Netloan Public Library Customer Survey Results 2017

February 2018

About the netloan customer survey

Each year, Lorensbergs carries out research to explore how library needs are changing and hear our customers' plans for their services in the year ahead. A survey is circulated to all netloan library customers, which in late 2017 covered over 110 public library authorities.

The survey findings are discussed and explored further during annual netloan user groups, which take place in four regional centres each autumn. The results provided in this document represent the findings and input from a total of 70 participating library authorities.

The netloan portfolio of library solutions

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

Key findings

- The support provided by libraries for using technology and getting online is vital. **Nearly half of public libraries** are seeing an increase in the number of customer requests for help with digital skills and resources.

  Only 3% are seeing a decrease in these requests from their customers.

- **Under 20% of libraries** are managing to meet this demand without the support of volunteers or partner organisations.

- **40% of libraries** are currently delivering or planning improvements and initiatives to support their ICT services and the digital expertise they provide to customers. However, this would rise to over a half of libraries if there was more funding available.

  Improvements include new hardware, more digital resources, code clubs and classes.

- **Almost 70% of libraries** are seeing stable or increased use of their public computers. The most common reason for those libraries experiencing an increase is a computer upgrade and investment in their facilities, with over half citing this reason.

  A further key reason is the Government's digital by default agenda including Universal Jobmatch and Universal Credit. Increases in PC provision and longer opening hours at some libraries is also driving an increase.

- A notable driver increasing PC usage compared to last year is Universal Credit applicants, with more libraries noticing the effects of local roll out, and **over twice** as many reporting an impact on usage.

- There are various reasons for a drop in PC use in under a third of libraries. Investment in library Wi-Fi is one positive reason, but most of these libraries (**75%**) report a combination of factors including shorter opening hours and under investment in their PC estate and facilities.

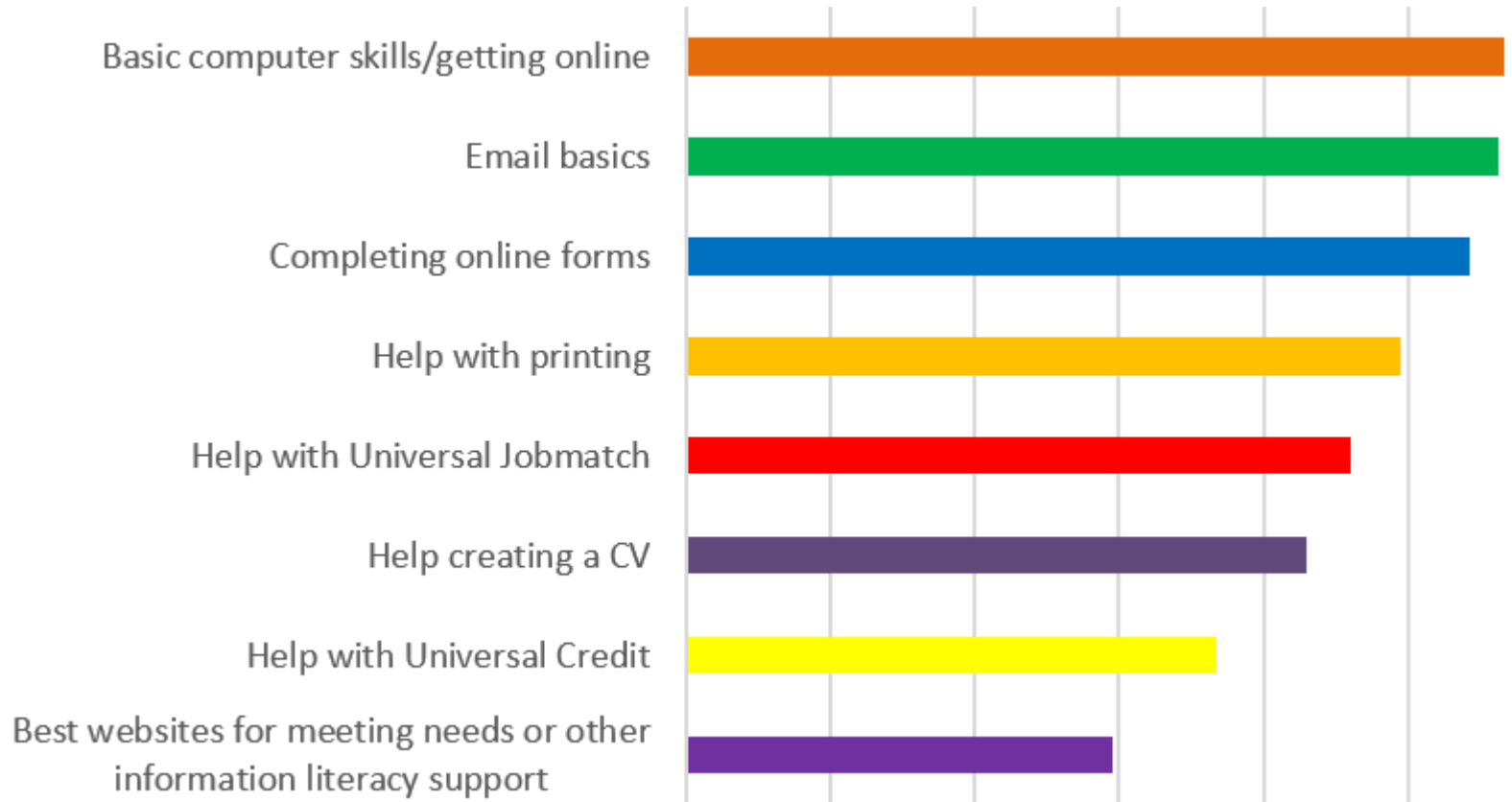# Are the number of requests for digital help from customers changing?

Staying about the same
35%

It's increasing
46%

Not known
16%

It's decreasing
3%
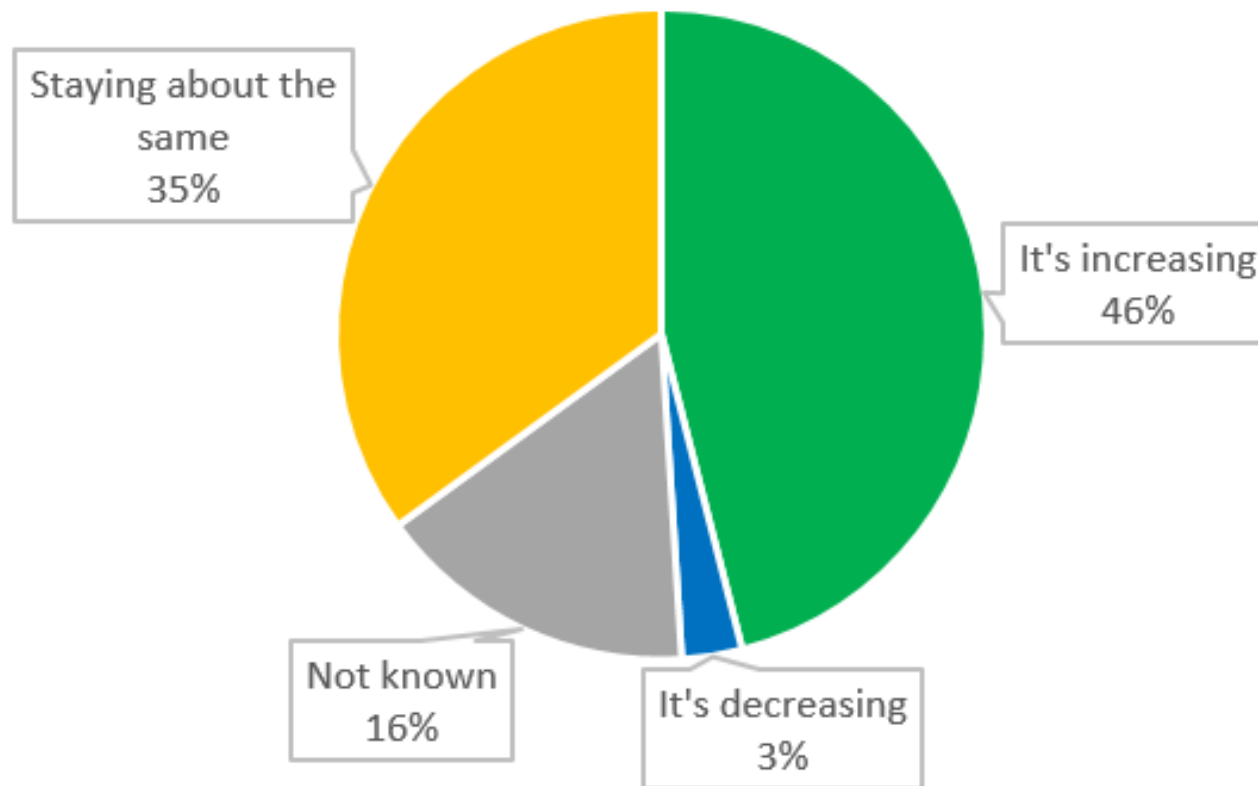
Do your libraries use volunteers for PC use and digital **skills** support?
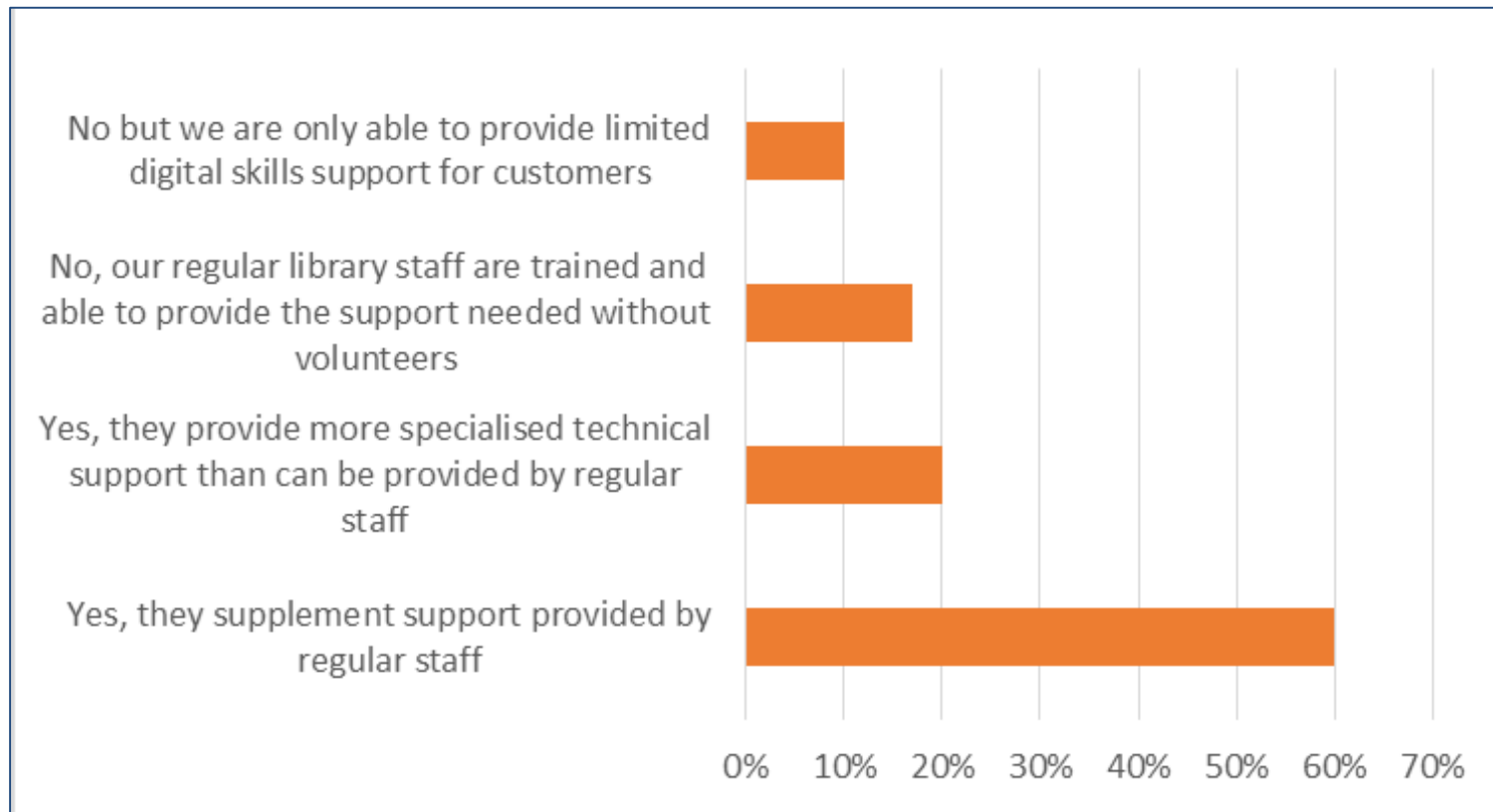
Digital skills volunteers are used for both knowledge and staffing capacity reasons. Volunteers can spend more time 1:1. Partner organisations include councils' Community Learning depts, Fastershire (rural broadband initiative), Age Connects, Communities First, Costal Housing, local job centres, local colleges, Age UK.

What digital support do library customers need? (ranked in order of importance)

netloan

Basic computer skills/getting online	
Email basics	
Completing online forms	
Help with printing	
Help with Universal Jobmatch	
Help creating a CV	
Help with Universal Credit	
Best websites for meeting needs or other information literacy support	

Other digital help highlighted:

- Using own devices
- Accessing Wi-Fi
- Social media
- Genealogy
- Scanning
- Photos
- Internet safety
- Online council services e.g. garden waste, paying for school meals
- Driving theory test
- Wi-Fi printing

"The queries can be very wide-ranging and diverse, covering any aspect of IT"

Have you recently improved digital services to support users and attract new ones? Do you have plans to do so?

40%

of libraries have either recently delivered or planned initiatives for better digital resources and services.

This would rise to over 55% if more resourcing was available.

Initiatives include: code clubs, tablet lending, Wi-Fi printing, upgrading kiosks and other self-service development, PC upgrades, increasing 1:1 digital support, 'digital dens' (Kent), audio books and other online subscriptions, Universal Credit bookable appointments plus staff training on UC, 3D printer access and modelling skills, online surgeries for blue badge and housing applications.
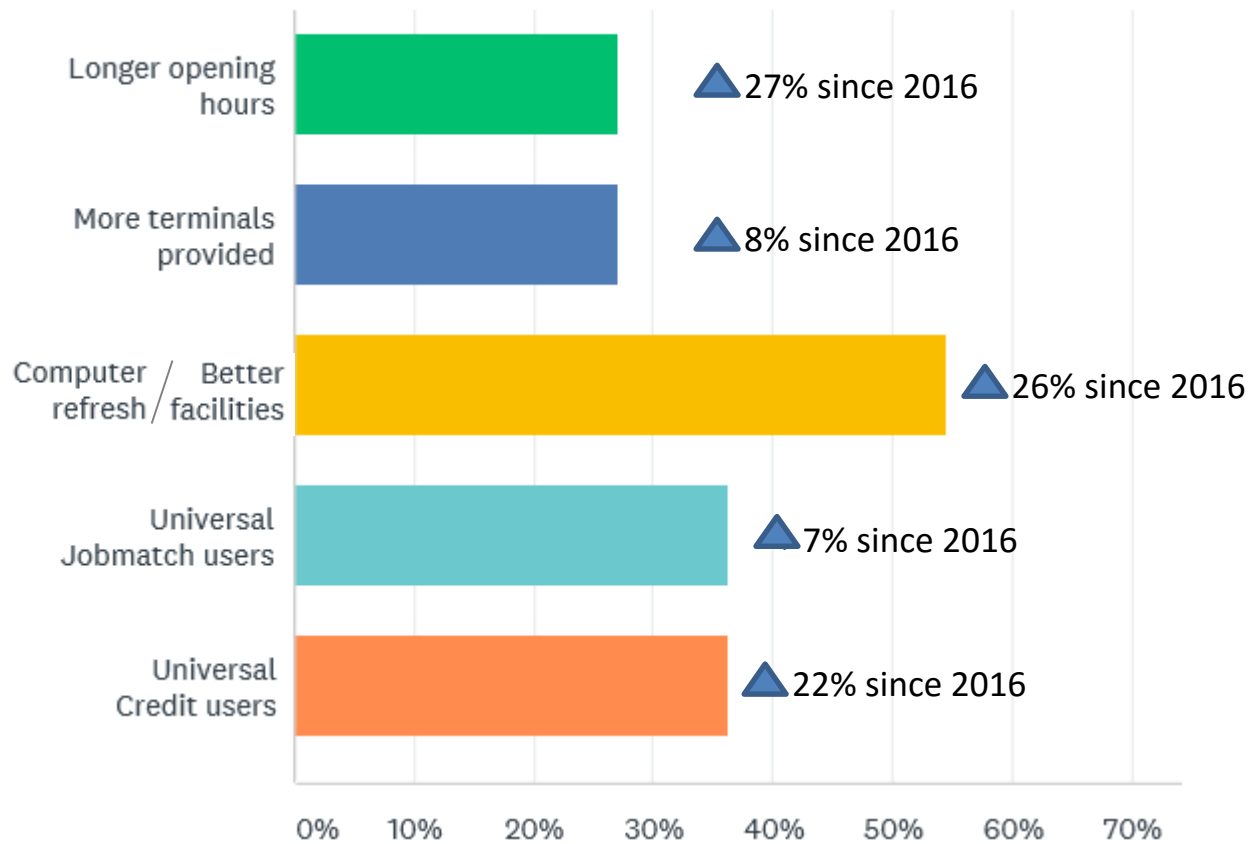
How is PC usage changing?

It's increasing 19%

It's decreasing 32%

Staying about the same 49%
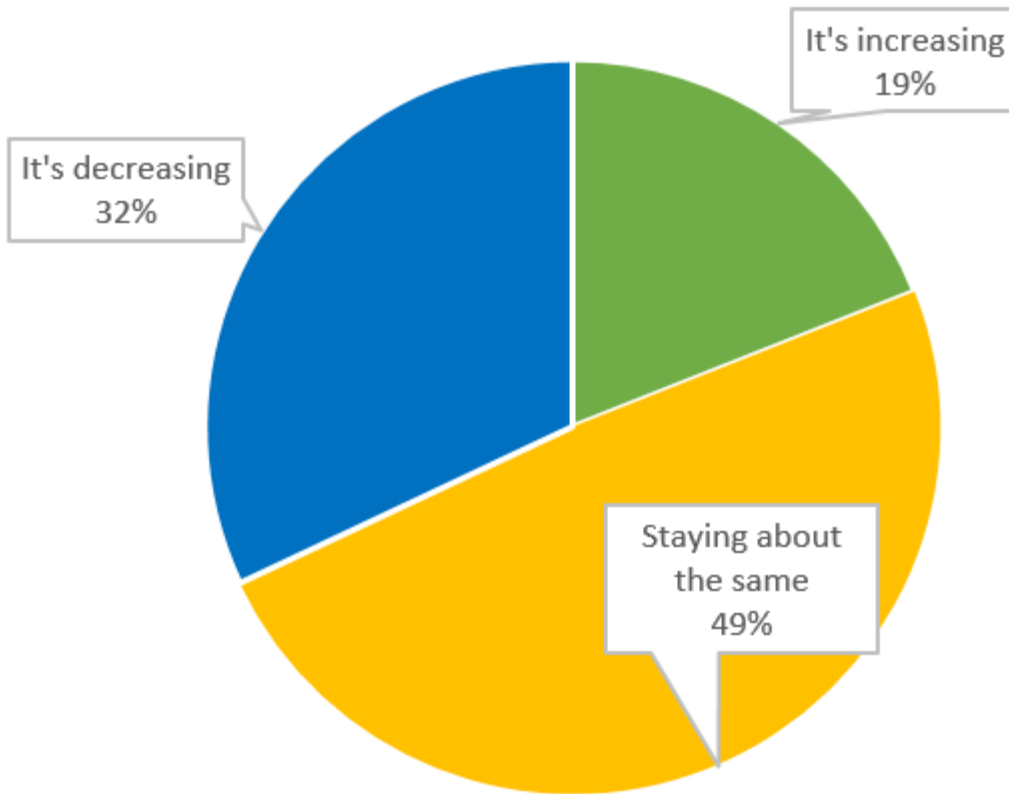
Libraries with increasing or stable PC usage are in the majority at 68%

Where PC usage has increased, why is this?

Longer opening hours — ▲ 27% since 2016

More terminals provided — ▲ 8% since 2016

Computer refresh / Better facilities — ▲ 26% since 2016

Universal Jobmatch users — ▲ 7% since 2016

Universal Credit users — ▲ 22% since 2016

(Chart x-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%)

Other reasons for increase: improved network speed, wider digital by default government agenda, council services being provided through libraries, removal of PC usage fees, integration of community education in libraries, digital literacy classes.

Where PC use has decreased, what are the reasons?

8%

24%

68%

REASONS FOR DECREASE INCLUDE:

- o Shorter opening hours
- o Fewer terminals
- o More Wi-Fi use
- o Outdated hardware or software
- o General decrease in footfall

- PC usage stable or increasing
- PC usage decreasing: more BYOD/Wi-Fi usage
- PC usage decreasing: combination of factors
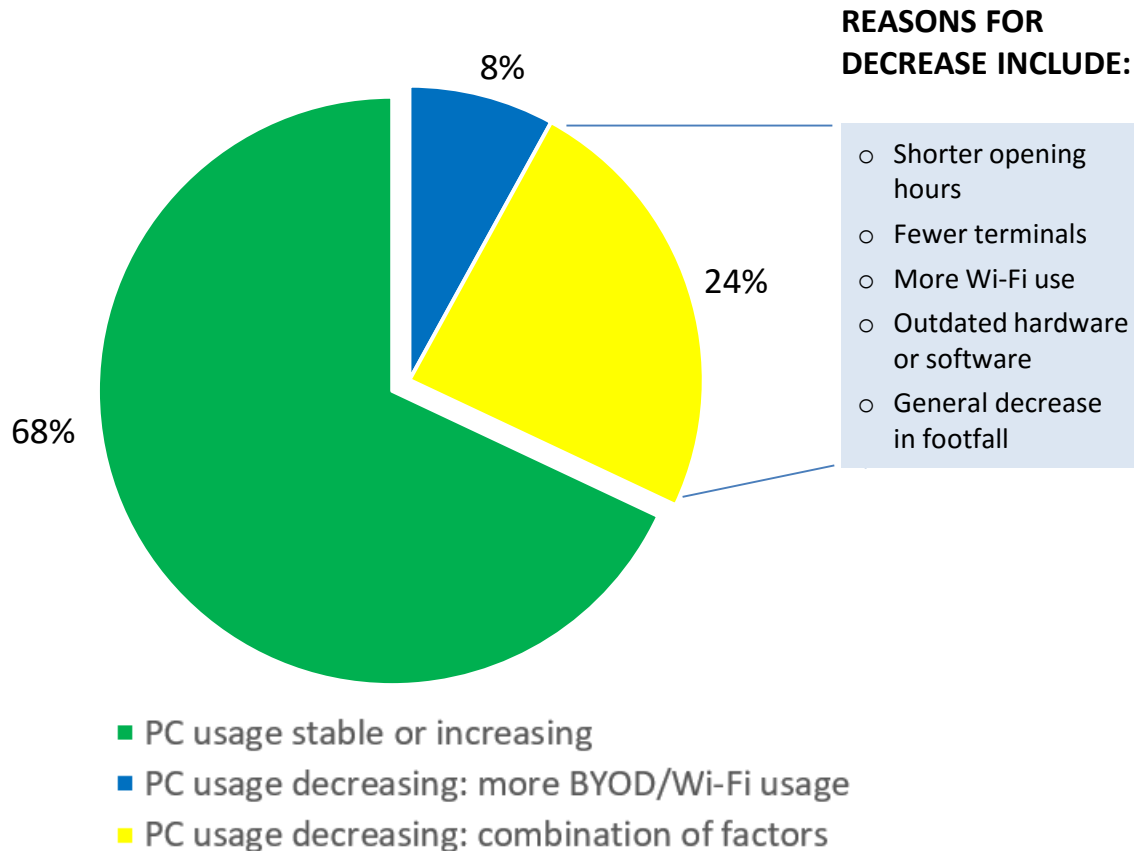
While increased investment in Wi-Fi is one factor, 24% of authorities have seen PC use decreases due to under investment in required technologies and facilities or shorter opening hours.

Thank you to all our customers who participated in the survey.

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

www.lorensbergs.co.uk