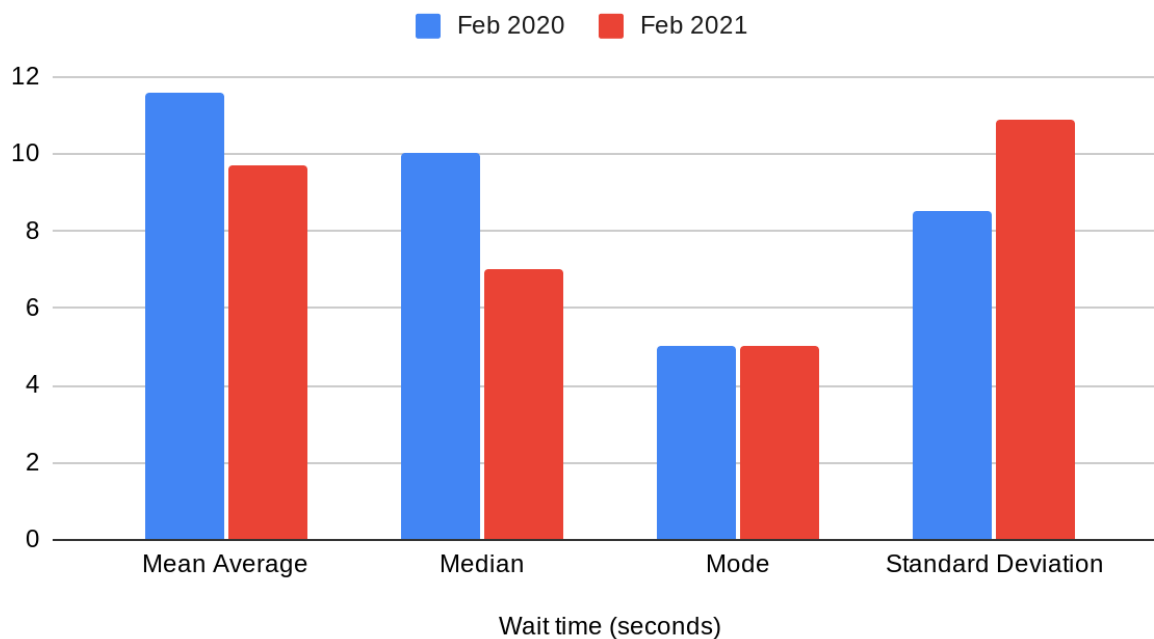
Figure 10: Analysis of wait times for February 2020 and 2021.

Duration (seconds) - October year on year comparison
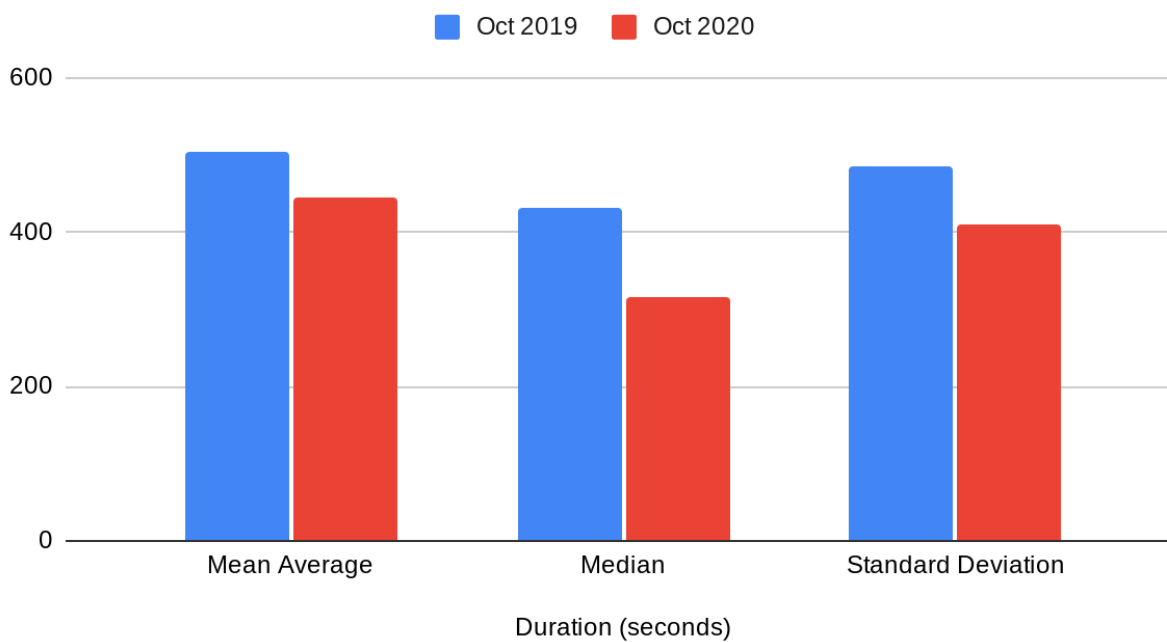
Figure 11: LibAnswer enquiry duration analysis for October 2019 and October 2020.

Duration (seconds) - February year on year comparison
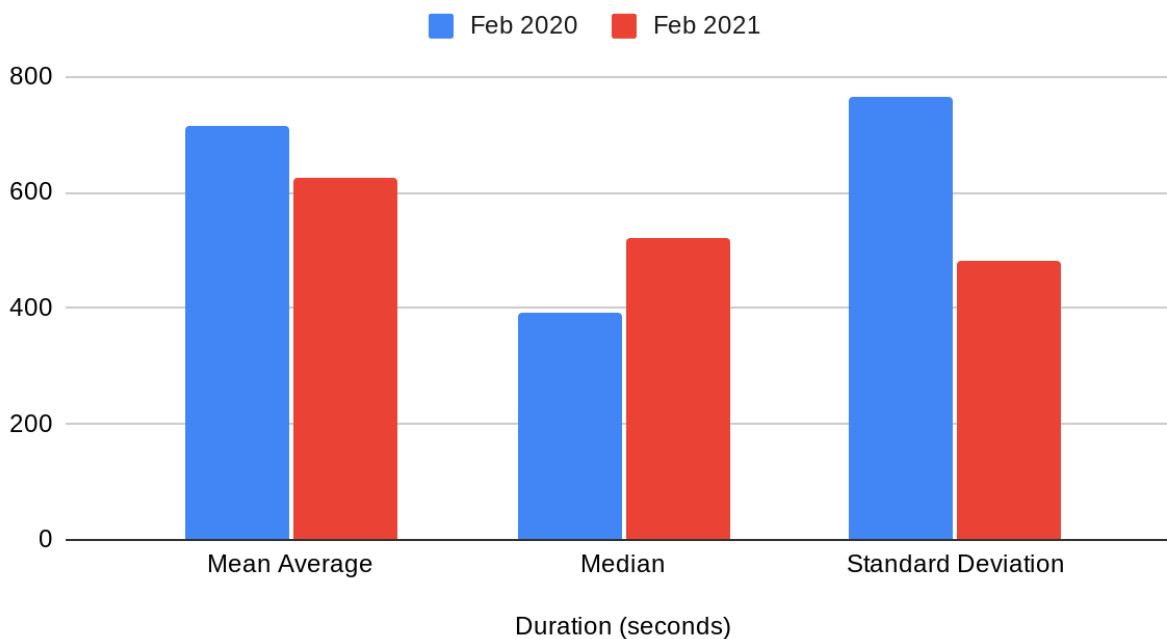
Figure 12: LibAnswer enquiry duration analysis for February 2020 and February 2021.

Message Count - October year on year comparison
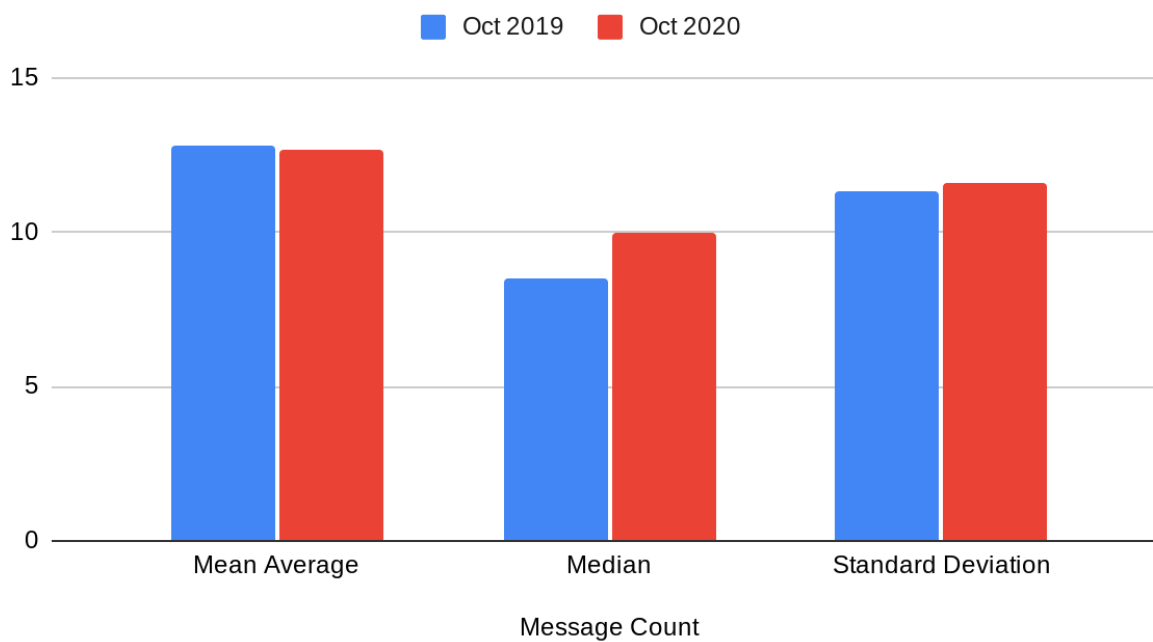
Figure 13: LibAnswer message count analysis for October 2019 and October 2020.

Message Count - February year on year comparison
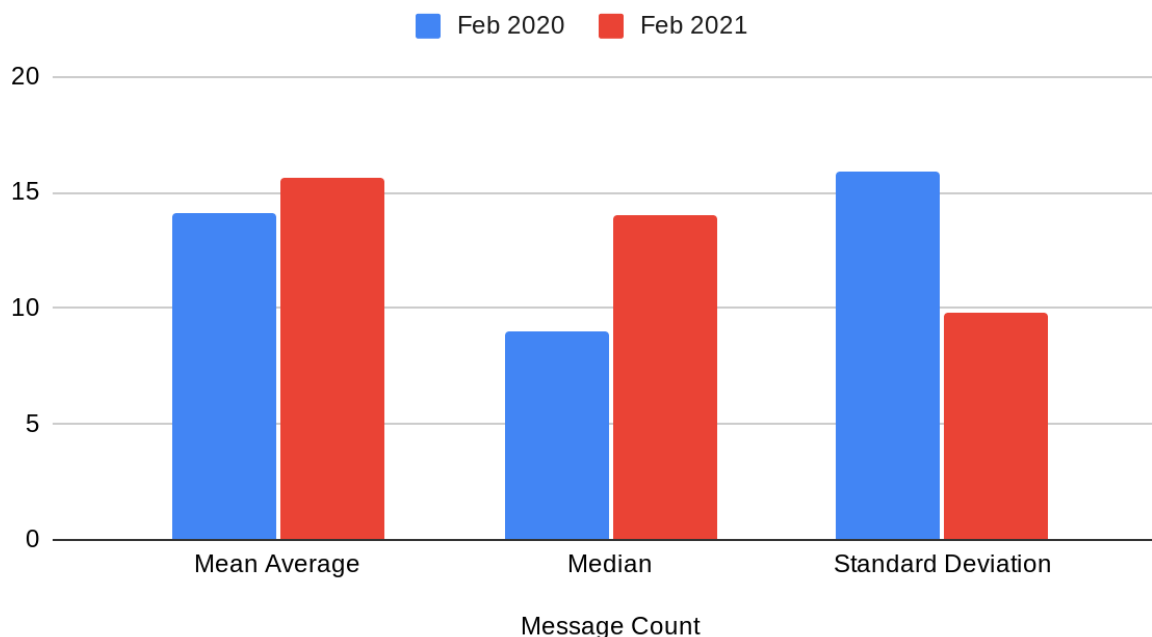
Figure 14: LibAnswer message count analysis for February 2020 and February 2021.

5.3. Enquiries by type

To determine the general type of enquiries being made, the anonymised transcripts were coded using the existing parameters for City's in-person enquiries. These were then tallied to see if there were any changes in the proportion of the types of enquiries being made (Figure 15), and enquiries that were specifically related to the pandemic or lockdown measures were noted (Figure 16).

Although more enquiries were made using LibAnswers during the pandemic periods, the types of enquiries were more weighted towards a few areas. The most notable difference between the lockdown and the previous years' data is that a greater proportion of enquiries were related to access. In looking at the specific enquiries made, the key issue affecting users was accessing online resources, either due to lack of understanding of how to access them using their library logins, or issues with accessing e-resources due to licensing restrictions. These kinds of issues are likely to become more prevalent if digital resources are students' only option.

Breakdown of enquiries by type
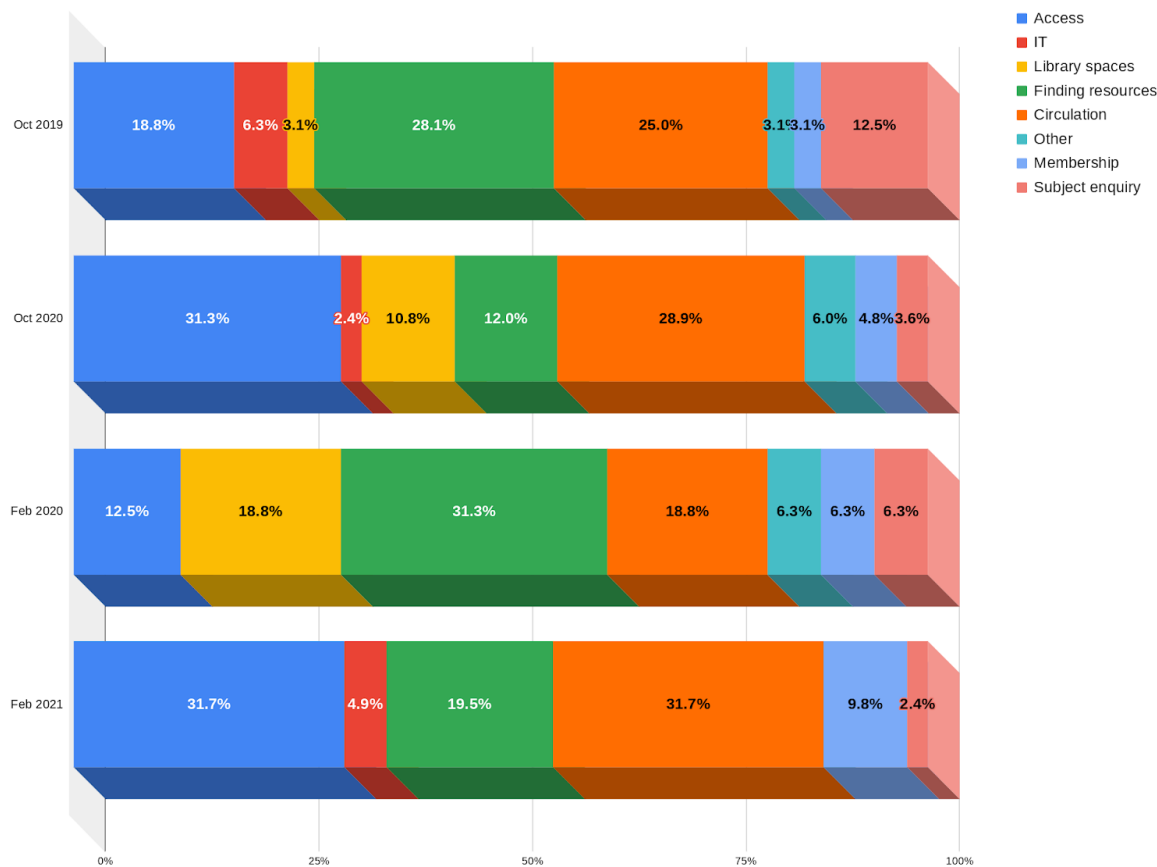
Figure 15: Breakdown of enquiries by type.

Circulation enquiries also increased in both of the analysed lockdown periods, this was largely as a result of the changing rules on collecting and returning items but these are also the kinds of enquiries that were largely asked in person. This notion is supported by in-person enquiry type data, which showed that circulation enquiries were the most common type of enquiry in October 2019 and February 2020. It could also potentially demonstrate the preference, or necessity of using physical items by users.

On the other hand, the proportion of enquiries related to finding resources decreased during the lockdown, which could imply that with this new digital focus students have become more adept at locating relevant information online. However, despite this

proportional decrease, the actual number of enquiries year on year are very similar, and the type of enquiries in all the analysed periods generally relate to a lack of student awareness of how to use the online catalogue. Although this demonstrates the need for improved information literacy skills for some students, the proportional decrease in enquiries is due to the greater number of enquiries being made in other areas.

The changes in the number and type of enquiries regarding library spaces is also notable, and reflect the lockdown restrictions that were in place at the time. For example, in October 2020 students were able to book study spaces in the library, and the majority of the library spaces enquiries are in regards to this. Whereas, by February 2021, stricter lockdown measures were again in place, and students were no longer able to study in the library. This may well account for why there were no library spaces enquiries during this period.

Figure 16: Proportion of lockdown related enquiries.

5.4. Summary and emerging issues

Although there were increased online enquiries made during lockdown, the majority of these enquiries were not directly lockdown related (Figure 16). However, it could be

argued that the increase in student difficulty accessing e-resources is an indirect result of the library being closed and its physical resources being less accessible. Furthermore, even with more enquiries being made the efficiency and reliability of the online customer service improved. This was demonstrated with shorter wait and chat times.

On the other hand, the types of enquiries being made were more heavily weighted towards issues of access and circulation than in previous years. This narrowing of user focus appears to be partially a reflection of the narrowing of available library services. However, the enquiries in regards to access and finding resources revealed areas of improvement for some students information literacy when it comes to finding and accessing resources using third party sites or the library catalogue. With the increased digital focus of higher education, the need for this training should not be understated.

6. Description and analysis of student survey data

The survey was carried out by City in November 2020 (see Appendix D for a copy of the survey), and the results of which were shared for the purposes of this study. With some lockdown measures easing, students were allowed to study in the library again. However, there were still limitations, students could not browse the physical collection, they could only stay for a maximum of three hours and could only book up to four sessions a week. The survey intended to find out what students thought about these new measures. The open responses also provide some qualitative data on the student perspective of the library during lockdown. The results of this survey will therefore focus on objectives one, two and four of this study, but only the survey questions that are pertinent to this research will be discussed.

This chapter will summarise and analyse the responses to each question in turn, using qualitative data from the survey's open responses to relate the findings back to the relevant research objectives. For a detailed summary of respondents see Appendix J, Table 6. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings and any emerging issues that arose.

6.1. Summary and analysis of results

6.1.1. What is your main reason for being on campus?

The first question asked what the students' main purpose for being on campus was. They were given four options to choose from as well as a free text box to give more information or state a different purpose. For the majority of those surveyed, it was to visit and use the library. Although it could be seen as encouraging that during the pandemic 80% of students cited that using the library was their main reason for being on campus, as those being surveyed are those using the library booking service it is unsurprising that the responses skewed in that direction. However, as noted, in the summary of student responses (Appendix J: Table 6), although a lower confidence interval could be achieved with a greater sample size, it is still enough to reinforce general trends observed from the data. This can be noted that even with the lowest

confidence interval applied to the data, it would still be nearly two thirds of respondents citing using the library as their main reason for being on campus.

What is your main reason for being on campus?
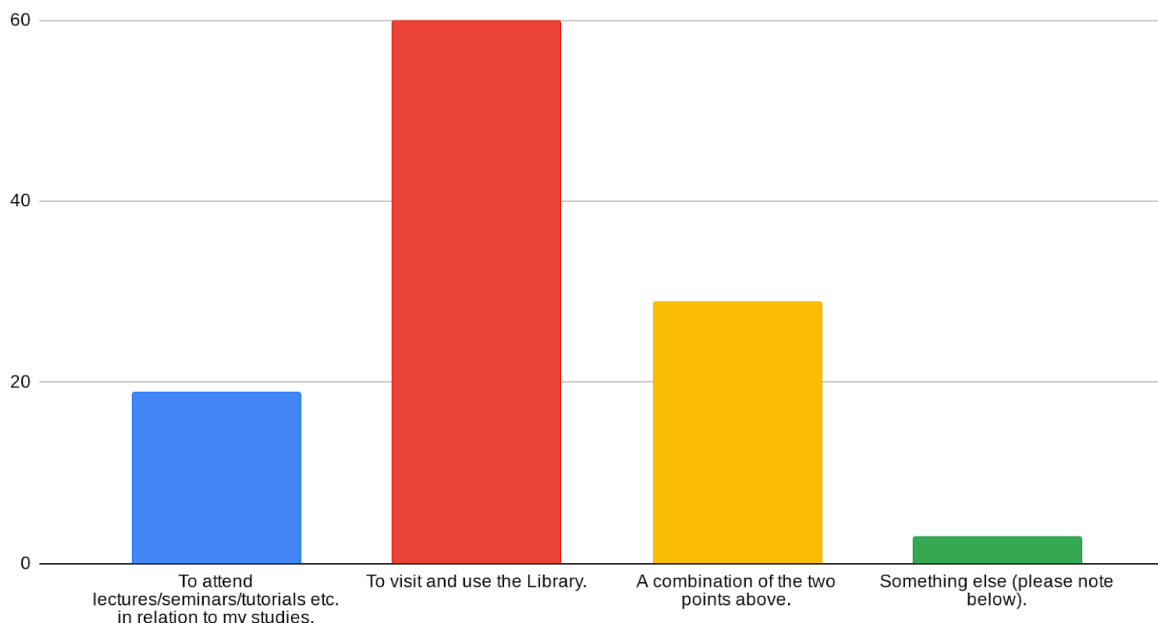
Figure 17: Responses to 'What is your main reason for being on campus?'

Furthermore, in looking at the open responses more insight can be gained as to why students are using the library. Of the 113 survey respondents 41 provided extra open responses. 37% of those responses provided more information about why they visited the library, citing that it's beneficial as a quiet place to study, an environment they often can't replicate at home. 15% of the responses are from students who visit the library to have access to computers, with several respondents clarifying that they didn't own reliable ICTs with which to do their studies.

These responses highlight the importance of library spaces for students as a quiet place to study and that also provides the technology that some need in a more digitally focused academic environment. Furthermore, several respondents noted that they simply just wanted to be on campus and visiting the library was the only way to do that. It may be that with some aspects of taught programmes moving online, and with the

potential that this hybrid method of teaching becomes the norm that more students will seek library spaces to feel connected to their university.

6.1.2. Booking frequency and process

The second question asked students whether they thought the frequency of which they could book study spaces was sufficient. As seen in Figure 18, the majority of surveyed students said that three hour sessions up to four hours a week was not enough. However, the consensus was that the booking process was easy to use.

In the open comments section for this question, although some students said that three hours was about right as it is the length of a lecture, or more than sufficient because they were only using the library to print readings, for the majority of those surveyed they expressed that they would have liked the option to extend or book multiple sessions in a day. This was because they said it wasn't long enough to do a substantial piece of work or to justify the time commuting to campus. For some, where working from home isn't a feasible option, they felt limitations on the time they could spend in the library put them at a disadvantage with other students. Even the 38% of respondents that said the booking frequency was about right, the majority of their further comments also expressed that they would still like to have more time. These kinds of mixed responses may have been avoided if in the original survey there were more options for the students to choose from, that could be measured using a Lickert scale.

Similarly to the responses to question one, these findings demonstrate the value of library spaces for students as a place to work effectively and the importance of them to be accessible. Further research could be done to see whether the restricted or reduced access to libraries has negatively affected the grades of students.

Booking frequency, is it:

About right
38.1%
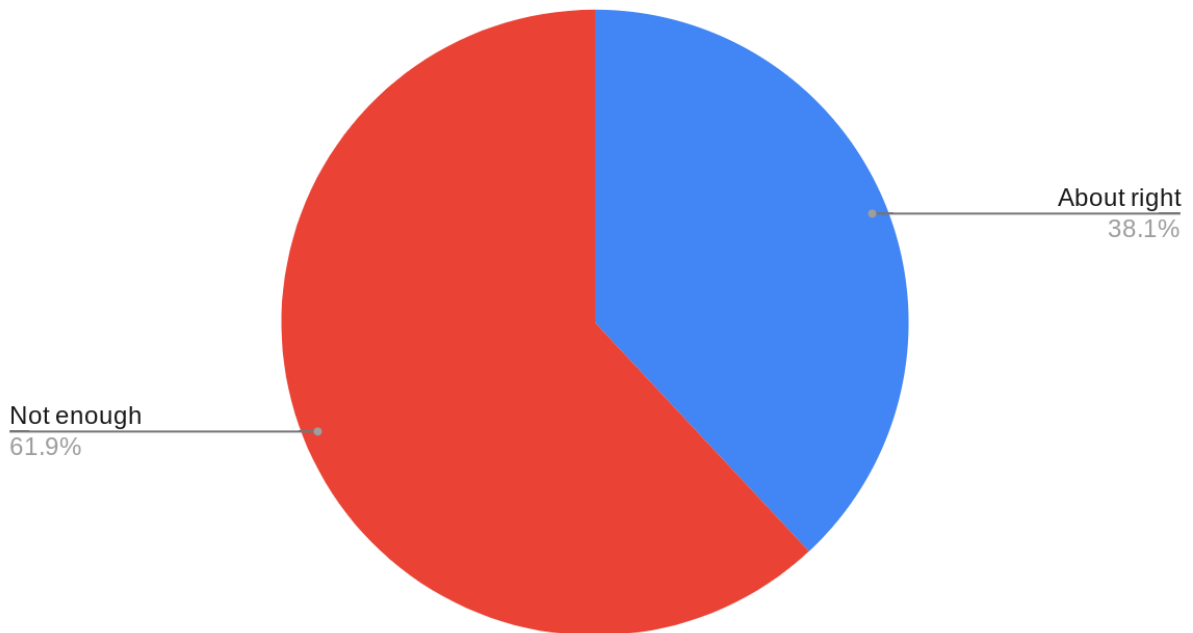
Not enough
61.9%

Figure 18: Responses to 'Booking frequency, is it: not enough or about right?'

Did you find the booking process easy to use?

Don't know
5.4%

No
3.6%

Yes
91.1%
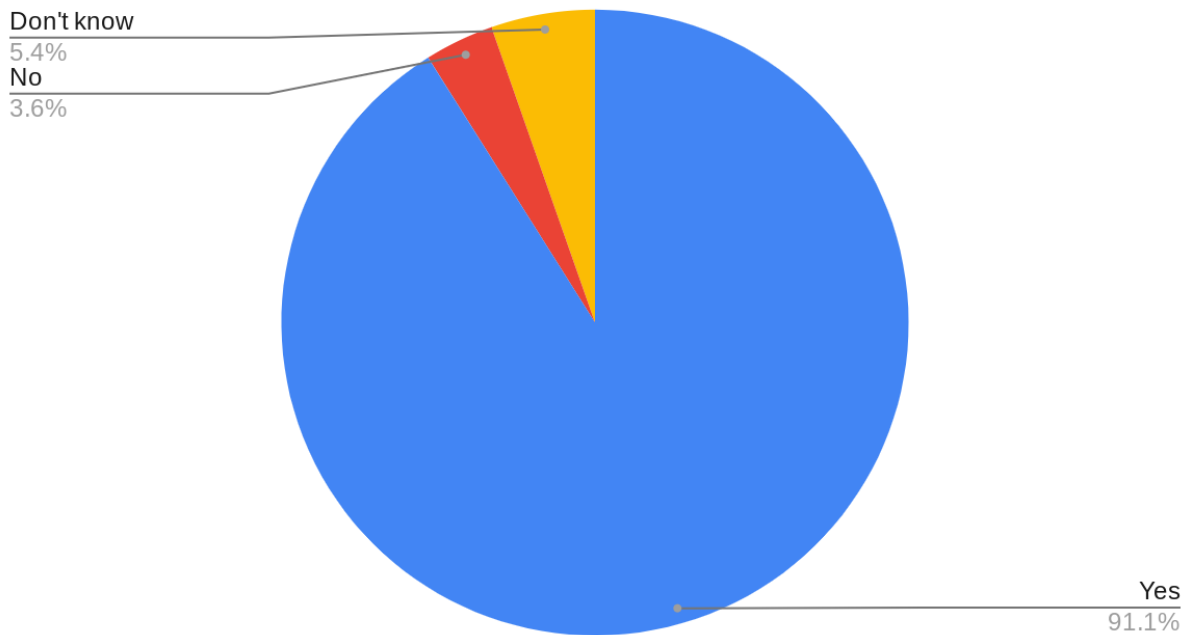
Figure 19: Responses to 'Did you find the booking process easy to use?'

6.1.3. Click & Collect

The third question asked students whether they were also making use of the C&C service while visiting the library, 60% of those surveyed said that they weren't (Figure 20). Although the phrasing of this question does not mean that students who said 'no' weren't also using C&C at another time, what this does suggest is that for the majority of those surveyed the main reason that they have come to the library is to use it as a study space rather than to collect physical items.

Making use of Click & Collect at the same time
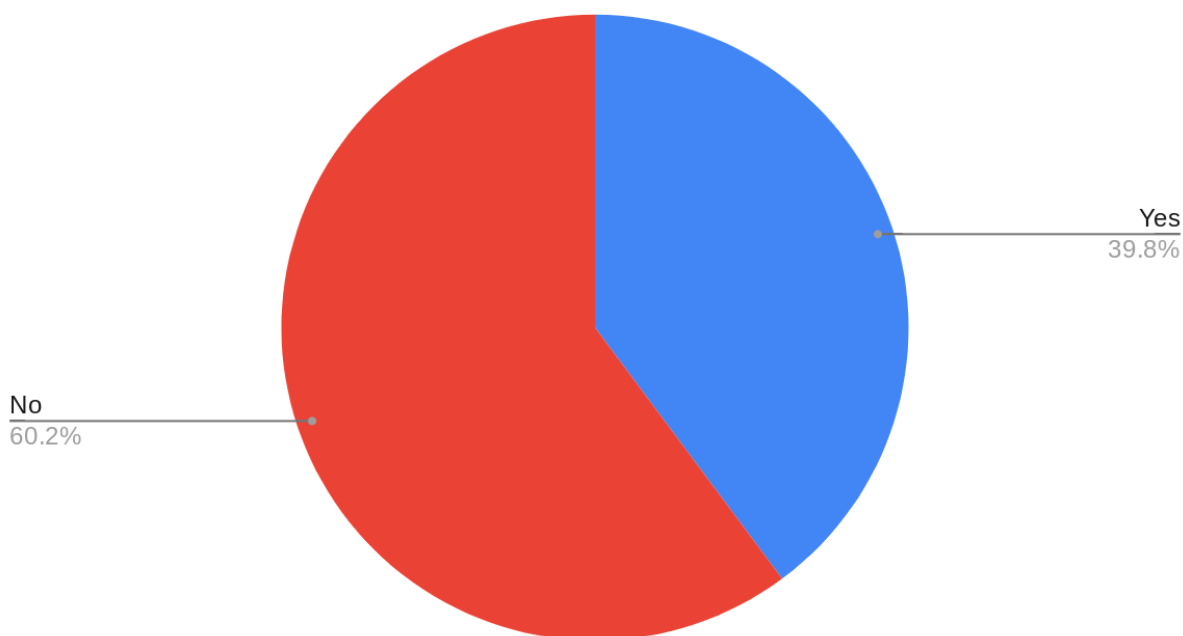
Figure 20: Responses to 'Are you making use of Click & Collect at the same time?'

However, 40% of students that have booked study spaces also using the C&C service is arguably still a significant proportion, especially considering the statistically significant decrease in items being borrowed from City libraries during this period. If such data is available, it would be interesting to note how this compares to previous years, and what proportion of students working in the library were also checking out books.

6.2. Summary and emerging issues

Although this survey does not include views from non-library users, the trends from both the quantitative and qualitative data are clear. The physical library space is still important to the majority of students as a place to study and to feel part of their university. For those that were using the library spaces during the pandemic they generally wanted to be able to use it more often and for longer periods. Many of those surveyed also expressed that the library provided them something that they could not get from working from home, be it a quiet place to study or access to a computer or printer. The importance of the library to students during the pandemic was encapsulated by one of the survey respondents who stated that the study spaces and access to a computer and books through C&C made the library an essential place for their studies during this period.

7. Description and analysis of interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out during July and August of 2021 with seven members of City library staff. The interviews helped to address the research objectives of the study by gaining insight from those working at the libraries at this time, to help give context to the findings from the usage data and to add to the findings of the literature review. The interviews followed the structure of asking the participants about their role at City and how it was affected by lockdown; their experiences and observations of the changes to library services and usage; and finally, whether any changes that occurred to their role or the library service as a result of lockdown should be continued when normal service resumes. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the participants, it then considers each of the question areas in turn, and concludes with a summary of the issues identified.

7.1. Participants overview

The participants have each been assigned a number, and will be individually referred to as P1, P2 and so on. The interview transcripts can be found in Appendix I. P1, P4 and P6 are in management positions within the library service, whereas the other participants are information assistants with different specialisations, working within different libraries at City. All the interviewees worked at City prior to the lockdown, so were able to speak on how work, services and usage changed within the library during this period.

Broadly speaking, all the participants observed that this was a time of great change for how the library services were used and operated. They noted that City libraries had adapted well, and continue to adapt to the changing circumstances, and that they provided a good service for students. Although one participant stated that they would "much rather everything was just how it was before'' (P2), all the participants described changes that had occurred to working patterns or to the library service as a result of lockdown that were of benefit and that they would like to see continued. However, in several cases these changes were already in motion but the process was accelerated by the changing circumstances.

7.2. Working life

When those working in the library transitioned to working from home in March 2020, for some it greatly affected the work they could do as well as their own wellbeing. As P1 observed, as the library service is user-facing, adapting to working from home and changing focus to an online service was "quite a shift to make mentally and culturally". With this shift also came technological challenges, such as some members of staff not having appropriate ICTs or having to share them with family members. In the digitisation team, only one member of staff had access to a scanner, which slowed down processes at a time where it was more important to have digital resources available to students (P2). At the initial stages of the lockdown, when the library was closed to everyone, it also meant that the physical books were inaccessible. This created further challenges for the digitisation of materials, for instance, if "there was this chapter that needed to be scanned it meant purchasing that book again even if we had 20 copies [in the library]" (P2). It also created difficulties in cataloguing new books and withdrawing old ones, as the cataloguers could no longer see them. Instead, they had to be sent pictures, and records had to be kept in spreadsheets on what should be weeded when the library could reopen (P5).

On the other hand, for those with more digital or less customer focussed roles, the transition to working from home was more straightforward as much of their work could be handled remotely (P6; P7). However, what did change was the adoption of video conferencing services, as observed by P1; "In February 2020, I barely used Microsoft Teams… By the end of March 2020 everything we were doing was revolving around Teams". Although Teams helped the library staff to remain in contact, there was a clear consensus among interviewees that they did not enjoy working from home, and that they "Much prefer being on site in the library" (P7). This was due to there being too many distractions at home, not having the right technology, not being able to interact face-to-face with staff and students and the loss of a clear delineation between work and home life.

For those in the Library Leadership Team working life changed dramatically, with much more frequent meetings where they had to "work together to create a short term strategy in terms of how [they] were going to deliver the library service in a very unknown and uncertain time" (P6). It was also noted that looking after staff wellbeing became increasingly important during such a turbulent time (P4). Although it was stated that staff wellbeing had always been a priority, the shift to remote working "put additional pressures on people and they also had all the stress and anxiety of this situation" (P6), so the pastoral aspect of management roles increased.

When staff could return to the library, working life was also altered. Initially, very few members of staff could return and those that were there had to be more flexible about the work they did. As observed by P5, "there were members of the leadership doing the help desk if we were short on people", they would also help with library admin, drop boxes and shelving. With spaces reopening to students and new measures being in place, such as social distancing and booking study areas, there was increased importance in the working relationship with the security teams, whom P1 described as being "at the core of what we've been delivering with the limited user support on site", helping to ensure that health and safety precautions were followed and staff and students were kept safe.

However, it is also on this point that P5 and P6 expressed concern with some students not wearing masks when on campus, and that it made them feel uncomfortable. Similar concerns were also expressed by P3, who said that they didn't feel that the library service had the support from the "senior university management… In terms of making the workplace as safe as possible", and that this may have been because there was a presumption that everyone was working from home, whereas many of the library staff were on campus.

7.3. Changes to services

A key change to library services that occurred during the lockdown was the shift in priority of the online enquiry service. This was crucial in a time of uncertainty and where

students needed more support and help adapting to new ways of studying. More library staff were put onto handling online enquiries, further training was given, and support hours were increased. However, although City did already have this service in place, as P3 stated, the pandemic sped up a process they had planned to trial, extending the use of chat service and having dedicated portals for each of City's libraries. With this service becoming increasingly necessary during the lockdown, "rather than trial it, we went straight into doing it" (P3).

Similarly, City libraries already had the policy in place "of purchasing in electronic format before physical" (P7) wherever possible. This mitigated the effect that the lockdown had on collection decisions and meant that "the impact on City wasn't as dramatic, say as perhaps other universities" (P7). However, even with this policy in place, much was done to get "a wider range of digital resources available" (P1) especially as several subjects taught at City still depend on access to print collections. This included purchasing more ebooks, acquiring new memberships to different platforms and collection databases, making use of publishers freely available resources and the change in licensing which meant that more of a physical book could be digitised.

It was also noted by P3 and P4, that e-resources are often considerably more expensive than their print alternatives, so although going on this "purchasing spree" (P3) was necessary to get the resources that students needed, it also really ate into library budgets at a time when they were already stretched. Although publishers did make more things freely available, this was only for a limited time, so once that access was "withdrawn there was also a lot of work looking at what [they were] losing that [they] actually need, and what [they] need to look into investing in" (P4). Adapting to a predominantly digital collection strategy caused logistical and budgetary issues, but it also created opportunities for library staff to work with academics to update, modernise and diversify reading lists (P4;P6).

Furthermore, another aspect of library service that adapted to the digital was that of library inductions and information literacy classes. The office hours for subject librarians

became online office hours and these were straightforward to carry out over Teams. Similarly with the use of online chat for student queries, online sessions with subject librarians was also something that the university had already begun trialling before the pandemic. However, the lockdown made these types of sessions the norm rather than the exception. As well as this, the library also made use of pre-recorded presentations to create a bank of library and information literacy resources. This type of online induction and instruction is something that P4 stated they'd "never really done before" and was helpful for those who couldn't attend a session or were in a different time zone. However, P6 stated that the challenge with transitioning from in-person sessions to prerecorded ones is that they can be "time consuming to do and they can become out of date very quickly".

Moving from the digital to the physical, this was another area where services and procedures were altered and in some cases entirely new services were introduced. Students' "book loans were extended, and a free postal loan service was introduced" (P6) to help facilitate access and the return of the collection when campus was inaccessible. Although students no longer had access to browse collections in person, once books were able to be loaned again, a C&C system was set up and the online library catalogue settings changed, so that students could request books for collection at the library. This was crucial for keeping the print collection accessible to students, however, one interviewee noted that trying to introduce a new service during the pandemic was at times a bit confusing, because "it was a bit unclear who was supposed to do what" (P6).

Furthermore, another key change in library services that took place during this time was that the library building was closed to students and therefore they couldn't provide access to physical collections, study spaces and PCs. This was understandably considered a key library service that could no longer be provided, as P7 put it, "We feel it's a large part of student experience and student life coming in to use the library". Once libraries were able to reopen again, P1 further highlighted the importance of these spaces stating that one of the biggest arguments in favour of reopening the library "was

to address students in digital poverty who didn't have access to robust wifi equipment at home and were struggling".

However, once some of the library spaces could reopen, processes were very different to before. There was a reduced capacity of the number of people who could be in the library, there were no group study areas, study spaces had to be booked in advance and social distancing measures were enforced. These changes were also constantly being revised and developed, as noted by P6 who said that "Every month we were revising… a library COVID risk assessment where we were looking at the library space, the physical spaces for students and staff, and constantly adapting as new government guidance came out". Several interviewees also voiced their frustrations with the often vague government guidance and concern for students' anxiety with all the changes to services.

7.4. Changes to usage

A clear effect that the lockdown had on library usage was on the number of print materials being borrowed, as P1 observed that they have "not really hit anything like the circulation figures from previous years". However, P3 and P4 also noted that even though the numbers were reduced, some students were making the effort to come into campus to get print materials. They postulated that this might be because of learner preference but also because some materials are only available in print and are not available online. For example, the print manuals in law were "continually coming up on reservations lists… So some patterns remained as they would in a normal year" (P4).

Furthermore, in regards to use of library computers, although there was an observed "reduction in use of equipment like that" (P1), there were "a lot of students that needed to come into the library… to use a PC, or maybe a specific piece of software that's on the student-built computers" (P7). Similarly, with the use of library spaces once they could reopen, P6 observed that "usage had been really down. And I don't know if that's because some students are still worried about travelling and about coming into the space". However, it was also noted by interviewees that the students who did come in

and needed a quiet place to study or to use a PC "were very appreciative. So we got a sense of, when it is important, it's very important for students" (P7). Although overall usage unsurprisingly did decrease in some areas and for some services, not everything could be replicated or was available for remote learning or for all students and this was reflected by those still using those services.

In contrast to this, most of the interviewees expressed that usage of e-resources increased over this period. However, it was noted that there were often some issues with increased dependency on e-resources with no print alternative. For example, many e-books have restrictions on the number of people that can access them at one time, and there were reported instances of students not being able to access the relevant e-books for open book exams because the license limit had been reached. Similarly, there were also reports of problems with accessing e-resources due to issues on the publishers' side, such as an update going wrong or links breaking. P3 expressed that it "can be very frustrating for the students because it can go on for hours, sometimes maybe even a couple of days that they can't access a particular book or journal. Whereas in the past they could've come into the library and just look at it".

On the other hand, one interviewee noted that the usage for some of the large publishers hadn't "gone up hugely" (P7) when compared to the previous academic year. They noted that this may be because students' information seeking and learning behaviors weren't hugely changed by the lockdown measures as there has already been a gradual increase over time of students using digital materials for their studies; or, that they were using the free materials that publishers were making available, and therefore the library was not able to track or reliably measure changes in usage patterns.

In contrast to this, an area that did see measurable increase was the use of the online chat function, as P1 observed, "we definitely got a good return on that in terms of the user engagement". This increase was particularly noted at the beginning of lockdown measures where students were struggling with the adjusted circumstances (P2; P3).

The increase is also attributed to the fact that the chat was available for longer periods of time and the service was promoted more than it had been previously. However, one participant noted that one potential reason for the increase was because the library service "were the only ones with an online chat service, so [students] were coming through [to them] to reach the school or a department" as it was an easier way of doing so than going through the other formal channels (P5).

Finally, on the subject of one-to-ones with subject librarians and information literacy classes, it was generally reported by interviewees that the uptake of these sessions have been "on a par with a normal year" (P4) although students "have needed more support" (P6). What was noted, however, was a general change in trend as to when students would opt to have these sessions, at first "it was like students went into hibernation" (P4) and weren't coming forward at all. Those numbers then began to pick up once it was clear that lockdown measures were going to last for a while, and the major change in usage trends is that the sessions "stayed fairly consistently popular through the year, rather than pereting off after the Easter period" (P4).

There was also concern raised by a number of interviewees that students' information seeking habits had changed as a result of the lockdown measures and that they were "stuck more to what was recommended in their reading lists" (P5) rather than browsing like they would when the library shelves were open to them. It was also expressed that because of the abnormal experience many students have had during this period, that when normal service can resume existing students will "need as much of an induction to the campus and library space as the [new] year one students… So there is maybe going to be a log jam of problems to tackle" (P1).

7.5. Changes that came about as a result of lockdown that could be carried forward into normal service
The final part of the interviews focused on what changes had occurred during lockdown that participants would like to see carried forward when normal service resumes. One of the changes that was highlighted by several participants was the increased use of

online chat and that potentially becoming the default channel for communicating with students going forward. One interviewee reported that they'd "been considering for a couple of years now winding down the traditional library enquiry desk" (P1) and the lockdown had given them the opportunity to make online chat a more up front part of the service. It also allows for inbuilt analytics and reporting as well as making sure library staff are handling library related questions rather than the apparently common student query, "where is the toilet on this floor?" (P1). Instead wayfinding and signage is planned to be improved to make it easier for students to find their way around the libraries without having to ask for directions.

Furthermore, even though the online chat function and some roles within the library can be handled remotely, this does not mean that the library will become a remote only service. Many of the interviewees reported not just that they prefer working on campus, but also that because of the student facing and print management aspects of their roles, they will have to continue working on site. However, it was noted that the lockdown has demonstrated that some work can be done from home, and therefore a greater degree of flexible working for some people could be beneficial going forward.

It was noted by several interviewees that the increased online offering of services is a better service for students, and if possible, should be kept to enhance the student experience going forward. That the library should not just have hybrid collections but also hybrid services, "because they allow all kinds of students whatever their preferred method" (P7). This will continue to be important if hybrid learning becomes more of the norm of academic study, and was also touted as being where the library service was headed anyway, but the pandemic "has possibly brought it forward" (P4).

Similarly, the increase in procurement and usage of digital collections was also the direction that City libraries had been heading in for several years, with one interviewee stating that "I think the increase is going to continue, I don't think that's going to stop or revert in any way" (P2). Although there has been significantly less investment and usage in print resources during the pandemic, another interviewee predicted that "when

the library opens, print usage will go back, maybe not to the same extent, but it will go up" (P4) as that is the general user behaviour for students in certain schools and on certain courses. What is clear, is that this period allowed for greater investment in new memberships and subscriptions to digital resources and also the refreshing and diversifying of reading lists that "haven't changed in quite a long time" (P4), and these are changes that are wanted to be carried forward as improvements to the service.

7.6. Summary and emerging issues

The interviews revealed that City was already well placed to pivot to predominantly online services during the pandemic, and the staff interviewed were generally happy with the service that they were able to provide to students during this difficult time. Unsurprisingly, in-person services and physical collections were significantly reduced during this period, but interestingly, there was reportedly not as much of a notable increase in use of digital resources as expected.

Although some changes that occurred, like working from home and reduced use of library spaces and physical collections, are unlikely to continue when normal service can resume, many of the changes that did occur are seen to have changed the library service for the better and were reportedly already in the pipe-line, but that the pandemic had sped up their implementation.

However, the physical library spaces and collections are still regarded as highly important, for giving students a place to study, access to PCs, or if their preference is to use print materials or speak to a member of staff in person. For this reason, it was expressed by several interviewees that going forward the library service, and not just the collections, need to be hybrid. To provide the same, or similar services online and in person to give the students a service that works best for them and their preferences.

8. Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to provide further understanding into the effects of lockdown measures on the libraries at City by synthesising the results from the data analysis, student survey, staff interviews and the literature review. This chapter will address the research objectives of this study by examining the main changes to library services and usage in turn, bringing in the findings from all of the research methods and providing recommendations on how the service could work going forward.

8.1. Working life

The findings from the literature review showed that the pandemic had been extremely disruptful for those working in academic libraries, from initially having to work from home, feelings of isolation, having to introduce new services while scaling back or adapting others, and in some cases not having the appropriate technology to do their jobs effectively. These findings were also evidenced through the interviews with staff at City, with emphasis on the increased need for pastoral care. Although this period demonstrated that some people can still do their work remotely, as the library is largely a student facing offering, remote working is not feasible for many members of staff. Furthermore, it was also expressed, even by those that could work from home, that their preference was to be on campus. Though it should be noted that this was from a relatively small sample of staff, and a wider survey would be beneficial. Although several papers noted the importance of the library space for student well-being (Cox & Brewster, 2020) and for feeling part of their university community (See, 2020) it seems that this is also the case for library staff. As normal service resumes, although a greater degree of flexibility to working patterns may be beneficial, so will ensuring that staff can all safely be on site again.

8.2. Library spaces

As with most universities, the libraries at City were closed to students during the lockdowns in the UK. Once they could reopen, they had different rules in place, such as having to book a study space in advance and for a limited time, there were no group study spaces available and students weren't able to browse the library shelves. These

restrictions, combined with some students' reluctance or inability to come on campus, as identified by the LibChat transcripts, resulted in significantly less usage of the library spaces. However, this period also revealed the importance of access to the library, especially for those that may not have ICTs, wifi or a quiet place to work at home. One interviewee stated that this was one of the key considerations when choosing to reopen the spaces, and this need was also expressed by several students who completed the feedback questionnaire. Enis (2020) noted in their paper that when courses move online many students are left behind, this concern was also expressed by students and that being able to physically access the library and its resources was of great benefit to them. The pandemic demonstrated that for some that studying and accessing library services remotely is sufficient, for others, it left them in the dark.

As previously stated, coming to the library also helps students feel part of their university. This finding was also expressed by some of the staff interviewees and by surveyed students. One student even said they were coming to the library because it was the only way they could be on campus. It is likely that when students are encouraged to come back that usage of library spaces will increase again, not just from those that need access to the services and technologies, but also from students looking to experience a key part of the student experience. However, at time of writing, City is planning to have hybrid learning sessions for the 2021/22 academic year, for this reason I think that library spaces should be adapted so that there are dedicated spaces where students can attend and interact with online lectures within the library or using a library computer without disturbing others that need a quiet place to study. This will help to ensure that even with some services and sessions still being online only, that students are less likely to be left behind.

8.3. Print collections

Furthermore, reduced access to the physical library also had a huge effect on circulation numbers, as evidenced by the statistically significant decrease in items borrowed. It was noted by interviewees that City already had in place a digital first collection strategy, however, as a result of the pandemic, fewer print resources were

bought and a proportion of the print budget was diverted to help pay for more digital resources. City's digital first policy was also reflected in the data, which showed that circulation numbers of print resources had been decreasing year-on-year for all the years reviewed for this study. It could be argued that the lockdown measures accelerated the existing trends in print usage.

However, several studies in the literature found that students and staff generally prefer physical resources, an observation that was also expressed by several interviewees, noting that in certain subjects, print is still the favoured resource type. One interviewee also stated that although circulation numbers were down, the overall peaks and troughs of print usage throughout the academic year had remained consistent. This observation was supported by the analytics data which demonstrated a similar trend line to previous years. Furthermore, from the student survey, nearly 40% of students stated that they were coming into the library to make use of the C&C service. It seems then that although print usage was down compared to the previous year, there was still a contingent of students who made the effort to come onto campus during a pandemic to get print resources, out of preference or because the resource was only available in that format. It seems likely that when more students return to campus that print usage will increase, though as the overall trend has been on the decline for several years, it is unlikely to ever return to previous heights. This change in usage should also be reflected in the collection strategy, it should remain hybrid, albeit with a stronger focus on the digital.

8.4. Digital collections

Similarly, it was observed within the literature review that there was a divide among academic libraries between those with largely print collections who had to drastically alter their collection strategies, and those already with hybrid collections who could more easily pivot to online only. City was in the latter camp, with one interviewee observing that their transitions had been less dramatic than other universities that they were in contact with. Despite this, and the aforementioned digital first collection policy, it was noted by several interviewees that still much had to be done to ensure that there

were enough digital resources for students and that they were accessible remotely. It wasn't the case that they could seamlessly switch from hybrid to digital only as some parts of the collection were still only available in print, or there weren't sufficient licenses to give all students the access they needed.

Furthermore, it was noted by most of the interviewees that usage of digital materials must have increased during this period as it was the only option available for students. Interestingly, one participant who had reviewed the data observed that on the major publisher platforms usage had not always increased compared to the previous academic year. They posited that this might be that as usage of digital resources has been steadily increasing over the years and that student information seeking habits were already in place; or, perhaps that as publishers had made more resources freely available that students were accessing them directly, and not going through means that can be tracked by the library. From looking at the data, the latter explanation seems more likely, as although it was noted in the literature review that the library website had become more crucial as the sole presence of the library, visits to the City Library search page have been decreasing year-on-year, and even decreased during the lockdown. This suggests that some students' information seeking behaviour are becoming less reliant on the library and its platforms, instead students may be using external search engines to find resources. They may, as one interviewee suggested, be becoming more reliant on their reading lists and not browsing beyond them. Or, as noted in the literature review and observed within the transcript data, there is a lack of student awareness of the library's digital collections and services and how they work. Therefore, it is important to note that although not everything is available to everyone digitally, and for some there is a preference for print, the increase in investment and usage of digital materials is set to continue. However, there must also be increased investment in education on how to find and use resources using the library's platforms. This will not only help to improve student's information literacy, but will also ensure that the library has more complete datasets with which to provide a better and more cost effective service.

8.5. Digital services

It was noted in the literature surrounding this topic that many libraries had introduced web chat applications to help answer student queries remotely. City already had such an application in place, it was pivoted to be the main point of enquiry and usage significantly increased. It was stated by several of the interviewees that the intention before the pandemic was to wind down in-person enquiry desks and shift the focus of enquiries to the web chat platform, as it provided built-in analytics and helped to ensure that enquiries were library related. The lockdown period worked as a trial period for this notion, and from the transcript data enquiries were handled more quickly and efficiently than they had been pre-lockdown.

However, in examining the data provided for the past three years, it showed that before the pandemic usage of the web chat was decreasing, whereas in-person enquiries were increasing and were the dominant form of enquiry. The overall number of enquiries were also significantly less than in previous years. In contrast to this, visits to the library's FAQ pages have been increasing over the past several years, suggesting that students' preferred method for getting answers to queries online was through these pages rather than through the webchat. If the transition from in-person focused to web focused enquiries is made, it should be done gradually so that potential changes in student behaviour as a result of lockdown can be tracked, and so that the web chat platform can be more widely advertised to students. However, because of the usage of the FAQ pages, a concerted effort must be made to ensure that they are kept up to date and surfaced frequently throughout the library's web pages and discovery platform.

Similarly, another digital service that was also introduced by many academic libraries during the pandemic was holding one-to-one sessions with subject librarians and information literacy sessions online. As with the web chat, it was noted by interviewees that this service was already being trialed at City but the lockdown facilitated its wider implementation. Within the literature, it was found that the numbers of those attending information literacy classes increased during lockdown, with one paper saying that their number had more or less doubled (University of Cambridge, 2020). At City, there wasn't such a drastic shift in usage, with the numbers reportedly being on a par with previous

academic years. However, it was noted by staff interviewed that going forward giving the students the option to attend these sessions either in-person or online makes the library service a better one for student's, especially those that are on placement. A bank of pre-recorded sessions were also made available for students, which was noted to be particularly helpful for students that were in different time-zones and weren't able to attend a virtual session, however they are time consuming to produce and have a limited shelf-life. The usage data, enquiry transcripts and the literature review paints a picture of some students having a general lack of awareness and knowledge of libraries' digital offerings and how to use them. So making information literacy classes and resources easier to attend and access for students should be a priority for the service.

8.6. Summary

In conclusion, the synthesis of the library analytics data, LibChat transcripts, student survey and the semi-structured interviews have complimented each other in being able to address the first three research objectives of this study, and combined with the literature review, have helped to inform the recommendations on how the library service could work going forward. The triangulation of methods and combination of datasets allowed for a more well-rounded picture of the library service and the effect of the pandemic upon it and was largely consistent with the findings of other research on this subject.

The key finding is that although the library already had hybrid collections, the shift to providing hybrid services as well has been an important step in providing a more versatile service to students. It was arguably where the library service was heading, but the lockdown measures sped up its implementation and adoption. However, the instinct to over correct and to make the library service a predominantly virtual one, is to be avoided. As it is apparent from this study that there is still a preference for print and in-person enquiries in some quarters and that the library space and technologies is a vital resource and key part of university experience both for staff and students.

9. Conclusion

This chapter summarises the findings of the project and to what extent they achieve the objectives of the study (see Figure 1, repeated below). Each objective will be addressed in turn, concluding with recommendations for the library service and suggestions for future research.
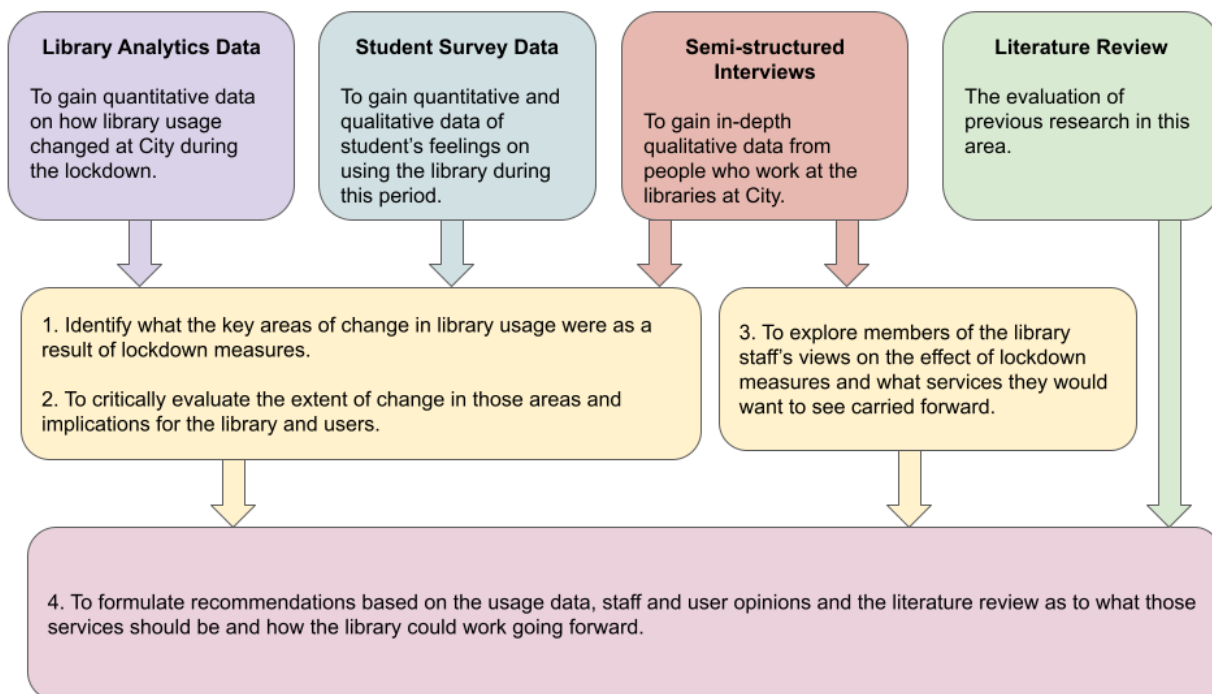
Figure 1: Relationship between research methods and research objectives.

9.1. Summary of findings and conclusions

9.1.1. Objectives 1 & 2: To identify and evaluate the key areas of change in library usage as a result of lockdown measures and to critically evaluate the implications for the library and its users

This study found that in most cases, such as the number of items borrowed and visits to the CityLibrary Search and FAQ pages, the lockdown measures accelerated existing trends in library usage. The fact that visits to the CityLibrary Search page were in decline during the lockdown suggests that even if usage of digital materials did increase, students' information seeking behaviours are moving away from the library

discovery platform and are probably more focused on external search engines and reading lists.

The one area where the trend was bucked was the usage of online chat, which prior to the pandemic had been in decline. A review of the student transcript data also revealed that many students lacked awareness and understanding of the library's digital resources. Not only were there more online chat enquiries, but a greater proportion of them were related to issues of being able to find resources and accessing them digitally.

Although print resources and physical spaces were understandably used less than in previous years, the student survey and transcript data combined with the findings of the literature review, found that for many students access to the library was vital for their studies and to keep up with their classmates and for others their preference was towards physical materials over digital. When classes and library services are only provided virtually, some students get left behind.

9.1.2. Objective 3: To explore members of the library staff's views on the effect of lockdown measures and what services they would like to see going forward

The interviews with staff revealed that, for the most part, City was well placed to pivot to predominantly online services and collections during the lockdowns, and that staff were proud of the service they were able to offer during difficult circumstances. However, there were still a lot of things within the collection that weren't available digitally, so new resources had to be bought and subscribed to and reading lists had to be modernised to ensure students could access the resources they needed. A C&C and book posting service were also set up to ensure that the collection was accessible to those that could get to campus. Those interviewed also spoke of the difficulties of working remotely, from not being able to do their work effectively due to lack of appropriate technology or struggling to maintain work-life balance. A clear preference emerged of working on campus, as opposed to remotely.

The interviews also confirmed some of the findings from the data, that for some students access to the library is crucial, and for many there is still a preference towards print resources. Although the majority of those interviewed also stated that the usage of digital resources increased, one interviewee noted that if there was an increase it was not as significant as expected given the circumstances. This may be because students are accessing resources through means that can't be tracked by the library, or as another interviewee suggested, students have become overly dependent on reading lists and aren't browsing beyond them. It was also noted that services like one-to-ones moved online, and that the uptake had been consistent with the in-person equivalents that had been available in previous years. Whereas, usage of the online chat function had soared.

Although one interviewee stated that they just wanted everything to go back to how it was before, for most it had been a time of necessary evolution. That now having online alternatives to what had before only been in-person services has made the library service a better one for students, and although many of these changes had already been in the pipeline, the lockdown had sped up their implementation. In other areas, such as the web chat, it was an opportunity to prioritise an existing service to be the focus for enquiries going forward. However, it was also noted that although print had been less important this year, services and collections need to be hybrid. Providing the same, or similar, services both online and in person gives the students a service that works best for them and their preferences. In many ways, the lockdown helped to facilitate this more rounded service for the future.

9.1.3. Objective 4: To provide recommendations based on all the data collected as to what library services should look like and how the library could work going forward

It has been clear from conversations with staff but also from the feedback received from the student survey that access to library spaces and PCs are crucial for some students. At the time of writing, City is planning to incorporate more hybrid teaching for the next academic year. For this reason, some of the library study spaces should be dedicated

for those who need to attend a virtual lecture or seminar and are able to interact and contribute without disturbing those who need a quiet place to study. This would help to ensure that students that may not have access to appropriate ICTs, wifi or study spaces at home can attend virtual sessions during the interim hybrid phase.

This period has been a time of digital dependence, this was already the trend within academic libraries and within City specifically, who have a digital first collection policy. Although print usage was reduced, it was evident that many students were still coming in to get access to print due to availability or preference. Circulation numbers had been steadily decreasing for several years, and although once normal service can resume it is unlikely that the numbers will return to pre-pandemic levels there will probably be more demand than there is currently. Any changes to collection policies and budgets will have to be reviewed again once students can fully return to the library.

Furthermore, what was evident from the library analytics data, student queries and interviews with staff is that some students lack a general awareness of the library's digital offerings and how to utilise them effectively. This was something that was also noted within the literature review. As collections continue to become increasingly digital, more must be done to provide information and digital literacy training to students. It was noted in the interviews that one-to-one sessions were consistent with previous years, yet this is a time of great disruption and students would have needed more support. More must be done to advertise these sessions and services, not just to improve students' skills, but also in advising them on how to use the library's discovery system rather than relying on external search engines will also give the library more complete data with which to analyse usage.

Finally, City's library collection has been hybrid for a long time, but it has taken the drastic measures necessitated by the lockdown to introduce complete hybrid services as well. Being able to offer students equivalent support in person and online will make the service better and more adaptable to students' needs and preferences going forward. However, although the online chat usage significantly increased during

lockdown, it is important to note that prior to that it was in decline and inquiries were predominantly asked in-person. The reported plans to phase out the in-person inquiry desk should be done gradually, to ensure that user behaviour has in fact moved towards digital and that it doesn't revert to pre-pandemic trends. Furthermore, the FAQ pages have proved to be increasingly popular with students over web chat, so these pages must be regularly added to and updated.

9.2. Limitations and suggestions for future research

There are some limitations to this study that perhaps could be addressed in further research. Only a small number of staff were interviewed, and although they represented a wide variety of roles, it cannot be considered to be an accurate cross-section of all members of staff. In future, a more complete review of staff's opinions could be carried out to identify other findings from this time period.

Not all library analytics data were available to be analysed, for instance, it was not possible to look at the usage data for digital items from external publishers. This could have greatly benefited this study, but a sense of it was still derived by speaking to staff and looking at other relevant data sets.

It also would have been helpful to conduct a bespoke student survey, rather than relying on one already conducted by the library. This would have allowed for the questions to be more tailored to this study, but unfortunately was not feasible due to the time constraints for this research project. It would be helpful to review students' information seeking behaviours and they used the library both physically and digitally during this period.

In future, it would also be beneficial to measure how usage changes once students can fully return to the library, and teaching resumes in person. This would help to identify if there have been any lasting changes to behaviour trends, or whether things largely revert back to how they were pre-pandemic.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Dissertation Research Proposal

Working title

How have lockdown measures affected library usage, and what changes to library services should be carried forward from lockdown to the "new normal"? A case study of the libraries at City, University of London.

Introduction

The lockdown measures that started in Spring 2020 in the UK and around the world have had a significant effect on academic library services and on how users access information, resources and services. From users not being able to access physical collections or space within libraries, click & collect and web-chat services being introduced and budgets and collection strategies being more heavily focused towards digital and e-resources (Bosch *et al.*, 2021; Nejdl and Lewis 2020; Limpitlaw *et al.*, 2020; Rafiq, M. *et al.*, 2021).

To better understand the implications of lockdown measures on the library, it's important to also quantify how these changes affected library usage. To identify the key areas of change, provide insight into the experiences and patterns of use of users and to help effectively plan library services going forward. Learning from this period of enforced distanced learning and research will be crucial for library services, as it potentially

becomes the norm for universities to provide hybrid online/in-person courses (Enis, 2020).

In this paper I will look into how lockdown measures affected library usage at the libraries at City, University of London. This will involve: descriptive analysis of broad usage trends of areas such as items borrowed, enquiries, account logins using data from LibInsights; an evaluation of chat enquiry logs looking into type and quantity of enquiries, data from LibWizard; and using data from LibCal to analyse potential trends of who is still making use of the physical library space, using the seat booking system. These findings will be supplemented with interviews with members of library staff and, if possible, a survey to students to also gauge their experiences of the lockdown measures, and their opinions on what services worked well and should be carried forward to the "new normal".

Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this investigation is to explore the impact of lockdown measures on library usage at the libraries at City, University of London.

The specific objectives of this investigation are to:

1. Identify what the key areas of change in library usage were as a result of lockdown measures.
2. To critically evaluate the extent of change in those areas and implications for the library and users.

3. To explore staff and library users views on the effect of lockdown measures and what services they would want to see carried forward.

4. To formulate recommendations based on the usage data and staff and user opinions as to what those services should be and how the library could look going forward.

Scope and definitions

The aim of the study is to look at library usage data from March 2020 - March 2021, compared with the same period over the past three years, to determine how usage has changed and identify key trends. The findings will then be considered with respect to the literature review, interviews with library staff and surveyed students to provide recommendations on what services should be carried forward.

This research will take the form of a case study of City, University of London's libraries, namely, Northampton Square Library, Business Library and Law Library. The more limited scope of a case study allows me to go into more detail and nuance about the institution, however it does limit the extrapolation of any potential findings to other libraries and institutions.

The lockdown measures referred to in this paper will be those implemented by City, University of London as a response to the COVID-19, an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (World Health Organization, 2021). The response from City included shifting from in-person to online support for students, click & collect

services for books that can no longer be browsed in person, quarantining return items and limited study spaces that have to be booked in advance (City, University of London, 2021). The "new normal" that is referred to in the working title and within this proposal is referencing what library services will look like once lockdown measures are lifted.

Library usage data will be examined from a 12 month period from when lockdown measures began at City in March 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The data will come from LibInsights, LibCal and LibWizard respectively and will be provided by City. Usage data includes, but is not necessarily limited to: enquiry volume by type and volume in person and/or online; FAQ views by month; online chat service enquiries by volume and type; number of items borrowed by month; number of CityLibrary search page visits by month; library account logins by month and by device; and number of visitors and page view to City Research Online by month.

The literature review for this study will consider academic, university and higher education libraries from both within and outside of the UK. This is because, at time of writing, the majority of the literature reviewed on the effect of lockdown measures at academic libraries as a result of COVID-19 have come from the USA, and although different countries have had different lockdown measures the responses from libraries have been broadly similar.

Interviews will be conducted with members of the City library staff to gauge their opinions on how library usage and services have been affected by the lockdown

measures, and what aspects they think worked well and should be carried forward into the future. If permission is received to survey students, the questions posed would be similar to those that I ask library staff in interviews, however I want to use the questionnaire format to widen my pool of student data. The results of the interviews and the questionnaire are hoped to bring more insight into the usage data, and are not the main focus of the paper.

Research context and literature review

Motivation for research

As a Library Science student who, due to lockdown measures, has not been able to access a physical library for over a year, the effect of the pandemic on libraries has rarely been far from my mind. The motivation to focus on library usage data to determine the effect of lockdown measures on library usage came from my background working in digital marketing and the Library Analytics session of module INM304 Digital Libraries. In digital marketing you rely on interpreting data to identify trends and what resonates with users, but also what needs to change or be restructured to better meet user needs. Creating reports and generating recommendations based on the data was an aspect of my previous jobs that I enjoyed and wanted to be able to apply to a library setting. This became more apparent to me when, for the aforementioned Digital Libraries session, I was given access to a data dashboard of usage at City, University libraries and I could begin identifying trends and comparisons to previous years. The pandemic has arguably created the biggest shift in library services and usage in living

memory, it is important to quantify that shift to better understand what changes occurred and what can be learned from them.

Literature review

Much of the literature reviewed on how lockdown measures have affected academic libraries focussed on the changes to library services and the work carried out by library staff. From introducing click & collect services to ensure access to physical materials (Bosch *et al.,* 2021; Kargbo, 2020; Temiz and Salelkar, 2020), implementing web chat functionality to answer queries and provide reference services (Cohn and Hyams, 2021; Mehta and Wang, 2020; Nejdl and Lewis; 2020), reducing the capacity of or restricting access to study areas and creating videos and web pages to replace in person training (Howes *et al.,* 2021; Koos *et al.*, 2021).

For hybrid digital and physical university libraries the changes necessitated by lockdown were less drastic, with existing digital services and resources becoming more prominent (Enis, 2020; Walsh and Rana, 2020). However, for libraries with largely print collections, the lockdown measures meant having to alter their collection strategies to focus on providing digital and e-resources for their students who could no longer access their collections (Limpilaw *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the literature reviewed also highlighted that a key barrier to library usage that became more prevalent during lockdown was the struggle for some students and staff to access library services due to lack of appropriate ICTs or a reliable internet connection (Ajibade and Mutula, 2021; Enis, 2020).

In contrast to this, an interesting theme that also emerged from the literature was the need for academic libraries to provide additional services to help with student mental health and well-being. This included promoting books, films and podcasts for leisure rather than study, and holding online events and discussions to try and replicate the well-being benefits students could normally get from being in the library (Cox and Brewster, 2020; Rysavy *et al.,* 2021).

The literature also provided some papers that utilised data to analyse the effect of lockdown measures of library usage. Including See's (2020) paper that found that students still consistently relied on the library building for research and study during lockdown. Howes *et al.'s* (2021) study found that although reference requests at the surveyed university library dropped significantly, literature search requests increased by over 200% year on year. And the findings of Koos *et al.* (2021) evidenced that the online training videos and sessions attracted more attendees than the pre-pandemic in-person sessions did.

There have also been several surveys on how the effect of lockdown measures on their information behaviour and library needs. Shi *et al.*'s study (2021) found that: surveyed students tend to prefer reading print textbooks to e-textbooks but also think that there should be more e-materials available through the library; reference services should be available 24/7 and should utilise AI technology to assist students; more information and digital literacy training should be provided; library websites should be modernised and made more user-friendly; and more events should be provided to help with student

well-being. Whereas, Enis's (2020) survey noted that "that campus shutdowns had made the library's digital resources both more vital and more visible to faculty and students".

Another key trend in the literature on this subject is looking at what the identified changes to services and usage will mean for the future of academic libraries. Some posit that with decreased student enrollment and many academic libraries facing budget cuts, combined with more distanced learning will mean in future library collections will be much more focused on digital holdings (Walsh and Rana, 2020) or that libraries will drop print subscriptions altogether (Bosch *et al.*, 2021).

The *LJ Academic COVID-19 Response Survey 2020* found that the majority of surveyed universities expect that their institutions will retain an online component to courses when in-person classes start again (Enis, 2020). Which means it is likely that any additional services brought in during lockdown will need to be retained to help facilitate distance learning, and will need to be done to help students access e-resources. This could potentially come from libraries lending students laptops and wifi hotspots (Mehta and Wang, 2020). There is also discussion on the implication of what will happen to physical spaces in libraries if more students and staff continue working remotely (Walsh and Rana, 2020).

Rationale for research

The literature review demonstrated the significant effects of lockdown on library services and usage and that, as the dust settles, there is still much that needs to be analysed and reviewed. Although the majority of the reviewed literature is about how services have changed and adapted, little so far has been based on usage data, but has instead been focused on personal experiences of those on the front line of service. Those that have brought in library analytics or surveyed staff and students have been of relatively small sample size, only focused on a limited area of usage, and are predominantly from institutions outside of the UK. As previously stated, the pandemic has necessitated a shift in library services and usage, and any further data to help understand its effect and help plan for the future will be beneficial. However, although this study will have greater relevance to UK institutions that are currently underrepresented in the literature, the findings and data revealed should help provide insights and comparisons for other institutions as well.

Methodology

The aims and objectives of this study will be achieved by using City, University of London as an instrumental case study, which is defined by Pickard (2013, p. 102) as investigating a "particular phenomenon or theory and the case itself becomes less important other than as a vehicle for our investigation". Triangulation will be achieved by using a mixed method approach consisting of a literature review, descriptive data analysis of library usage data, interviews with library staff and a survey of students.

A thorough literature review will be carried out on the relevant literature for this subject, it will be analysed using Pickard's evaluation and critical analysis framework (2013, p.33) and synthesised to inform the rest of the study and to help corroborate or challenge any findings of the case study.

The main part of this study will be the quantitative analysis of library usage data, which will be provided in Excel format from the City library. This will include descriptive data analysis, the tabulation of data and testing for statistical significance between different year's data to gain insight and draw conclusions on the effect of the lockdown measures on library usage.

I am hoping to add qualitative data to the findings of the data analysis by conducting, at most, five semi-structured interviews with City library staff with different job titles within the institution. These interviews, due to current lockdown measures and for convenience, will most likely be held using the video conferencing software, Microsoft Teams and if permission is received they will be recorded. Recordings will be deleted once they have been transcribed. Interviews will then be analysed using the appropriate coding system for the findings.

If permission is received to survey City students, the final part of the research will involve a brief survey to try to gain insight into the student experience of using library services during lockdown. This will be carried out using Qualtrics survey software and preliminary permission has been given to use the City library's existing cohort of people who have agreed to give feedback on the service.

The results of all these methods will be synthesised to reach a conclusion on how lockdown measures affected library usage, and to provide recommendations on what services should be carried forward to the "new normal".

Dissemination

Beyond the writing and submitting of my dissertation, I intend to journal my progress, with any particular interesting findings along the way being posted on my blog: https://regardingstacks.com/ and shared via my Twitter account: https://twitter.com/TimCoppen. If appropriate, I will deposit my dissertation in the CityLIS area on the Humanities Commons repository, I will share any findings with library staff at City, and depending on my findings, will look to more widely sharing the paper.

Work plan

	10 May	17 May	24 May	31 May	7 Jun	14 Jun	21 Jun	28 Jun	5 Jul	12 Jul	19 Jul	26 Jul	2 Aug	9 Aug	16 Aug	23 Aug	30 Aug	6 Sep	13 Sep	20 Sep	27 Sep
Literature review (ongoing)	■	■	■	■																	
Write up literature review			■	■																	
Request library data from City (time to chase if necessary)	■																				
Prospect and contact interviewees				■	■																
Analyse, tabulate and format data					■	■	■														
Draft interview questions								■													
Create questionnaire and test								■	■												
Undertake interviews									■	■											
Launch questionnaire										■	■										
Transcribe interviews											■	■									
Analyse and compare interview findings													■	■							
Analyse questionnaire findings														■	■	■					
Analyse and compare interview, questionnaire and usage data																■	■				
Write up																		■	■	■	■
Submission																					■

Resources

To undertake this research I will require a personal computer, the Microsoft Office Suite for the tabulating and analysis of data, write up of findings, and Microsoft Teams to carry out and record interviews. I will also need Qualtrics survey software. Travel costs are not currently being factored in, as it is assumed that any interviews will take place over Microsoft Teams for the foreseeable future. If in person interviews do take place, they will likely take place in London, so any travel costs would be minimal.

Ethics

The participants in this research will all be adults, and I do not anticipate that any will be classed as vulnerable. All participants will receive approved communication on what the study is about before being interviewed or surveyed so that they can provide informed consent. They will also have the opportunity to have their contributions removed if they so wish. There is the potential ethical issue that I will be surveying fellow students and interviewing staff from the institution that I am attending. However, no personal information that is not pertinent to the research will be collected. More details on this can be found in the confidentiality section below, and in the ethics checklist that will be submitted with this document.

Confidentiality

Library staff and users will be interviewed and surveyed respectively, but responses will be anonymised and no identifying data will be used without permission. In regards to usage data that I will receive from the library, this will be cleaned and anonymised

before I receive it, but I will also check to ensure that it is in line with Data Protection principles before it is included. All data will be stored securely on a password-protected personal device, will be backed-up, and will be deleted after the paper has been submitted.

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Appendix B: Reflection

The final project is, for the most part, the one I set out to do when writing my proposal. However, limitations of time and resources meant that there had to be some compromises on the amount and scope of work that could be done. As stated in my original proposal, I was already interested in this topic for my dissertation, but after attending a lecture on library analytics and seeing what data was available, it became clear to me that I wanted to look into analysing the effects of the pandemic with a focus on usage data. Although I wanted the data to be the focus, I decided to triangulate the findings with staff interviews and a student survey. However, after submitting my proposal and discussing it further with my supervisor, we agreed that trying to implement all of these research methods was a little ambitious for the time period I had to play with, so I decided to drop the student survey. Fortunately, City library had already carried out a student survey, and although it wasn't perfectly aligned with the focus of my research, it still provided beneficial findings into the experience of students.

In my proposal I also stated that the library analytics data would be the main focus of my research, and although this is still the case, the semi-structured interviews with staff yielded a lot of valuable insight and became more prominent in my discussion and conclusions than originally intended. This was partially because I did not have access to data on all aspects of library usage that I ideally would have liked to have as well as there being gaps in some data sets. It was for this reason that I also decided to interview more people than originally intended. I think this is an important point to note to anyone attempting to do similar research, and especially those studying a case which they are not fully familiar with. You can gain some understanding from analysing data alone, but it is invaluable to speak to those on the front lines.

This brings me on to what I found the most difficult about this research, and that was making recommendations for how the library service could work going forward after only studying it for a few months. Although I don't expect any of my recommendations will be carried out based on the findings of this research alone, it still felt odd as an outsider looking in to make them. But despite that, I still think that my conclusions and

recommendations are warranted based on the data that I collected, and I hope that they can be useful when looking back at this period of time and when deciding what the future should look like.

Furthermore, another challenge in writing this research was the ever changing nature of the pandemic and the lockdown measures in this country. When I was first thinking about this topic, there wasn't a vaccine and it was uncertain when physical library services would be able to return. When I was writing my proposal, we were just coming out of another lockdown, vaccines were being rolled out and some physical library services had returned again. Now, as I'm writing this reflection, a new academic year is about to start, and although there is going to be some hybrid learning, City is encouraging students to come back to campus and to use the library again. These changes and developments have definitely had an effect on my research as well as on my mind set when writing about the changes of the period. Although the pandemic isn't over, the findings of this research would be able to be implemented now, rather than further down the line, which was originally envisioned when writing the proposal.

Overall I am pleased with how the research process turned out. I continued to find the work interesting to do, and although a lot of the findings are unsurprising it was always interesting to uncover the unexpected trends within the data. I have learned a lot about academic libraries, and how they have changed and developed during a difficult period in their history. I would have loved to do my own student survey, and to collect data specifically orientated towards this study, but my supervisor was correct, there wasn't time and considering my word count, there probably wasn't space either. But even given this limitation, I hope that someone is able to find this research useful, even if not to change or alter library practice but just to compare and contrast how the pandemic affected us all.

Appendix C: Research Ethics Review Form: Tim Coppen CityLis dissertation project

CityLIS students undertaking their dissertation project are required to consider the ethics of their project work and to ensure that it complies with research ethics guidelines. Usually approval will be given by the supervisor, but in some cases a project will need approval from an ethics committee before it can proceed.

In order to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to ethical issues, all students must complete this form and attach it to their dissertation proposal. There are two parts:

PART A: Ethics Checklist. All students must complete this part.
     The checklist identifies whether the project requires ethical approval and, if so, where to apply for approval.

PART B: Ethics Proportionate Review Form. Students who have answered "no" to all questions in A1, A2 and A3 and "yes" to question 4 in A4 in the ethics checklist must complete this part. The project supervisor has delegated authority to provide approval in such cases that are considered to involve minimal risk.

A.1 If you answer YES to any of the questions in this block, approval will be needed from an appropriate external ethics committee for approval. Consult your supervisor if you think this may be the case.	*Delete as appropriate*
1.1 Does your research require approval from the National Research Ethics Service (NRES)? *e.g. because you are recruiting current NHS patients or staff?* *If you are unsure try -* *https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/*	**NO**
1.2 Will you recruit participants who fall under the auspices of the Mental Capacity Act? *Such research needs to be approved by an external ethics committee such as NRES or the Social Care Research Ethics Committee -* *http://www.scie.org.uk/research/ethics-committee/*	**NO**

1.3	Will you recruit any participants who are currently under the auspices of the Criminal Justice System, for example, but not limited to, people on remand, prisoners and those on probation? *Such research needs to be authorised by the ethics approval system of the National Offender Management Service.*	**NO**
A.2 If you answer YES to any of the questions in this block, approval will be needed from the Senate Research Ethics Committee. Consult your supervisor if you think this may be the case.		*Delete as appropriate*
2.1	Does your research involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? *For example, but not limited to, people who may have a degree of learning disability or mental health problem, that means they are unable to make an informed decision on their own behalf.*	**NO**
2.2	Is there a risk that your research might lead to disclosures from participants concerning their involvement in illegal activities?	**NO**

2.3	Is there a risk that obscene and or illegal material may need to be accessed for your research study (including online content and other material)?	**NO**
2.4	Does your project involve participants disclosing information about special category or sensitive subjects? *For example, but not limited to: racial or ethnic origin; political opinions; religious beliefs; trade union membership; physical or mental health; sexual life; criminal offences and proceedings*	**NO**
2.5	Does your research involve you travelling to another country outside of the UK, where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has issued a travel warning that affects the area in which you will study?	**NO**

	Please check the latest guidance from the FCO - *http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/*	
2.6	Does your research involve invasive or intrusive procedures? *These may include, but are not limited to, electrical stimulation, heat, cold or bruising.*	**NO**
2.7	Does your research involve animals?	**NO**
2.8	Does your research involve the administration of drugs, placebos or other substances to study participants?	**NO**
A.3 If you answer YES to any of the questions in this block, then approval will be needed from the Computer Science /Library and Information Science Research Ethics Committee (CSREC). Consult your supervisor if you think this may be the case.		*Delete as appropriate*
3.1	Does your research involve participants who are under the age of 18?	**NO**
3.2	Does your research involve adults who are vulnerable because of their social, psychological or medical circumstances (vulnerable adults)? *This includes adults with cognitive and / or learning disabilities, adults with physical disabilities and older people.*	**NO**
3.3	Are participants recruited because they are staff or students of City, University of London? *For example, students studying on a particular course or module.* *If yes, then approval is also required from the Head of Department or Programme Director.*	**YES**
3.4	Does your research involve intentional deception of participants?	**NO**

3.5	Does your research involve participants taking part without their informed consent?	**NO**
3.5	Is the risk posed to participants greater than that in normal working life?	**NO**

3.7	Is the risk posed to you, the researcher(s), greater than that in normal working life?	**NO**
A.4 If you answer YES to the following question and your answers to all other questions in sections A1, A2 and A3 are NO, then your project is of minimal risk. **If this is the case, then you can apply for approval through your supervisor under PROPORTIONATE REVIEW. You do so by completing PART B of this form.** **If you have answered NO to all questions in the checklist, including question 4, then your project does not require ethical approval. You should still include the form in your dissertation proposal.**		*Delete as appropriate*
4	Does your project involve human participants or their identifiable personal data? *For example, as interviewees, respondents to a survey, or participants in testing.*	**YES**

PART B: Ethics Proportionate Review Form

If you answered YES to question 4 and NO to all other questions in sections A1, A2 and A3 in PART A (checklist) of this form, then you should complete PART B of this form to submit an application for a proportionate ethics review of your project. Your supervisor has delegated authority to review and approve this application under proportionate review. Your proposal, including this ethics application, must be approved by your supervisor before beginning the planned research.

If you cannot provide all the required attachments (see B.3) with your project proposal (e.g. because you have not yet written the consent forms, interview schedules etc), you

must submit the missing items to your supervisor for approval prior to commencing these parts of your project.

Your supervisor may ask you to submit a full ethics application through Research Ethics Online, if they are unable to give approval.

B.1 The following questions must be answered fully.		*Delete as appropriate*
1.1.	Will you ensure that participants taking part in your project are fully informed about the purpose of the research?	**YES**
1.2	Will you ensure that participants taking part in your project are fully informed about the procedures affecting them or affecting any information collected about them, including information about how the data will be used, to whom it will be disclosed, and how long it will be kept?	**YES**
1.3	When people agree to participate in your project, will it be made clear to them that they may withdraw (i.e. not participate) at any time without any penalty?	**YES**
1.4	Will consent be obtained from the participants in your project? Consent from participants will be necessary if you plan to involve them in your project or if you plan to use identifiable personal data from existing records. "Identifiable personal data" means data relating to a living person who might be identifiable if the record includes their name, username, student id, DNA, fingerprint, address, etc. *If YES, you must attach drafts of the participant information sheet(s) and consent form(s) that you will use in section B.3 or, in the case of an existing dataset, provide details of how consent has been obtained.*	**YES**

	You must also retain the completed forms for subsequent inspection. Failure to provide the completed consent request forms will result in withdrawal of any earlier ethical approval of your project.	
1.5	Have you made arrangements to ensure that material and/or private information obtained from or about the participating individuals will remain confidential?	**YES**

B.2 If the answer to the following question (B2) is YES, you must provide details	*Delete as appropriate*
2	Will the research be conducted in the participant's home or other non-University location? *If **YES**, you must provide details of how your safety will be ensured.*	**YES**

B.3 Attachments All of the following documents must be provided to supervisors if applicable. If they are not available when the proposal is submitted, they must be approved by the supervisor later.			
	YES	*NO*	*Not Applicable*
Details on how safety will be assured in any non-University location, including risk assessment if required (see B2)	X		

Details of arrangements to ensure that material and/or private information obtained from or about the participating individuals will remain confidential (see B1.5) *Any personal data must be acquired, stored and made accessible* *in ways that are GDPR compliant.*	X		
Full protocol for any workshops or interviews**	To follow		
Participant information sheet(s)**	X		
Consent form(s)**	X		
Questionnaire(s)** *sharing a Qualtrics survey with your supervisor is recommended.*	To follow		
Topic guide(s) for interviews and focus groups**	To follow		
Permission from external organisations or Head of Department** *e.g. for recruitment of participants*	In principle		

Appendix D: Student survey questions

What is your main reason for being on campus?

[dropdown ▼]

Please feel free to expand on your answer.

[text box]

You can book one three hours session a day per library location and up to four per week.

Do you feel this is:

Not enough

About right

Too many?
Please feel free to expand on your answer noting any changes you may feel should be made.

[text box]

Are you also making use of our 'Click & Collect' book retrieval and reservation service during your library visit?

Yes

No

What do you think of the study environments in place, in terms of:

Cleanliness – is the booked study area sufficiently clean?

Yes

No

Don't know
Noise – is it quiet enough to study?

Yes

No

Don't know
Heating – is it warm enough?

Yes

No

Don't know
Lighting – is there sufficient lighting?

Yes

No
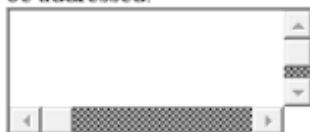
Don't know
Safety – given the current requirements for social distancing, do you feel adequate measures are in place?

Yes

No

Don't know
Please feel free to expand upon your answer, noting any specific study areas you feel need to be addressed.

Did you find the booking process easy to use?

Yes

No

Don't know
Please feel free to provide more information here.

Please use this space to add any other comments.

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet

Date: 04/05/2021

Version of information sheet: 1

Title of study

How have lockdown measures affected library usage, and what changes to library services should be carried over from lockdown to the "new normal"? A case study of the libraries at City, University of London.

Name of principal investigator/researcher: Tim Coppen

Invitation paragraph:

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if you have any questions or queries. Please keep a copy of this information sheet.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to look into the effects of lockdown measures on library usage, to identify and quantify the key areas of change. It will investigate this data, and gain insight from the experiences of staff and students at City to see if any measures and services that were introduced during lockdown in the libraries at City should be carried forward into normal service.

This study is being undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MSc in Library Science at City, University of London, which will be completed on 1 October 2021.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to participate in an interview because of your role in City, University of London's library service. Up to five participants will be interviewed in total.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project. You can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. Please note, that any personal or identifiable data will be anonymised. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw without giving a reason, and any data collected up to the point of withdrawal will not be retained. However, once your data has been transcribed and anonymised, it will no longer be possible to remove it.

What will happen if I take part?

Your participation will take the form of one semi-structured interview, most likely using Microsoft Teams, to speak about your experiences of working for the library during lockdown. The interview is planned to take place in July, and should last no longer than an hour. You will be emailed a copy of the topic areas and a consent form prior to the interview.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable disadvantages or risks associated with you taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that this study will be able to provide greater understanding to the effect of lockdown measures on library usage and services, and could potentially provide findings for how these services could be improved in future. I will also be happy to share my findings with you, upon request, after the research is completed.

Data privacy statement

City, University of London is the sponsor and the data controller of this study based in the United Kingdom. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The legal basis under which your data will be processed is City's public task.

Your right to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in a specific way in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal-identifiable information possible (for further information please see).

City will use your name and contact details to contact you about the research study as necessary. If you wish to receive the results of the study, your contact details will also be kept for this purpose. The only people at City who will have access to your identifiable information will be the researcher and the research supervisor. City will not keep identifiable information about you from this study.

You can find out more about how City handles data by visiting . If you are concerned about how we have processed your personal data, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (IOC) https://ico.org.uk.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The study will not include any personal information or data. Any identifiable data will be kept on a password-protected computer, and will be deleted after the research is submitted. The recording of your interview will be transcribed, but no personal details will be included in the transcript. You will be assigned a number which will be used instead of your name in the study, as anonymised quotes may be used. The original

recording of the interview will be deleted once it has been transcribed. No personal information will be passed on to any third parties.

What will happen to the results?

This study is part of an MSc dissertation and will be submitted no later than 1 October 2021. Once submitted it may be made open access on the CityLIS Humanities Commons. If you would like to receive a copy of the publication, please let me know before 1 October 2021, and I will retain your email address for this purpose and delete it after the dissertation has been sent to you.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City, University of London Department of Library and Information Science Research Ethics Committee.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through City's complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is *How have lockdown measures affected library usage, and what changes to library services should be carried over from lockdown to the "new normal"? A case study of the libraries at City, University of London*.

You can also write to the Secretary at:

Anna Ramberg
Research Integrity Manager
City, University of London, Northampton Square
London, EC1V 0HB

Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk

Insurance

City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

Further information and contact details

Researcher: Tim Coppen (tim.coppen.2@city.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Lyn Robinson (l.robinson@city.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix F: Consent form

Researcher: Tim Coppen, MSc Library Science, City, University of London.

Title of study: How have lockdown measures affected library usage, and what changes to library services should be carried over from lockdown to the "new normal"? A case study of the libraries at City, University of London.

	Please tick or initial box
I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information dated 04/05/2021 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving a reason without being penalised or disadvantaged.	
I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the time of transcription, at which point it will be anonymised.	
I agree to the interview being audio OR video recorded.	
I agree to City recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) explained in the participant information and my consent is conditional on City complying with its duties and obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	

I would like to be informed of the results of this study once it has been completed and understand that my contact details will be retained for this purpose.	
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publication.	
I understand that my anonymised data may be made open access on CityLIS Humanities Commons.	
I agree to take part in the above study.	

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

When completed, 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher file.

Appendix G: Email to potential interview participants

My name is Tim Coppen, I'm a student at City, studying for an MSc in Library Science. For my dissertation project I am looking at the effects of lockdown measures on library services and usage at City, and trying to identify if any of the changes that were brought about during the past year and a half should be carried forward when "normal" service can resume.

A key component of my research will be interviewing members of library staff who worked at City both before and during the pandemic, to hear about their experiences and to gather their insight into the changes that occurred. The interviews will take place during July or August 2021, they should last for around 45 minutes and will take place over Microsoft Teams. All the interviews and any personal information about interviewees will be anonymized. For further details about the project and the interview process please see the attached document: *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix E).

I believe that this research will be beneficial for the understanding of the effects of lockdown measures on library services, and with your help, could also provide insight into how to plan library services going forward.

If you would like to take part in this project or have any questions or queries, please reach out to me at ████████████████.

Thank you for your time

Yours sincerely

Tim

Appendix H: Interview protocol and topic guide

Project: How have lockdown measures affected library services and usage, and what changes to library services should be carried forward from lockdown to the "new normal"? A case study of the libraries at City, University of London.

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Consent form signed? _____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30-40 minutes, with five question topics.

Purpose of research (although this will have been communicated via email before the interview takes place, I will briefly run through it again at the beginning of the interview, and ask if they require any clarification on any points before we begin).

The overall aim of this investigation is to explore the impact of lockdown measures on library usage at the libraries at City, University of London.

The specific objectives of this investigation are to:

- Identify what the key areas of change in library usage were as a result of lockdown measures.
- To critically evaluate the extent of change in those areas and implications for the library and users.
- To explore staff and library users' views on the effect of lockdown measures and what services they would want to see carried forward.
- To formulate recommendations based on the usage data and staff and user opinions as to what those services should be and how the library could work going forward.

Topic 1 - About the interviewee and their role

Initial question: Can you tell me about your job role in the library before lockdown began?
Potential follow up/prompting questions:
- How long have you worked at City, and in what capacity?
- What was a day in the life of your role at City?
- How many people are there in your team/department?
- Were there any major projects you worked on?

Topic 2 - How lockdown measures affected their role

Initial question: how did the lockdown measures affect your role within the library?
Potential follow up/prompting questions:
- How did it affect your working environment? E.g. Were new measures put in, did you work from home, were you furloughed?
- How did it affect your team/department as a whole?
- Did it affect or change the kind of work you were able to do?

Topic 3 - Changes to library services

Initial question: How did you find the lockdown measures affected what library services were provided and available to staff and students?
Potential follow up/prompting questions:
- If applicable - did this alter decisions and strategy about collections? E.g. more focus on digital materials, difficulty in determining what was dead stock etc.
- Were any new services provided or more resources allocated to different services? E.g. focusing on student mental health, restructuring library sites, allocating resources to different areas.
- Were there any services that could no longer be provided?
- Were they any services you think didn't work effectively or could have been improved?
- Were there any services you think should have been added or removed?
- Is there anything else you would like to mention about how lockdown measures affected library services?

Topic 4 - Changes to library usage

Initial question: Did you observe any changes in library usage during this period?
Potential follow up/prompting questions:
- How did it compare to previous years?
- Were there any unexpected trends you noticed?
- How do you think these changes relate to lockdown measures?
- Did you notice any barriers to access?

Topic 5 - The "new normal"

Initial question: Are there any changes to library services or your work role that came about as a result of lockdown measures that you would like to see carried forward when normal service resumes? E.g. working from home options, click and collect etc.?
Potential follow up/prompting questions
- Do you think it is likely that these changes will be implemented or kept?
- If they don't think there is anything that should be carried forward, why not?

Concluding

Is there anything else you would like to add that hasn't been discussed that you think could be relevant to this research?

Thank them for their time. Reassure confidentiality.

Appendix I: Interview transcripts

Interview 1

Interviewer: Could you briefly describe your role at City, University of London?

Participant 1: ███████████████████████ my responsibility is for the library services, spaces and the staff who deliver those services and look after the spaces across the library estate. That's the main library at Northampton Square, the business library and the law library. ████████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████████ And our team as well have got a responsibility for the inquiry service which has increasingly been a remote, online one in the last 15-16 months. And then the other aspects of my role would be around managing some of the relationships that the library has with other stakeholders. One of the most crucial ones for us, which has been absolutely integral for what we've done during the lockdown, is a company called Reassurance Security who provide our library security support which covers extended hours, evening, weekend opening hours during a normal term time and other the past 12 months they've very much been at the core of what we've been delivering with the limited user support on site at Northampton square and business. And then also relationships with other stakeholders in the university such as the estates team and the IT team because obviously we are very interlinked with those parts of the university to deliver our services and manage our spaces.

Interviewer: So you touched briefly on a couple of changes that have occurred in your role, and aspects of your role that changed during lockdown and the pandemic. Are there any other changes that came about during this time to your role specifically?

Participant 1: Well I found it quite a shift to working remotely because I've always found that the oversight, the managing the spaces and interaction with staff who are working in those spaces to be really, you know, the core bits of what I do, what I kind of enjoy doing with my role. So having to adapt from that being an everyday thing to being

something that was no longer there because of lockdown and we were focusing on being an online service was quite a shift to make mentally and culturally for me and for how I work. Transitioning to working from home was a bit of a leap into the unknown at first, but it was a process that was actually, I found, eased considerably because we had a great sense of mutual support and camaraderie among the library colleagues. In February 2020, I barely used Microsoft Teams, and that was true for pretty much everyone else on the library staff. Some had used it in a very limited way. By the end of March 2020 everything we were doing was revolving around Teams. And I think because we are a good group of people who were willing to just roll with that in some ways, but were able to see some of the benefits and enhancements that it offered. Setting up a play channel was a great thing that we did as it allowed us to post comments about books, records, tv programmes, and share things like that. So we got a lot of mutual support out of that. So that helped the change in processes. But then there was the realisation that we were at some point going to come out of this lockdown. So I think part of my role that was the biggest change was planning for what it would look like for when we started reopening, and that was a focus. And I think what we decided would be the approach from an early stage is that we would focus on services, spaces and staffing as three distinct but overlapping areas and make our planning evolve around those. And we tried to come up with five different service models which were the different models which we thought were the different ways a library service could operate depending on what the university was trying to deliver in terms of teaching or activities on campus and things like. It didn't quite work out like that, we had to be a lot more reactive. It wasn't like from the 10th October or something like that, we would move to service level 3, it was much more of a moving train that sometimes went into reverse and sometimes went forward. We had to be much more reactive than simply saying we had five service models and we would move incrementally through them to reach normality at some point in the future. Things were very fluid.

Interviewer: *Again, you've touched on a couple of things there already, including the transition of user enquiries being almost entirely online. Were there any other library services that were particularly affected by lockdown measures?*

Participant 1: Well I suppose the borrowing and returning of books is the obvious one. Having to adapt our procedures there, we gave students extra time to borrow books, recognising that they were going to be in lockdown and not able to travel to campus. We gave them options to return books by post. We've done a lot more liaison and dealing with enquiries and queries from students with outstanding books and how they should be proceeding with those and we would normally expect to deal with more of a simple process of a deluge of books coming back at the end of a normal term. So we had to think through a lot of that and then think about how it would work with managing the checkout process and the collection of books when we were following the guidelines not to give access to bookshelves and so on.

In other ways involving our security team as a more integral part of managing the library space during the day was quite a change for us. And that was made much easier because we had an established relationship with this company, they delivered security cover for our extended opening hours for ten years. So we had confidence that they would be able to provide us with well trained staff, well recruited staff, and fulfill the hours that we required them to work. But they adapted very well to be asked to do new processes. So one of the other big service changes that we made was reducing the capacity of the library, and then making all those limited seats we had available bookable. Mandatory bookings for using seats. The security team were fantastic buying into that and helping just with the process of guiding users through what to expect when they came into the space, making sure they were checking in to help fulfill track and trace requirements and so on. And it was something that needed quite a lot of time and work to focus on getting them ready to do that and changing the brief that they had which was previously more just a general monitoring, patrolling and managing access during evening and late weekend hours.

Interviewer: *Would you say that the Click & Collect service was also effective? Were there any improvements that could've been made?*

Participant 1: Well, I suppose if you take it on metrics in terms of number of books being borrowed you'd probably say that's not really hit anything like the circulation figures from previous years. I suppose we have to consider that we're part of the bigger picture and the much reduced activity with the students coming onto campus. We have provided them with the books they need. We have had some feedback from students, understandably maybe, that they're frustrated that they have to make a request and wait for a confirmation that the books are available for them. And not the certainty that they will be able to pick up or borrow the books they need on the day when they are on campus for a specific class or something like that. So that's something which I'm not sure could've worked better because we were following the Public Health England and general library guidelines for how libraries should operate. I know some libraries went down a different route to make book stock more freely accessible but that may be something that if we had to approach something like this again we would review and maybe try to do it differently. We also had to I suppose reign in what we offer in terms of services to alumni and other members of the external City community as well. And that's something that hopefully reinstates soon.

Interviewer: How about things like PC use and printers. I guess those were also restricted?

Participant: Yes, I mean maybe a positive note with the PCs, our IT team were quite quick to… This was something that was tied to social distancing as well. Where we had areas of the library space with ranks of PC desks, ones side by side with another - we took every second desk out of use and that computer was then utilised by IT for remote access so students could effectively remotely use that PC and its profile to get access to the full range of student software remotely. Definitely been a reduction in use of equipment like that as well on estate. Which goes hand in hand in hand with the drop in foot fall.

Interviewer: That brings us quite nicely to changes in library usage. You've already touched on the fact that the number of physical items was significantly reduced. Were

there any other changes in usage you noticed during this period? For instance, was there an increase in digital items being accessed?

Participant: Yeah, well we did a lot of work to get a wider range of digital resources available. So a lot of extensions of ebook platforms. One in particular that the law area, that I think was initially extended for three months and then six months, and eight months, and 12 months. We had good engagement with that. And good engagement with what we used to call office hours for our subject librarian team, so those became online office hours and I think they delivered not far off the same level of one-to-one or small tutorial group support that they would have been doing in person. So that worked quite well as an example of a service that changed how it was delivered. The staff engagement and the user engagement with the online enquiry service is probably the best example of that. ███████████████████████████████████ ████████████████████████████████ But to sort of underpin that we did have to put quite a bit of work into reviewing how things like the staffing rotas were managed, and how the training of staff, and making sure they all had access to content and material that they needed to help answer enquiries through the online chat portal. Some time was put into addressing that as well. I think that we definitely got a good return on that in terms of the user engagement. And the appreciation that that had from students for being able to contact someone and get support online.

Interviewer: Did you notice any barriers to user access? Or did you hear any reports of students unable to get access or not having appropriate ICTs access library materials online?

Participant 1: I was aware of that from the early stage of some of the discussions of campus reopening. One of the biggest arguments in favour of doing that was to address students in digital poverty who didn't have access to robust wifi or equipment at home and were struggling with that sort of thing. So that was certainly something we were conscious of. I suppose being able to make a wider range of online resources available also helped address that. We extended our chat service support hours gradually as well

during the year, extending it into the weekday evenings and the weekend as well, to give more coverage there. We've tried to make ourselves more contactable but mindful that a lot of students have not had that experience of being on campus and in the library space. But it's something that maybe it's hard to quantify or measure now, but we might see evidence of this perhaps into October - November when the new academic session starts. And if we go ahead as planned and see a return to nearer normal levels of student activity on campus, one of the things we're factoring into our planning at this stage is for students who have progressed from first year undergraduate to second year, they had a completely abnormal university experience last year. So they will need as much of an induction to the campus and library space as the year one students. And third year students had a disruption throughout. And students coming into year one had a very unsettled experience in their school year and A levels and things like that. So there is maybe going to be a log jam of problems to tackle. Things that are going to come down the line now and will have to be mindful of when students return in September - October.

Interviewer: *Speaking of the next academic year, are there any new services or trends in services that you would like to see bright forward. Again, mentioning the online enquiry services and much more time and resource being invested there. Is that something you would like to see continued?*

Participant 1: Yes, and we are making that a much more up front part of our service in future. We didn't shout too much about it before but we've spoken about some little adaptations like on some of our notices on library spaces and other publicity that would be in university corridors publishing library services. We may put a URL or QR code that directs people to the LibAnswers enquiry and chat portals. There actually exists our physical help desk space, but we've been considering for a couple of years now winding down the traditional library enquiry desk that we've had in one part of the library in Northampton square. We've been staffing that for a few years now with usually subject librarians during the week, and they've been picking up a lot of questions but they are not necessarily questions appropriate for their level of expertise. Some of them will

probably testify to you that one of the most common questions on that help desk is "where is the toilet on this floor?" Directional stuff like that needn't be handled by someone on a helpdesk, this is something that library services can do by improving wayfinding or making the usability of the space better. So we think we can have a more effective frontline enquiry service through our chat platform. And the other benefit I see with that is the built in metrics, things like time and turn around times for answering questions. Then we can start to see, hopefully, a consistent quality being delivered there. So that's certainly one change that I think in some ways the pandemic escalated for us making that leap and maybe just nudged us in the right direction into making that change. We might have taken our time over making that transition or pushed back or turned into a pilot. But we thought, no 3 - 4 months is enough of a pilot. It's a good way to go.

Interviewer: How about things like click & collect and booking study spaces?

Participant 1: I think the guidance we're getting from the university is that they want to move on from social distancing at this stage and we're envisaging just restoring the library to its normal capacity maybe on a phased basis but that's what we're looking at for the start of the next academic year. So we don't see mandatory seat bookings as being something that we need to resume unless things go in a bad direction again. But we think there's enough user engagement and potential user benefit for making it available at a limited basis at certain times in the academic session. So we know when we have our peak periods of footfall, and library capacity can sometimes get tested during the undergraduate exam season, so we might sort of allocate 100 odd seats and make them available on the booking system at that time. A bit of work that I've told one or two of my team about, that they don't know all know they're going to get tasked with doing this yet, is just building on what we've done, and getting a limited number of seats onto that booking system and giving them a name and a number. So I'm looking across now where I think something like where seat A47 on the fourth floor of the library is. We're looking at actually giving each of our seats an identifier, not necessarily having a booking requirement for it but we think it could help with usability and it can help us if

someone has reported a problem we can see where they are. So it might sync quite well with what we've suspended over the past year and another springshare function is their sms service, which we've encouraged students as a bit of a noise line in the past to report disturbances in study areas and they could use that for their benefit. And it might mean that we're better prepared in future to decide which clusters of space that we want to manage at certain times with the booking system. And also we've had some conversations about some functionality in SpringShare's LibCal tool, but there are one or two other potential providers where we might be able to get more of an interactive floor plan of some of our library spaces. And so again, having more of a clear numbering system for the desks could be a good thing to develop on that front too.

Interviewer: How about in terms of your own role? You spoke before about transitioning to working remotely, but then that being something that ended up working quite well. Is that something that's still on the cards - remote working or more flexible working?

Participant 1: Not as a general rule in the library, some departments at City, including professional services which is the wider directorate that we work under, are looking at a more agile working pattern. But our line in libraries tended to be more, we've always worked on the principle of all our staff contributing to having some service delivery element in their role. And although I've spoken a lot about making the online enquiry service part of that, we feel that it's more equitable to be managing that through staff being on campus wherever possible. So, looking at the future, if things do stay on this roadmap, with work from home no longer being a requirement. And the expectation of what the government calls it nowadays, one minister will say one thing in the morning, and someone else will say something different in the afternoon. Although that's the que we're getting from the central government that's the approach that we'll be taking in the library. There are other areas of the university that are looking to take a more flexible approach than that, but we feel that we've been very much at the heart of what's being delivered on campus in the last 12 months and we want to continue doing that in future.

Interviewer: Also, I believe that it was announced last week that City is going to do a kind of hybrid teaching model for the next academic year, with large lectures still taking place online, which might help facilitate more distance learning. Do you think that will have similar effects on library usage that lockdown did?

Participant 1: I think it could do. I mean we've certainly seen... it's maybe more noticeable in the business and law library locations, at Northampton Square although various disciplines are covered at Northampton Square it's not quite as easy to see it in action. When there's a class of 150 law students being taught in a lecture theatre in the law building in normal circumstances, it's not untypical or unexpected for a good number of that class to then adjourn and come into the library all at one time. So if it's smaller groups that are being taught so that might change a little bit. We might see students planning their time on campus slightly differently and using the spaces in slightly different ways. We've always noted a correlation in the past between some of the big teaching sessions and patterns of students coming in or coming out of the library space. That might be one manifestation of it. And that in turn might mean that we need to flex our approach to how we deal with some of the book stock that's in high demand. Our law library collection has multiple copies of some core texts, which quite often students are expected to, if they don't have their own copy, borrow a library copy, take it into the class and then bring it back after the class. So if the teaching model develops in a different way, and that becomes a longer term thing, we would certainly need to look at how we support or provide those resources.

Interviewer: Especially as with a lot of e-versions of these resources there's a limited number of people who can access them at one time.

Participant 1: Yeah, multiple users exactly. That's another consideration.

Interviewer: Do you think that also many students would come onto campus to attend lectures on the library computers?

Participant 1: Yeah, we definitely saw that, that was a notable trend we were seeing over the past year. Students asking if it was ok for them to listen to a lecture, or engage with a class, because in many cases it was an interactive participation they were expected to have. So again, that might be something we might have to factor a little bit into how we plan our spaces and how we label them as quiet study or group study spaces in the future. I'm jumping around a bit here, but we're not confident at this point towards the end of July that we should be opening up our group study rooms in the library in the new academic session. Because those are, they seat 5, 6, 7 or 8 people depending on size in normal times. But they're not particularly well ventilated so there are things like that we need to think about before we can bring those back into use. So there are alot of those things that will just need a little bit of, well, seeing how things develop as we go through the coming months I expect.

Interviewer: Yes, still uncertain times, it seems. ▮▮▮ *I would like to ask if there is anything else you would like to mention or say at this point, that you may have noticed over the past 18 months that you think might be relevant to this research?*

Participant 1: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮we've had to pull up the drawbridge a little bit in terms of external users, non-City students and staff not coming into the space. There was actually something that came round yesterday,▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮ SCONUL access scheme] It looks like that is in abeyance until the middle of November. And, well, all the 150 odd member libraries were surveyed a month or two ago. Our response was that we would be ready for it at the start of the new academic year. But there seems to be a mixture of views across the academic library network about how ready or otherwise feel in terms of bringing students from other institutions onto our campuses. So that's something that is maybe demonstrating the impact of this is trickling through into another academic session in terms of what that means for the student experience and so on.

Interviewer: *Yeah, I think, that's an important point. One of the main selling points of coming to a university that is part of the university of London is all the libraries that you would usually have access to. And there is just one more thing, which I've just thought of now. When you were speaking about working remotely and you said a great thing you did on Teams was adding the play section. Talking about things other than work, to help deal with working remotely. There have also been some reports in the papers I've read, there has been increased university library usage of leisure materials. Things less for study and more for play. Is that something you have noticed as well at City, or did that really not come across your desk?*

Participant 1: I don't think we have. ████████████████████████████ ████████████████████ But we've got a fiction collection and a DVD collection. The DVD collection that we have, has enstibly been supporting some of the courses in the School of Arts and Social Sciences. Music, creative writing and things like that. The fiction collection is something that we actually developed 5-6 years ago, when we made a point about getting a small range of fiction titles. It must come to about a thousand odd items across the shelves at Northampton square, and the business and law libraries have got some too. Now, in a normal academic year at some point across the year we would probably run one or two promotions to make students aware of that and maybe tie it in with if you're commuting student you can borrow a fiction book from the library and read it on your journey in and out of university, that kind of thing. We've kind of put all those campaigns and promotions and things on hold over the past 12 months because the focus has been on, well more than just keeping the doors open, but more about supporting the more limited on campus experience. So we've not promoted those parts of the collection, and my sense is I don't think they've been flying off the shelves.

Interview 2

Interviewer: *Ok, so if you could just outline what your role is at City?*

Participant 2: ███ I work within the e-access and digitisation teams at the moment. ████████████ ██, so I've got quite a good overview of how it runs. Well I think I have, whether I have or not is another thing. So, I'm working with the digitisation and e-access team at the moment and that did get particularly busy because of everything going online. So although we already had quite a lot of online resources, most of our journals were online anyway, we also had quite a lot of e-books. There were quite a lot more e-books bought, quite a lot more online resources bought, and with regards to digitisation we had to scan chapters and that was one of the jobs that I generally do here when I'm on site. However, due to the lack of scanners in people's homes, that changed, but it worked quite well. So our library admin lady had a scanner at her house, and she was ordering books to be sent to her home and she was having to scan the chapters from her home and then forwarding them to one of my other colleagues who was then uploading them to various reading lists and things.

So, we adapted very quickly I have to say, it was quite good, from my own perspective, the initial lockdown wasn't so great because the only devices I had ay my home was a really old iPad, not very technical in a way, an old iPad that didn't really do very much and ████████ had a laptop which we shared and I found it all, because I was trying to populate, you know, equipment with things that we needed or IT had to take over. It was all a little bit dodgy at the beginning, and IT were frantically trying to get laptops sent out to people, I think they really had their work cut out. Because I'm quite a structured person, I didn't like working from home to start with. I find that I like to keep home, home and work, work. It didn't suit me. But because I couldn't have access to the things that I normally have access to here, I found that quite frustrating. And it took, I would say at least, it seemed like forever, but it was probably more like 3-4 weeks before I got a

laptop issued to me by City and delivered to my home. But as I said I think they were just working flat out trying to get everybody, not only library staff, but obviously the whole university, all up and online and running and having access to all the different programs that they needed to access. So, I found that personally quite frustrating and I'm quite organised and I quite like to do certain things in a certain way and I found that I wasn't getting any work satisfaction by being at home. ████████████████████████ I was forever saying to managers, "Do you need me to go in? I can go in". All I wanted to do was to be back here. So needless to say, when July came and we re-opened the library service I was one of the first people who came in. And I've been back since July full time as working from home didn't suit me. There are too many distractions in my home life. ████████████████████████████████████. And because they knew I was at home they would phone, you know what I mean? Too many distractions, washing to put on, meals to prepare. I found too many distractions. So, yeah, so that was sort of that side of it. So once we came back, once I came back in July, it was great. There were only a few of us, very skeleton staff, and already the people that were here the weeks before me had already marked out areas, putting stickers everywhere for one way systems and cordoning off furniture and all sorts like that. But it was very quiet, there weren't any other staff. It was quite eerie, the only other staff on campus were security and path. And so in these big buildings when you're used to having corridors jammed packed with students, people talking and eating, it was quiet, it was ghost-like being back. So that was a bit strange. Yes, so for me being back, it was great and then I had access to everything, so you had… ██████████████████████ ██████████ we could flip from role to another, there's lots of user services stuff going on, or if there's somebody in a different team that needed access to something. Also we had access to the books which was great because it opened up… if we couldn't order something or you know, say for instance if we didn't have access to books, or there was this chapter that needed to be scanned it meant purchasing that book again even if we had 20 copies here. So there was a lot of pressure that way in getting all of these additional books. Also on our admin team had her little scanner at home and had to suddenly learn how to do it and send the files off. Yeah, being back on site was good for me and I'm sure it was for the other people who came back. We all wanted to come

back, do you know what I mean? It was good for us. But yeah, it's very quiet student-wise.

Interviewer: Yeah, you touched on some things there about changes to, perhaps how people are accessing things and there being a lot fewer students around the library. Were there any other changes to the library services that you noticed during this period?

Participant 2: Well we already had in place something called LibChat, I don't know if you're aware of that, so we probably got a few more queries within in that respect. So usually within the library there would only be one person, on a two hour slot, from 9-11 there would be one person manning the chat. But I think it increased to two or more at the very beginning, where at the beginning we were expected to be inundated with stuff. However, myself, personally I don't think we were inundated with questions because I think everybody was going through it, so everybody, even if the students were… I don't know how it affected them personally within their learning but I just think it threw everybody out of sync, and people were worried about their own health, their mental health with basic day-to-day stuff. So I can't really speak to the student side of it, and it's still quiet now, though I've noticed a few more people around today. I think since July 19th, since everything sort of got lifted we have had a few more students. But there's still not many here. It's going to be strange in September just to see how many people are back on site. Because I think they're trying to get the staff all back now. During August they're trying to encourage everyone to come back because they want it to be as normal as possible from the beginning of September.

Interviewer: You mentioned some things about having to purchase more copies of books so they can be scanned and can be accessed. Were there any collection decisions you noticed, like maybe more focus on digital materials then there had been previously?

Participant 2: Yeah, although I have to say that the digitisation side of library services was going that way anyway. With ebooks, more and more ebooks are being purchased rather than physical books, I think. We already subscribe to loads of journals, we get very little print copies now of anything. Most stuff is digital. I work in the access team so we have to do lots of checks to make sure resources are working or we deal with any queries if somebody says links are broken or stuff like that, we have to investigate that side of it. So I think with regards to libraries it's going that way anyway. Although we do have a great library book, physical book collection here, and we're constantly, we're still buying books it's not like they've stopped. Which I'm glad about because I actually like the physical books. Yeah, I think the world was going that way anyway before we had this pandemic. But with regards, I think you'd need to speak to someone in acquisitions to see if they've noticed a vast increase in purchases in that area. But I'm assuming that it did.

Interviewer: And were there any services that could no longer be provided? I mean other than initially access to the building and to physical books. Was there anything else you noticed or observed?

Participant 2: I don't think so. I'm trying to think of the different teams we've got, and whether they did. No, I mean academic services still provided, they may have had physical one-to-one meetings here pre-pandemic, but that went online. Everything went over pretty good. I mean we have Teams, we were having team meetings with our other colleagues. Yeah, I don't think there was anything we didn't provide. It was obviously great once we opened because people had access to the physical books again. And we did, well we're still doing, a fetching service. Books went into quarantine when they were returned. We had extra book return bins. They set up a postal system where they shipped labels to students that had finished their courses and maybe had gone abroad or gone home. So all that was in place, to get all our book stock back safely. And it was all, as I said, put into quarantine for several days, before we could then open it and check in, and they were all backdated to be checked in. So, no, I think on the whole, we still provided a great library service.

I can't say even when I've manned things like LibChat that we've had any negative responses from many students that we haven't provided anything for them. And even the CLI license that covers how much of a book we're allowed to scan, they increased their coverage from 10% to 20%. So we were allowed to scan more of a book, with no additional costs. It seems like all people pulled together to try and make it, give everybody what they still needed and more. To enable them to get through that year and finish their courses or their first, second, or third year. No, I personally don't think that there was anything that we were lacking. I'm pretty sure we gave the students everything that we possibly could. I don't think there was anything, apart from like you said, the physical aspect of talking to people one-to-one. Because that's what we said, it's going to be very strange getting students back in and they start asking questions. Because we used to get from September to the end of October maybe, we used to constantly get people asking, we've probably forgotten half the answers, we've got to retrain! And I think that IT must have done a fantastic job as well, because very often in the library we get asked a lot of IT stuff, and we didn't get inundated with stuff in regards to IT queries either. I think on the whole we didn't do too bad at all.

Interviewer: *On a similar note, you mentioned before that you weren't inundated with queries on LibChat. Were there any other kinds of changes in library usage that you noticed during this period, or maybe things you didn't expect?*

Participant 2: I mean, I expected to get a lot more queries than we did, to be honest with you. But as I say, the academic services team provided one-to-ones with students, so I'm assuming, maybe someone from that team would be able to answer it better. But I'm assuming that any students that were in need of help that they must have found their subject librarians to get assistance that way. Sorry, could you say that again?

Interviewer: *That's ok, did you observe any changes in the way the library was used this year, when compared to previous years?*

Participant 2: Yeah, well you know just the lack of students really. Yeah, I mean even just with the students that are coming in, trying to understand the way the things we've set out for them - the requesting of books, maybe. We did get the odd student that would come to the desk thinking that they could just come in and have access to the book collections. But again, that wasn't very many. I think people adapted to the rules they were given. I think people understood once they knew how to request books, they could come, they knew how it worked. Once they knew how the system worked, people were fine about it. I just think generally the whole world just had to adapt whatever was thrown at us. I don't like it the way it is here, I like to have new students around. I mean, having things taped off and having big stickers marked off, and one way, and the sanitising stations. I mean it's quite normal now, wearing the masks. We've got screens up everywhere. It's pretty much the same as every other establishment actually.

Interviewer: You also said that at the beginning that you struggled with access, not having the best ICT equipment to be able to do your work. Did you observe any similar issues for access, be it internet or technology based, for students as well?

Participant 2: I didn't personally, no. I mean I'm assuming that with regard to the one-to-one academic service team, they would have used teams. And assuming that students would've had access to Teams themselves. When the lockdown first happened, I had very little technology to help me adapt to being online and doing my work. Who knows what equipment students had? Maybe they relied on using PCs here? And the PC labs here. But I don't know anything about that, I can't say I've had any students talk to me about that, or had any queries about that. I mean because a lot of our resources are online anyway, I'm assuming that students knew how to access them, as long as their IT accounts were ok. For them it must have been pretty much the same as usual, if they knew how to access the online stuff. Yeah, it probably increased for them. I'm hoping that we satisfied the students' needs for what they wanted. It's just the strangeness of not having that face-to-face interaction with people I think. The sooner things get back to normal in that respect the better, for my part.

Interviewer: Did any changes occur in your role or in the service as a whole that you would like to see continued into the "new normal"? I mean, you've made it clear that you don't like working from home, but was there anything that did arise?

Participant: Not really. I'd much rather everything was just how it was before. I suppose Teams in general has made it easier for people to interact with each other without having to be on site. For those people who can't get in, maybe distance learners, or the academic services team having one-to-ones with students. Rather than them having to actually come in and physically use a library space, or an office like, I'm in one of the academic services rooms now where they would have a one-to-one with somebody. I suppose if they could do it from home, it may be easier, say for example for nursing students, they're on placement, so it might be quite difficult for them to get into campus, so if they can do it from their own home or wherever their placements are, perhaps they can use other facilities where it doesn't mean that they have to get on transport or worry about getting somewhere on time. I think Teams has been quite a great thing actually, because a lot of our files and things that we have on our PCs were transferred over to Teams, so that enabled us all to share documents. It took a little bit of getting used to, and where things were, because you were used to searching for things in a specific way. But I think Microsoft Teams, this has become an advert for Microsoft Teams. But I think that's one, which for me personally, is one of the things that was most beneficial, that's helped a great deal because as I said, you can talk to your line manager, you can see each other, you can have a laugh, a little bit of a joke. I would say that's a win-win situation.

Ebooks and online resources, as I said to you before, they were going that way anyway. I think the increase is going to continue, I don't think that's going to stop or revert in any way. But we need students back, there might be some benefit to other teams that work within the university with regards to working from home. But we provide a desk service, so we do need some library staff actually on campus and we need people to reshelf books. Generally be around for students that need the one-to-one interaction, or to talk to people physically. I mean there might be some library staff that could work from

home, but I think we're on a rota here, we all do some user services desk slots and things. Or we run workshops, we have stalls on the walkways where we have like a library essential stall where people can just stop and chat to us about things. So all that will be great when that comes back. Yeah, the library is here to stay, it's not going anywhere. We need it, we're a service that's needed. We're not a virtual service, it is a physical service, I don't think we'll ever go anywhere. It might reduce a little bit, but I don't think it's going to go for good.

Interviewer: If we can just briefly touch on what you were saying about digital resources, ebooks and e-resources being on the increase. And you also mentioned the easing of licensing restrictions of scanning and things. I don't think those are permanent changes though, are they?

Participant 2: No, it's been lifted now. It's gone back now. We're just doing rollovers now for next year for reading lists, and it's stopped now. It has actually stopped. But it was good for the time that it was needed. At least something positive was done rather than it never happening at all. But, yeah it's reverted now, it's gone back to 10%.

Interviewer: Do you think if those licensing restrictions could be eased again, permanently, that that would be of benefit?

Participant 2: Yeah, that would be great, I think so. Of course it would. I think, very often, we can run into a brick wall, just because we've got a copy of a book that's not been published in the UK and we can't scan it. We've come across this before, we've got an American copy, and we're forbidden from scanning it. So we have to find a copy that's published here or somewhere else. We have to buy the physical copy that we're allowed to scan from. So those sort of things, I find those a bit, jobs-worthy should we say. The students are here to learn. I think they should have access to everything.

Interviewer: And just finally, is there anything else that you would like to say or add that you think would be beneficial to this research?

Participant 2: No, I don't think so. I think I've covered everything.

Interview 3

Interviewer: Could you briefly outline what your role is at City?

Participant 3: ███████████████████████████████████████ So I have an interesting role in that my line manager is the user services manager of the law library. So, at City library we have three teams if you like; we have user services - which is basically to do with running the physical library and looking after the patrons, we have academic services - which looks after subject librarians and subject specialists, and then we have the biggest team, which I used to be part of, called technical services which runs all the book processing, ebooks, databases etc. ████████████████████ ██ ████████████████████████████ But also I have a split role, in that I support the law subject librarian. So in other words, I do academic work as well, so I might help him with one-to-ones or inductions about law, and I also help with some of the things like the library subject guides for law. So there's kind of that element as well. So that's my role.

Interviewer: How was your day-to-day working life affected by the pandemic and lockdown?

Participant 3: Well it was quite complicated on a number of levels. One is that last year we moved the two law libraries. We had two law libraries, one in Gray's Inn Place and one in the main university campus, and we were planning to put them together, consolidate them and move into the new law building. So that was a project for last year. So, lockdown put a slight spanner in the works, because we didn't know where we were. We'd had lots of preparation because we had a lot of duplication in the collection and we were trying to get one collection going. So there were lots of spreadsheets. But we also needed to physically be in the library to mark up shelves etc. We managed just about to do that before we had the lockdown. But, then we had an issue in that we knew the law libraries would be shut for the move. So we had arranged to create a third library, law library collection, that would be housed in the library at Northampton Square

for the interim period during the move. So basically we had three library collections and we were concerned that we wouldn't be able to get that third collection to the Northampton Square library. We managed to do that, just about. But our concern was obviously with the students being able to access books. So, that was one thing that was a specific problem within our team because we were moving a library. And not just moving a library, but moving two libraries into one library, so you can imagine what that meant? And, the other thing of course was that obviously studying was still continuing and we were concerned about students, not so much having study space, we hoped that they would have study space at home, but that they would need to access our resources, our print books, and that was the immediate issue with law, because law books are some of the most expensive books to buy. So, you can imagine that ebooks are even more expensive to buy. So we had to try as much as possible to put our collection online. We have a mixture of print books, we went on a purchasing spree trying to cover as much as possible so that we could put as much as possible online. Which obviously really ate into our budget and we had to go through, the whole team had to work hard over the first few weeks because we students who were stressed, who couldn't, who wanted to borrow books but they couldn't come in and borrow them. And we were trying to find alternatives in our ebook collection. But also, to purchase more ebooks and you could say, well why didn't you have to start with? But obviously we were managing a budget and often it would be cheaper to buy twenty print copies of a book, than buy a license for an ebook. So that's something that the law librarian has to balance. But as it was, but I can talk more about that if you want to? So those were the two problematic things to start with. We got over the collection things, I would say within about a month, but we were having to field a lot of enquiries of students. And we did have books online, so we were trying to give them alternatives when we couldn't purchase, or couldn't purchase quickly, what they needed.

Interviewer: *And you mentioned before helping with the subject librarian and doing one-to-ones and things with students, I assume that was also affected?*

Participant 3: That was affected, but that was quite easy to be done online and often via email. So that was affected, and we pretty quickly got into Teams, and one thing that the, if you're interviewing anyone else from City Library, one thing that the pandemic did was speed up something that we were going to trial, which was we have an instant chat service anyway, but we wanted to extend that, extend the hours that we do it, but we also wanted to make it more specific about the business and the law library and the Northampton Square library which is across the other subjects that City teaches. We wanted to roll out for each library, and so that is what we did. But rather than trial it, we went straight into doing it. So we could offer instant messaging to students, which was great and that's something that's really good that's come out of it. LibCal, it's one of these software products that we have, so we started to extend our use of it and started to utilise some of their new things that we were planning to do over the year but in a gentle way. So that's something we did quickly and is here to stay.

Interviewer: In terms of numbers of enquiries or one-to-ones you had, would you say that was about the same as in previous years?

Participant 3: There was a much greater number to start with. I mean, we were doing email enquiries really, and LibChats and we had a lot over the first couple of months. I mean it was really a lot, we were very busy because students were stressed and it was a completely different way for them to study. They were particularly concerned about their access to resources. So, as I said, they couldn't come in and borrow books and so we had to keep directing them to ebooks. Which of course some existed anyway, but this is another thing about, I would suggest about law, is that they're quite big tomes often that students have to look at. So whilst they might be very happy to read an online article in a journal, to have three or four big ebook tomes open on your laptop is quite difficult for them. So they like to have the physical book. And unfortunately we had to say that this is the best that we can do right now. But we did subscribe to a number of resources, and I think we pretty well covered everything, actually, ultimately.

Interviewer: Were there any usual services that weren't able to be provided?

Participant 3: Well initially we couldn't provide, obviously we couldn't provide book borrowing and couldn't provide study space. But that was what we did when we came back in the summer. So I think we came back in June. There was a small team of us that volunteered to come back and that was to set up study spaces that could be booked, that were spaced, and they had to be booked in advance. But, you know, if a student turned up they could just book it on their phone. But they had to book it because a student would only be allowed into the university, they were trying to limit the number of students on campus. But we were aware that some students needed somewhere to study that was quiet, or that they needed to use a PC. So that was our priority, and also we set up a click & collect service for books. So again, we changed, if you've looked at our City library search on our online catalogue. Usually when you look for a book it has a 'request it' button underneath the title, and that is usually used if all the books are out on loan and you want to reserve the book. So we changed the settings so that people would just use that button to request the book. So they would come in, in the normal fashion like a reservation, so I think twice a day we would go collect books from the shelves that had been requested. That would then trigger an email to students that their book was ready to collect and they were allowed in to collect their book. So those were the two services that we weren't providing in lockdown that were our priority as soon as we were allowed back on campus in a limited fashion. And it was a small team, because obviously, the less of us there were the more space we would have between us. We also wanted to get books back, get the collection back, that was out on loan, particularly from final year students. So we had a book bin, or a book deposit, outside the main entrance of the university on Northampton Square, where people could post their books in. We also did, for a limited time, a free post service - which did cost quite a lot of money. So we tried to encourage students, we asked students... and if they said they couldn't we'd give them the free post. But obviously we didn't want to have to pay for that out of our budget. So that was our priority, to get the collection back, to provide study space, and to allow students to borrow books - because that's what we couldn't do when the campus was shut.

Interviewer: How about in terms of usage of these services? So you mentioned already there was a limitation to the books that could be used, and an increased focus on e and digital resources. How did those numbers compare to previous years?

Participant 3: I don't have the metrics, ███████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████ But obviously, much much bigger use of e resources. And actually, what we started doing over the past year we bought, so slightly different in law, in that if you want to make money go into legal publishing. A lot of our main textbooks have a new edition every year, or every few years, and as a law library we don't keep any old editions. The other subjects might keep two or three old editions as they're not so important, but with law, law's got to be current. So we only ever keep one edition. So over the past 18 months or so we have been buying less print books. So it might be, come September we'll put in an order for some more. So maybe we might have bought 25 copies of a book, we'll buy five because we've already paid for an ebook. So we're trying to limit that and we'll see what the usage is like on the print books. I imagine when the library opens, print usage will go back, maybe not to the same extent, but it will go up, because that is sort of the behaviour of law students. One thing that we did was that we bought a resource that some other law libraries have, but it's extremely expensive, I think it's about 100 grand a year out of our budget. And it's a collection of law books that Oxford University publishes. Now, you can only buy some of those, or most of those, if you buy the whole collection. So you can't buy them individually as an e-book, but you can buy them as a print book. So, in the past we've bought maybe 20 odd copies of a book, rather than subscribe to LAWTRO, but actually we really felt that we didn't have a choice over the lockdown, so we have subscribed to it, which is actually a fantastic database, as its got a huge range of core legal texts in it, but you can also search across the texts within the database. So it's a really nice resource for the students and I hope that more of them have gotten into it, and we keep encouraging them to use it because it's costing us so much money. So that is something that we are keeping, and we've got budget for it for the next academic year. So that means we are buying less of those print books, quite substantially less, and we'll see what the usage is like, because we do have feedback channels for the students, and if

we do get a lot of requests for more print books we do look at it. I mean sometimes you have to make a choice, you're only going to use this for a very short amount of time, it's an expensive book. I mean some law books are hundreds of pounds each. So we do have to make decisions like that.

Interviewer: During the lockdown some publishers, some databases, offered more free trials or relaxed some restrictions. Was that the case for law as well?

Participant 3: Not really. No, I mean although we did make a bit of a deal with Oxford Law Trove, though not that much of a deal. I think it was Cambridge University Press they did some, and there were some law titles within that. Trying to think... I can't remember. But, yeah that is true, and obviously that made sense for them because also, maybe not so much for law because they're quite specific texts, but maybe for some other subjects they gave access to more of their collections. So, it meant that our subject librarians could see that students were using certain books so when the free trials finished it was, they may well subscribe to them, they may well buy them. It was kind of in the publishers' interest to say you can have a free go at this, and we'll let you use your core texts as well. So that did happen, that is true.

Interviewer: You also touched upon that the general trends with law students was toward print, and I know one of the complaints that is raised against e-resources is the limited amount of people that can access them at once. Was something that you also observed?

Participant 3: We had that for a few titles. Which was a little bit unfortunate during exam time, I think we had a couple of episodes where we weren't given a heads up that there was going to be an open book exam. And after that we did a project, well very soon afterwards, because it stressed the students. Fortunately it was only one or two episodes. We went through, we got the exam timetable and we checked all the resources. So that the subject librarian could buy some extra licenses for them. A lot of the time, by then though, we were borrowing books as well, we were doing Click &

Collect so we could have come in and got one. And we did allow them to borrow, basically, everything. The only thing that we wouldn't let them borrow was like a loose leaf or a law report and we said we'd scan them for them. Because we just didn't want those to physically go out of the library. But yeah, that was part of the problem. But I think, this is just my view, I might be wrong, but I just think that they liked to have the books open on their desks because often they're referring to different sections. I think unless you've got a couple of screens, which most people wouldn't have at home, it can be quite tricky. It's not like you're reading one book through with law, you're referring to a number of books.

Interviewer: And how about any other barriers to access, maybe more to do with digital poverty or not having appropriate ICTs or WiFi?

Participant 3: I wouldn't say that we came across... I personally didn't come across any terms of digital poverty. I think I had a very occasional request, I mean it was really occasional, maybe one or two over the whole year, "can we borrow a laptop?" In which case we passed them onto IT, because I believe they were doing some kind of system there, because we don't have laptops to borrow. More was the, and this is something that happens all the time anyway, is that something might go wrong with our IT system or often, and it is more likely, something with the publishers' platform. Like an update that goes a bit wrong, and our link isn't working, all kinds of stuff. So we have an e-access team in technical services that troubleshoot those things. And that can be very frustrating for a student because it can go on for hours sometimes, maybe even a couple of days that they can't access a particular book or journal. Whereas in the past they could've come into the library and just look at it, they're stuck with that. That didn't occur that much I wouldn't say. It was just like normal, but of course you don't have the alternative of saying, "well here it is, here's the print".

Interviewer: That brings us on quite nicely to the last thing I'd like to ask you, which is, were there any changes to services that occurred during the pandemic that you would like to see continued into the "new normal", whatever that may be?

Participant 3: I think it's hopefully be able to offer students a variety of things. So if they want to connect over Zoom that's an option. I think, but also give them the option to come in. As I said, some of the resources that we've bought, particularly the Oxford Law Trove, I think it's a wonderful resource, I'm glad we've got it and I hope we keep it. That's about the budget, but I think we've had a lot of feedback about that. Some of the resources I think we'll keep. And I think, I mean my job as I said is user services within law, so ours is obviously an online presence in terms of doing LibChat, answering emails, being available for a Zoom call. But also to be physically in the library, so we can open it, so we can help students, we can shelve books and all the rest of it. So I imagine that I will not be working from home, because to be honest, although I can do some work from the crux of my job is on site, and I understand that. But I think that particularly in academic services, the subject librarians, I believe and I would hope that the library management would see that there is more opportunity for flexible working because that hasn't been something that has been allowed in the past. Only very limited flexible working. And it seems to me that the people that are technical services and academic services, a lot of people can work from home, or maybe one or two days a week could work from home. IT has set up remote access for all kinds of things now, and it doesn't really have an impact. Obviously you have to have a certain number of people on site, because you have to have security, you have to look after the patrons, the students, and have the physical spaces open. But so much is done in front of a screen that you could do at home that I hope that that could be what we'll have more of, because I think people will be happier with it. And like I said, I think our chat service will further be extended, we've done some more training, during term time we had it at the weekends, and we were training our evening and weekend staff on how to use it to answer enquiries. It's available, and we think that's what students want. They also want to physically be able to come into the library. So that's maybe what will change, there will be a little bit more flexible working within the team, and we will be using some resources that we haven't used before and also we'll be extending our online services in terms of the chat messaging and that kind of thing, because we've seen how easy it is to use, and we've had a good response from it.

Interviewer: Do you think that was where the library was heading anyway, and this has maybe just sped up that process?

Participant 3: In terms of online presence, yes, it was where the library was heading and it just sped it up. About flexible working, I'm not convinced about that. I think some libraries have much more flexible working patterns than City library does, and our management seems to be quite resistant towards that. I understand that and I think that maybe it's shown that actually, because it's quite easy to monitor what we're doing, you can see what people are producing and I wouldn't be surprised if we produced more in terms of cataloguing books, all the rest of it. Of course there's got to be a physical presence and people get sick, so even though your job might be cataloguing a book online, it might be that someone is sick and you need to go and work on the service desk. There's got to be flexibility. But, yeah, I think flexible working, and I also think that some of the collection decisions might have changed.

Interviewer: Towards the more digital first?

Participant 3: Yeah, maybe digital first, I think. But that's a really hard one to explain, there was a time when people thought it's just going to be digital and experience has shown that people don't want just digital, they really don't want it. It's got to be a hybrid.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you would like to add or discuss that we haven't spoken about yet that you think could be relevant to this research?

Participant 3: No, I don't think so. I mean, my experience was that we worked well as a team, and obviously people had different circumstances, and that had an impact on who could come in, what work could be done. We tried to organise that certain jobs would be done from home and only the physical jobs would be done on site, so we wouldn't be wasting people's time. So I would say that the library management team has been flexible and good. I'm not so, this is a personal opinion, I'm not so convinced about the

university management team. At times we felt rather under appreciated seeing that we were the ones turning up. And there was a presumption that everyone was working from home and that wasn't the case for the library service. Sometimes it didn't feel like we didn't have the support, not from the senior library team, but from the senior university management in terms of health and safety etc. In terms of making the workplace as safe as possible. Fortunately the Union health and safety were pretty vocal about all of that. So yeah, that was my experience really.

Interviewer: So there were definitely some areas where things could've been improved?

Participant 3: Yeah, but I mean to be fair, within the university yes, I think so. But within the City Library team, I really think we did our best. I think we can be proud of what we did. It wasn't perfect but I think we did pretty well. And we didn't have many complaints, once we explained to the students that it was beyond our control that they could not come into the library. As soon as they were permitted to come into the library we provided services for them so that they could.

Interview 4

Interviewer: *Could you outline what your role is at City?*

Participant 4: Sure. ███████████████████████████████████ ██ ██. So I oversee anything to do with collection management, but also teaching, so information literacy, digital literacy type things, and all of the kinds of things around reading lists, liaison with schools and making sure we've got the right books etc. etc. As an aside, I also oversee the marketing side of things within the library service as well, so obviously that's been fairly active this year.

Interviewer: *How did lockdown measures and the pandemic affect your role?*

Participant 4: It kind of varied across the period of time. ███████████████████████ ████████████████████████████████████. So they've probably got a slightly different perspective, or at least a broader perspective of what's been going on, which I think is good for your research. In terms of initially, it was more about managing, checking in that people were ok and more of that pastoral thing, if you like? And just kind of checking that everyone was ok, and that combined with putting messages out about what we were doing and what we couldn't do currently, and what we could do. But as things improved or we suddenly got to grips with how things could work remotely then it was kind of feeding that information out. So, yeah, the initial thing was almost a bit like, just a lot of stuff I would say. But I think it was probably the same for most people, wherever they were working, or even if they weren't working I think it was… a lot going on, and a lot to think about.

In terms of longer term, it was more than about, I think initially people were thinking that it would be a short period of time and then we'll all go back to normal. But obviously as time went on and things didn't really pan out like that it was then about making sure the

service would be developing into something that we could sustain over a longer period of time. And particularly in my team it was more about, we were coming up to summer by that point, so it was thinking about the following year. Some universities had already made quite bold statements saying that they were going to go online for the following year. We hadn't made a statement like that just yet, I think everyone was thinking maybe term one. And then obviously that's morphed over time, so, a lot of what we were doing was kind of suring up being able to offer an equivalent to what we would normally offer face to face in the online environment. Moving online in terms of one to one student support, making more content available, like video content people could access whenever they needed it rather than having to be in a teaching session, or that kind of thing. So yes, I think by the time we got past that initial phase it was more about thinking longer term about what we could actually deliver and what we could promise in schools. And certainly in my role as well, I sit on a lot of committees where there were various conversations going on about what we were going to do about this, and the teaching and learning committee going through all the options for hybrid versus online versus everything else. There was a lot of stuff bubbling away in the background at university level, which helped, as I was able to feed that back into what we could do with the team and our offer going forward.

Interviewer: *You touched on before part of your role is supervising or helping with information literacy and digital literacy. How were those services and other library services affected during this period?*

Participant 4: It's been quite interesting insofar... we've just done a bit of analysis of patterns in terms of use from students. I think initially it was like the students went into hibernation, we just didn't really hear much from them. We were kind of offering what we could at that point, getting to grips with Teams and that sort of stuff. I think then as people realised it was going to go on for longer, they realised that they could take more advantage of the stuff we were offering. So, certainly I would say summer, the summer period, Easter to Summer last year, up take for things like one to ones was quite low. We had a few people come to online workshops but it was probably on a par with what

we'd normally see face to face, numbers are generally quite low for that kind of thing because they're voluntary, and at that time of year students are less interested in coming along to that kind of thing anyway. What I think was interesting since this year, and it was kind of like a fully online experience this year, we've sort of offered equivalent to everything we would have offered face to face, possibly more actually, as its in a way easier to deliver online because you dont have to have x people in a room, and you can do it a bit more and you can have a bit more flexibility, and particularly with things like student one to ones, you've got the flex on the timings as you don't necessarily need to have a meeting room booked or any of those kinds of things. So we've seen an uptake of that, and I'd say on a par with a normal year, but what has been really interesting is that we still have students doing one to ones now. Normally by about the end of May they've dropped off completely, we don't really hear from them apart from the odd person writing a dissertation, or something along those lines. But I think it's quite interesting this year that it seems to have stayed fairly consistently popular through the year, rather than petering off after the Easter period. It'll be really interesting to see what next year looks like, because one of the things we're talking about now, the university is talking about bringing people back on campus and what we are offering our students and trying to offer them the best experience we can, from an in person perspective. So obviously we're going to have to offer a lot of stuff in multiple formats, because I think we can't just withdraw the offer of giving an online one to one for example, I think it's more about having the flexibility and working around that. I think those trends will be really interesting once we're into the post pandemic thing. I think it'll be really interesting to see what the trends are like and whether the uptake of face to face or online is more popular, because at the moment I generally have no idea what it'll be like.

Interviewer: Have extra steps been taken? I've read reports of universities creating recordings of these sessions and making a bank of materials that students can access, is that something that's being done at City as well?

Participant 4: Yes, we've done loads of stuff around, either if it's a specific session for a school that's been arranged by an academic to make it available and there's the whole

time zone thing as well, which is obviously an issue, or has been a bigger issue this year. So we've done a lot more of that, but we've also done a lot more pre-record rather than live online sessions as well. And again it has come down to what the schools have asked us to deliver, for the most part. If their preference is to have a recorded thing and then a live Q&A to follow on from it, there's been a lot of stuff around that. But also last year was the first year we had an online induction module for the library. In previous years we'd always been denied, Moodle was too cluttered, and they wanted to keep it clean and slick. Last year there was really good rationale as to why that needed to be there, because if a student couldn't actually attend, be it online or face to face, a session, there was a bank of resources there and could signpost what they need. So there was some video content created for that and we're looking at refreshing that for next year as well in terms of doing some way-finding type content, like images of the library and where people can find things, and that kind of thing. Which we've never really done before, and although central marketing have done some tours of campus, but none of them go into the level of detail that we'd want to relay to students that are trying to figure out how to issue a book or where a library book would actually be. So quite base level, but hopefully providing something in a different format that's a bit more useful and accessible for them.

Interviewer: That more kind of digital focus of messaging and training, was that something, that prior to the pandemic, was something that the team was looking to do, or was that something that emerged out of necessity?

Participant 4: I think it's both. We had been trialling online one to ones already in two schools of the five, and based on the student feedback they said it would be really good. It's interesting, it's business and law, and that's more likely anyway because of the kind of people that are doing those courses might have a job or might not be around, and they want the flexibility to fit it in with their work schedules. So it kind of made sense completely. So we had been trialling that. We were originally using Skype for business, which was a bit hit and miss. Teams has certainly been a lot more reliable from that perspective. But yeah, uptake of that had been patchy I would say. It tended to be

people who were in jobs and needed to do it in their lunch break or that kind of thing. Or maybe the odd nursing student who was in a hospital. So I think it was, it was always something we were looking at, it has possibly brought it forward and I think we always would have been looking at some kind of hybrid model for that, rather than withdrawing the face to face option, as I know that some students really get a lot more out of sitting down with someone in front of a computer and doing it that way as well. So it was something we were looking at. In terms of teaching, not so much. We had done the odd thing when we'd done a session and recorded it on lecture capture and that kind of thing. But it wasn't something that we did a lot of, more of the kind of instructional video type of content was the thing we usually focussed on the online. So like a five minute database demo with a voiceover, that would be more like what we would be delivering in a non-live format previously. Rather than an actual live teaching session. So that was different.

Interviewer: And in regards to subject librarians, how were there services affected during this time as well?

Participant 4: Apart from the teaching side of things, which we've talked about. I think the other big thing has been liaison with academics in terms of getting stuff for our students that's been online. Because there are, not in all, but in certain subjects there are huge pockets of stuff that we had only in print. And also for the first three months we couldn't even digitize anything because we couldn't get into campus to get the physical copy to scan it or what have you. So the big focus in terms of those first three or four months was just trying to buy as much equivalent online content as we could, and I think that was quite a, particularly at that time of year when most of your budget is already spent, it was a bit of a tricky one. Usually by that point in the year you've pretty much spent as much as you think you're going to spend, as you've already done your reading list and your term two reading list and it's only really the business school that have ever had a term three and not really have to purchase much at that point. So usually by about February - March we think we're spent up. So we did invest quite a lot in purchasing as many ebook collections as we could. And that was helped by the fact

that the publishers made a load of stuff free online for a big chunk of time, until around June - July that year. And then once that was withdrawn there was also a lot of work looking at what we're losing that we actually need, and what do we need to look into investing in for the current academic year? So a lot of that was around budget concerns and balancing things up, and finding out what packages we could take advantage of that could tick as many boxes as possible. As obviously, inevitably, budgets have been tighter this year, so that was a trickier one to balance. Though, having said that, I think we're in quite a lucky position of having the ability to turn around and say, well, we have to buy this stuff, we don't have any other option, if you want to educate the students they need access to things.

Interviewer: So, it clearly had a big impact on collection decisions, and it obviously depends on the subject as to whether they are more print or digitally focused, but do you think the swing towards digital first will be something that will be continued?

Participant 4: I would hope so, it is something that we've always pushed. So our collection development states that we will always purchase e over print wherever we can. Some of that is difficult just because of the nature of publishing particularly, you're probably aware of all the issues around e-textbooks, so there are issues around that. There are also issues around some of the stuff not being available in an e-book format, or historic, insofar as no longer published material, where you're relying on a 60 year old book which has been rebound however many times just because it's the only copy we've got and we can't get anymore but the academic insists that it being the only book they can use. So I think that's been the hardest thing, the liaison with academic staff and saying you'll just have to move with the times now. It's almost forced a lot of hands, which I think longer term will work potentially to our advantage as it means we've been able to push back more than we normally would. And we can say, that unless you make this stuff available, students will have nothing from their reading list, or you know, 50% of the stuff is not there, or what have you. So I think it's certainly helped enforce that argument.

Interviewer: Obviously this was a period where the usage of digital materials increased compared to previous years. There's also been talk about how students often do prefer print. Is that something you noticed when things such as Click & Collect were introduced, that people were coming in to favour print?

Participant 4: Yes, I think what we were doing quite proactively, and I think this is why we were probably more aware of it. The way the whole system works is that we run a report every Tuesday and Friday, and look at everything that has a hold on it and where there was an ebook, we would contact the user and say, do you know it's online? It was quite surprising what proportion of those things did have an online equivalent. I would say in 50% of the cases the student just hadn't found the ebook, and was just like, oh great I'll go and use that. There were others that were definitely coming in to get that print copy. For I think a number of reasons, some of it is preference, some of its learning styles differ. Some people find it alot easier. I mean certainly if I have a long meeting document I print it out because it's a lot easier for me to read, then constantly viewing it on a screen. So yeah, I completely get that. I think if you look at the proportion of stuff we've bought in print this year it's tiny, for obvious reasons, because for the most part people couldn't come in. But there are still some that were in really high demand. So the print manuals in law are not available online, so we were seeing those continually coming up on reservation lists and kind of continually coming in and out. So some patterns remained as they would in a normal year. I mean ▮▮▮▮ can probably give you some actual data on what number of holds we had, ▮▮▮ got some very good statistics on that kind of thing. But it certainly seemed like the people that really wanted the print were happy to just make the effort and get it despite everything else was going on. In a way it was nice, it was nice to see people.

Interviewer: Were there any other changes in trend to library usage that you noticed?

Participant 4: Chat obviously increased, but I think and again ▮▮▮▮ got stats on that as well. That would probably be reinforced by the fact that we offered a longer duration of chat enquiry time. But I think also there's been a huge push, to create the assumption

that I'll chat to the library online, I'll submit a thing in a queue and I'll get a response. So reinforcing that as a service we can offer has been really positive and hopefully, although I'm not hoping that everyone will disappear from the library, because that would be bad. But hopefully that will reinforce the fact that they don't necessarily have to come to a help desk to ask a question, but there is a librarian in whatever system they are accessing. And just push that up over time. I think when we were talking about it that ▮▮▮▮ said that usage, certainly in Feb-March of this year, was double of what it had been the previous year. So people were making better use of that, but it's kind of difficult to speculate because you don't know how many of those people were literally stuck in a house because they couldn't go somewhere, couldn't travel to the UK, so there's many factors to take into that. The interesting thing is we're still getting students coming in and asking for group study spaces, even though campus rules were masks and 2m metre distancing and all the rest of it. I mean, I can see why people would want to come in and work together, so I don't think that will necessarily change so much, I think the library has always been used as a space for that. I get the feeling that will probably continue.

Interviewer: And how about barriers to access, maybe not the physical library, but maybe more the digital materials. Did you come across potential digital poverty, people not having appropriate ICTs or WIFI to be able to access things during the term?

Participant 4: Yeah, I mean, we don't necessarily come into contact with those students because we'd not normally be the first port of call, but I'm certainly aware of a number of subject librarians in my team having conversations with students along those lines, maybe not realising that there were places that they could go to talk to people about that, or get funding or what have you. I think a lot of the time it was, not so much digital poverty specifically, more that they were in a shared house or were sharing a laptop with eight other people, or they're there with their family. So that kind of thing was quite a big issue, and I think that's what a lot of them really appreciated when reopened and they could come in, book a PC and sit in a quiet space and have that peace and quiet. But yeah, a lot of the conversations we had with those students were more about

signposting who they should talk to whether that was in the school or the digital scholarship fund and that kind of thing, because although there was a lot of communications coming out from the university continually. I can see why students might not necessarily check the email from two months ago. So a lot of what we were doing was signposting things. From an accessibility perspective, in my team I have an accessibility librarian who worked as hard as she possibly could to get licenses to software and things like that, and expanded to them to get access extended, because a lot of licenses are site specific and with all the assisted technology softwares. She did a lot around that, working with the providers and managing to get licenses available that could be used remotely, across Macs and PCS and all the rest of it. Although there wasn't a crazy uptake, it was still much appreciated by the few students who did need access to that kind of stuff remotely.

Interviewer: You also mentioned at the beginning of this interview that you are also involved with the marketing side of things as well. I imagined that changed a lot this year, were there any disruption to planned campaigns or new campaigns that had to be introduced?

Participant 4: Yeah, it's interesting actually because we usually do… the end of our financial year is July, and I usually have to have my budget spent by May, because we use the two month window as a bridging window just to check we don't have any holes anywhere that need to be plugged or wealth that needs to be redistributed. So because I was looking at having everything spent by the end of May I'd ordered all my marketing materials Feb/March for the following September… Well, no one was in. So yes, that's kind of been, in a way I didn't spend any money for a year, so that was quite good. I have also been stockpiling freshers goodies for about a year and a half now, and it's interesting I was having a conversation with someone today about doing an audit of what we've got as we know there will be on campus activities next term and what can we do to, not just use up the stuff we've got around, but also use that as a nice promotional tool to welcome back, there's stuff here, come and talk to us, we're friendly and that sort of thing. We're shifting very much towards lots and lots of remote stuff

really. We've always had a quite strong social media presence, mainly on Twitter I would say, Facebook's just not a thing that young people use, and I mean I don't use it I consider myself old. It's another thing there's been lots of conversations at university level about what platforms we should be using, and what's appropriate… I think there's a monitoring angle as well which makes it quite difficult especially from a safeguarding angle and I know that the university certainly has been reluctant to go down the angle of WhatsApp groups and stuff like that, as there's no way of monitoring what's going on without having someone actively monitoring a group and that kind of defeats the purpose if the whole point is to get students communicating with each other. So we've mainly been focusing on our standard social media, so Twitter and a bit more Instagram this year. We've been doing some stuff recently, because things have been opening up, we've been doing a bit more about what's available on site. We've got a new law library which no ones been in yet, so kind of that sort of stuff, amping up towards next term, trying to build a bit more excitement about, we're kind of taking down all the hazard tape off of everything and coming back to a bit of normality, so I think that will be nice and I think they'll probably be a bigger push on that actually going into next September/October than maybe there was this time last year. Just because of the nature of things being a lot better I think. Feeling a lot more positive anyway.

Interviewer: Looking at some university libraries, I saw that they were promoting a lot more of their leisure materials, fiction, DVDs, things not to do with study. Was that something that was happening at City as well?

Participant 4: Yes, we did some stuff around… So certainly at the start of lockdown it kind of coincided more with some reading list work we were doing for a thing called liberating City library which is a promotion we do for diversification of the library collections. And so we did quite a big push around that just because it happened to coincide quite closely with the launch of it as an initiative. We've also then subsequently done, what we tend to promote is kind of thematic depending on what point of the academic year we're at. So if it's vacation time we'll tend to do stuff around relaxation, nice resources, like broadcasts if you want to watch telly or that sort of stuff. We tend to

kind of do more well-being type stuff around exam periods, because it just kind of makes sense, and then going into summer it's a bit more about nice literature we have online and that kind of thing. I think we've always had a bit of a slight sticking point with leisure reading just because we don't... It's a problem with academic libraries across the piste, it's quite difficult to get hold of ebooks for a library type scenario, in terms of the way we access and lend. But we are, one of the positive things that's come up with it, but we're now looking at an online fiction provider for next year. Which obviously will cater to our English lit and creative writing courses, but it will also add a lot of leisure reading in the same way as a public library, so that's quite nice. And normally this time of year we would be doing a lot of promoting of public libraries, but obviously this summer and last summer the opening of the public library across the road has been quite limited, so it's been difficult to promote that at times.

Interviewer: *Just finally, I'd like to ask quite a broad question, have there been any changes to library services, or to your role specifically, that were introduced during the pandemic that you would like to see continued when "normal" service can resume?*

Participant 4: That's kind of a hard question. I would say the main change to my role since we returned to campus last summer is I've had more of a user services focus, in terms of having… not that I was never aware of these services, but I think it's kind of been at the forefront of every thought process. Like, ok how is it going to work in the general scheme of things of being in the library, instead of just deferring to someone else, but having to deal with thoughts about it as well. So I've been working a lot more closely, I always worked quite closely with ███, but I feel like we've been doing a lot more of the practical day to day, like what are we going to do about this, what about this book shelf, or you know all that kind of stuff. I feel like I've been doing alot more of that. I think that's been more of a necessity than anything else just because we've had so few people on campus until now. And so, whether that would remain, I don't know is the answer. I think it's good having more of a hand in things, certainly a lot easier when you're responding to academics' queries and that kind of thing. I don't know whether that would change dramatically. I feel like one of the things that we can use to our

advantage coming out of this a bit more leverage when it comes to things like reading lists, I mentioned before, but the whole shift to online and trying to get people to update things, diversify them as well that was one of the key things at the back of my agenda. Some of the lists haven't changed in quite a long time, and a bit of diversity would be nice. So there's stuff around, but I think actually coming off the back of this we've got a bit more leverage, because we can argue and say, you know what, there was this scenario and this is what happened and we weren't able to deliver x,y,z because stuff wasn't online or stuff wasn't what have you. And I think that push towards online as well, I think from a student and academic staff perspective will be like going forward.

Interviewer: Having more of a hybrid approach, or at least the offer for students to have a hybrid way for them to get information?

Participant 4: Yes, and similarly, if you think about all of our services, we've had online chat since way before the pandemic, but we're seeing a lot more use of it now. And I imagine that will continue, or would hope it will continue. And I think now that we're in the position where we are now able to use the technology to adequately offer online options for training, etc. etc. And I don't see that going anywhere, I think that's here to stay.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss that we haven't spoken about that you think would be relevant to this research?

Participant 4: No, I think we've covered off everything, well certainly everything that leapt to mind when you send your request through. If anything else comes to mind I can get in touch with you. But you're speaking to various other people hopefully. You'll get a more rounded perspective.

Interview 5

Interviewer: Could you outline what your role is at City?

Participant 5: ███████████████████████████████████. So at the moment I work with the City research online and it's the digital repository. ███████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████████. Mainly during the pandemic, so last year when we reopened throughout all the lockdowns I was an information assistant and I was mainly based at the law library, but because the law library was closed and we only had Northampton Square open at first, I worked at Northampton Square when we reopened last July. Are you familiar with what an Information Assistant does?

Interviewer: Yes, but if you could outline in your own words what your day to day role is like?

Participant 5: In normal times, it would have been like, so before Covid, mainly covering the help desk. So here I'm talking more about the law library, I don't know exactly how it was at Northampton Square. We would cover around 4 hours per day at the help desk, and we would be helping the students with basically any query they had. Which would have gone from like IT query, to more specialized law inquiries because we were trained to help students, and if their query was too long or too difficult we would send them to the subject librarian, but for the basic one, and if there was no queue we would have been able to help students. And it included shelving, keeping the library a safe environment, classes on information access. And we normally have more time to do other tasks, like library wide. So I also helped a lot with things like marketing, social media, and plenty of other projects that were coming up over the years, from customer service excellence to some help with the archives, reading lists, policies and all this stuff.

Interviewer: You touched on the law library being closed during lockdown, but how else lockdown measures affect your role?

Participant 5: Do you mean when we were actually working from home, or when we came back?

Interviewer: Both, but let's start with working from home.

Participant: So it affected it a lot, mainly because my role was a lot of face to face. And even though the library did really well, because we, at least I think so, we increased the online chat service, we had more people available, we were present via email, we'd try to work a lot using social media to try and connect with students. But it's still not the same as having a physical space and so I found myself with fewer things to do, and library management was very understanding of this because of course if our role is mainly being in the physical space with students and with books it's not something you can do from home. So we did offer a very good service from home but it's not the same as being back on campus and which is why when we were asked for volunteers back in June, of people who wanted to go back, I was one of the first to basically just run back. And when I went back on campus for me it was really different, because I mainly work in the law library. ██ ████████████████████████████. And it wasn't just different for me, but it was different even for people who had been working there for years because of course we didn't know exactly what services to offer, how to start offering those services, so there were a lot of… It was quite cool actually we were different grades that came back so different grades would be like the higher grade the more responsibility you would have and you would not really deal with receiving books from the drop box if you were a member of the drop box if you were a member of the leadership team. But when we went back it was just like, I don't even think 10 people, it was like seven eight people, and everyone was contributing to everything that needed to be done. So like, there were members of the leadership team doing the help desk if we were short on people, we had some of them that were library admin helping with drop boxes or shelving. Especially in the first month, there were a lot of cooperation between us and it was kind of like, of course we still had our roles and our grade system, but it was less important

than it used to be, because of course we needed to get the service running and I don't think like when we came back, it wasn't like I'm too high to do this job or I'm too low to do this job, it was really like a cooperative effort to just get things running again, especially because we like noone in the world really had like an idea of how to go back to work and as library we were, I think, one of the first departments but of course our job is different from property and facility and we kind of just had to come up with ideas ourselves on how to do things.

Interviewer: You touched on trying to get services back up and running, were there any particular changes to library services during this time?

Participant 5: Yes, so I think the one thing that changed a lot, first of all… sorry, because I'm thinking back now. Returning books, because of course normally we would ask students to just bring the books back on campus, that was not possible for many of them for a variety of reasons. Some of them were shielding, some of them just didn't feel comfortable coming, some of them were living in Leeds or Manchester or even outside of the UK. And so we started doing postal returns and at the beginning it was a bit confusing, not in a bad way, but it was just like, we have never done it before and so it was a bit unclear who was supposed to do what, especially like in the beginning, if you want I can find some pictures just so you can have an idea of what the library looked like. We had this pile of books to return, and many students added their name to the parcel so we had an idea of like, first we were quarantining them, then we were checking in the books and then we would write the students to let them know. Yes, so basically we were receiving the parcel, letting the student know we've received the parcel, quarantining the books, checking the name, writing the students that we received the parcel and then just reshelving them. I think there was some other quarantining in the main door. And that was a bit confusing because it was unclear who was supposed to write the students and I remember I actually raised this point, because we had a lot of things to do on campus, and we were only working from 10-4, when normal is 9-5, but because we were so few people that agreed to go back, they kind of gave us an adjusted working hours and we didn't have time to also write the students so

I remember asking the people that were working from home that were the majority of people, if they could do it. I could update the spreadsheet, and say we received parcel from ███████████, she returned five books, so we know how many books we've received if there were like six on the account, we could say we're still missing this book, it wasn't in the parcel, please check your house or maybe it's still on its way. It was too much for us and I raised that and I think other people raised that too, and then it was agreed that people working from home would write to the students. And I think maybe at the beginning it was a bit like, I think people couldn't understand how much there was to do on campus, and how many things were different. Like also adding books, normally, law is a bit different, but normally we would receive a book, a cataloguer would catalogue it and then we would process it on our library management system and then add it to the collection. Sometimes withdrawing old books, this is mainly in law though. Now, because of course the cataloguers couldn't see the book, so we had to either send them a picture of the book, because I don't know exactly how cataloguing works so you might want to check with someone from that department. If you ask ███████████ I'm sure he'll be able to help. They had to download it from somewhere and I think they will be trying to keep procedures as they were. But of course that wasn't possible because it wasn't normal and we had to adjust some procedures to keep up with everything.

More specifically for law it was really different because both libraries were closed when we reopened in July and August, I think we reopened Gray's Inn in September. And basically I had to add all the books, but the problem is that with law, when you get a new edition of a book, you withdraw the old one, because the law is not valid in the previous edition. And of course that wasn't possible any more because there was… like normally I would add the new books, go to the shelf, place them, get the old editions and then just withdraw everything and leave a note on the LMS. So, like when the books come back we would withdraw it because we didn't have access to the collection so I had to like keep a spreadsheet of books I was adding so then when we could access the library we could go back and withdraw the ones that we didn't have. And, that was a lot of work more to do, because normally you don't need to keep track, the LMS does it for you. And we also didn't have a library so we had to create a space in Northampton

Square for all the law books, and was what even more complicated, and I don't know if it's important for your thesis, but as you may know we were closing the two law libraries to move into a new building, so that was a lot of work on top of it, because we had to like basically at the end merge two libraries plus a portion of Northampton Square into one library, in a new building that wasn't even open yet. So there was a lot of admin and spreadsheets and things like that. And also we were short on staff. So normally we would have a whole law team, me and my supervisor. And then we received help from other people that were working on site of course but it's not the same because they are not familiar with the law collection.

Interviewer: Yeah, well that sounds like a really challenging period.

Participant 5: Yes, it was really challenging.

Interviewer: And were there any other services that couldn't be provided as a result of that? Obviously the building being closed and access to books, at first.

Participant 5: We tried a bit, but normal enquiries at the desk, because now it's a bit different, but especially when we reopened we didn't know exactly… we felt comfortable coming back, but you still don't feel super comfortable, some students weren't wearing masks. And especially at the beginning it was really a struggle. And normally we would just get enquiries at the service task, and I don't know how it was like at Northampton Square, and we would help them with anything, like finding books, and sometimes we would help them with referencing or whatever. But we couldn't do that anymore, so any question that wasn't how do I return my books, or how can I borrow stuff, it needed to go through LibAnswers or through the online chat. That I think it must have been a bit weird for some students. Noone ever complained and they all understood, so it wasn't really an issue, but that was different, because we tried to move more online to kind of keep it safe, we didn't have to answer the phone. Which was great because I don't like answering the phone, so I'm not complaining about that, but normally people like enquiries via the phone. The use of the space was very different as well of course,

because they had to book a space. Some students were fine with that, other people were not really happy, but you always get someone who doesn't understand common sense. So the majority of students were fine with that. But of course it changed because we didn't provide group study rooms anymore. Have you been to the library?

Interviewer: I've been to pick up books but I haven't been beyond the threshold.

Participant 5: Yeah, so basically it's like how it normally would have been. So we have three floors and our silent study, then there is one floor on the 3rd with quiet study and group study rooms. And there also like nice couches where you can sit and technically study, but practically it was often used for socialising. And then there is the second floor which you have seen. And basically, first we only had the second floor open. And then slowly during the days we opened all the other floors, of course students kind of lost all the group study rooms, because we were not allowed to open them for obvious reasons. And level two was normally quiet study, it kind of became silent study. So of course we cannot guarantee complete silence because there is the door, and people will move around, but it wasn't the same, we also had to ask students if they were working together in a group, we had to ask them to please split. Often they were studying, they weren't trying to be naughty or anything. It's just something that our health and safety had been assigned for individual study, we were told by high management from the uni that you can't do this. You need to keep students separate, so I think the use of the space was very different and is still very different.

Interviewer: And you mentioned before increased use of the online chat function, were there any other new services that were introduced, or services that were used more frequently than before?

Participant 5: Well, everything moved online including like the subject librarian and workshops. You spoke with ████████, right? ███████████████ so she will know more about all our workshops moved online. I have to be honest, I don't know if there was an increase or not because I don't know the stats from previous years. I've

run some workshops and we had more or less the same amount of students that we were having when we were running them in person, but I only ran like 2 or 3, so it's not enough to give you an actual number. All the subject librarians moved online on Teams, but I think some of them also on the phone. I don't know exactly how that went, I they had, I don't know maybe double check with ████████ if she hasn't told you yet. Other services, you know, for the online services, I'm not sure because I've basically been on site five days a week since last July. And so I don't know how they are doing it at the moment.

Interviewer: There was a shift in library usage, you already touched on the fact that people had to book study spaces, and how the library spaces changed, but were there any other changes or trends you noticed to library usage during this period?

Participant 5: It's hard for me to draw a comparison because I was in law before. So, I've seen this library, it was mainly during the evenings and weekends. Not that I can really say, I mean it was completely different from previous years. That's in general, in the university, normally you wouldn't be able to walk the corridors at lunchtime, while now there was no one. I think despite the fact that there were some students who were complaining that it was hard to book places, or they were worried about being able to find a place to sit, I think there were always plenty of spaces for students. Except sometimes we were really busy and there were days when we had a lot of students in, but it was a lot for pandemic times, not compared to previous years.

Interviewer: And what about the changes in use of print resources, obviously at first no access was allowed, but then with click and collect… Was there anything you noticed about that process, do you think that people were coming in good numbers to get print?

Participant 5: So I don't know… of course we had fewer people, but I've seen plenty of people printing and I help people with the printers as well. So I didn't notice a change with it. Of course there were fewer people, so I guess the printers were not being used as much, I noticed that some people were coming in just for printing, they didn't want to

check in, when at first we were asking even if you are coming in just for printing, please let us know in case you develop COVID we can alert people. Or its user services and this private information. But no I didn't see a big change, I was helping students with printing like before. I think the main problem for people, at law we never had an IT person on site, so any problem I was always trying to solve anyway. When I think at NSQ they used to have an IT person, and now they've kind of lost that, so we had to cope. And if a student could not print for any reason, it's not something that we as the library can fix, we can add paper and unjam your print. But if your account is not connecting then you need to speak with IT. So, now everything was going through the phone. But for me personally in law everything was always going through the form, so it had the same process.

Interviewer: And did you mann the LibChat channels as well? Did you handle online queries?

Participant 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: I've heard that the usage increased, but was your experience using it during the pandemic as opposed to before?

Participant 5: I think maybe students were a bit more confused, understandably, on who they could ask for help. Because before it was a bit more obvious, and I think it was also harder sometimes for us to direct them to the right person, because if they would ask, whenever we were doing the chat we were always on site anyway because it would've been from 9-5. So we could have been like this is something for the IT department, or student services or whatever. You can find them on level 2 or wherever. So we could just point them in the right direction. They would be like of course I know how to get there, or I've seen it, so they were a bit, they knew where things were in the university more because they were on campus. And I think what was different is that they were a bit more confused about who could help them with things. Which I understand, because there are so many departments in the university its hard to know

exactly where to go, but I think a lot of times they were coming to library services because we were the only ones with an online chat service, so they were coming through us to reach the school or a department, or maybe like the disability service because like we were the only one with the chat. Of course it's easier, and even if we don't have the answer we can at least direct them to the webpage, and then they will need to email or whatever. And I think that was kind of the same even when we reopened, because we were the only student facing services on campus, I think IT was on campus, but I don't remember when they opened, because they have a specific IT office for students where they can drop in, but I think it opened in September. So a lot of students through the chat or face to face were just coming to us. We were there.

Interviewer: Were there any other general differences in the kinds of enquiries you would get online versus in person?

Participant 5: I've done the online chat in the three months when we were closed, but then I didn't do anything until last April because I was on campus. So I'm thinking about the last one, the last chats that I've done were more or less the same. Especially how we would like to get, why can I not renew books? Expired account, or someone else has requested it. I didn't really notice any difference, but I haven't been on chat that much.

Interviewer: Were there any changes to library services or to your role generally that came about during this period as a result of lockdown, that you would like to see carried forward into the future when normal services, whatever that may be, can resume?

Participant 5: I think like what I was saying before about cooperation and flexibility. So like, all the managers are actually great, and if you have ideas they would listen to you and it doesn't matter who you are, your opinion is taken into consideration. But I think especially last year, in the first couple of months, it was really great to see that if you had a good idea, it would have been listened to. There was cooperation, and I think that was especially true for people who were on site, because I think people that were not on site couldn't understand how different things were. And that's something that we always

did, but I think it became even more true during these times and it's something I would like to keep, because it's just like, it allows everyone to come up with ideas, and maybe especially actually, for information assistants you are the person that deal with the services, deal with the help desk, if you raise an issue or raise a point you will know better sometimes than management because you are... I don't want to say battlefield. So you can see issues arising quicker sometimes than higher management and it's nice to be listened to, and they did listen and I think it's important and is something that we need to keep going with some good communication. It's a bit hard for me because it was a very different environment, coming from the law library, and because there was also the move, there was all that thing to do, which would have been different even in normal times, except we were going to have a party but we didn't.

Interviewer: *Hopefully you can have one soon. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we haven't discussed that you think would be relevant to this study?*

Participant 5: Not that I can think of, but I'll drop you an email if I think of anything.

Follow up email from participant 5:

Something important I forgot to mention. Normally students would have been able to browse the library collection, while this year we closed the shelves.

I think this changes a lot the way they find books/information. They probably stuck more to what was recommended in their reading lists. It's similar to when you go into a bookshop compared to when you are buying books on Amazon: on Amazon you go with an idea of what you want to buy, in a bookshop you can browse and discover new stuff.

I'll think a bit more as well about things I'd like to keep. We have done so much last year but it's all a bit of a blurr!!

Interview 6

Interviewer: Can you outline what your role is at City?

Participant 6:

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███████████████████████████████████, it sits within the library services directorate at City and what I'm responsible for is the library service as it is delivered to the Business School. I'm also a member of the library leadership team, so I kind of have the two elements. I have my focus on the number of physical services, but also I have a wider panoramic view of the library service as it's delivered to the university. So I input into both and I also have a health and safety role which has been quite significant, so I lead that for the library and DSLO group. We've been quite significant over the last year. So that's what I do. The job title, the focus is on ensuring that the Business School has come with an excellent experience of library services and now I'm the link between the school and that service. But as I say, I also work with ████████ as he sits on the library leadership team and other colleagues to give a strategic direction to the delivery of the service across the university.

Interviewer: You touched on the health and safety aspect of your role, but in what other areas did your role change during lockdown and the pandemic?

Participant 6: So if we first of all take it from, I guess the top level and work down. So at the top level, as a member of the Library Leadership Team my role changed in that we had much more frequent meetings, we had to work together to create a shorter term strategy in terms of how we were going to deliver the library service in a very unknown and uncertain time. So we had to be using the word agile that a lot of people used, but that is what we had to do. So we were meeting more regularly. We were, in a sense, putting on the back burner some of the strategic priorities that we had been working on and refocusing our priorities so that we were... things like you know, all members of library service had to do appraisals and they have objectives within that. So those

objectives, by and large, changed or work was put on the back burner unless they had been really, you know, urgent ones. And so there was a refocus of priorities for everybody. There was a situation where we had to ensure that the service that we had was able to change quite quickly. Fortunately, we were able to do that. It meant that I wasn't meeting face to face with colleagues for a lot of the time I was having, you know, as everybody is having to adapt to online communication, and as I say, we had more frequent communications for that. Partly for that reason, but partly for the you know, the reason for having… We weren't sailing as a ship in stillwaters anymore, we were kind of having to adjust the sails all the time. And there was a well-being aspect to that as well, and the members of my team, my colleagues, I worked at the business library because we were for periods of time not working in a physical space together and it was very important to maintain contact, but also to ensure that the you were supporting the well being of your colleagues, which you do anyway in a normal environment, but it's easy to do when you're seeing people and obviously working remotely put additional pressures on people and they also had all the stress and anxiety of this situation. So you know that the well-being role kind of got more magnified, I think. It's always there, it's always underpinning things, and in terms of my role, I... This library service is a student facing service. In my specific role, it's easy to adapt to doing it from home because I don't work on a service desk, so you know for some members of library staff and some members of the team, it was quite challenging having to take somebody whose role is quite a campus based role and have them working from home and think about what can they do working, you know, working from home and supporting them in that and supporting them in doing different things and you know supporting people who are having technical problems for example and having to get used to new ways of interacting with technology but also who are working from home where they had no issues with them linking up with other colleagues. So my role changed in that I was doing a lot more of that, a lot more checking up on people, a lot more checking that everybody was OK, that everybody could communicate thinking about OK, this person's role, they're not able to actually do their role in the normal way that they would do it. So what else can they do so you know, think a bit imaginatively about things that people could do. But as I say, for me, a lot of the work that I personally do involves me sitting at a computer either going to meetings

or sitting at a computer. So the change of location didn't massively impact on what I was personally able to do.

But the main difference, I think for me, obviously we had to consider the library resources for the Business School and think about how those were delivered. And I had to do a lot of liaison with some particular database suppliers where we've got some business databases which had previously been very… they were only available on campus, but they were very high use and because of when all this happened, you know students, the students are probably postgraduate students, so most of those are just there for a year, but obviously we've got the undergraduates as well at Northampton Square. But by March 2020 a lot of students had developed some kind of dependency on using these resources. They were using them for their projects, their research, and those resources were not available remotely so I had to suddenly have conversations with suppliers. I'm not sure this is answering your question about my role, but it is kind of how it should make you know extra things I had to do, so I had to spend quite a lot of time liaising with some key suppliers to try and obtain remote access to these resources for students in order to support them. My priorities really changed, that became a really huge priority because it was very, very important for the students to maintain access to those kinds of resources. And we also did a lot of work with ebook suppliers to expand, and looking at budgets and thinking let's put a lot of money. So there was, you know there was a realignment, reprioritization for me, and, as I say, very much a focus on an awareness of the well being of staff and students and supporting that and reconsidering how we were providing access to resources. But also when the library spaces did reopen, we had to reconsider how we provided access to that space and rethinking the way that space was worked out and how we were going to do that in a safe way.

Interviewer: You touched on a number of things that have to do with changes in library services, including more focus on ebooks, and also how the space changed when it could open up. Were there any other changes to library services you noticed during this time?

Participant 6: You mean specifically at City library services? I mean to be fair, I think what we... Because I'm a member of a number of other professional associations and what happened at City is very common to what happened, not just in the UK, but you know internationally. So the changes I think were... And the thing was, there were different changes. The issue changed as time went along. So if you first of all look at the changes where we were in complete lockdown, we couldn't think about library space because it wasn't there. So we had to very much focus on the resources we were delivering and the support that we were providing to the students. So I talked a bit about the resources, investment in ebooks and looking at working with suppliers to make resources available remotely and how we supported those as well. Because it's one thing supporting somebody using a complex financial database when they're on campus. It's another thing trying to do it when you're not face to face with that student. Support. We did things like, subject librarians offered office hours online, you know remote office hours so that students could come and dip in. You could book one to one appointments with them anyway, but it was more of a kind of an open office. You know this is a time when I'm available for you to come online and chat to me. We extended the hours for the online chat service and the usage of that soared. We had to consider things like physical books would have gone out and book loans, or… ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬. But you know, book loans were extended, and a free postal loan service was introduced. So new services were introduced, an addition which we haven't done before.

Additional flexibility was added to existing services and it was quite challenging because during that period as well we were doing online inductions and at the Business School we normally do face to face inductions and I had a very challenging situation where both of the two business subject librarians were going on maternity leave at a very similar time and they were the people who would be doing these presentations. So we delivered inductions in a different way. We had to consider how we were going to do that and it was online and what we did was we actually recorded some of the presentations we already do, but we actually did some different presentations as well, allowing for the fact that we weren't physically in front of students. So those resources

are useful and we're still using them. The challenge with doing that kind of thing is that they can become very time consuming to do and they can become out of date very quickly. So we did that. I think once we reopened the library spaces, obviously we had to then think about how we use a library space and we did a phased return so we didn't open everything even at the Business School there was from some quarters. There was some pressure to open a lot sooner. We didn't do that because we took a cautious approach, which I think you know was correct and we were very much… Again, this is kind of embedding the agility, we're very much monitoring things, constantly monitoring as we're going along and seeing where we can change and also dealing with the fact that students needed a lot more support understandably, and things because it's a huge change for students and very difficult to suddenly adapt and you know, not having access to library spaces was a big issue. I mean, Northampton Square Library opened in July, the business library reopened in September, and I think for students having that space where they could study made a big difference because a lot of, you know, a number of students don't actually have a comfortable place where they can study, obviously, that really impacted on them. So we've had to consider how the spaces were mapped out, how much space we made available. Opening hours obviously were looked at, so we were kind of readjusting opening hours and I think a key thing is, as well, when we reopened was supporting staff well being as well as we changed the manner in which staff are working so that staff were not… ████████████████████ █████████████, but there's the rota system whereby staff will be on campus for a certain number of days and they could as far as possible we would work with the days they wanted to be. But it's very complicated sorting out and so they will be on campus for three days a week I think and then could work from home for two. But some jobs are easier to do from home. You know, again that was we had to think about the staff workspaces as well. This all came into my library DSLO because we have a risk assessment which we... and this is another thing where my role changed, ██████████ █████████████████████████, we met much more frequently, as did all you know, any groups across the university that we're dealing with this sort of thing. Every month we're revising a risk assessment, a library COVID risk assessment where we were looking at the library space, the physical spaces for students and staff, and constantly adapting as

new government guidance announcements came out. The government guidance hasn't really been that granular, should we say, and which has been challenging for us. And you know, when we did reopen spaces, we had to introduce new rules that we haven't had before, so things like wearing face coverings, and that's challenging because, you know, across the university not all students adhered to that, and that that was a another challenging situation for us having to manage that how to manage the staff anxiety where students weren't doing that. What do you do if students aren't wearing face coverings and the students are already stressed?

There were things like that we had to deal with in a very quick... you know, make very quick decisions about what we were going to do and implement new ways of doing things and communicate. I think the key thing was how we communicated to students. You know we changed our online library guides, we had information up there about what was happening in the library service and what they could expect, and that was regularly being updated. But you also have an issue with staff availability because when we did reopen spaces, there was a rota system going anyway, but you have a whole situation if a staff member has to self isolate which has happened on a number of occasions, that can then really have an impact on what you're delivering. And it can impact the opening hours that you have. So it's been another particular challenge which we haven't had to face before, because if somebody self-isolating, they can't come in for 10 days. It's one thing if it's somebody, you know, my sort of position where it's not going to have a massive impact. But if you're somebody who covers the service desk and I'm sure you'll know we introduced things like click and collect, students did not have access to books if only just introduced reintroduced access to book collections. Then I think we took quite a cautious approach on that, so, as a student you didn't have the ability to browse collections, you would have to know what you wanted and then you could come and pick it up. And we had to quarantine books when they came in. Well, you know we had to deal with all that, as I say, the health and safety, there was a lot we had to change in our library spaces and not just in terms of the seating, but we had to put in place signage like one way systems, we had to have screens put up, there were lots of things. There are a number of changes, some of which I think we will probably come onto,

which will remain, some of which have now gone. But you know you're dealing with spaces for example in the business library where the library space itself doesn't necessarily lend itself to doing a one way system very easily in some of the spaces, and so you're kind of having to consider what is going to be, you know, say for students and how can we make it clear to students what they can and can't do.

Interviewer: You touched on a number of things there, but just to circle back on a couple of points. So again we covered the increased focus in e books and digital collections, was that something that the business Library service was moving towards anyway or has it [the pandemic] just maybe accelerated that change?

Participant 6: I think you will hear a lot of people say in HE (higher education) that a lot of the changes that they made were things that we were moving towards but the pandemic has accelerated it. I mean ebooks are something which we already were purchasing in preference to print, but a change, for example, that occurred as a result of this is every summer I send out an email to faculty in the Business School reminding them about sending their reading list to us. So last year and this year I have said to them specifically can you be very aware of not having a dependency on print books for essential reading because we can't guarantee that students will have access to the print collections. Can you please consider online alternatives? And that's been a bit of a challenge somewhere where there isn't an online alternative and you know, or it's not available online, so they have had to think about a different book or whether the student may be housed or not able to buy the book, not all students depending upon where they're located, have access to the book buying options, or do not have access to the same book buying options. So, I think yeah in terms of e books it was already happening, but obviously there was a possibly a bit of a diversion of budget that would have gone to print to E and also some ebook publishers. And this happened with other online suppliers for periods of time during the pandemic they would kind of open stuff up that was not previously available. Now that was very nice of them to do that, it's also in their interest to do that, obviously, to be cynical. Because you know they could then create a demand for things which you know... So it didn't change any ebook buying

strategies, in a sense, I don't think... it might have slightly accelerated, but I don't think it really did because I think that it was more of a diversion of, actually at this time, you know, because we were already on that road. So there is no point in spending lots of money on print books because there's very few people out. When we were closed, we'd be having books delivered that nobody could do anything with anyway. And when we're open, we've got fewer staff to process them. We did buy some print books, but you know, anyway that was the logic behind it. That was a very long answer to your question.

Interviewer: Following on from that, did you notice an increased usage of digital and e materials over previous years?

Participant 6: Well, I mean, I'm not the best person to reply to that, simply because I don't look at those stats, but I'm pretty confident that you will have done. ███████████ ██████████████████████████████████ but I can't see how you wouldn't have done, because that you know, there was simply a high dependency on that format, so I would say that you must have done that. As I say, we saw some things go up with some things go down so and as I said, things like library chat and all the online support staff and our use of online resources, you know in terms of databases has also increased, so I think you must have done.

Interviewer: And were there any other kinds of changes to library usage that you noticed? I mean, you already touched upon online chat increased by a lot, additional e and digital materials, reduction of use of the physical space. But is there anything else that we maybe haven't touched on yet that you know changed the way that people interact with the library?

Participant 6: Well, it kind of weaves into what I've already said, which I think that students this year have needed more support, but that's understandable. So this is going on a bit of a tangent, but one of the things that we are having to consider very much, in terms of our reopening, now that students are coming in September, for the

undergraduate students you know, we've got students coming in who hardly used…
who've been here, but haven't used the library who's experience at the library is a very
different one. You know it's been more of a virtual experience to the library, and so that's
impacting upon how we deliver induction. For example, to second years, in terms of
how students use and I would say that they have needed more support. Since we
reopened our spaces the business library usage has been quite low. I mean, it's starting
to get a bit higher now, but I think that also, all usage has been really down. And I don't
know if that's because some students are still worried about traveling and about coming
into the space. But, the actual usage of the physical space has been significantly lower.

*Interviewer: Yeah, it will be interesting to see if that changes in the next academic year.
And did you notice any barriers to access? Maybe not to the physical library, but with
the increased dependency on e and digital resources, did you come across any
examples of things like digital poverty or people not having appropriate ICT's or Wi-Fi.
Was that a concern for the department?*

Participant 6: It was absolutely a concern for the department or something that we
were very aware of, and I think you have situations as well, for example, you may have
students in particular countries who, for other reasons, have some challenges
interacting. Personally, in my personal experience, I am aware that that is the case, but I
haven't personally had that. I am aware that it's something that the library service has
been aware of and also we've liaised with the IT department about this because it is a
key... Again, I'd say that's one of the key reasons why I wanted to open our spaces to
make them available to students so they could use the computers in the library space
as well as the study spaces. So I think I've actually probably had a couple of students
where, but this related specifically to access to a particular database, which they were
not able to access for some time. And that was the barrier that was actually in place
because of an access model, which I'm happy to talk about because the business
databases are, that's been something that's you know very much affected the business
students obviously not so much the wider…

Interviewer: *So yeah, with the access to those databases was it like with the publishers where for a reduced window they gave you greater access? Or has that been a permanent change?*

Participant 6: So, well, most of the business databases are available online so they were fine. But we do have one or two which are key databases which are heavily used by students and which are normally only available on campus, and when we closed campus we had a couple of database suppliers who actually were very quick to work with us and put in place a model we had to, again talking about changes to to your role, I had to with one of my direct reports had to work very quickly with the supplier to put in place, to workout, to think of and then put in place a suitable access method for a particular database, because obviously our students had to authenticate access to this database and these resources were not designed for use in the academic arena, to be used remotely, I think they can be used remotely, but that wasn't an option that was made to HE. So we were able to do that, but we had another database where the access model that they had in place and they, well it wasn't, for various reasons, wasn't feasible, and this was a resource that students used a lot, so we had to do a… There was a lot of negotiation that went on. There was an attempt to support students switching to using alternative resources from this particular one because they couldn't access it. That was something that I spent a lot of time doing talking to these database suppliers about their access models, trying to get in place something that would work, explaining to them what would work for us. So we were able to provide some access with staff to this particular database over the summer, but not to students. And anyway we worked further with them and then ultimately we were able to provide remote access, but that was a real hurdle for us and one where we had to try and change track and take the students with us because the students had a particular dependency on this. Fortunately for us, we did have other resources that were very similar, but we had to then take them with us and say, unfortunately, we can't provide access to this, but you know, use this resource. Then they had to get used to using a new resource, you know in midstream, as it were. And to be fair, I think for most they probably didn't have a familiarity with this other database. But that was a real challenge and in my role I had to

do a lot of liaison with the school, explaining to them what was happening to the library service and explaining to them how things were changing, why we've made particular decisions. We had as well, I think I mentioned earlier about the space, the amount of space that we made available to begin with, and, so yeah….

Interviewer: Were there any changes to the library service or your work role specifically, that came about during lockdown that you would like to see carried forward when normal service, whatever that may be, can continue?

Participant 6: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a good question. I think a lot of universities are looking at this and thinking, you know all the things and ways that we can do things differently. Certainly, for me, I think the main one is the access to these databases that are campus based because as we move into potentially thinking about doing more hybrid learning, it is going to be more important for students to be able to have access to these resources remotely, and this is something that I personally have wanted to do for some time, but there has been reluctance, I think on the database suppliers, but which I completely understand because in the business for business databases, many of the resources we have are really, really hugely expensive, really expensive, even at a you know an educational discount and they are used in the corporate environment. And there was obviously concern about these, despite the fact that we've got online resource use policies, students sign up to appropriate use of the database, the suppliers still have concerns about how this data might be used and who it might get because they sell it for a very high price in the corporate environment. But I think that having now gone through this period of time where there has been that remote access, what I would really like to do is to continue with that and to continue with those particular resources with the hybrid model. And that's what I'm focusing on with the database suppliers, is to continue to have a situation where we have on campus access and we have remote access and that will significantly enhance the service and that you know the student experience for business well, not just for business students because other students use these resources, but that's a real challenge doing that, there's some. But it is a concern for me that if we go back to how things were before, it's a more limited service. In terms

of the way that we support students, again, I think that we may certainly in terms of induction… I mean, we've got a bit of a hybrid now in the Business School this year, we've got some face to face and some online, but I think it may well affect how we deliver induction, and also I think to a degree, support what we were already doing. What I think it's important for us to do is not to make any assumptions about how the students may or may not want things to be delivered. I think we've got to kind of really engage with the students to find out because you know, a lot of people obviously do very much value the face to face as well. So I think it's just integrating some of the things that we've been able to do rather than overturn things. I don't think there will be a significant difference in terms of the actual business library space. I don't think that's going to significantly change, and as I say, we were already on the path in terms of the e resources and e books to continue to develop those collections. But as long as we still have a physical library, students do still like to have books as well.

Some departments in the university are looking at hybrid working where staff can work more from home. That's much more of a challenge in a library service where you're a student facing service. So I don't think that will be something we would be able to apply, because it's just that there are other services as well where that would be difficult. But I know that's a change that other areas would look at and I think you know. We might look at our online resources, online guides and see what students had really been using more over this time and maybe do some tidying up of things there as well. Another thing, I think that probably, in place this week we already had an emergency, we always had business continuity and emergency response plans, but I think one of the things that I want to do is to look at how we integrate a response to a pandemic, or that because they had, you know, I think that needs to be… We are working on that now and that needs to be a bit more agile and so that we actually have something more concrete to work with. But let's say we had that already, we had plans in place.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you would like to add that we haven't discussed or touched upon here that you think could be relevant to this research?

Participant 6: I don't think so. I mean, as I've said to you, what I've heard from a lot of colleagues at other institutions is that they are taking some things that they've done during the pandemic, and I think actually having to, as I say it's, I think there will be an impact on support, we need to be very well aware as well and in the coming period, the student, and I've mentioned this, the student well being and in terms of having to get used to using library spaces. But obviously we've got staff well being as well, because there is, you know, just because we're reopening the libraries again, it doesn't mean that the situation is going away. It's still there. So I think that's something which will, as I say, it's always been there, but will be something that there will be very much a focus on.

I oversee the production of a so-called local action plan for the library service, which is where we look at health and safety priorities for the service. And one thing I would be considering there very much is its staff and well being for staff and for students, because students obviously are going to have the stresses of still coming in and using spaces, as staff will. So I think that that will be, it's not a new thing, but it's a refocus. Well, you know those anxieties were not necessarily there for students and staff before.

Interview 7

Interviewer: Could you outline what your role is at City?

Participant 7: ████████████████████████████████████. So what I do is I work in the e-access team and we look after our digital subscriptions, so electronic journals and databases. And I kind of work through the whole lifecycle of a resource, from when it's first selected and subscribed to, until cancellation. And during that period we kind of just monitor access. Make sure access is available, and sometimes things break down and we have to fix anything from links to just just making sure that what we pay for is available to all our students and all relevant people. Yeah, that's it in a nutshell. That's what I do, and that's my kind of main job. I also work on the desk as well as you know, the help desk on level two, issuing books and answering questions down there. And similarly work on chat as well, so occasionally I'm rotad to a chat session, which means just answering any incoming questions from users.

Interviewer: And how would you say that lockdown measures affected your role day-to-day?

Participant 7: In terms of the e-access team, I wouldn't say a great deal because obviously our work is online anyway. I think there's a big shift away from the physical. Obviously there was a big shift away from the physical library towards the electronic. Those resources were promoted more than they were promoted, I think probably slightly more, and students perhaps saw the value of the necessity of electronic access. But in terms of my role, because I'm not really in contact with students so much apart from the desk, it didn't change a great deal.

Interviewer: How did you find working from home?

Participant 7: Personally, I didn't like working from home. I like to have a clear delineation between work and the home environment.

██ the house for me is a bit noisy and a bit chaotic and I don't really like that so much. Much prefer being on site in the library office. So I was much happier to come back in. I think I was one of the first members of... like not the first, but you know in that first batch of library staff who came back in September last year. I was quite keen to come along.

Interviewer: And you touched on there an increased student awareness or focus on digital materials. Were there any other changes to library services that you noticed?

Participant 7: Well, obviously when we closed down we couldn't loan books out anymore, that was obviously a huge change, and for a very long time students couldn't use the study space. So I mean they were kind of huge changes. We feel it's a large part of student experience and student life coming in to use the library. We know that not all students do come in, say, in normal times, you know some do and some don't use the library. Obviously when they were forced not to, it's kind of… like that was a massive change. And so when we did reopen in a limited capacity, the students who did use the service were very appreciative of that. So we got a sense of, when it is important, it's very important for students.

Interviewer: And you said that part of your role is looking after membership to digital resources, because digital were the only resources that could be used, were there increased memberships?

Participant 7: Well, several things happened. A lot of publishers issued or made available material for free, so suddenly students could get into more journal articles and access more databases that previously weren't available to them, that we hadn't subscribed to. I've looked at a couple of spreadsheets or graphs of our usage from looking at it as a whole. It's quite tricky and laborious to assess the whole of our electronic usage, but looking at individual publishers, the ones that do a large variety of subject matter. So Taylor & Francis and Wiley, Sage, Elsevier. If you look at those as a kind of barometer of usage as a whole. I was surprised that it didn't increase more than

it did. I think we found in some areas there was an increase, say in the previous year, the previous academic year, but it hasn't gone up hugely. So either people are just carrying on, the students are not using the material anymore than they did in the previous year, or they're using the free material that publishers are making available, and therefore we're not able to count them. We can't actually measure that usage, so it is a tricky thing to kind of assess how usage of electronic resources increased, but we haven't seen a massive increase if it has.

Interviewer: *Yeah, that is interesting.*

Participant 7: Yeah. There's lots of caveats to kind of consider when you look at electronic usage, I should say.

Interviewer: *And have enrollment numbers been about the same as opposed to the previous year?*

Participant: When you say enrollment numbers, what do you mean by...?

Interviewer: *I mean the number of students at the university.*

Participant 7: That's a good question. I don't know. Well, as the university as a whole, membership of the library because they kind of join the library automatically at the start of the student life, so. Is that what you meant?

Interviewer: *Yeah, I think so. Maybe just the number of students enrolled at the university. I wonder if fewer students came to university this year, and could that have an effect on the number of…?*

Participant 7: Yeah, that's a good point. I think there was a dip, wasn't there? I'm not aware of the exact numbers, but I think there probably was a dip of students signing up. So the academic year was probably a little bit quieter. It's going to be interesting to see

what happens this year. I think there's kind of a bounce back from that. And then the 2021/22 academic year is going to be… I'm not sure about the numbers.

Interviewer: Were there any other changes to library usage that you noticed during this period?

Participant 7: The students kind of had limited options in how they could use the library. We instituted a click & collect system, so they couldn't browse the shelves for physical books any longer. And so all those floors with books on were closed off and we only had a few study spaces on level two and then over the time as kind of like lockdown was eased across all industries across the whole country we've opened up the library in those spaces so now they are able to return to borrowing books. But because we're in the summer period, it's so quiet it's difficult to kind of assess. Of all the changes we made, it's difficult to assess their impact, so I think we'll probably find out more information and what things are like in September and October. Uhm, any changes? No. It's just as I said that those students that needed a study space, really found it of value to be able to come in. So there weren't many people on campus at all, but they were students that maybe they didn't have a quiet place at home. We know that some were living with their families or some students that had kids found it a real boon to be able to come into the library and sit quietly just for a bit. I think other students just like the system of just kind of coming in and regularity of having that method of studying. The need to get away from everything else.

Interviewer: Did you notice any barriers to access to digital materials? Maybe because of things like digital poverty or students not having appropriate ICT or WiFi? Is that something that you would come across in your role?

Participant 7: Potentially. We only kind of find out about problems if the students get in touch with us and kind of raise the issue with us and many of them do and we're there. We have chat and we have emails and these channels for them to contact us, but we find that even in normal times if a student has a problem or an issue with an electronic

resource, for example, if they can't get into an article they particularly want to read. They don't necessarily come to let us know that the link is broken or there's a problem or they have an issue, they'll just kind of move along and move on to the next one. That's kind of apparent, so we don't always get to know when students have issues. But again, some on the other hand, some are very forward about, you know? They'll come along and they'll tell you everything that's wrong. Yeah, I think a lot of the students that needed to come into the library were the ones that needed to use a PC, or maybe a specific piece of software that's on the student-built computers. So something they couldn't do at home, they were only able to do if they came onto campus.

Interviewer: Yeah, and so just to circle back on said you're looking at the usage of digital resources generally. Are there any other changes in trend you noticed other than, maybe usage not increasing by as much as you would expect? Were there any other changes that became apparent?

Participant 7: A typical academic year has a specific pattern to it. I can't remember exactly what it is, but there's peaks and troughs. Obviously there's a big trough in the summertime. Though we sometimes see spikes because of, you know, research activity that's going on. There's a lot of research being done. But typically the peaks around the times of dissertations and papers being handed in just before Christmas. So the end of the first, just before Christmas, just after Christmas and when people are studying for exams and things like that, those are the two main peaks where the e-resources are at their busiest. And then it kind of trails off after that. I would need to go back and kind of have a look, I don't think we've done a comprehensive review of usage, you know, comparing academic years? I probably need to see a pattern, I mean in general usage overtime has been going up since, well, when we first started back in say 2007... so it's been a gradual increase because more has become available perhaps, and it's been easier to do and the way that students work. You know they're not necessarily looking for physical materials anymore, they are going online and looking up using the catalog to find these things. So as it's become more kind of prevalent, it's increased across the whole academic libraries industry in general. It's gone up.

Interviewer: *So that whole kind of digital first trend is already here. It's not something that came about because it was necessary because of lockdown. It was already part of regular student activity?*

Participant 7: Yes, I think City University has been kind of ahead of the curve, or in that leading group of universities that have adopted electronic resources. Way back, I think it was probably about 2007/2008, the librarian at the time decided that we would purchase electronic resources where we could. We would make a transition to buying all our journals, subscribing online. So we did have a large collection of physical journals we would take in a lot of them, but that's now being reduced to only those things that we can get physically. So we have a policy of purchasing in electronic format before physical and so other universities may differ in the impact that lockdown has had and are... in fact I know they do. I know I've seen sort of emails from colleagues at other universities that didn't take that route that City did, and they've had to do much more of rapid adaptation. So the impact on City wasn't as dramatic, say as perhaps other universities.

Interviewer: *Have there been any changes to the library service or to your role specifically that came about as a result of lock down and you would like to see carried forward?*

Participant 7: I suppose yeah. This is a difficult question because a lot of the, as I say, a lot of the things we do and the kind of policies were in place before lockdown, so lockdown was a continuation of them and it was and it became apparent to us that we were on the right kind to become more electronically based in terms of our resources, but also our help as well. We started using the chat facility and that became kind of our default or go to kind of channel for communicating with students or for having them kind of contact us. So I think that's going to continue, I don't think we'll make a change back to any other system. We're going to kind of carry on with that.

I don't know, maybe flexible working, I mean, but this is kind of a point that's relevant to all industries. I think in all office based companies businesses are finding that we don't need to all be in the office at the same time. Despite people like me who would rather be there, I think it's kind of useful that we can do stuff from home. I mean, one of my issues was kind of having to share my home Wi-Fi ███████████████████ ██ obviously it would sometimes conk out and that would be frustrating. But if that's not an issue, then working from home is very easy for some librarians, you don't have to be on campus to do all of the tasks you need to do, you can do chat from home, you can access all of the systems from home. So maybe just flexible working as a benefit for librarians.

Interviewer: And do you think that move to more digitally focused services, like online chat over maybe an inquiry desk, do you think that is something that has worked well?

Participant 7: I think it has, but then maybe that's because it's had to work.. I think students vary in their desire to communicate and chat about problems. So whereas some would prefer to come to the desk and talk it through, others are quite happy to type in a question and they'll get an answer and they'll just sign off immediately. They just want that question, and then they're gone, whereas others want to have a conversation at the issue desk. So I don't think City will ever, I won't say never, but for the foreseeable future I think we will continue with the old model of having an issue desk, but it'll be supplemented with the chat as well. So I think that kind of hybrid method will stay and I think they complement each other nicely, because they allow all kinds of students whatever their preferred method… It gives them the opportunity to communicate with us.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think that's right. That's a really important point. It's kind of this has been a period where before many libraries have been about hybrid collections and now it's kind of also about hybrid services as well.

Participant 7: Yeah. Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: But as you said, City was already on that track, I believe chat had been in place for a while already?

Participant 7: Yeah, I forget exactly when it was introduced, but now it seems to have been on the rota… So because we get rotad for an hour or so or two hours throughout the week and so part of... just as we are all rotad to be on the help desk. So it seems, yeah, it seems to have been there for a long time, but definitely before the lockdown. The changes we had to make weren't as I say, as dramatic as other universities.

Interviewer: And just to conclude, is there anything else you'd like to say or add that we haven't spoken about that you think could be relevant to this research?

Participant 7: I don't think so, no. It's not as dramatic as I think it could be... I think City's coped quite well with the lockdown. It was in a good position to cope well with it and I think it's done… There's been a variety of responses but I think it has worked pretty well. You know, opening up the spaces where we could come, and having that kind of online service and resources. So now I think I'm quite proud of working at City and I think what we've done for our students is pretty good.

Appendix J: Data tables

Table 6: Summary of student survey respondents.

Summary		Notes	Limits and considerations
No. of unique users during period	1265	For the purposes of this analysis - the '**Population SIze**'	The number of Library users can vary and be measured differently. The user population from all enrolled City students is higher than this figure, but this value represents the number of unique users engaging with library bookings services during the review period: 28/09/20 - 30/10/20.
No. surveyed	345	This is the number of users who agreed to a follow-up survey. They were all contacted via email with a link to the survey.	
No. of respondents	113	This represents the number of respondents who completed the survey. This is the '**Sample Size**'.	It is assumed that respondents only completed the survey once, but this is not known for certain.
Response rate	33%	The percentage of respondents ('**Sample Size**') from those surveyed.	
Confidence level	95%	We can be 95% confident that the same results would be reflected within the entire population ('**Population Size**').	
Confidence interval (**CI**)	9%	The accuracy of the responses is -/+ 9%.	A greater '**Sample Size**' would yield a lower **CI**, but for the purposes of this survey it still helps to reinforce the general summaries drawn from the data.

Table 7: Table of number of items borrowed by month.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
March	9313	8153	7167	4108
April	7476	7464	6412	0
May	6974	6243	5400	4
June	5084	3174	3031	0
July	2633	2268	2066	145
August	1619	1834	1546	149
September	4041	6573	6507	1018
October	14649	11853	9214	1821
November	9449	8409	6555	1032
December	6504	5270	4008	629
January	8257	8123	7397	694
February	8933	6902	5295	931

Table 8: Table of CityLibrary Search page visits.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
March	39070	40622	36678	31085
April	35992	41561	36729	31747
May	27991	31422	24124	30931
June	17150	18284	16037	20054
July	15521	17845	11929	16054
August	17550	18876	17652	15561
September	17848	22927	23135	20767
October	43579	41190	39921	31488
November	40722	37321	36344	31726
December	33296	27950	28976	26004

January	34255	31501	33577	31768
February	34713	27451	30606	25776

Table 9: Table of FAQ page views by month.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
March	1514	2087	2462	2429
April	1172	1683	2220	2559
May	1025	1749	2316	2470
June	819	1650	1603	1771
July	692	1378	1610	2084
August	1447	1557	2350	2395
September	1540	1749	2354	2536
October	3652	3906	3881	3540
November	2682	3007	2739	2593
December	1880	2446	2155	2143
January	2117	2442	3084	3014
February	1940	2395	2411	2142

Table 10: Table of LibAnswers Online user support enquiries by month.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
March	110	116	102	170
April	128	118	117	174
May	108	95	87	135
June	70	59	60	143
July	80	67	37	153

August	92	57	91	106
September	114	105	97	316
October	186	199	172	354
November	135	140	95	322
December	98	98	92	138
January	112	128	77	222
February	104	142	78	159

Table 11: Table of the total number of in-person enquiries by month.

	2017/18	**2018/19**	**2019/20**
March	n/a	1918	3734
April	n/a	1691	3013
May	n/a	1971	2823
June	n/a	930	1111
July	n/a	645	595
August	590	628	528
September	2007	2943	3133
October	4755	6587	5339
November	2719	4416	3506
December	1566	2114	1875
January	2191	3939	3735
February	2239	3023	2771

Table 12: Table comparing the total number of online and in-person enquiries for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

	2019/20	**2020/21**
Online enquiries	1105	2392
In-person enquiries	32163	n/a
Total enquiries	33268	2392

Table 13: Table of the total number of LibAnswers Online enquiries.

	Oct 2019	**Oct 2020**	**Feb 2020**	**Feb 2021**
Total enquiries	32	83	16	41

Table 14: Analysis of LibAnswer wait times.

Wait time (seconds)	**Oct 2019**	**Oct 2020**	**Feb 2020**	**Feb 2021**
Mean Average	24.3	7	11.6	9.7
Median	7	6	10	7
Mode	6	4	5	5
Standard Deviation	41.7	4.6	8.5	10.9

Table 15: Table of LibAnswer enquiry duration analysis.

Duration (seconds)	**Oct 2019**	**Oct 2020**	**Feb 2020**	**Feb 2021**
Mean Average	503.8	446.1	715.3	624.8
Median	430.5	315	393.5	523
Standard Deviation	485	410.2	763.5	482.2

Table 16: LibAnswer message count analysis.

Message Count	Oct 2019	Oct 2020	Feb 2020	Feb 2021
Mean Average	12.8	12.7	14.1	15.6
Median	8.5	10	9	14
Standard Deviation	11.3	11.6	15.9	9.8

Table 17: Breakdown of LibAnswer enquiries by type.

	Access	IT	Library spaces	Finding resources	Circulation	Other	Members hip	Subject enquiry
Oct 2019	6	2	1	9	8	1	1	4
Oct 2020	26	2	9	10	24	5	4	3
Feb 2020	2	0	3	5	3	1	1	1
Feb 2021	13	2	0	8	13	0	4	1

Table 18: Table of responses to survey question 'What is your main reason for being on campus?'

	Count of Being on campus	%	CI (-)	CI (+)
To attend lectures/seminars/tutorials etc. in relation to my studies.	19	17%	8%	26%
To visit and use the Library.	60	54%	45%	63%
A combination of the two points above.	29	26%	17%	35%
Something else (please note below).	3	3%	-6%	12%
Grand Total	111	100%		

Table 19: Table of responses to survey question 'Booking frequency, is it: not enough or about right?'

Booking frequency, is it:	Count of Booking service	%	CI (-)	CI (+)
About right	43	38%	29%	47%
Not enough	70	62%	53%	71%
Grand Total	113	100%		

Table 20: Table of responses to survey question 'Did you find the booking process easy to use?'

Did you find the booking process easy to use?	Count of booking process	%	CI (-)	CI (+)
Yes	102	91%	82%	99%
No	4	4%	-5%	13%
Don't know	6	5%	-4%	14%
Grand Total	112	100%		

Table 21: Table of responses to the student survey question, 'Are you making use of Click & Collect at the same time?'

Making use of Click & Collect at the same time	Count of Other services	%	CI (-)	CI (+)
Yes	45	40%	31%	49%
No	68	60%	51%	69%
Grand Total	113	100%		

Appendix K: T Test Calculations

Dependent T-Test for comparing items borrowed by month for 2019/20 and 2020/21

There was a significant decrease in the number of items borrowed by month in the year 2020/21 (M = 877.6, SD = 1161.5) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 5383.2, SD = 2311.4), t = -8.04, p < .05.

The value of t is -8.036011. The value of p is < .00001. The result is significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing items borrowed by month for 2018/19 and 2019/20

There was a significant decrease in the number of items borrowed by month in the year 2019/20 (M = 5383.2, SD = 2311.4) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 6355.5, SD = 6737.5), t = -4.32, p < .05.

The value of t is -4.31689. The value of p is .00122. The result is significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing CityLibrary Search page visits: 2017/18 and 2018/19

There was not a statistically significant increase in the number of CityLibrary Search page visits in the year 2020/21 (M = 29745.8, SD = 9036.7) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 29807.3, SD = 10223.5), t = -0.05, p < .05.

The value of t is -0.051799. The value of p is .95962. The result is not significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing CityLibrary Search page visits: 2018/19 and 2019/20

There was not a statistically significant increase in the number of CityLibrary Search page visits in the year 2020/21 (M = 27975.7, SD = 9289.5) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 29745.8, SD = 9036.7), t = -1.9, p < .05.

The value of t is -1.90452. The value of p is .08331. The result is not significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing CityLibrary Search page visits: 2019/20 and 2020/21

There was not a statistically significant increase in the number of CityLibrary Search page visits in the year 2020/21 (M = 26080.1, SD = 6395.9) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 27975.7, SD = 9289.5), t = -1.44, p < .05.

The value of t is -1.435023. The value of p is .1791. The result is not significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing FAQ page views: 2017/18 and 2018/19

There was a statistically significant increase in the number of FAQ page visits in the year 2018/19 (M = 2170.8, SD = 725.3) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 1706.7, SD = 836.1), t = 7.19, p < .05.

The value of t is 7.19458. The value of p is .00002. The result is significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing FAQ page views: 2018/19 and 2019/20

There was a statistically significant increase in the number of FAQ page visits in the year 2019/20 (M = 2432.1, SD = 612.8) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 2170.8, SD = 725.3), t = 2.41, p < .05.

The value of t is 2.410572. The value of p is .03458. The result is significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing FAQ page views: 2019/20 and 2020/21

There was not a statistically significant increase in the number of FAQ page visits in the year 2020/21 (M = 2473, SD = 459.9) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 2432.1, SD = 612.8), t = 0.59, p < .05.

The value of t is 0.595734. The value of p is .56341. The result is not significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing LibAnswers Online user support enquiries: 2017/18 and 2018/19

There was no significant change in the number of online user enquiries in the year 2018/19 (M = 110.3, SD = 40.4) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 111.4, SD = 29.7), t = -0.2, p < .05.

The value of t is -0.202419. The value of p is .84328. The result is not significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing LibAnswers Online user support enquiries: 2018/19 and 2019/20

There was a significant decrease in the number of online user enquiries in the year 2019/20 (M = 92.1, SD = 32.6) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 110.3, SD = 40.4), t = -2.36, p < .05.

The value of t is -2.3632. The value of p is .0376. The result is significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing LibAnswers Online user support enquiries: 2019/20 and 2020/21

There was a significant increase in the number of online user enquiries in the year 2020/21 (M = 199.3, SD = 84.3) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 92.1, SD = 32.6), t = 5.25, p < .05.

The value of t is 5.252616. The value of p is .00027. The result is significant at p < .05.

Dependent T-Test for comparing in-person enquiries: 2018/19 and 2019/20

There was no significant change in the number of in-person user enquiries in the year 2018/19 (M = 2567.1, SD = 1750.2) compared to the same period from the previous year (M = 2680.3, SD = 1427.3), t = 0.45, p < .05.

The value of t is 0.45275. The value of p is .65953. The result is not significant at p < .05.