

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Submission

Section A

EQIA Title

Folkestone Library

Responsible Officer

Anna Hendy - GT GC

Type of Activity

Service Change

Service Change

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth, Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Libraries, Registration & Archives

Responsible Head of Service

James Pearson

Responsible Director

Stephanie Holt-Castle

Aims and Objectives

Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill temporarily closed on 20 December 2022 because it became unsafe for customers and staff. Kent County Council's (KCC) financial situation remains very challenging and means that the Council does not have the budget to repair and reopen the building. The current estimated costs to repair the building is £2.9 million.

Services have been put in place since the temporary closure of the Grace Hill building to minimise the impact of the closure on our customers. These have been kept in place while a long-term town centre location for Folkestone Library has been investigated. The temporary services we have put in place include:

- "Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" which opened in November 2023 at 5 Grace Hill (previously the Shepway Youth Centre). This is temporarily the location for the complete local studies collection, public PCs, Wi-fi, microfilm reader, photocopying and study space.
- A free reservation service provided at 5 Grace Hill. The service means that customers can order anything from the Kent library catalogue and have it delivered for free to the building for collection.
- The opening hours at the libraries closest to Folkestone town centre have been increased so that there is library provision available six days a week. Hythe Library has increased by 7.5 hours from 37 hours to 44.5 hours per week and Wood Avenue Library has increased by 15.5 hours from 23 hours to 38.5 hours per week. While Folkestone Library was also open on Sundays the temporary provision offers library opening across six days. Sunday usage

was lower compared to the weekdays so to maximise the offer we put the extra hours into the other libraries across Folkestone and Hythe during the week.

- Additional services have been provided at Wood Avenue Library including three additional public computers and increased loanable stock. We have also added this as a location to register a birth or death, in addition to Hythe library.

The temporary provision at 5 Grace Hill was subject to a separate EQIA.

As well as the temporary measures, the following existing library services are also available to help mitigate the impact of the temporary closure:

- E-library service - we have a large digital offer with thousands of free e-books, audiobooks, online newspapers and magazines and other online resources for all ages and interests.
- Library services direct - including the Home Library Service, where we can deliver library items to people if they cannot visit a library, and also our Mobile Library Service.
- Other libraries in the Folkestone and Hythe district - Hythe, Cheriton, Wood Avenue, Lyminge, Sandgate, Lydd, and New Romney.

In January 2025 KCC took a decision to further explore options for 2 Grace Hill as well as any other long-term locations for Folkestone Library. In recognition of the time it would take to confirm and then reopen any permanent location for Folkestone Library the council committed to finding a further town centre location where it could deliver a full (single site) temporary library service until such time as the permanent location was decided and ready.

A location was found on Folkestone High Street for this temporary library, which would also be the permanent home of the Adult Education service. The building is in a central location on the main high street – 14 Sandgate Road – next door to Waterstones Bookshop and opposite Card Factory as below:



This EQIA reviews the impact of the service moving to a further temporary town centre location at 14 Sandgate Road where the full library services will be delivered from this one location. Where adverse impacts are identified, it addresses how such impacts may be mitigated. This EQIA is intended to help ensure the Council complies with its duty to have due regard to the need to consider the following: (a) elimination of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (c) foster good relations between persons with who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The building will be shared between Libraries, Registration and Archives, Community Learning and Skills and have staff office space for other KCC teams. When the library service moves into the new temporary location at 14 Sandgate Road the district libraries will return to their standard

opening hours (those in operation prior to the temporary closure of Grace Hill). Folkestone library heritage and Digital access will close as the service will move into 14 Sandgate Road.

Equality RISK: Low:

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes (Appendix 1)

Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

A public consultation on Folkestone town centre library and registration service provision ran from 18 July to 11 September 2024. The consultation questionnaire included a question to capture feedback on the consultation stage EQIA and if there was anything else consultees felt we should consider relating to equality and diversity. 22% of consultees provided a response to this question. An analysis of responses can be found within the consultation report.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on consultation webpage (www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary). Hard copies of the consultation material, including the questionnaire were also available in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and on request. Easy Read and large print formats were also available. The consultation material and webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. In addition, four in person drop-in sessions were held at Wood Avenue Library and 5 Grace Hill. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.

The consultation was promoted in a mix of digital (for example, social media, emails, website) and non-digital methods (for example, posters, postcards, newspaper advert). Library staff were briefed to promote the consultation to service users and provide support as required. Library public computers could be used to access the consultation website and complete the online questionnaire.

Emails were sent to key stakeholders, including Folkestone & Hythe District Council, the town and parish councils, community groups, local charity organisations, library groups and partners encouraging their participation in the consultation and support promoting it to their residents, members or the people they work with. Local schools were contacted twice, at the beginning and towards the end of the consultation. The consultation period coincided with the annual library school age children's Summer Reading Challenge which is a busy time of year seeing many families visiting libraries.

The consultation results showed that many people felt strongly that the community needed a full library services available in the town centre.

A customer engagement is being completed from 8th December 2025 to 10th January 2026 to ask Folkestone library customers which days out of Wednesday and Sunday they would prefer the new temporary library at 14 Sandgate Road to be open. The library's new High Street location and co-location with the Adult Education centre means it's part of the town centre so we want to make sure our opening days reflect when people are most likely to visit in this setting. The results of the vote will then inform the decision we take on opening days at the new temporary library at 14 Sandgate Road.

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Residents of Folkestone and key local stakeholders. In detail:

- Library customers
- Wider Folkestone and Hythe residents
- Folkestone district library staff
- Folkestone and Hythe KCC members
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council
- Key interest/campaign group or key customer contacts
- Local MP
- Creative Folkestone
- Folkestone Town Council, Sandgate Parish Council and Hythe Town Council
- Cheriton Nepalese Group
- Library related groups, such as Books Groups, Baby Rhyme, Books Beyond Words etc.
- Folkestone Community Fridge (currently partners at Wood Avenue Library)
- Living Words (displaced due to Folkestone temp closure)
- Local schools and colleges
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes. There has been a full EQIA (version 2) for the Future of Folkestone Library Key decision. A consultation stage EQIA (version 1) formed part of the public consultation. We have also completed an EQIA on the current temporary provision at 5 Grace Hill.

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes. Since the temporary closure of the library local people and community groups have been providing feedback through a variety of means and so we recognise the strength and depth of local feeling regarding the need for a full library provision in the town centre. This is detailed in the responses from the public consultation.

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff/volunteers

Staff/volunteers

Residents/communities/citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Re-opening a town centre library provision at 14 Sandgate Road will provide a number of positive impacts.

- This will provide the complete town centre service—including book collections and event space—in one accessible building. The full Adult Fiction and Non-fiction selections will return from nearby branches.
- It will return a full children's library to Folkestone town centre providing books, information as well as events and activities such as Baby Bounce and Rhyme Sessions and craft events which have only been available at nearby branch libraries since the temporary closure at 2 Grace Hill.
- A move to a building co-located with other public and community services offers opportunities to better serve the public within one location. This brings more services to

people in one convenient place but also has the potential to increase the take-up of library and other services for those who don't currently use them.

- It may bring more customers to the service in the new high street location where the services delivered in the library will be more visible through large windows facing onto the high street
- The service will be able to advertise the services available to members of the community passing by on the high street visiting other essential services such as the post office and bank.
- 14 Sandgate Road is accessible from the high street and there are nearby public transport services and parking options.
- 14 Sandgate Road's closest car parks with disabled bays are at Shellons Street (2 disabled bays and run by FHDC offering free parking with a blue badge for 3 hours) which is 0.1 miles/4 minute walk away or NCP Bouverie Place (26 disabled bays) which is 0.2 miles/3 minute walk away. In comparison the closest car parks with disabled bays to 2 Grace Hill are at Shellons Street which 0.1 miles/3 minute walk or Payers Park (4 disabled bays and run by FHDC offering free parking with a blue badge for 3 hours) which is 0.1 miles/2 minute walk away.
- 14 Sandgate Road is located in the Folkestone Central ward next to the Folkestone Harbour ward which is an area of high deprivation. 14 Sandgate Road is close to parts of the community who could particularly benefit from accessing library services although there are areas of need across Folkestone.
- A high street location could be more accessible for those with mobility impairments due to the proximity to other shops and services that people will want to access. The high street is also accessible from public transport and parking options.
- The library at 14 Sandgate Road will be all on one level providing an accessible space for all.

Library usage data (Appendix 2) from before 2 Grace Hill temporarily closed, showed that the largest proportion of library users travelled from Folkestone East and Folkestone Central wards which would make the library closer for them at 14 Sandgate Road. While concern has been raised that a high street location would make the library less accessible for those from the Folkestone Harbour ward it is felt that any high street location would be positive overall given that other services, retail and leisure facilities are also in the town and the distances involved are reasonable. There are car parks and bus stops nearby so can be accessed as well as any other town centre location.

The return of a full town centre library and registration service at 14 Sandgate Road would provide the following benefits:

Age/Children/Pregnancy and Maternity

- Early years activities, such as Rhyme Time and Summer Reading Challenge can return to Folkestone town centre providing greater accessibility.
- Birth and death registration appointments would resume in Folkestone town centre.
- Customers would be able to access a full library and registration service/full public computers/activities in the town centre again.
- All of these activities would be available to attend in a town centre location.
- The library service will be delivered from one floor with no steps creating an accessible space for all.

Disability/Carers

- Books Beyond Words reading group (reading group for people with learning disabilities) could resume at a town centre location and this option would be discussed with the group.

- Specialist book stock to support those with disabilities would be available again at a town centre library location.
- The library service will be delivered from one floor with no steps creating an accessible space for all.

Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation

- Specialist LGBTQIA+ book stock would be available again at town centre library location.

Race

- Dual language and specialist book stock to support those whose first language is not English would be available again at town centre library location.
- Potential for meet and practice English groups to be setup in a town centre location once more.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for Age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

- The journey from 2 Grace Hill and the current temporary library at 5 Grace Hill to 14 Sandgate Road is uphill. This could be more difficult for some older customers, some carers who might wish to visit with their cared for family member/client, or those with babies if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill.
- The co-location may present a busier library space and therefore potential challenges for some in visiting a noisier and busier space.
- The ward in which 14 Sandgate Road is located has a lower proportion of individuals aged under 16 (18%) than the ward in which Grace Hill is located (24%). A move to 14 Sandgate Road could adversely affect young people, for whom access to library services may be particularly important, who live closer to the Grace Hill building.
- Opening hours may not be convenient for everyone.

Mitigating Actions for Age

- 14 Sandgate Road is a more central town centre location than Grace Hill as it is on the high street. 14 Sandgate Road in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. There is a car park located very close to 14 Sandgate Road.
- Ensure clear signage is in place for the temporary library location at 14 Sandgate Road and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan is in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales. This includes a customer engagement asking library users which days out of Wednesday and Sunday they would like the service to be open and signage on the 14 Sandgate Road building advertising that the Library and Adult Education services are 'coming soon'.
- For those customers unable to travel to a high street location we can offer the Home Library Service as an alternative way to access the service.
- The data on the home addresses of Folkestone Library customers from 2022 (prior to the temporary closure) was reviewed (Appendix 2) to cross reference with the wards served by Folkestone Library. The data shows that the highest proportion of Folkestone Library users live in the Folkestone Central ward which is closer to 14 Sandgate Road.

- For the customers travelling from Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East wards there is already an uphill journey to get to Grace Hill. The distance from Grace Hill to 14 Sandgate Road is 0.2 miles. 14 Sandgate Road is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.
- The library will all be on the ground floor so will provide accessible service to all including having accessible public toilets.
- The layout of the library has been considered to include quieter spaces. We would work to ensure any new building and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.
- The opening hours will be the same number of opening hours as was in place at the Grace Hill Library. We are engaging with customers about whether the library is open on a Wednesday or Sunday. The service does offer a range of opening hours and times to cater for all age ranges including Saturday opening hours if people cannot visit during the week, after school time for example.

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

20. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

- The journey from 2 Grace Hill and the current temporary library at 5 Grace Hill to 14 Sandgate Road is uphill. This could be more difficult for customers with reduced mobility if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill.
- For some customers accessing a new and different building can be daunting for example those with neuro diversities.
- Co-location options may present a busier library space and therefore potential challenges for some in visiting a noisier and busier space.
- The ward in which 14 Sandgate Road is located has a lower proportion of individuals with a highly limiting disability (9%) than the ward in which Grace Hill is located (12%). A move to 14 Sandgate Road could adversely affect those disabled people in the latter ward.

Mitigating actions for Disability

- 14 Sandgate Road is a more central town centre location than Grace Hill as it is on the high street. 14 Sandgate Road in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. 14 Sandgate Road's closest car parks with disabled bays are at Shellons Street (2 disabled bays and run by FHDC offering free parking with a blue badge for 3 hours) which is 0.1 miles/4 minute walk away or NCP Bouverie Place (26 disabled bays) which is 0.2 miles/3 minute walk away.
- Ensure clear signage is in place at 14 Sandgate Road and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan is in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales. This includes a customer engagement asking library users which days they would like the service to be open and signage on the 14 Sandgate Road building advertising that the Library and Adult Education services are 'coming soon'
- The Home Library Service, online library services and the alternative Folkestone and Hythe district libraries offer alternative ways to access the service for those customers unable to

travel to a high street location. The service offers free eBook/magazine/newspaper collections via our website. Further promotion could be carried out to raise awareness of these services. A Home Library Service promotional campaign is currently underway.

- The data on the home addresses of Folkestone Library customers from 2022 (prior to the temporary closure) was reviewed (Appendix 2) to cross reference with the wards served by Folkestone Library. The data shows that the highest proportion of Folkestone library users live in the Folkestone Central ward which is closer to 14 Sandgate Road.
- For the customers travelling from Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East wards there is already an uphill journey to get to 2 Grace Hill. The distance from 2 Grace Hill to 14 Sandgate Road is 0.2 miles. 14 Sandgate Road is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.
- For those with neurodivergent conditions or anxiety when accessing new spaces we would provide a social story for a new location. The social story is a social learning tool supporting individuals with neurodivergence to clarify and explain social situations aiming to reduce anxiety in unfamiliar locations and promote understanding of social situations and expectations. We would also investigate the option of a virtual tour of the building to further allow customers to familiarise themselves with the space before visiting.
- The layout of the building has been considered to ensure accessibility, including quieter spaces. We will work to ensure any new building and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.
- The library will all be on the ground floor so will provide accessible service to all including having accessible public toilets.
- The opening hours will be the same number of opening hours as was in place at the Grace Hill Library. We are engaging with customers about whether the library is open on a Wednesday or Sunday. The service does offer a range of opening hours and times to cater for all including Saturday opening hours if people cannot visit during the week for example.

Responsible Officer for Disability

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

21. Negative Impacts and mitigating actions for Sex**Are there negative impacts for Sex**

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not applicable

22. Negative Impacts and mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender**Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender**

NO

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race**Are there negative impacts for Race**

Yes

Negative impacts for Race

- The ward in which 14 Sandgate Road is located has a lower proportion of individuals of a non-white ethnic background (8%) than the ward in which Grace Hill is located (12%). A move to 14 Sandgate Road could adversely affect those people of a non-white ethnic background, for whom access to library services may be particularly important, in the latter ward.

Mitigating actions for Race

- 14 Sandgate Road is a more central town centre location than Grace Hill as it is on the high street. 14 Sandgate Road in comparison to Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (there may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. 14 Sandgate Road's closest car parks with disabled bays are at Shellons Street (2 disabled bays and run by FHDC offering free parking with a blue badge for 3 hours) which is 0.1 miles/4 minute walk away or NCP Bouverie Place (26 disabled bays) which is 0.2 miles/3 minute walk away.
- We will ensure that clear signage is in place and raise awareness of the new location at 14 Sandgate Road. A communications plan is in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales. This includes a customer engagement asking library users which days they would like the service to be open and signage on the 14 Sandgate Road building advertising that the Library and Adult Education services are 'coming soon'
- The Home Library Service and the alternative Folkestone and Hythe district libraries offer alternative ways to access the service for those customers unable to travel to a high street location.
- The data on the home addresses of Folkestone Library customers from 2022 (prior to the temporary closure) was reviewed (Appendix 2) to cross reference with the wards served by Folkestone Library. The data shows that the highest proportion of Folkestone library users live in the Folkestone Central ward which is closer to 14 Sandgate Road.
- For the customers travelling from Folkestone Harbour and Folkestone East wards there is already an uphill journey to get to 2 Grace Hill. The distance from 2 Grace Hill to 14 Sandgate Road is 0.2 miles. 14 Sandgate Road is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities.
- The opening hours will be the same number of opening hours as was in place at the Grace Hill Library. We are engaging with customers about whether the library is open on a Wednesday or Sunday. The service does offer a range of opening hours and times to cater for all, including Saturday opening hours if people cannot visit during the week for example.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

24. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief

No

Negative impacts for Religion and belief

Not applicable

Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Not applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief

Not applicable

25. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation

No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not applicable
26. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Yes
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The journey from 2 Grace Hill and the current temporary library at 5 Grace Hill to 14 Sandgate Road is uphill. This could be more difficult for pregnant customers or those with babies if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill. Opening hours may not be convenient for everyone.
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 Sandgate Road is a more central town centre location than Grace Hill as it is on the high street. 14 Sandgate Road in comparison to 2 Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. There are car parks located very close to 14 Sandgate Road at Shellons Street and Bouverie Place. 14 Sandgate Road is located near many other local services on the high street, such as the Post Office, banks, supermarkets and shops meaning that customers would be able to combine a visit to the library with other activities. The number of opening hours at 14 Sandgate Road will remain the same as opening hours at the Grace Hill Library but we are engaging with customers about whether the library is open on a Wednesday or Sunday. The service does offer a range of opening hours and times including Saturday opening hours if people cannot visit during the week.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Yes
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice of marriage appointments will not be delivered from the new temporary library at 14 Sandgate Road.
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice of marriage appointments will continue to be delivered at Wood Avenue Library.
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn
28. Negative impacts and mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

Yes

Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

- 14 Sandgate Road is on the high street so the journey from the current building to 14 Sandgate Road is uphill. This could be more difficult for someone with mobility issues and their Carers if they live closer to the current location on Grace Hill.
- Opening hours may not be convenient for everyone.

Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

- 14 Sandgate Road is a more central town centre location than Grace Hill as it is on the high street.
- 14 Sandgate Road in comparison to Grace Hill is closer to the bus station (There may be future changes to the provision which lead to more bus stops in the town centre) and equal distance to the train station. 14 Sandgate Road's closest car parks with disabled bays are at Shellons Street (2 disabled bays and run by FHDC offering free parking with a blue badge for 3 hours) which is 0.1 miles/4 minute walk away or NCP Bouverie Place (26 disabled bays) which is 0.2 miles/3 minute walk away.
- The layout of the building has been considered to ensure accessibility, including quieter spaces. We will work to ensure any new building and layout has accessibility for all as a key requirement of the design process.
- The library will all be on the ground floor so will provide accessible service to all including having accessible public toilets.
- Ensure clear signage is in place and raise awareness of the new location. A communications plan is in place to raise awareness of the new location, promote the services available and inform people of timescales. This includes a customer engagement asking library users which days they would like the service to be open and signage on the 14 Sandgate Road building advertising that the Library and Adult Education services are 'coming soon'.
- The opening hours will be the same number of opening hours as was in place at the Grace Hill Library. We are engaging with customers about whether the library is open on a Wednesday or Sunday. The service does offer a range of opening hours and times to cater for all age ranges including Saturday opening hours if people cannot visit during the week, after school time for example.

Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities

Anna Hendy and Donna-Marie Dunn

Appendix 1

Demographic Profile: Folkestone and Hythe

Data primarily sourced from Office of National Statistics (ONS) data from KCC's [website¹](#).

Folkestone is a coastal town in East Kent with a population of 52,279 (2021 census), and sits within the Folkestone & Hythe District which has an overall population of 110,200, forecast to rise to 120,700 by 2027.

Age and Sex

4.5% of the population of Folkestone & Hythe fall within the 0-4 age group, 10.7% are aged 5-14 and 9.5% are aged 15-24. 49.7% of the population are aged 25-64, while 18.7% are aged 65-79, and 6.8% are 80 and older.

48.7% of the population are male, and 51.3% female.

Life expectancy in Folkestone & Hythe is 79.2 years for males and 83.2 for females.

Diversity

88% of the population are White British, and 12% are in ethnic minority groups which are broken down as follows:

Groups	Percentage
White minority groups	4.6%
Asian	3.9%
Black Caribbean or African	0.6%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1.9%
Other ethnic groups	1%
Total	12%

13.7% of young people aged 0-15 are in ethnic minority groups, as are 14.4% of adults aged 16-64 and 5.3% of older people. 2.3% of households have no adults with English as their main language, while 0.6% have no adults but at least one person aged 3 to 15 who has English as their main language.

48% of people stated their religion is Christian, 1.3% Hindu, 1% Muslim and 0.9% Buddhist. 42.1% stated that they have no religion.

¹ www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles

Socio-economic groups and Deprivation

The Mosaic data for Folkestone and Hythe from 2022 is as follows:

Mosaic Group	Definition	Percentage of overall population
Group D – Rural Reality	Householders living in inexpensive homes in village communities	13.6%
Group E – Senior Security	Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement	13.2%
Group C – Country Living	Well off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life	9.5%
Group H – Aspiring Homemakers	Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means	9.4%
Group L – Vintage Value	Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs	9.1%
Group O – Rental Hubs	Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods	8.2%
Group B – Prestige Positions	Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles	6.6%
Group F – Suburban Stability	Mature suburban owners living in settled lives in mid-range housing	5.8%
Group G – Domestic Success	Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers	5.6%
Group I – Family Basics	Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet	5.4%
Group J – Transient Renters	Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short term	4.7%
Group M – Modest Traditions	Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles	3.7%
Group N – Urban Cohesion	Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity	3.2%
Group K – Municipal Challenge	Urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges	1.8%
Group A – City Prosperity	High status city dwellers living in central locations and pursuing careers with high rewards	0.2%

Mosaic is a classification system designed by Experian to profile the characteristics of the UK population. Each household in the UK is classified as belonging to one of 15 groups and 66 types. These groups identify clusters of individuals and households that are as similar as possible to each other, and as different as possible to any other group. They describe the residents of a postcode in terms of their typical demographics, their behaviours, their lifestyle characteristics and their attitudes.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2019 reports that Folkestone comprises 67 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Four of which rank among the top 10% most deprived areas in the country. The wards within which these LSOAs sit are Folkestone Harbour, East Folkestone and Folkestone Central.

2 Grace Hill sits within the Harbour Ward and FOLCA is in Folkestone Central.

14.9% of 16-64 year olds in the district were recorded as claiming Universal Credit in November 2022, which is 1.6% higher than the average for Kent, and 0.8% higher than the national average. 63.8% of the claimants are not in employment. As of December 2022, Folkestone Harbour, Folkestone Central and East Folkestone wards have the highest rate of unemployment within the Folkestone & Hythe District².

East Folkestone sits within the top 10 wards in Kent with the highest number of children in absolute low-income families³.

² Kent Analytics: Ward Unemployment Bulletin -www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent/economy-and-employment#tab-5

³ Kent Analytics: Children in Poverty 2022 - www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/7956/Children-in-poverty.pdf

Folkestone Library Statistics

Issues (library items taken out e.g. book loans)

The table below shows issue rankings for Folkestone and Hythe district libraries in relation to the 99 Kent Libraries. The more library loan items taken out the higher the ranking, e.g. 1 equals the highest number of loans in the county, whereas 99 equals the lowest level of loans.

Library	Issue ranking for April to November 2022 ⁴
Hythe	21
Folkestone	25
Cheriton	40
New Romney	54
Lyminge	64
Wood Avenue	72
Sandgate	89
Lydd	94

Active Borrowers

The number of people borrowing items from Folkestone Library had been steadily increasing throughout the year, and from April to November 2022 increased by 18%. In November Folkestone Library had 2,911 active borrowers, while Hythe Library, although issuing more items, had 2,347 active borrowers.

1,402 customers borrowed items during the last full quarter of Folkestone Library being open, and these customers can be broken down into the following age categories:

Age band	No. of customers	Percentage
0-10	536	38.2%
11-19	126	9.0%
20-29	62	4.4%
30-39	141	10.1%
40-49	126	9.0%
50-59	88	6.3%
60 plus	314	22.4%
Age unknown	9	0.6%

Of these customers 45.9% identify as female, 25.9% as male, 0.14% as non-binary/3rd gender while 28.03% did not specify their gender identity.

17 customers (1.21%) indicated that they had a disability as follows:

Disability	No. of customers
Mental health	2
Physical impairment	5
Vision impairment	2

⁴ This period was chosen as this was the last period during the financial year 22/23 when Folkestone Library was open.

Not all customers will provide information on disability when joining the library service, therefore it is likely that the true figure would be more.

Of the 335 customers who indicated their ethnicity, 83% were White British and 17% in ethnic minority groups which can be broken down as follows:

Ethnicity	No. of customers
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	2
Asian/Asian British – Indian	4
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	2
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	3
Asian/Asian British – Other	1
Black/Black British – African	3
Black/Black British – Caribbean	1
Black/Black British – Other	1
Mixed/Multiple – White and Asian	2
Mixed/Multiple – White and Black Caribbean	1
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	2
White – Irish	1
White – Other	24
Other Ethnic group	10

Visitors

Library	No. of visitors April to November 2022
Folkestone	50,675
Hythe	38,399
Wood Avenue*	22,209
Cheriton	21,397
Sandgate	6,982
New Romney	6,392
Lydd	3,092
Lyminge	3,007

*Wood Avenue Library visitors include customers using the Community Fridge

PC Usage

Use of the public computers (PCs) increased by 36% from April to November 2022 compared with the previous year, with over 6,000 hours of PC usage in total for the year up to December 2022.

Events and Activities

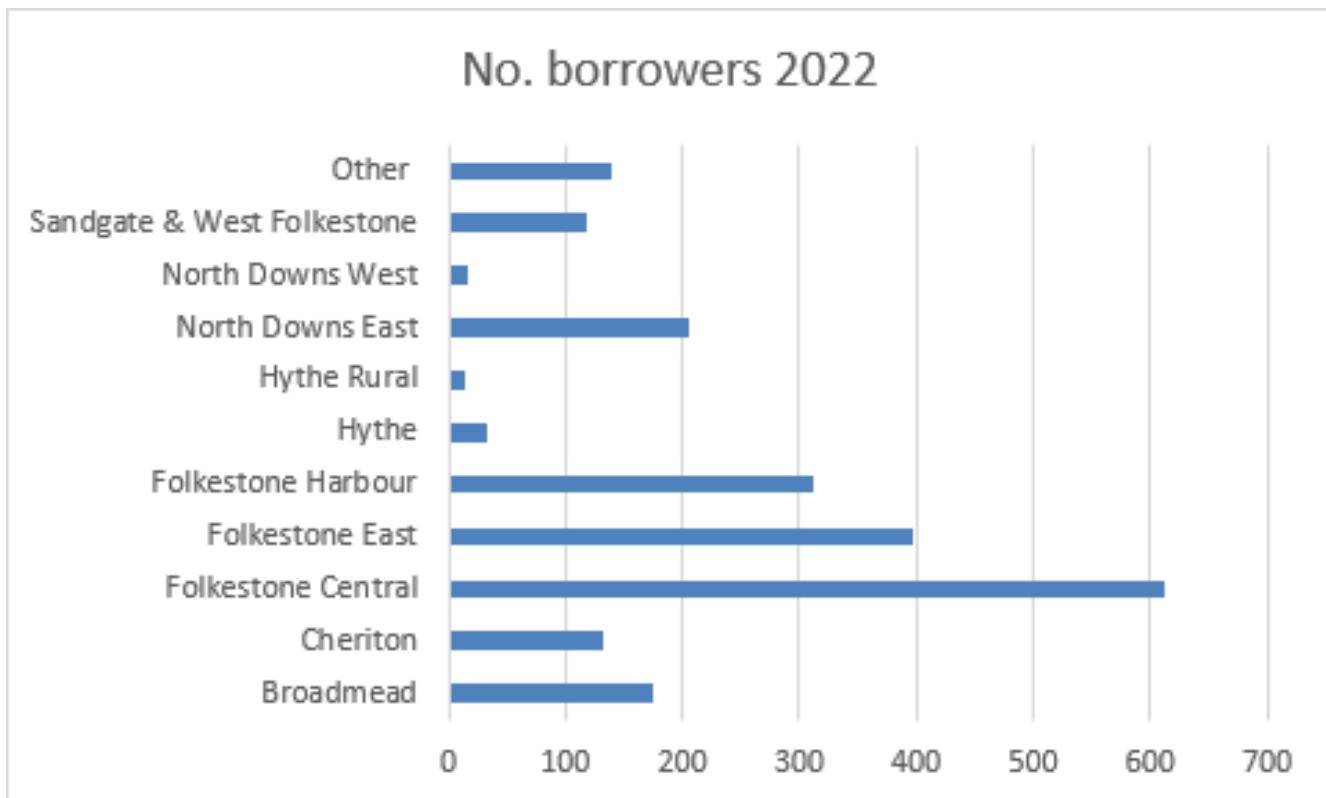
From April to November 2022, Folkestone Library held 141 community events and activities, with 1,464 attendees. These activities include the following:

- Rhyme Time for babies, toddlers and their parents and carers.

- Playground artist-led sessions for babies 0-18 months and their parents and carers.
- Books Beyond Words book group sessions for adults with learning disabilities.
- Meet and Practise English sessions for adults whose first language is not English.
- School Holiday activities in conjunction with the Summer Reading Challenge.
- The Library also hosted a series of sessions for the Flux programme with partners Living Words, who were working with 18-25 year old LGBTQIA+ people addressing issues around self-harm, ill mental health and suicide through the creative arts.

Appendix 2

Library borrowers in 2022 cross referenced with wards that are served by Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill:



NB - North Downs West would be served mostly by Lyminge Library, and Hythe by Hythe Library.
2 Grace Hill sits within the Harbour ward and FOLCA is in Folkestone Central ward.

The details of the above graph are detailed in the table below:

Ward	Number of Registered Borrowers at Folkestone Library
Folkestone Central	613
Folkestone East	396
Folkestone Harbour	313
North Downs East	205
Broadmead	174
Cheriton	132
Sandgate & West Folkestone	117
Hythe	34
North Downs West	17
Hythe Rural	13
Other (covers customers from other wards/districts who have registered at Folkestone; includes Romney Marsh, Dover, Dartford, Canterbury, Ashford, Maidstone, Thanet, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells),	139