### London Metropolitan Archives

Understanding current and future audiences

January 2023

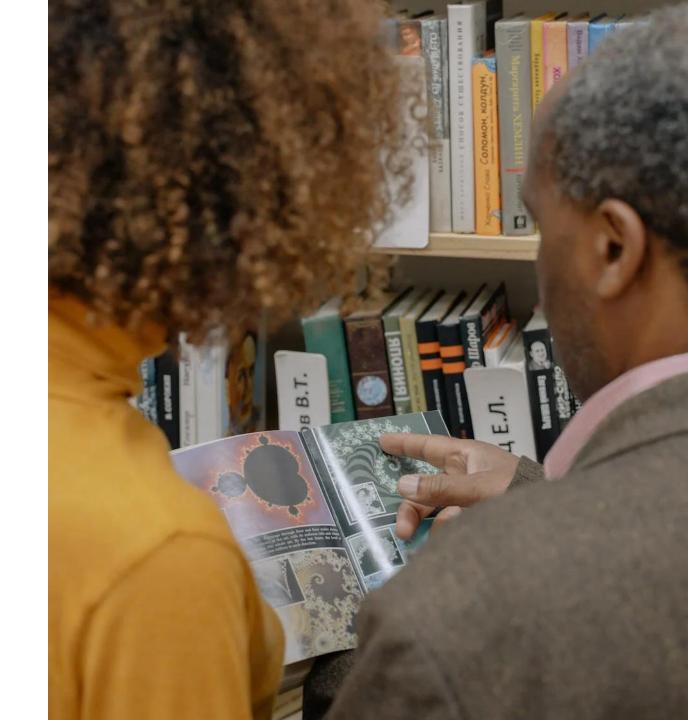




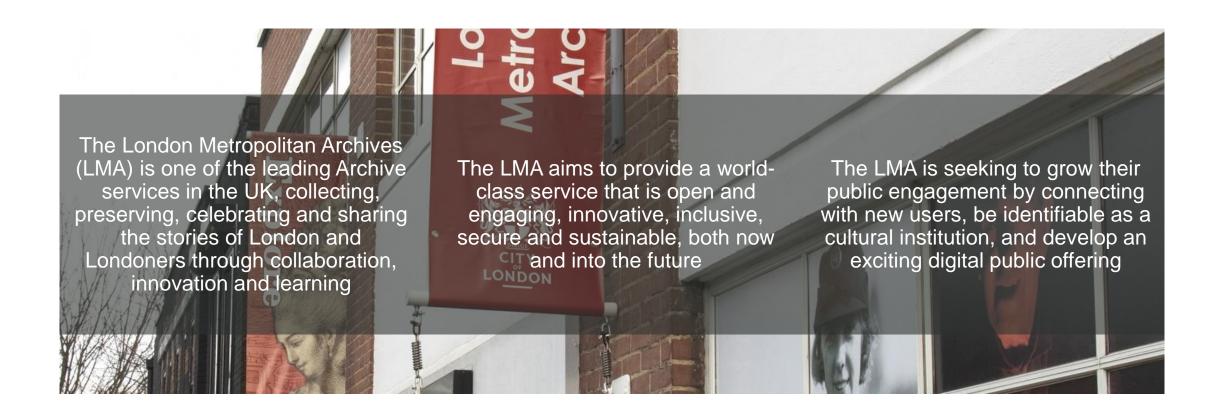
What people think, feel and do

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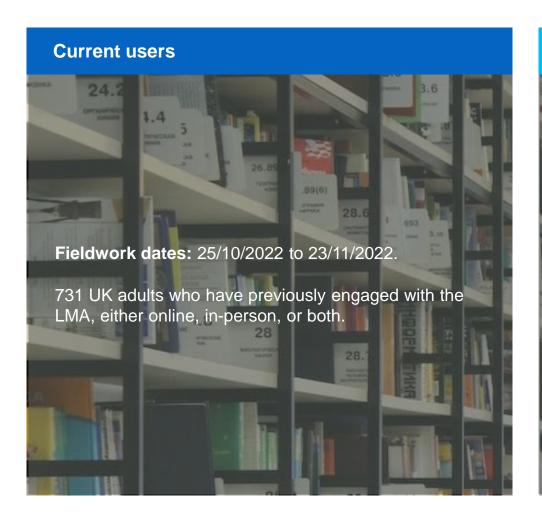


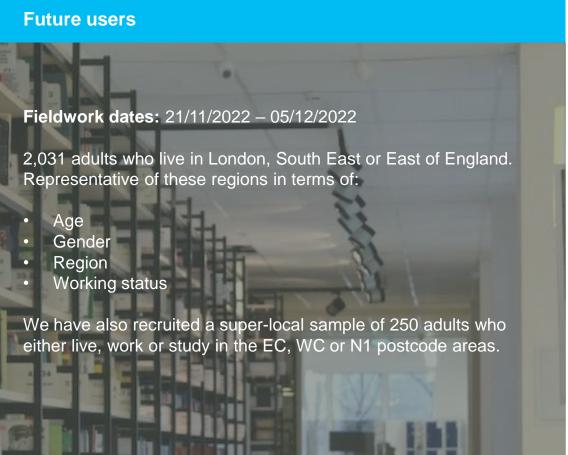
### Our understanding of your challenge





### Research design at a glance







### How do we define each audience?

#### **Current LMA Audience**

The current LMA audience are recruited via the LMA themselves, whether through email, social media or on-site.

They already engage with LMA, either online, in-person or both.

Moving forwards, they will be defined as:

**Current users** 

#### **Future LMA Audience**

The future LMA audience are those who live in London, SE or East of England, and would consider visiting either cultural attractions or archives.

They may or may not already be aware of LMA, but the common factor is that they are open to visiting similar institutions.

Moving forwards, they will be defined as:

**Future users** 



### Key take-outs



### Summary of findings – Current users

- Nearly everyone (97%) was satisfied with their overall experience when they last visited LMA, with over seven in ten (71%) very satisfied. Similarly, nearly four in five (79%) are very satisfied when dealing with members of LMA staff.
- Nearly all current users are **engaging with LMA for personal reasons (83%)**, with academic reasons (27%) and professional reasons (15%) less popular in comparison.
- What most current users love the most is the collections, with the breadth and depth well-mentioned, alongside the knowledgeable staff who are able to help. The areas where they would typically like to see improvements is in the opening hours and the on-site facilities (having a café/tearoom).
- The top three topic areas they would like to learn more about is the growth of London (51%), followed by architecture (26%) and business history in London (21%).
- In order to attract people like them, the number one suggestion is to increase the awareness of LMA. Many refer to it as a "secret" or "hidden gem", but it needs to be more available to younger people by having later opening hours, more records online, and increased communications.



### Summary of findings – Future users

- Over half of Londoners/SE/EE people have heard of LMA (56%), ranking similarly to the Postal Museum (58%). Those who live, work or study in one of the local London areas to LMA are more likely to have heard of LMA than those who do not.
- Nearly everyone who has visited LMA (10% of the future users group) was satisfied with their overall experience, with 93% either fairly or very satisfied. Importantly, this scores similarly to the larger organisations (National Archives, British Library and British Museum), with users who attend these venues as satisfied as those who visit LMA.
- More than half do not know what LMA does (54%). There are also some misconceptions based on the name, with some thinking it is an archive solely for the met police, and others thinking it solely looks at the metropolitan areas of London.
- The growth of London is still the front-running topic of interest (23%), but not to the same extent as current users. Interestingly, crime and war round out the top three here, representing potential areas of development. The two event types that garner the most interest are exhibitions about the history of London and the chance to see famous documents, with over eight in then interested in both of these.
- Most agree that LMA is in a good location (68%), with those who don't think it's in a good location stating it's because it isn't near their house and other personal reasons.



# What this means for LMA

### 1. Keep doing what you are doing

- LMA has a very high satisfaction score from personal and professional users.
- Staff are well regarded, and the collection is serving people well.

#### 2. Grow awareness

- The archives are enjoyed by those who know of it, but it's a hidden gem that needs to be less hidden.
- Simply raising awareness, especially in local communities and within relevant organisations, will grow the audience and the reach of LMA.

### 3. Diversify the offering

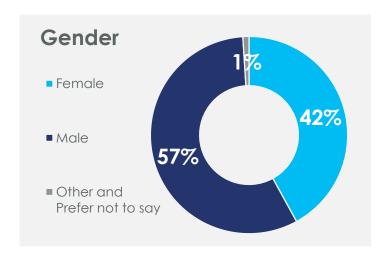
- Getting people in the door for the first time is a key consideration. Events and partnerships can be a cost-effective way to reach new audiences.
- Reaching out should be about breadth, not depth. Connect with people on a topic that engages them on the surface, and provokes them to dig deeper, rather than focussing on your biggest collections.
- Making LMA available for more people is likely to broaden the scope of people who can attend.

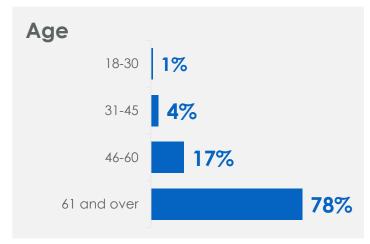


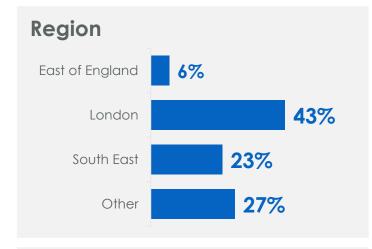
# Who are the LMA current users?

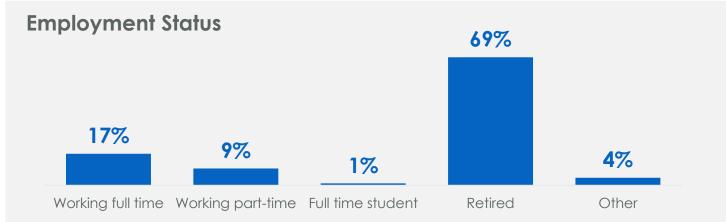


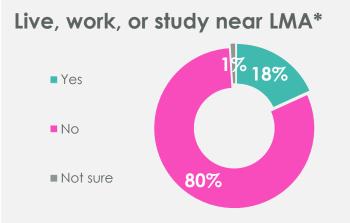
## LMA fans are slightly more male than female, largely London-based, aged 61+ and retired







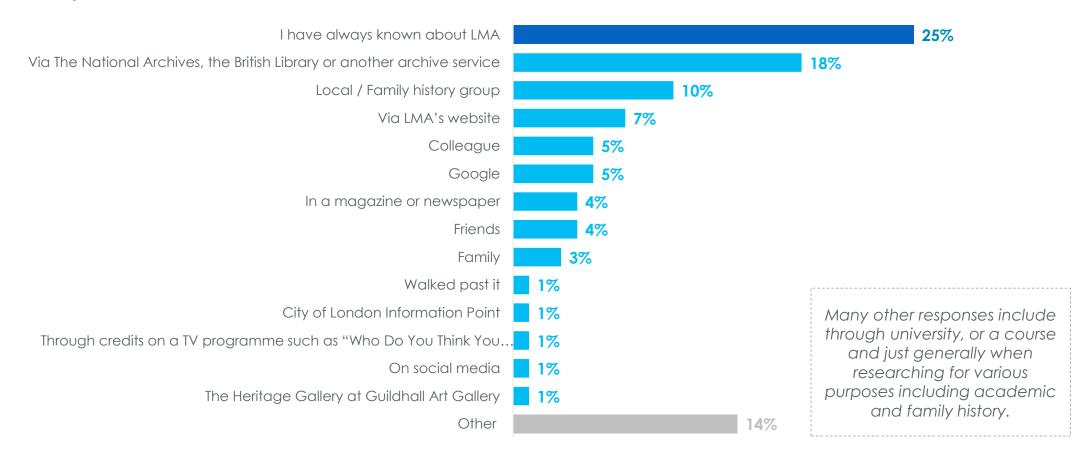






### One in four have always known about LMA, however, nearly one in five find LMA from other archives. Limited find LMA online

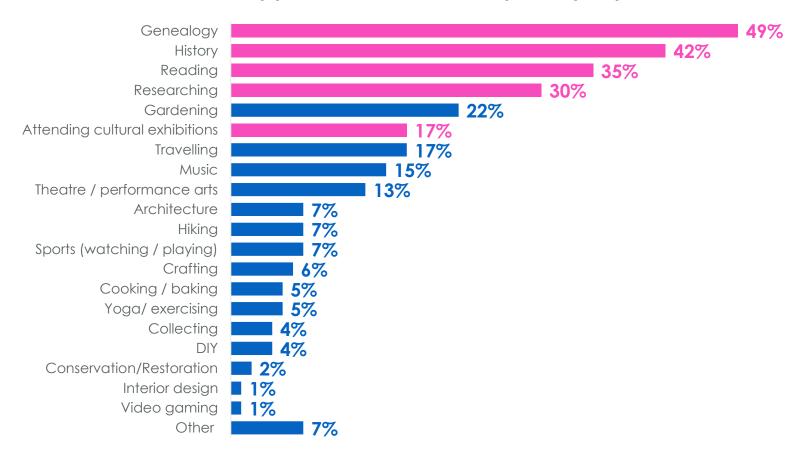
#### How they heard about LMA





### Genealogy, history, reading and researching are among the top hobbies and interests of users

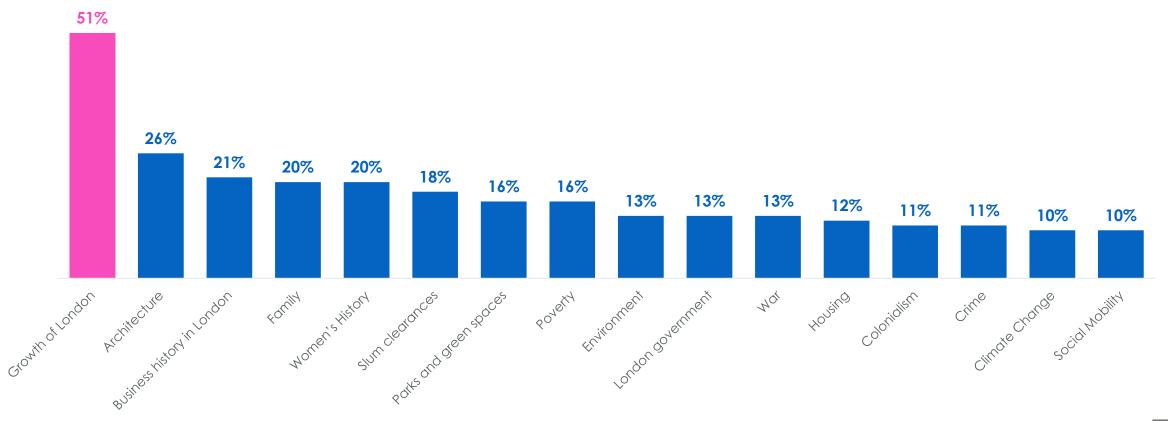
#### Hobbies and interests that they pursue outside of their day-to-day responsibilities





### Growth of London is the most popular topic of interest among London-centric LMA fans

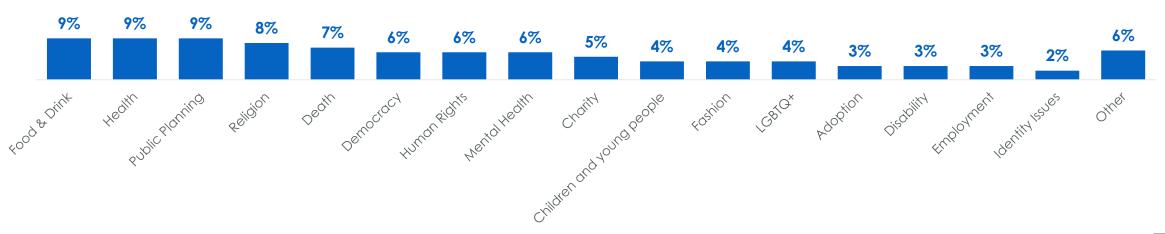
Most popular topic areas they would be interested in learning more about





### Whereas, those topics which do not pertain to all (identity, adoption and LGBTQ+) have less overall interest

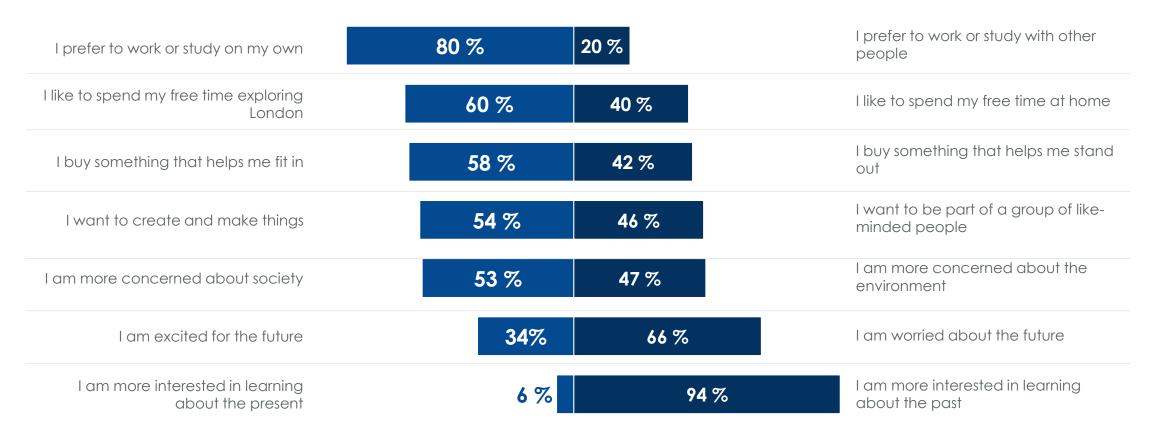
Lesser popular topic areas they would be interested in learning more about (2/2)





# Fans tend to be interested in learning about the past, prefer solo study, worry about the future, and enjoy exploring London in their free-time

#### What types of people are LMA fans?



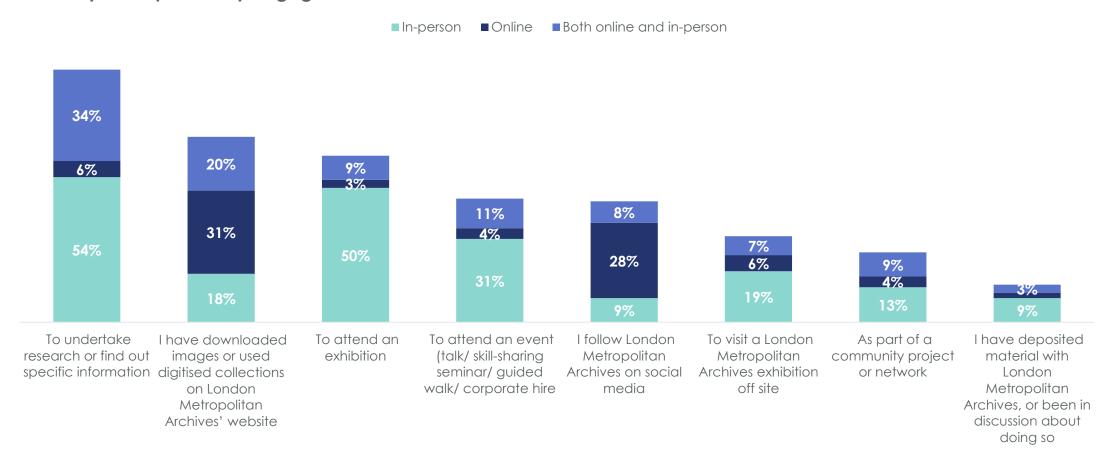


# But in what ways do current users use LMA?



### Most use it to undertake research or find out specific information both in-person and online, and to attend exhibitions

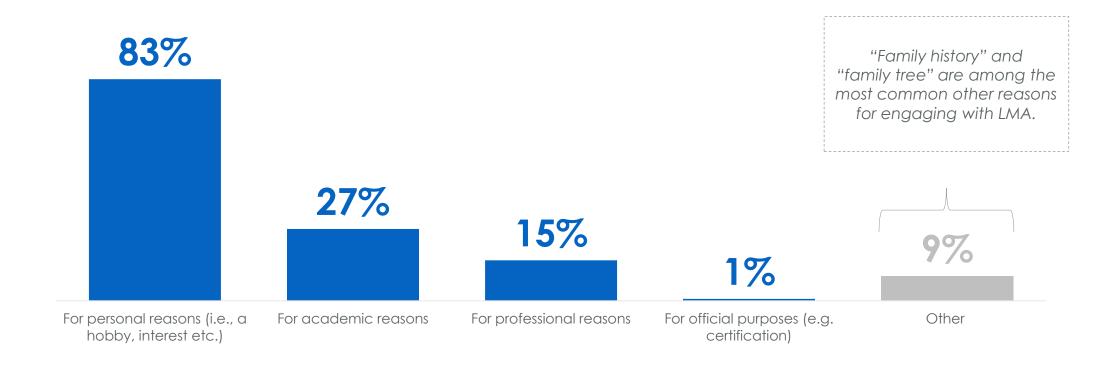
#### How they have previously engaged with LMA





## The majority engage with LMA for personal reasons, and over a quarter use it for academic purposes

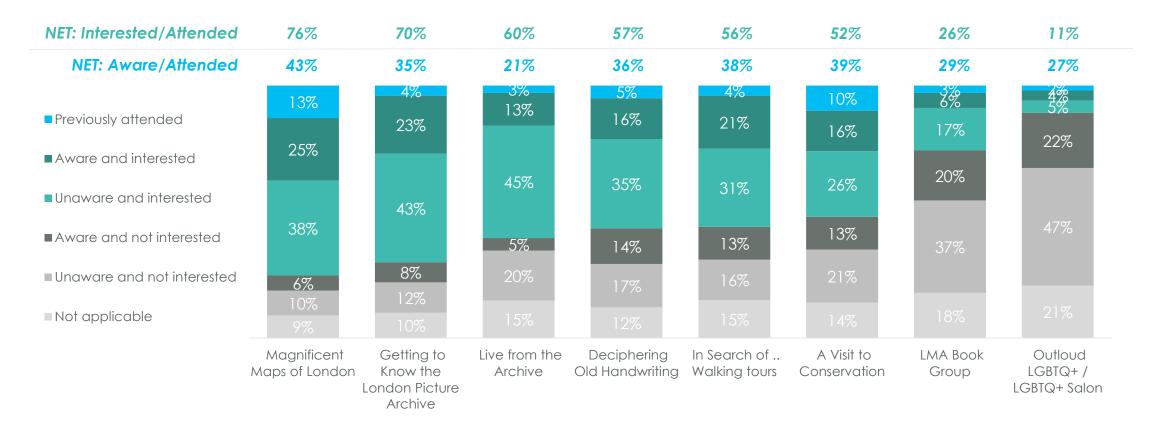
#### Reasons for engaging with LMA





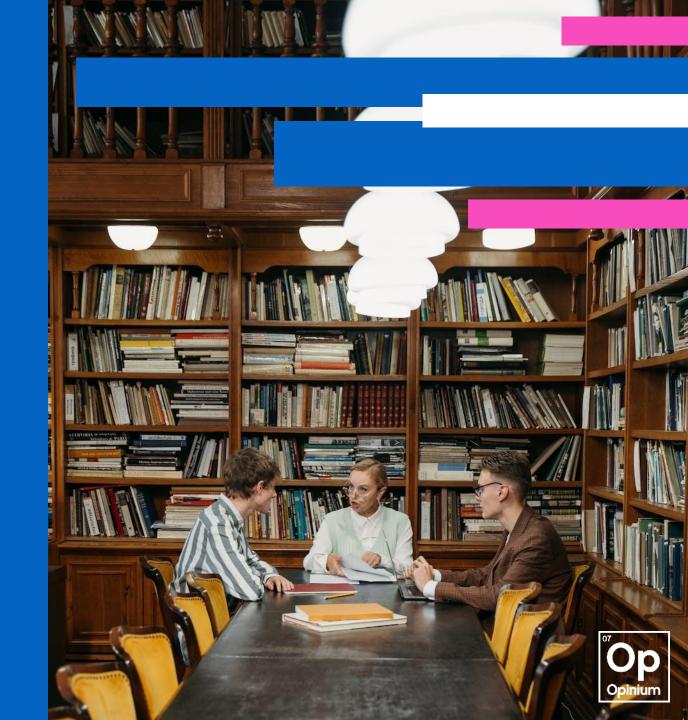
### Magnificent Maps generates the most interest and awareness, alongside getting to know the Picture Archive and Live from the Archive

#### Interest in and awareness of different LMA events



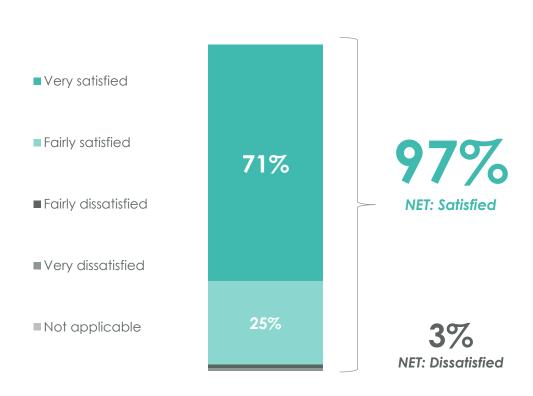


How is LMA viewed by current users?



# Overall, users are very positive about their last visit, with many praising the helpful and knowledgeable LMA staff. Nearly all were satisfied with their overall experience

#### Satisfaction with their overall experience when they last visited LMA



"Collections are amazing, knowledge of staff is exemplary, access is great, atmosphere and attitude of staff is welcoming." – A Very Satisfied User

"Staff were helpful and the exhibition I visited was well presented and interesting. I have deposited materials in the past and have always been impressed with the friendliness and seriousness with which I was treated." – A Very Satisfied User

"Staff pleasant and helpful, **clean spacious comfortable** facility, **easy to find and order** the material required." – **A Very Satisfied User** 

"Materials I'd requested were provided promptly, staff were welcoming and helpful, atmosphere was conducive to effective research." – A Very Satisfied User

"The facility is functional but now **open for much shorter hours** than it used to be. Document production is now decidedly **poor compared to the pre-pandemic service.**" – A Fairly Satisfied user

"Despite having done a lot of work with historical records and documents, I always find the LMA catalogue difficult to navigate."

– A Fairly Satisfied user



## While users are particularly satisfied with the staff and the materials at LMA, they're less satisfied with the opening hours

#### Satisfaction with different elements of LMA NET: ■Not applicable ■Very dissatisfied ■Fairly dissatisfied ■Very satisfied Satisfied The staff within London Metropolitan 17% 79% 96% Archives The materials archives and library at 69% 24% 93% London Metropolitan Archives The ambience of the London 58% 34% 93% Metropolitan Archives The facilities at London Metropolitan 52% 42% 95% Archives The wait-times when requesting 43% 36% **79%** materials The free onsite access to Ancestry.com 41% 11% **52%** and other genealogy sites The opening hours 37% 48% 85%



# For most users the best thing about LMA is the extensive collection, and the ease of access facilitated by the helpful and expert LMA staff

The best things about LMA according to LMA fans

1

The helpful, knowledgeable and welcoming staff

The willingness of the staff to share their knowledge and expertise regarding the collections at LMA and elsewhere, and the way they help users access the information they're looking for in a way that suits them.

2

The very existence and the sheer volume, quality, breadth and depth of the them

What I can access. I once found my granddad's holiday for the year 1952 in the Whitbread archive. And his handwriting all over a document. It was powerful and emotional.

3

The ease of access and freely available records both physically, digitally and online

Ease access to original sources coupled with good online facilities. All sorts of fascinating information freely available to interested members of the public.



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#### The best things about LMA according to LMA fans

### The helpful, knowledgeable and welcoming staff

The willingness of the staff to share their knowledge and expertise regarding the collections at LMA and elsewhere, and the way they help users access the information they're looking for in a way that suits them.

**The people who work there!** They are professional, knowledgeable, helpful, and pleasant.

The availability of information and **the opportunity to ask questions** of the very professional and knowledgeable staff.

**Staff are very friendly**, generally, and it is light and airy, and the **collections are amazing.** 

It has a **wealth of materials** and **experts to help** with research.

### The very existence of the archives and the sheer volume, quality, breadth and depth of the them

What I can access. I once found my granddad's holiday for the year 1952 in the Whitbread archive. And his handwriting all over a document. It was powerful and emotional.

The range of resources, both original documents and access to copies (transcripts, microfilmed, etc.)

**The existence of your collections** and the ease of investigating them.

The **depth and breadth** of its material, and its **innovative and imaginative way of using that** - think maps, think Black History, think Great Parchment Book

The quantity of archival material it holds, and the (relative) ease of locating what one wants to see.

### The ease of access and availability of records physically, digitally and online which are freely available to the public

Ease access to original sources coupled with good online facilities. All sorts of fascinating information freely available to interested members of the public.

A central repository of documents about London that is well set out and easy to access either in person or online.

Online searching and descriptions of material which makes preparation easier before a visit and then maximum use of time in viewing room.

The range of materials available to consult that are not available elsewhere and its accessibility in London.

The **richness** of their holdings and the **increasing digitization** of medieval records.



# Longer opening hours, improved service and facilities, better cataloguing and more online availability of digitised records wanted

What LMA fans would change about it

1

Longer opening hours and better facilities like on-site refreshments

Opening hours don't make it at all easy for those in permanent employment. A few Saturdays a year with no live document production is exceptionally poor.

2

Greater accessibility - more digitisation of materials online and better cataloguing

Apart from longer opening hours... more/better digitisation, both in terms of indexing the content of documents and making documents available online.

3

A better service, clearer information and knowledgeable well-trained staff

Make it clearer when you arrive what archives you have. I don't mind asking but I like browsing and finding things I wouldn't have looked for as I didn't know they existed.



## Longer opening hours, improved service and facilities, better cataloguing and more online availability of digitised records wanted

#### What LMA fans would change about it

### Longer opening hours and better facilities like on-site refreshments

Opening hours don't make it at all easy for those in permanent employment. A few Saturdays a year with no live document production is exceptionally poor.

IT needs improvement - reliable Wi-Fi, staff to assist when something goes wrong; far more charging plugs.

More staff would be really helpful.

...longer opening hours would be helpful. On my last visit they had removed the hot drinks machine and the snack machine, which means wasting time leaving the building to get any type of refreshment.

would be nice to have an area where one could purchase drinks and hot food as it is some way from nearest café... Increase opening hours.

### Greater accessibility - more digitisation of materials online and better cataloguing

I would **digitise a lot more of their materials** and make it available online. It takes me approx. 3 hours door to door to visit the LMA and costs around £50. I can't afford to use the LMA for a research project.

Cataloguing system (very difficult to crack), amalgamation of ancient archives with local library type services, overly high cost of getting a copy of a simple will.

Apart from longer opening hours... more/better digitisation, both in terms of indexing the content of documents and making documents available online.

Continue to upgrade the online catalogue and digitise sources. I find it frustrating that some collections have a printed catalogue only.

### A better service, clearer information and knowledgeable well-trained staff

I would have a **team of knowledgeable volunteers** available, particularly for first time visitors.

**Greater depth of knowledge** about the contents of the archive on the part of front-of-house staff.

Make it easier for first-time visitors to understand where they can go and how to access the various resources - it can be a bit daunting.

Make it clearer when you arrive what archives you have. I don't mind asking but I like browsing and finding things I wouldn't have looked for as I didn't know they existed.

I think that although the staff are helpful, they do not always have a good knowledge of the material available.



# To improve LMA, many mention the opening hours, but also the on-site facilities and ease of getting information

How they would improve the experience

**Longer opening hours** would allow visitors from the Longer opening hours provinces to get more out of a day at LMA As I said previously, I would appreciate an area where **Better facilities** people could socialise and get refreshments. A more user-friendly means of understanding the depth and range of material held. Sometimes I sense Greater help for new users that there is much more material available but I don't know how to access it, or even appreciate it is there. **An online account with digital storage** that could be **Greater availability** accessed remotely, and an online or contactless card payment system



# To improve LMA, many mention the opening hours, but also the on-site facilities and ease of getting information

#### How they would improve the experience

#### **Opening times**

Increased opening hours ie 1-2 late nights

Longer opening times would be good

Longer opening hours would allow visitors from the provinces to get more out of a day at LMA

**Longer opening hours.** Better facilities for **printing**. Lower charge for photography.

Longer opening hours and more comfortable chairs (the ones in the reading rooms are instruments of torture if you are there all day...)

#### **On-site facilities**

Better toilets, cloakroom, lockers, lounge, and a cafe

An area to sit and buy coffee etc so that I can take a break every couple of hours (to help with the headaches in particular)

As I said previously, I would appreciate an area where people could socialise and get refreshments.

A cafe? I know there are lots nearby but was thinking it would be good way of generating income.

Reinstall a vending machine for food/drink

#### Greater help for new users

I think the LMA is well organised. I do think some people do not understand how to use the archive and so a small info card or similar could be available for services. This might help get people to visit who are unsure how to start the process (I met a few people who didn't understand access to materials etc).

A more user-friendly means of understanding the depth and range of material held. Sometimes I have a sense that there is much more material available pertinent to my research but that I don't know how to access it, or even appreciate it is there.

I think if I knew more about what records you hold and how to find them that would be a great help to me

#### Greater availability online

Make it accessible all weekend,
put the catalogues back on the site
so content can be ordered
beforehand, make everything
orderable online before the visit so
waiting times are shorter, make it
possible to order things during the
visit on weekends too

An online account with digital storage that could be accessed remotely, and an online or contactless card payment system

It would also be appreciated if clearer instructions could be given about the need to pre-order or give notice when consulting some collections. If this is the case then it should be immediately clear from the entry on the online catalogue or the printed catalogue or when you ask a query about the collection.



In order to attract others like themselves, the key area is increasing awareness, through greater advertising, and relationships with similar organisations

#### How to attract others like themselves

Advertise its facilities in universities and other adult Increased awareness educational venues, e.g. City Lit. **Increase Saturday opening** so those of us who work full Greater opening hours time (standard hours) have more access Perhaps put a small exhibition of a peculiar cased Different activities and document/set of documents to visit and see (leading to a wider linked set of papers etc. that might have demonstrations been missed). Keep up in sending emails an a monthly bases and Increased engagement with when having special events always remind people on existing users a regular basis.



In order to attract others like themselves, the key area is increasing awareness, through greater advertising, and relationships with similar organisations

#### How to attract others like themselves

#### **Increased** awareness

Advertise in Community Groups in London, Churches, Shopping Centers and Local Newspapers.

Provide a quiet hour for Autistic people.

Make your presence better known. Ever thought about a full page ad in the London Metro?

Advertise more so that people are aware of what LMA does.
Give examples of the kind of records available to view.

Advertise its facilities in universities and other adult educational venues, e.g. City Lit.

Publicity. Tell people about LMA.

You are too hidden away to be
seen from the main road so start
shouting!

#### **Greater opening hours**

Increase Saturday opening so those of us who work full time (standard hours) have more access

Saturday opening or extended hours as I don't live in London.
Before Covid, Wiltshire Family History Society would book a coach on a Saturday and drop people off at British Library or Society of Genealogists (before thy moved premises) or LMA

More late evening opening times

Improve the opening hours, especially on weekends, for people that do not live in London and have to travel to the Archives.

### Different activities and demonstrations

School workshops in schools and outside. Get your name known with children - and with teachers and school staff.

Emphasise the social and community aspect and try to make the entrance more noticeable and reflective of the contents (Difficult, I know, with the current building constraints!). Join forces with the Society of Genealogists for the benefit of people who are nervous of archives but want to trace their family history.

Perhaps put a small exhibition of a peculiar cased document/set of documents to visit and see (leading to a wider linked set of papers etc. that might have been missed).

### Increased engagement with existing users

e-newsletters are good (like TNA),
document and conservation
workshops, advertise in Family Tree
Magazine/article or interview
explaining what you have, maybe
same with National Trust where you
share common ground

Events, events, events!

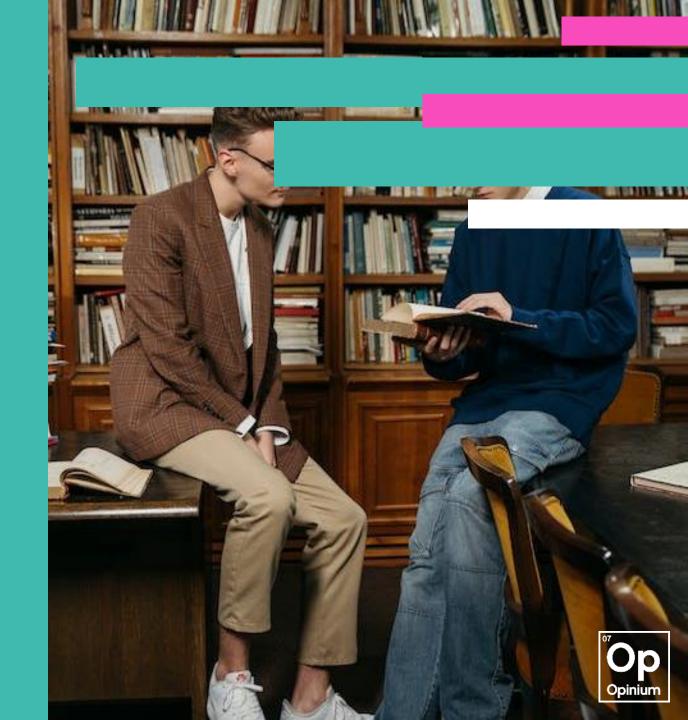
Keep up in sending emails an a monthly bases and when having special events always remind people on a regular basis.

Even though I get the newsletter I think bringing to the attention of people examples of records you hold such as inquest records etc.

Maybe sharing examples/images on twitter reminding us that you hold this and other types of records

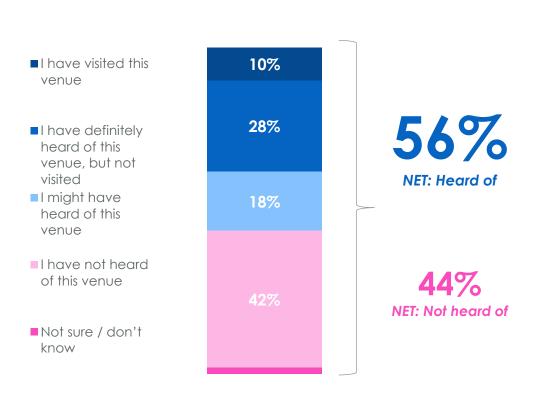


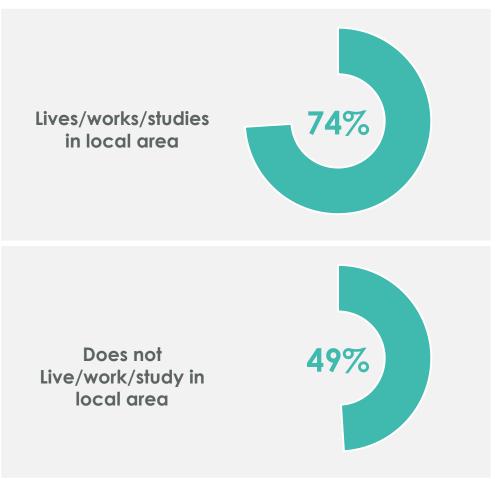
How is LMA seen by future users?



# Over half have previously heard of LMA, which increases to three in four of the 'super-local' group. One in ten have visited in the past

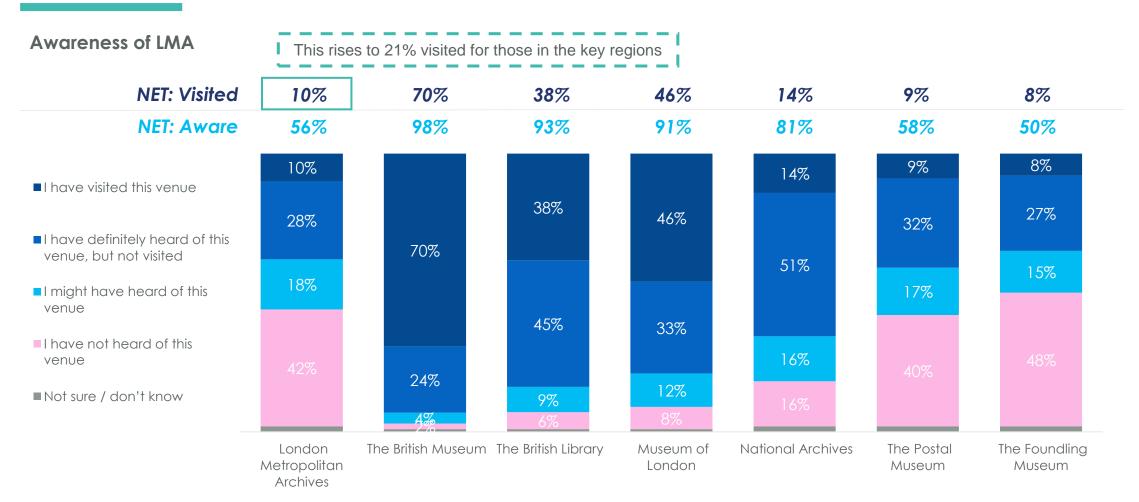
#### Awareness of LMA







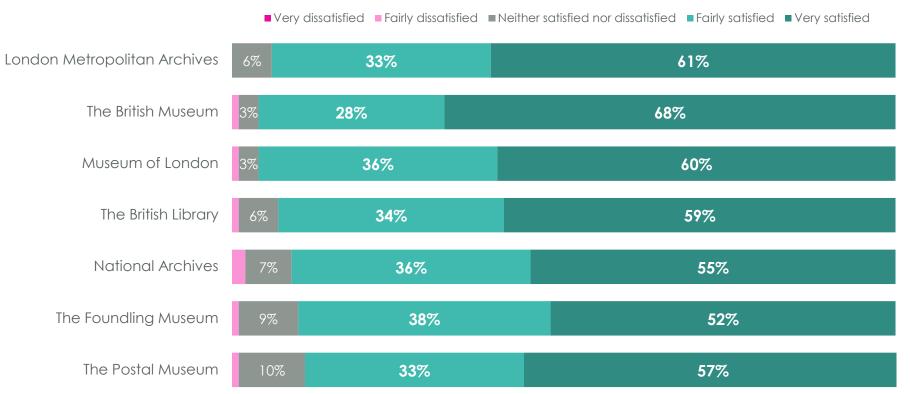
# Awareness of LMA is comparable to the Postal and Foundling Museums, and unsurprisingly falls behind the larger organisations

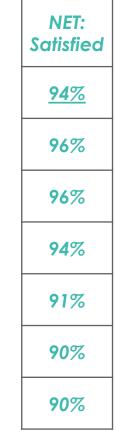




# Importantly, amongst those who have previously visited, they are equally as satisfied as when they visited the larger organisations

#### Satisfaction with LMA & competitors

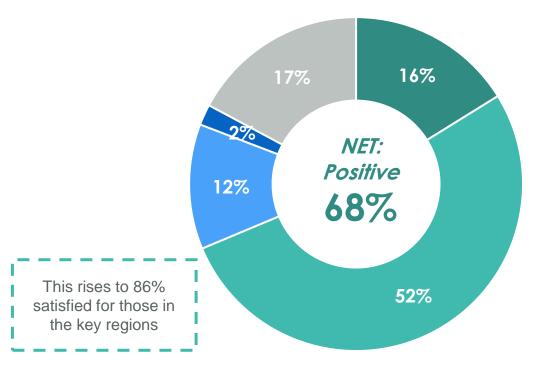






## Over two in three are satisfied with the current location of LMA, noting the easy transport links and local amenities on offer

#### Thoughts on current location of the LMA



- Is in an excellent location Is in a good location
- Is not in a good locationIs in a poor location
- Not sure / don't know

"It seems easy to get to with decent transport links"

"It is quite **central without being saturated in tourists** and is easily accessible which is great"

"I know and love Islington and though a distance to get to, travel there is easy route. **Get to take a break at the Canal, very relaxing.**"

"The location is not far from the city centre and the delivery is easy. And the surroundings are beautiful."

"Well connected, lots of amenities, coffee shops and places to eat nearby"

"It is in the heart of the capital city London and **convenient** for everyone who wishes to visit and accesses the history information."

"It is near the centre and close to east London, where many young people and creative professionals live, and they are usually the ones who visit museums and galleries the most"

"Easily reachable and **Exmouth market is great for a meal** afterwards"



However, the name of LMA is not the most enticing for future users...



## Whilst some correctly identify that LMA is a archive which contains information on the history of London...

What do you think LMA does? (1/3)

1 4

**London Archival centre** 

Keep various important documents specifically for **London** 

Houses and maintains personal and London based historical information

It holds digitalisation and paper copies of historical documents relating to the **London metro area** 

**History of London** and how it was giving it's name and who and what it was **significant to in history** 

2

History of the London Met Police

3

History of London transport /
Government



## Others believe it solely looks at the history of the London Metropolitan police

What do you think LMA does? (2/3)

**London Archival centre** 

2 History of the London Met Police

I would imagine by the sound of it that it holds info about the London met police or government.

It has archives in it of **police crimes** dated back and as far forward as the public are allowed to have access to Keeps records. Maybe to do with the London Met police? All I know is they keep records of some sort.

Archives suggest it has something to do with old files and metropolitan perhaps police archives?

History of London transport /
Government



## Whilst others believe it focuses on the history of London transport and the government of London

What do you think LMA does? (3/3)

London Archival centre

History of the London Met Police

History of London transport /
Government

Keep records of **London transport** 

It is about **history of trains** 

Historical documents from **government or business for work** carried out in London

The administration of current government documents and the protection and restoration of archives

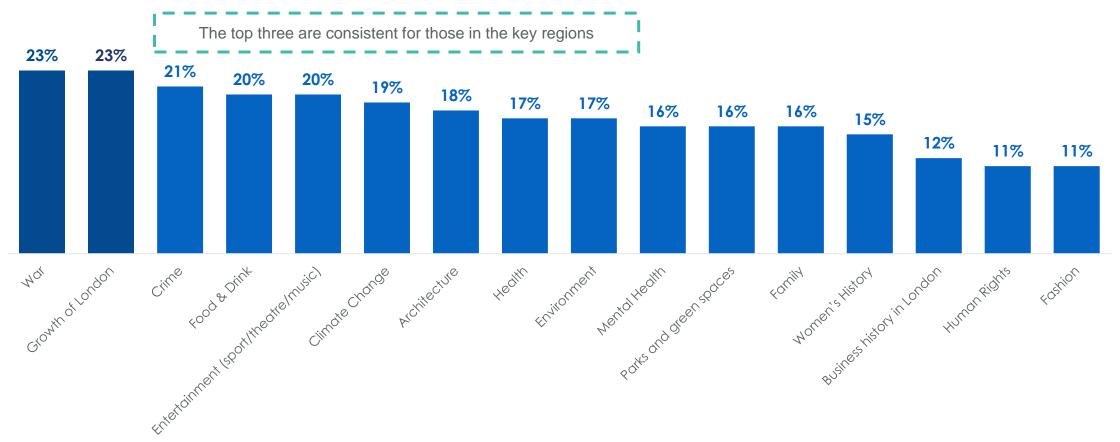


How to attract future users



### Growth of London remains most popular – alongside war and crime

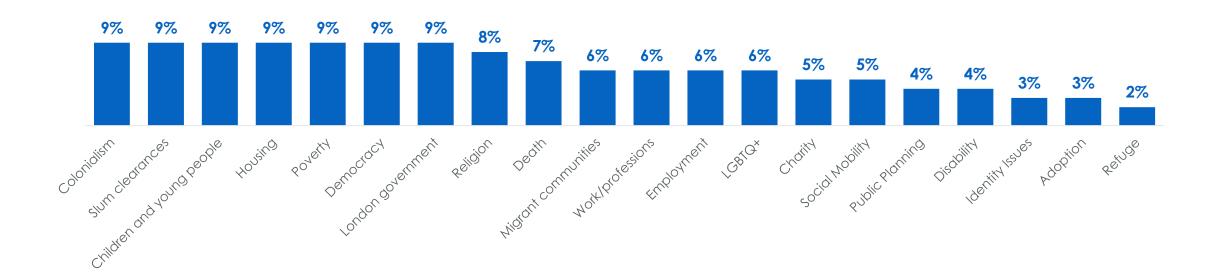
Most popular topic areas they would be interested in learning more about (top group)





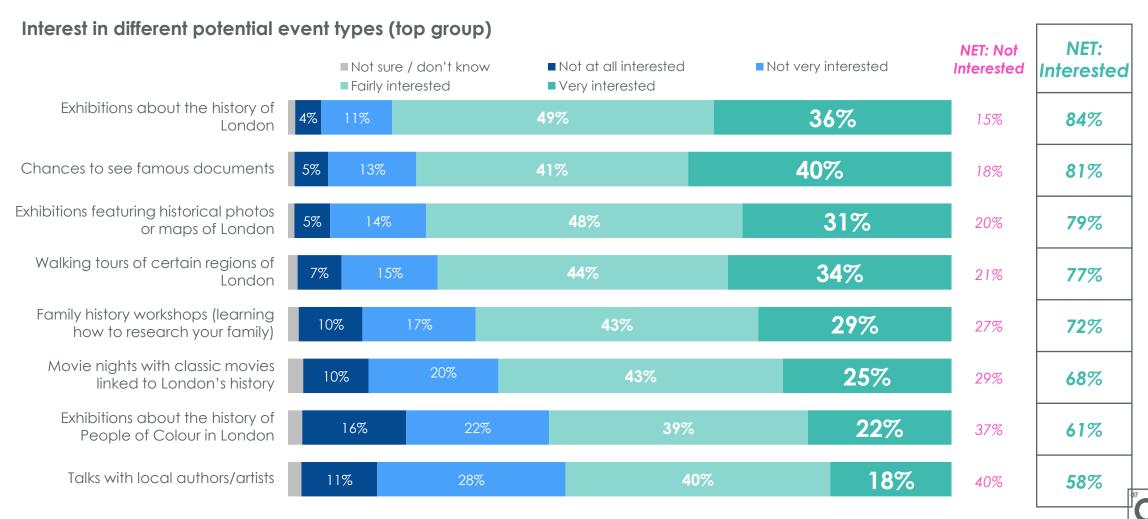
### Meanwhile, topics that do not pertain to all (identity, adoption and LGBTQ+) have less overall interest

Lesser popular topic areas they would be interested in learning more about (2/2)

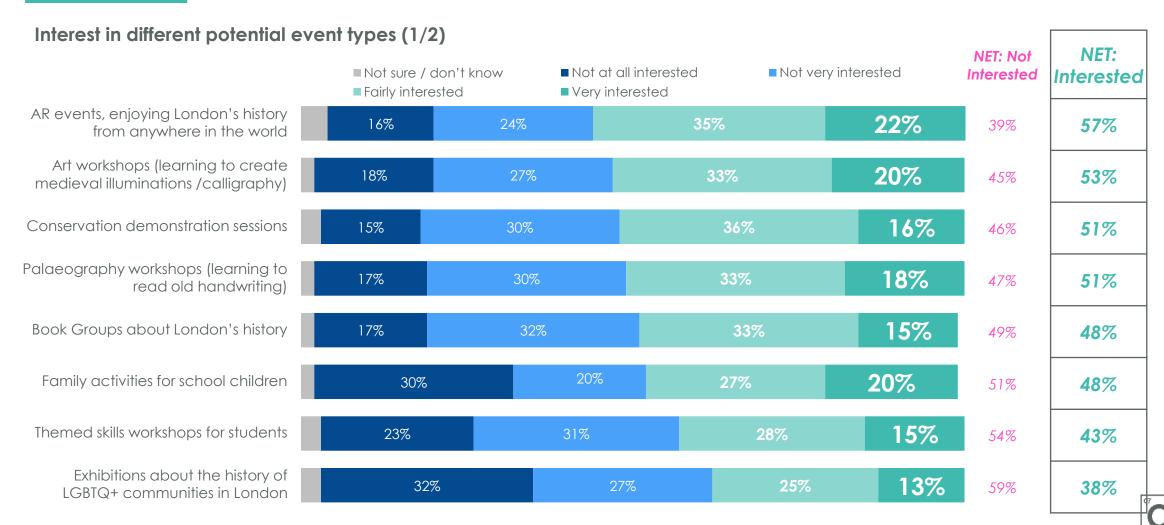




### The event types which garner the most interest focus on the history of London, whether that be through exhibitions or walking tours



### More niche areas like art, conservation and family activities have less interest as a whole

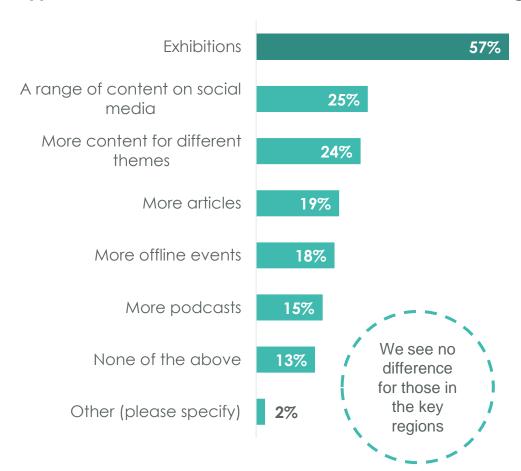


# And what types of content would be most popular?



The most interesting content types drawing visitors across all age groups are exhibitions. Podcasts/social media are more popular amongst younger ages

#### Types of content/events to increase likelihood of visiting LMA



	18-30	31 - 45	46 - 60	61 and older
Exhibitions	50 %	55 %	62 %	60 %
A range of content on social media	29 %	36 %	26 %	12 %
More content for different themes	27 %	25 %	25 %	19 %
More podcasts	23 %	19 %	13 %	7 %
More offline events	20 %	22 %	16 %	14 %
More articles	18 %	20 %	20 %	17 %



How do you speak to future users?



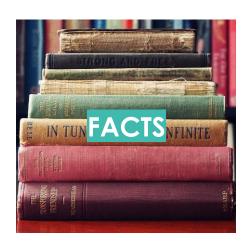
### Most like to be communicated with on a personal level, with humour, words and facts also appealing to future users

#### How they like to be communicated with









57%

Connect with someone on a personal level

50%

Use humour to make a point

49%

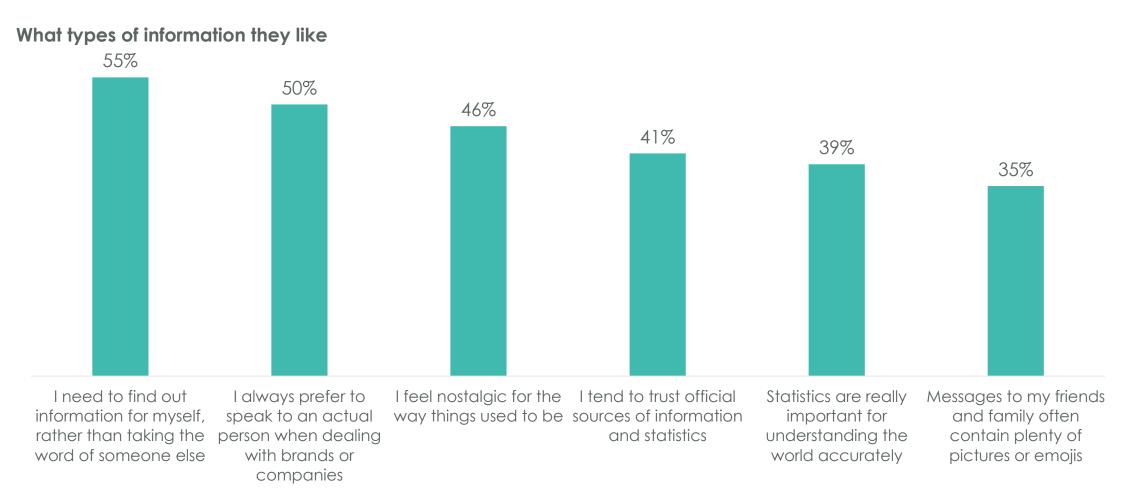
Describe something in words

40%

Refer to concrete facts to support your point of view

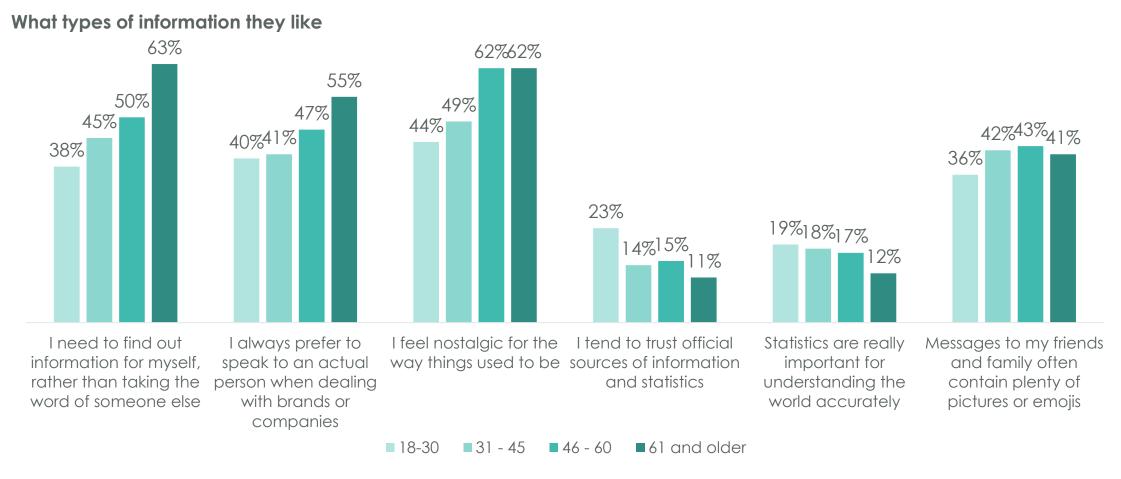


### Most like to look for information themselves, rather than taking the word of someone else





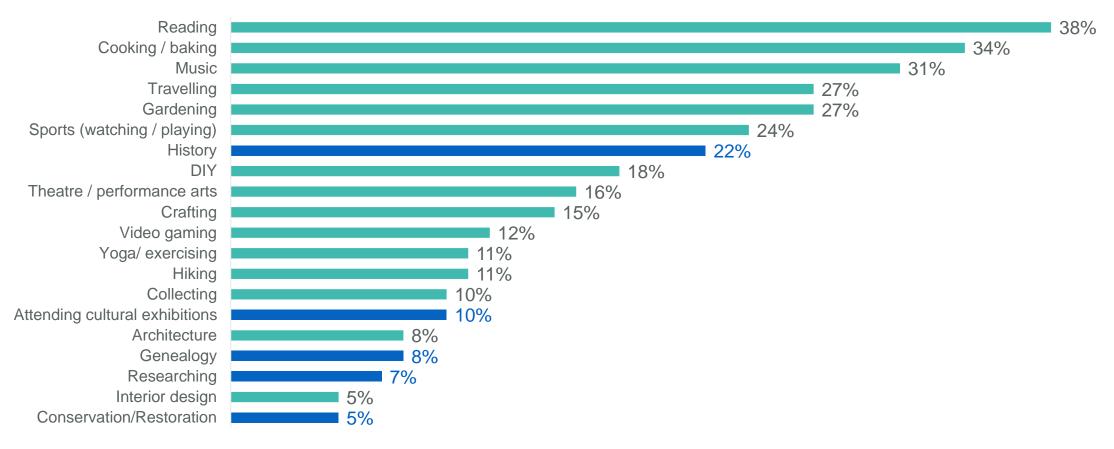
Communicating in a nostalgic sense is most important to the older age groups, which LMA can play into – alongside the personal touch of speaking with actual people





## One in five are interested in history – with genealogy, architecture and conservation less popular – highlighting where LMA should operate

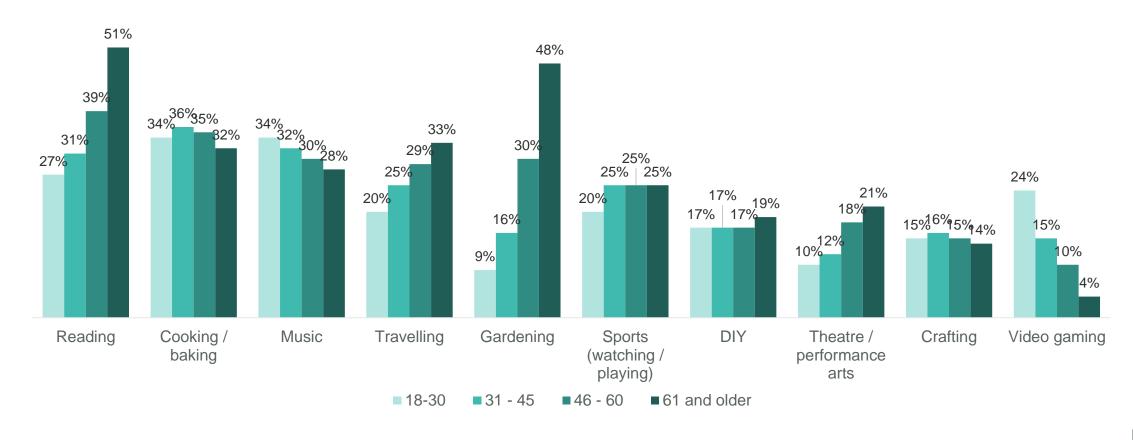
#### Hobbies and interests that they pursue outside of their day-to-day responsibilities





Unsurprisingly, those aged 61 and older are most interested in gardening and reading. It is interesting to see the younger adults are less interested in travelling than their older counterparts

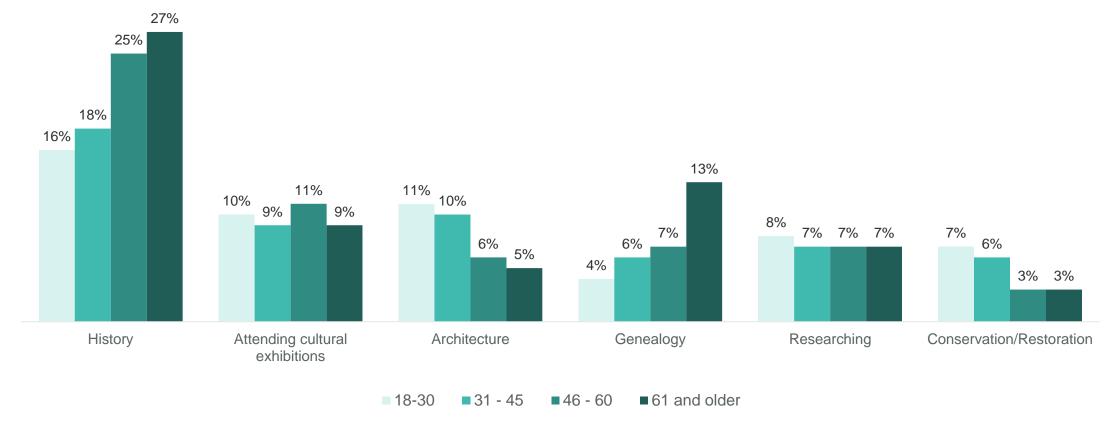
#### Hobbies and interests that they pursue outside of their day-to-day responsibilities





## History & Genealogy is most popular amongst those aged 61 and older. Cultural exhibitions are equally popular across age groups

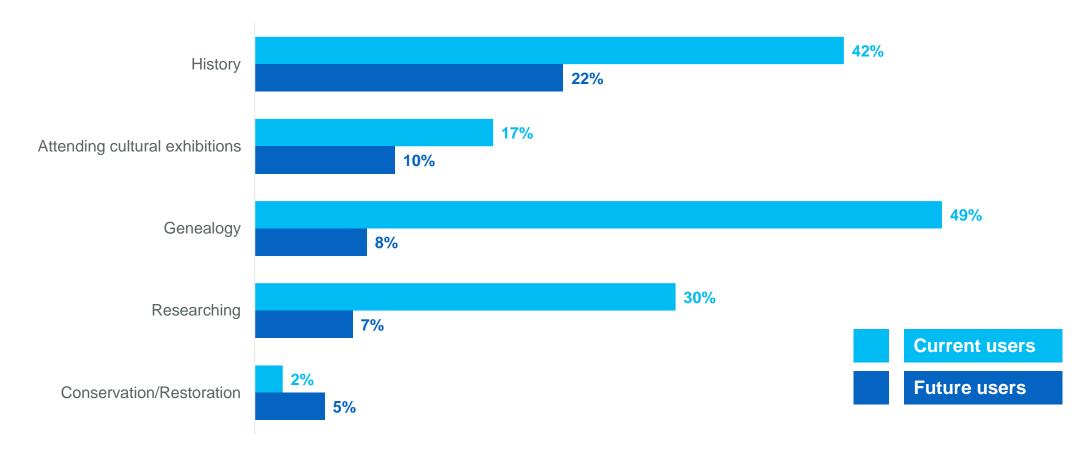
Hobbies and interests that they pursue outside of their day-to-day responsibilities related to LMA





The topics which are of greatest interest to LMA are of more popularity for current users (as to be expected), but history is the topic which can be most tapped into

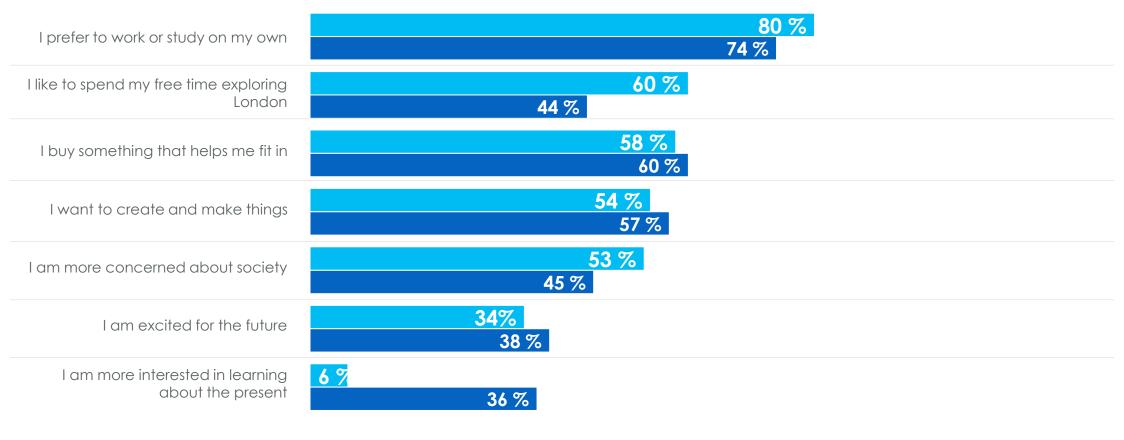
#### Hobbies and interests that they pursue outside of their day-to-day responsibilities





Current and future users tend to be similar in terms of their values and beliefs, although future users are more interested in learning about the present

#### What types of people are LMA user's vs future users?

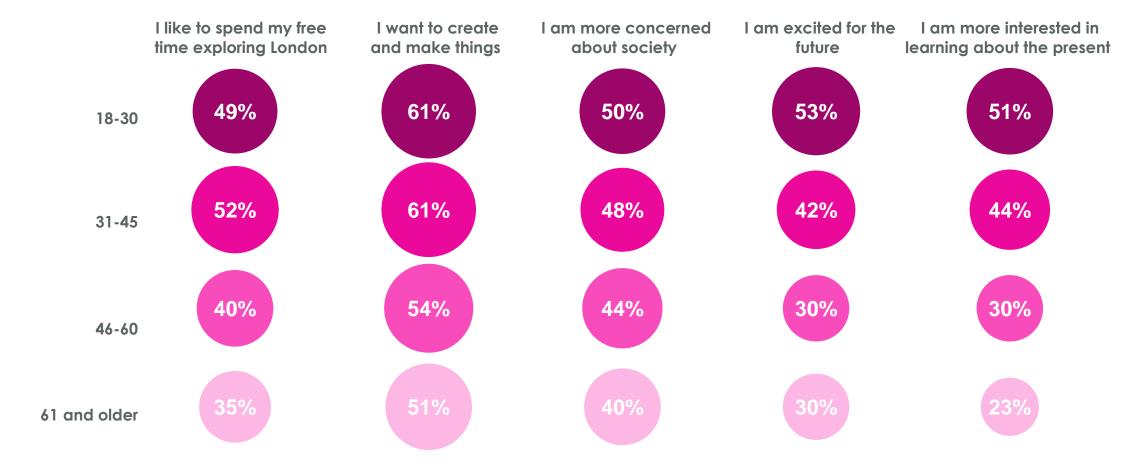


**Current users** 

**Future users** 



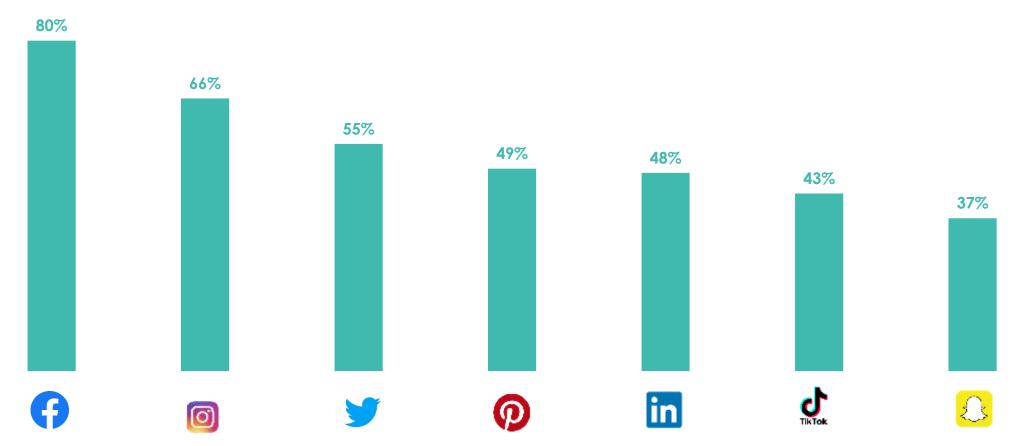
Younger future users are more present-focused, being more interested in learning about the present and the future. They also like exploring London more than their older counterparts





### Facebook and Instagram are the two most used social media platforms, with Twitter and LinkedIn also well used

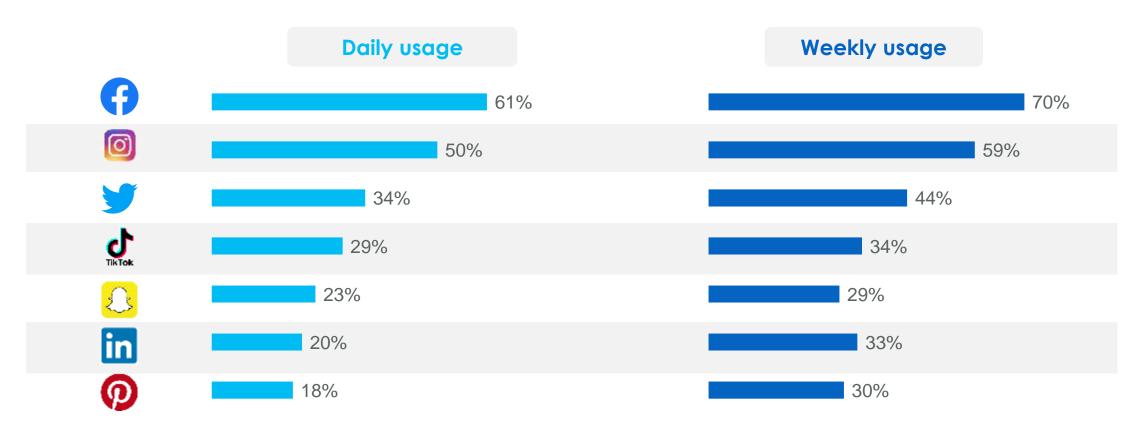
#### Usage of each social media channel





### Facebook and Instagram are the two most used daily platforms

#### Frequency of social media consumption





### So, what are the next steps?



# Next steps for LMA

- Current users are happy with LMA as it currently stands. They like the staff, the offering and the materials that LMA has. There is some appetite amongst this group for LMA to stay the same but grow in its size.
- 2. There is an appetite for more from LMA whether that be through more events, exhibitions or ways to attract others through the doors.
- 3. The name needs some explaining! Not everyone is able to gather that LMA is for London in general, with some misattributing it towards the met police/local government or transport.
- 4. Future users are more positive about crime, war and the history of London, highlighting a clear way to encourage people into the space.
- 5. Future users will respond best to facts, some humour, and being encouraged to explore on their own.







### CHRIS CAREY HEAD OF ENTERTAINMENT



+44 (0)7921 216 586



CHRISCAREY@OPINIUM.COM



58 GREAT SUTTON ST | LONDON | EC1V 0DG



### **SAM JONES** research manager



+44 (0)20 7566 7431



SAMJONES@OPINIUM.CO.UK



58 GREAT SUTTON ST, LONDON EC1V 0DG



What people think, feel and do