



**Daisyfield Pools
consultation
October 2023**

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Summary and consultation overview

Summary:

Following the closure of Daisyfield Pools on Saturday 19th August 2023 due to serious health concerns including the presence of legionella bacteria, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (BWDBC) wished to consult the public on their views surrounding the closure and future of the building. This would allow users to give their thoughts on the future of the site as well as give BWDBC a rounded view of the effects closure would have on users and residents of the area.

Consultation overview:

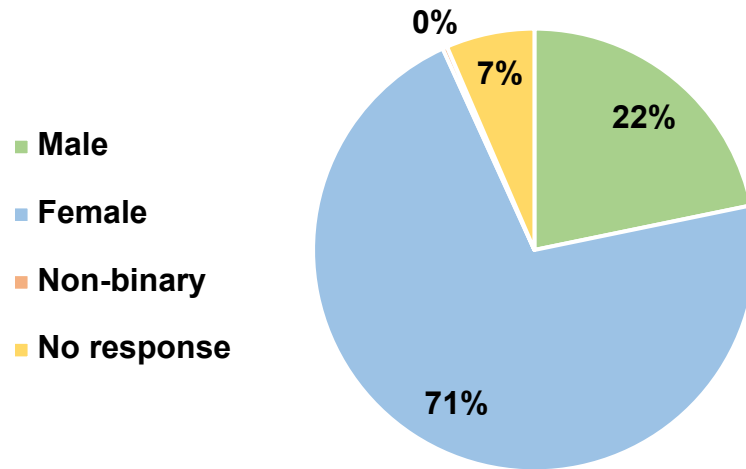
The Daisyfield Pools consultation ran for four weeks from Monday 18th September 2023 to Sunday 15th October 2023. An online form was available for users to complete anonymously and was accessible via the BWDBC website home page and open consultations page.

Communications were released on all BWDBC social media pages as well as The Shuttle website and paper forms were available at all local libraries and Little Harwood Community Centre. A support session took place at Little Harwood Community Centre on Wednesday 20th September 2023 to aid users in completing the form.

A total of 294 submissions were received from users within the borough and externally. This included views from local residents, casual users, parents or guardians of young people who use the pools, Half Fish HQ staff members, local schools, swim clubs, trainee swimmers, and more.

Demographic insights

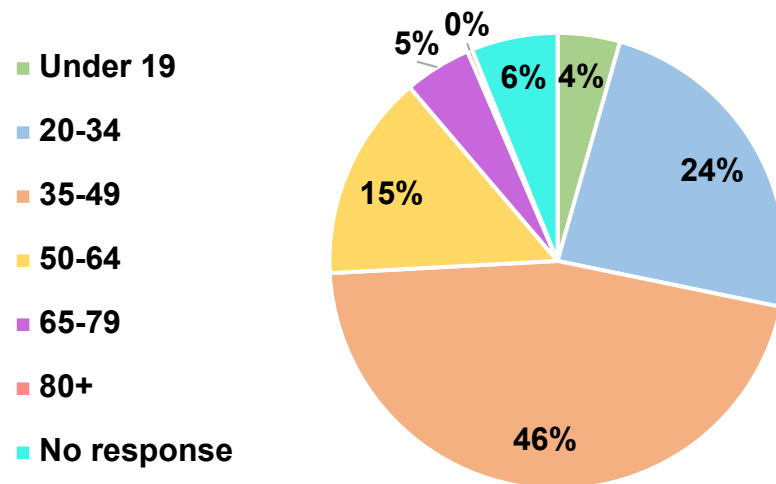
User submissions by gender



Of the 294 submissions, 275 users gave details of their gender.

- the majority of respondents were female at 71%
- 22% of respondents were male
- 1 user identifies as non-binary

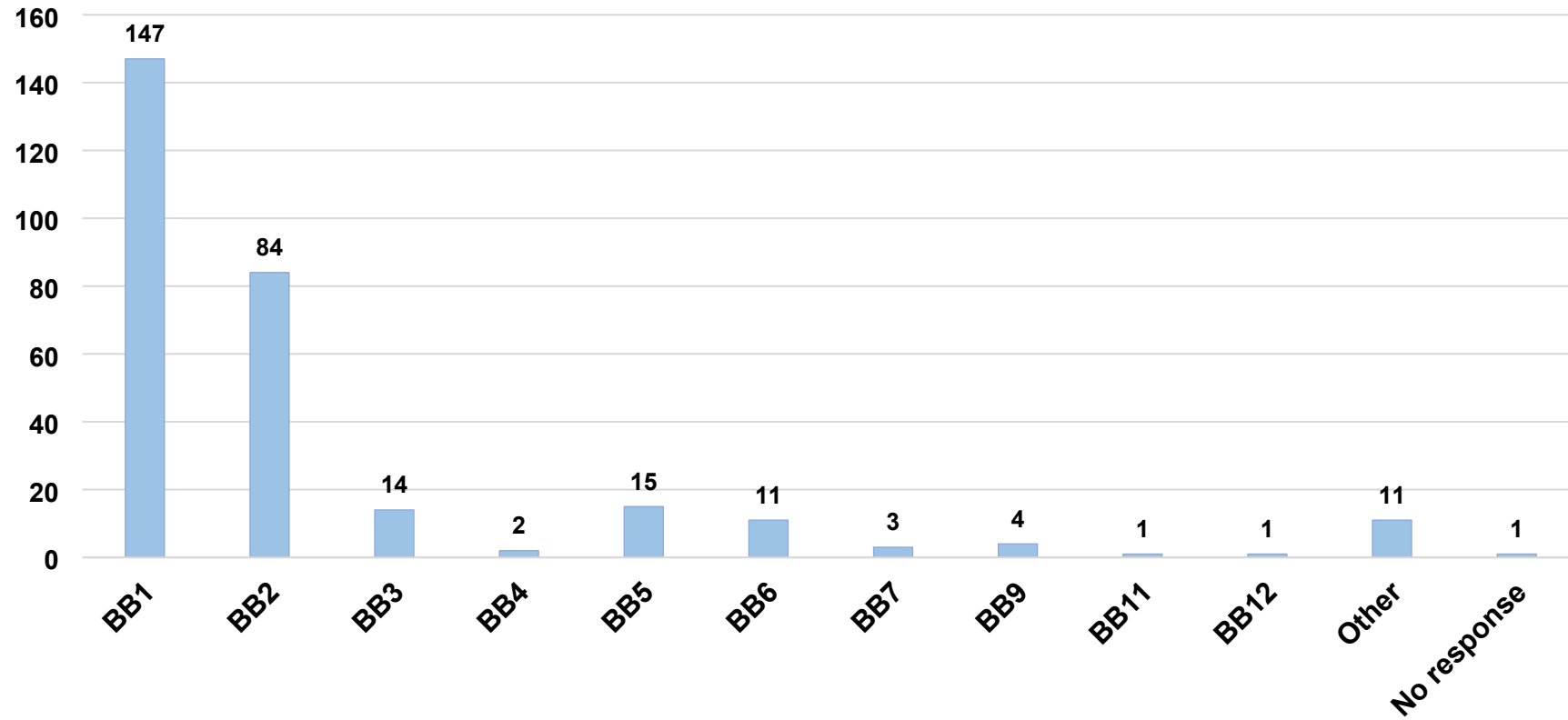
User submissions by age group



Of the 294 submissions, 276 users gave details of their age.

- the largest number of submissions came from the 35-49 age group
- combined, the 20-34 and 35-49 age ranges make up 70% of submissions
- the 65-79 and 80+ age ranges make up 5% of submissions
- 1 user was 80+

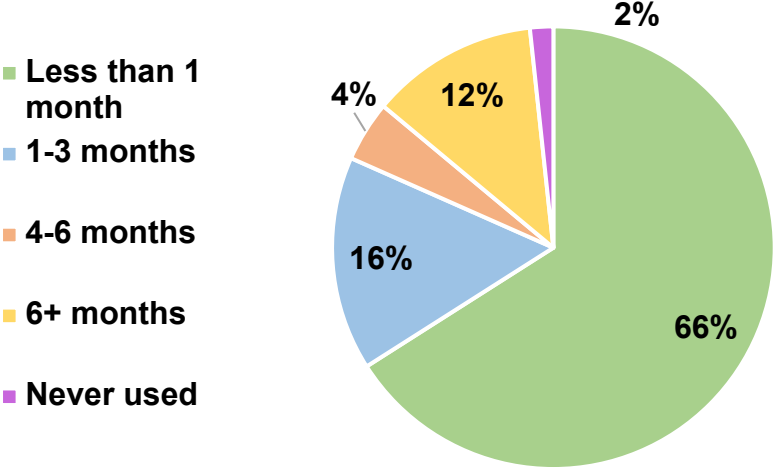
User submissions by postcode



- 50% of submissions were made by residents of BB1 postcodes
- 29% of submissions were made by residents of BB2 postcodes
- other areas represented include Ramsbottom, Chorley, Preston, Chester, and Nuneaton, as well as 2 submissions from North Wales and 1 submission from Scotland

User habits

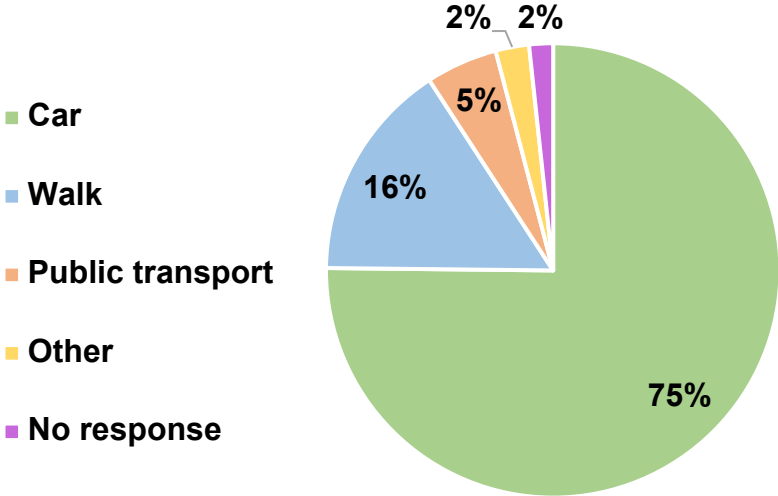
Users last usage before closure



Users were asked when they last used Daisyfield Pools prior to closure:

- 66% of users used Daisyfield Pools within 1 month of the closure date
- 16% of users used Daisyfield Pools between 1-3 months before closure
- 16% of users visited Daisyfield Pools 4 or more months before closure
- 5 respondents had never used Daisyfield Pools

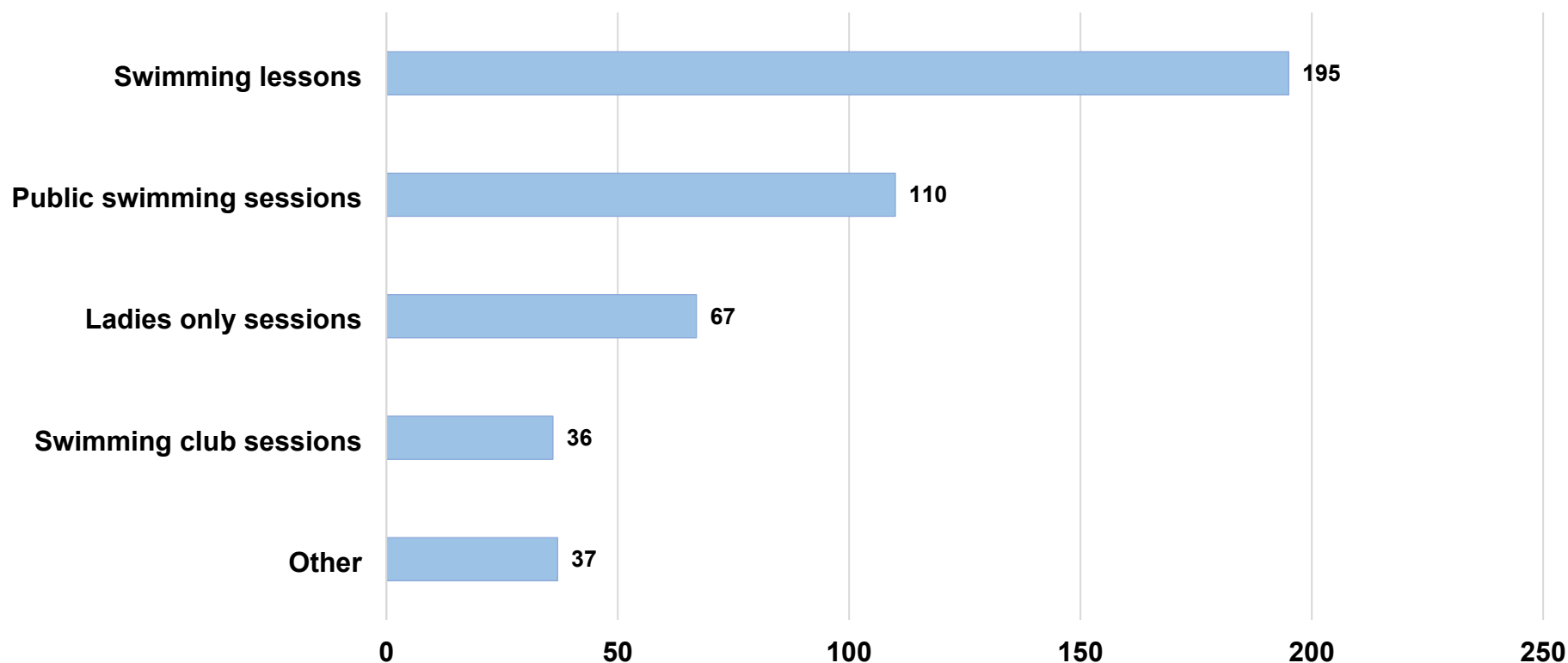
User means of travel to Daisyfield Pools



Users were asked how they travelled to Daisyfield Pools:

- 75% of users travel to Daisyfield Pools by car
- 21% of users either walked or travelled by public transport
- other means of transport used included private coaches and school buses.
- 2% of users gave no response; these are users who stated that they never used Daisyfield Pools

User activities at Daisyfield Pools



289 users who previously stated they had used the facilities were asked about their usage of Daisyfield Pools.

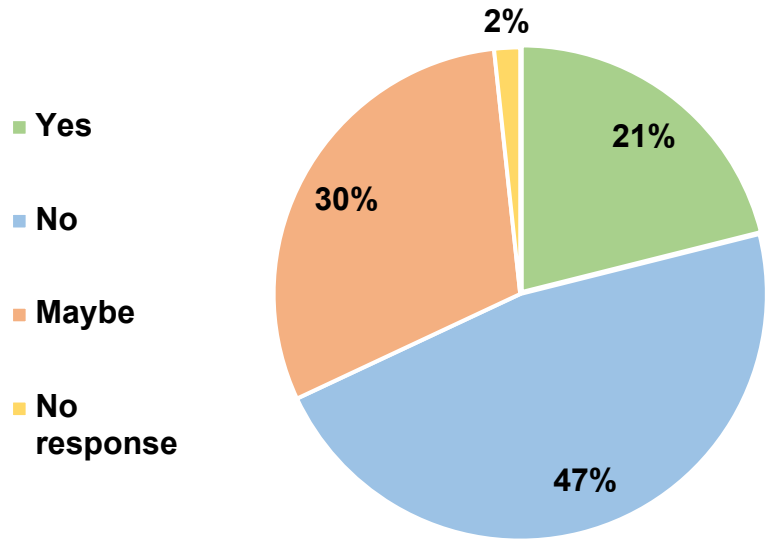
- 67% of users attended swimming lessons
- 38% of users attended public swim sessions
- 23% of users attended ladies only sessions
- 12% of users attended swimming club sessions
- 12% of users stated they used the pools for other activities. These included mother and toddler sessions, men's and teens sessions, private sessions, lifeguard training, first aid training, mental health first aid training, sponsored swims, various camps, and holiday clubs

Why do users use Daisyfield Pools over other facilities in the area?				
“Convenient, community support”	“The swimming lessons are amazing for my children”	“I used it only once. I was shocked by the state of the facilities”	“Calm atmosphere, amazing staff, warm pool.”	“They have fun ways of building confidence, and I don’t worry about safety”
“There are no other lifesaving clubs in Lancashire”	“It’s a local pool near my location and not as busy as the one in Blackburn town centre”	“Convenient times and fair prices”	“Teaching style, community feel, affordable, friendly staff”	“I am restricted on how far I can walk, and the pool provides local exercise for me”
“It’s a good place to be social, meet new people and exercise. It’s also affordable”	“Since taking my child to the pools, she has become so much more confident”	“They are the only place offering rookie lifeguard courses continually rather than a crash course”	“My kids use the pool for school swimming lessons”	“It’s a nice friendly place that fits with my lifestyle”
“Accessibility, free parking, familiarity, convenience. It’s not in a busy town centre”	“Other swim schools we have attended don’t come close to the standards at Daisyfield”	“There are massive waiting lists for swimming lessons at other pools”	“I attend the male and teen sessions with my son. My wife attends the ladies only sessions”	“I’ve been coming here since I was a child and I’m used to it”
“Easy access and parking. They have separate changing rooms and cubicles”	“It’s close to home so I can walk instead of drive”	“It’s a closed pool with no way for people to view swimmers”	“They are the only pool locally to offer ladies only sessions with female lifeguards”	“It’s cheaper than the rest”

<p>“We have access to the pool for private sessions”</p>	<p>“There’s lots of ways for children to feel like part of the community”</p>	<p>“My children feel comfortable there. All the staff are happy to see them and encourage them to come swimming”</p>	<p>“The classes are small and personalised”</p>	<p>“Instructors are amazing, they are patient and make sure the lessons are fun”</p>
<p>“It’s local for us Little Harwood residents. Nice and quiet”</p>	<p>“There is a large separate pool for toddlers”</p>	<p>“It has free parking and isn’t as busy as the one in Blackburn town centre”</p>	<p>“Lessons are oversubscribed at other pools”</p>	<p>“The times of swimming lessons are really accommodating to my work schedule”</p>
<p>“It’s my local pool and I’m very happy with the friendly environment”</p>	<p>“The payment plan is perfect for me”</p>	<p>“They have the days and availability to accommodate my daughter”</p>	<p>“We appreciate the fact the public do not have access whilst our school children are swimming”</p>	<p>“I stopped using it prior to closure as the operators were poor and the pools not clean”</p>
<p>“It’s local with a nice set up”</p>	<p>“The baby pool is a fantastic temperature for toddlers and the lifeguards are in the pool”</p>	<p>“They have lots of mother and baby sessions available. It’s easy to find a time that suits my family”</p>	<p>“I feel it’s an important resource for teaching school children how to swim”</p>	<p>“My whole family, from my grandad to my mum to my kids, have used this pool”</p>
<p>“The opportunity for children from a deprived area to swim is incredible”</p>	<p>“The staff know and care about each child”</p>	<p>“It was closer, but I think it would be ludicrous to reopen with the same management”</p>	<p>“The low-level floor is great for teaching children to swim”</p>	<p>“It’s the only original pool left in Blackburn. We need to support it”</p>

Pool closure

User views on continuing their activities elsewhere



Users were asked if they would continue their activities elsewhere if Daisyfield Pools were to close:

- 47% of users said that if Daisyfield Pools were to close, they would not continue their activities elsewhere
- 21% of users said they would continue their activities elsewhere
- 30% of users were unsure if they would continue elsewhere

138 users stated that they would not continue their activities elsewhere if Daisyfield Pools were to close permanently. Some reasons for this include:

- quality of staff and training
- availability of specialised lessons for children with additional needs
- accessibility of other sites
- crowded nature of other pools in the area
- lack of availability for swimming lessons and other sessions
- fear of the standard of care at other sites
- course availability
- pricing and timing of sessions
- temperature of alternative pools
- lack of awareness of other options

User views on the effect of closure to their ability to access swimming in the future				
"I would have less opportunities to swim"	"I would be unable to continue the sport"	"The lack of activities for children and adults will have an effect on public health"	"It reduces choice and will make the other pools busier and harder to use"	"My daughter will not engage with other places we have tried. She is no longer terrified of water"
"Swimming is the only time I get to interact with people and exercise. It would have a huge effect on my mental health"	"It would knock my child's confidence as she has a set routine at Daisyfield"	"My child will be unable to develop important water safety skills"	"I don't have transport so I would be unlikely to go elsewhere"	"My daughter would lose all the skills she has learned, and her confidence would be knocked"
"There are no lessons available for my young child so if they fall into water, they are likely to drown"	"I would have no job and my children would lose their favourite place in the world"	"We would have to go to Darwen or travel somewhere else"	"My children will not be able to swim and that is a life lesson everyone should know"	"I wouldn't be able to train as a rookie lifeguard"
"There would be no activities for children throughout half term and the summer holidays"	"I would have to go to Blackburn Leisure Centre"	"Children doing school swimming lessons would miss out as there is no room elsewhere in the area"	"My group of ladies and my children could not enjoy the sport of swimming"	"We would be very limited due to parking issues at other sites"
"I don't think I would be comfortable going somewhere else"	"My children would struggle to feel confident with a new teacher in a new pool"	"My children would have no access to rookie lifeguard or the youth leader programme"	"As a family we would probably stop swimming"	"I would lose my confidence in swimming"

<p>“I don’t like communal changing areas so I would need to find somewhere else outside the area”</p>	<p>“I wouldn’t have access to affordable ladies only sessions”</p>	<p>“I wouldn’t be able to go elsewhere as I would have panic attacks”</p>	<p>“It would have a significant impact as I took up swimming to improve my health”</p>	<p>“My children would suffer and possibly not be able to continue their swimming journey”</p>
<p>“We would not be able to provide school swimming lessons”</p>	<p>“I would not be able to swim as much, and my kids wouldn’t have access to swim clubs during the holidays”</p>	<p>“My kids would miss splash camp and wouldn’t be able to swim much as I can’t afford lessons year-round”</p>	<p>“It wouldn’t affect me as I now take my grandson to a BWDBC pool”</p>	<p>“I have a water phobia and anxiety. I don’t know how I would feel going to another swimming pool”</p>
<p>“There’s much less availability for lessons elsewhere”</p>	<p>“It would have a very big impact both individually and on the community as a whole”</p>	<p>“None, I have found an alternative pool that is far cleaner and has working hot showers”</p>	<p>“My children will miss out because they require the more personal touch of a small club”</p>	<p>“There are no ladies only sessions at other pools. They have huge windows and large viewing areas”</p>
<p>“Women’s only sessions elsewhere have male lifeguards and are very busy”</p>	<p>“I am struggling to find lessons for my little boy. Swimming is a life skill and he’s missing out”</p>	<p>“BWDBC has not got enough facilities to deal with the demand”</p>	<p>“People won’t be able to afford swimming lessons elsewhere”</p>	<p>“I would gain weight. I’m already suffering depression because of it”</p>
<p>“I was swimming at Daisyfield twice a week and have only been able to go once a month since”</p>	<p>“I would miss the pool, but Half Fish HQ should not continue to run it. The health and safety issues are horrific”</p>	<p>“It has affected my exercise regime as I have been unable to swim since it’s closed”</p>	<p>“Public transport to Blackburn Leisure Centre is shocking and there’s nothing for children in our area”</p>	<p>“People may not swim again leading to more unhealthy lifestyles and obesity”</p>

User suggestions to avoid closure				
“Open a community gym and sports centre similar to Audley Sports Centre”	“Fix it. Our kids need to be water safe wherever they go. Surely that’s paramount”	“I think the investment is too great unless Heritage England can assist”	“Fund the repairs and reopen the pool. Sell the pool to an interested group”	“Give Half Fish HQ full ownership”
“Build a new pool that would be cheaper to run in the same place”	“Invest in making it safe and reopen”	“Sell the building to Half Fish HQ and help them secure funding to fix the building”	“Close it down”	“Fundraising, sports grants, local authority investment”
“See if any local schools want to take over running it and keep it open to the public”	“The council should monitor the building with more regular inspections”	“Let the staff continue to teach at the Blackburn and Darwen pools”	“Let the community help with a GoFundMe page”	“National Lottery funding”
“Reopen the pool without Half Fish HQ running it”	“As a community we all need to help make the building safe”	“Complete overhaul of the swimming pools, showers and changing rooms”	“Provide some financial support to the building which you own”	“Invest in updating and maintaining the wonderful community assets we already have”
“Repair or build a new centre. There’s the demand for it and it would be a good investment”	“Use some funds to support a valuable asset for the community and our younger generation”	“Look for local businesses to help support it”	“The building is in need of an upgrade to bring it into the modern time”	“I’m a huge advocate for building a new pool in its place”

Local schools

9 local schools submitted official responses.

Why do schools use Daisyfield Pools over other facilities in the area?				
“These days children 100% need water safety skills and the way they teach is amazing”	“Close proximity to the school. Limited impact on missing other curriculum time”	“We have to provide a service, but another good facility is very hard to find”	“We appreciate that the public don’t have access to our children whilst they are swimming there”	“It’s within walking distance which supports exercise, road safety and reduces transport costs”
School views on the effect of closure to their ability to access swimming in the future				
“It’s extremely difficult as there are long waiting lists or no other pools available for our lessons”	“We would have to find an alternative provision. This will affect our successful swim rate of pupils”	“We will now have to pay £2000 for transport”	“It’s difficult to get times that meet our needs. Less availability will make it even harder”	“Our biggest challenge with both Blackburn and Darwen Leisure Centre is that the public can access the baths”
School suggestions to avoid closure				
“BWDBC should invest in the pool and support healthy lifestyles”	“Health and safety issues need to be addressed and money invested to provide an essential facility”	“Community fundraising”	“Use the pool to generate income once the refurbishment has taken place. For example, swimming galas”	“The building should have a yearly maintenance programme, but I understand this comes down to money”

Protected characteristics

Users were asked if closure would affect them due to any of the following characteristics:

- age
- gender
- disability
- ethnicity
- religion or beliefs
- sexual orientation

Responses were received for age, gender, disability, ethnicity and religion and beliefs.

How would closure affect users due to their age?				
"I'm a 70-year-old lady with limited physical ability. Going further afield is not an option for me"	"There are no swimming lessons available for me. I will be an adult by the time I can get a place"	"Young people are going to miss out on the essential skill of being able to swim"	"Closure will remove my ability to fight my advancing age"	"Children are too young to travel all the way to town on foot. They will be in danger and there are no funds for transport"
How would closure affect users due to their gender?				
"Ladies only sessions with female staff poolside"	"I go to the male sessions and my wife goes to the female sessions"	"Female only sessions were easily accessible at Daisyfield"	"There are separate changing rooms at Daisyfield"	"Daisyfield offer women's only sessions. When I have a terrible day, I can still go knowing I will be safe"

How would closure affect users due to their disability?				
“This would hugely affect my autistic daughter. It’s hard for her to interact with people and the support there is fantastic”	“I have osteoporosis, and this is the only place I can comfortably and confidently go swimming in my area”	“My child has ADHD and autism. She needs familiar surroundings. Daisyfield closing will affect her both mentally and emotionally”	“I have mental health problems that going swimming helps with a lot”	“They specialise in teaching people who are water phobic and autistic. I don’t know any other local pools who deal with this”
“I am partially sighted. I know this pool better”	“My son has low muscle tone, and this will be affected by him not being able to swim weekly”	“It would affect my nephew’s autism as he loves to swim only at this leisure centre”	“I do not feel safe in most public buildings as they get overcrowded, and I find it hard to concentrate due to my mental health issues”	“I have a child with multiple disabilities and the staff at Daisyfield are great with him. I’m not confident another facility could provide this”
How would closure affect users due to their ethnicity?				
“I feel uncomfortable swimming around male swimmers so I could not go swimming”	“The diverse group of people make you feel welcome and valued”	“Men should swim separately to women”	“The location is near to many ethnic minorities”	“People use Daisyfield because it’s a community pool. It gives a chance to exercise and socialise”

How would closure affect users due to their religion or beliefs?

<p>“For Muslim women who wear a hijab, it’s a comfortable local pool. We feel respected and safe”</p>	<p>“There’s no discrimination of what we are wearing. It’s good for our self-esteem and wellbeing”</p>	<p>“Other pools don’t have separate changing facilities”</p>	<p>“The staff at Daisyfield are very understanding of my beliefs. They have diverse staff, and it makes for a comforting environment”</p>	<p>“Other swimming pools don’t have male only sessions with male lifeguards or female only sessions with female lifeguards”</p>
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Closing insights

Overall, the Daisyfield Pools consultation was successful in allowing users to voice their views on the closure of the site. Key demographic data showed:

- 71% of responses were received from women
- 70% were from users aged 20-49
- 79% of users resided in BB1 and BB2 postcodes
- 67% of respondents used Daisyfield Pools for swimming lessons
- 66% of users last used Daisyfield Pools within 1 month of the initial closure
- 75% of users travel to Daisyfield Pools by car

Most respondents are unhappy with the closure. Some of the most common reasons for this include:

- there are few other options in the area with the same offering as Daisyfield Pools. Most pools are busier and more costly
- parents are struggling to find swimming lessons for their children without long waiting lists
- other swimming lesson sessions are not tailored to children with additional needs
- there is less availability elsewhere for women's only, men's only and parent and toddler swim sessions. Users also highlighted that these sessions can be uncomfortable at other pools due to the presence of lifeguards of the opposite gender and viewing platforms allowing the public to watch over the pools
- other pools in the area have communal changing facilities
- users will miss the sense of community at Daisyfield Pools

Many users had glowing reviews of the staff from Half Fish HQ and support for the services they provided was good overall. However, several users stated that should the pool reopen, Half Fish HQ should not be in charge due to the serious health and safety violations.

Users suggested avoiding this by sourcing another company to take over the day to day running of the building, or by bringing the pools back under the umbrella of BWDBC leisure. Some users felt the site should be used to build an updated sports centre that would be more sustainable for future generations.

The consensus shows support for Daisyfield Pools and many feel that losing the pools would be a big blow to the local area and the community that resides there. Many users have attended Daisyfield Pools since childhood and believe the building has significance to the history of Blackburn.