

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Gwynedd

Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Gwynedd's annual return, case studies and narrative report submitted to the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government.

1 Executive summary

Gwynedd met all of the 12 core entitlements in full.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Gwynedd achieved 9 in full, and 1 in part.

Gwynedd library service has continued to perform well, with improvements in a number of areas. Attendance at training sessions and activities / events have all increased, reflecting well on the development of service programming, although there are already indications that the service will find it challenging to continue to perform at this level. Despite a decline in some usage indicators, customer satisfaction with the service also remains high. There has been a welcome increase in the materials budget in 2017-18, with the targets here met, and a continuing emphasis on Welsh language provision / resources where the service also leads on all-Wales initiatives. While staffing levels have improved, it is noted that professional staffing may have to be reviewed in the future, – this would be disappointing given the existing challenges posed by limitations on staff capacity, although the emphasis on staff training and development, and protecting frontline services is noted.

- User surveys were completed during 2017 showing continuing high levels of satisfaction. 92% of young people think the library helps them to learn, and 92% of adults (up from 70% in October 2016) believe it has made a difference to their lives.
- Attendance at formal training sessions has improved, and numbers helped by informal training have increased significantly with performance now above the median level. While support for health and well-being is good, it is noted that staff capacity makes some areas of additional provision here challenging.
- The service has improved its events and activities offer in 2017-18, with average attendance per capita now the fourth highest in Wales. Usage levels, in terms of physical visitors, library membership and overall book issues have however declined.
- Increased investment in the book fund has enabled achievement of the acquisitions target; the service continues to perform well in relation to Welsh language provision.
- Staffing is below the stipulated levels, but overall has increased, with professional staff numbers maintained at 2016-17 levels. Indications that professional staffing may have to be reviewed in the future, are however a concern given the challenges already posed by low staff capacity.
- Total revenue expenditure has increased compared to 2016-17, with spending per capita the second highest in Wales.

2 Performance against the standards

The standards framework comprises of core entitlements, quality indicators with targets, quality indicators with benchmarks and impact measures. Section 2 summarises

achievements against these areas. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is provided in Section 3.

2.1 Core entitlements

Gwynedd is meeting all of the 12 core entitlements in full. The service works with a wide range of partners to promote and deliver services, using statistics, local data, and information on library use to inform planning and service development. Services generally are designed to be broad and diverse to meet the needs of the community, with a focus on digital provision, health and well-being information, leisure and social use, and reading and learning. High quality services, resources and cultural activities are also provided through the medium of Welsh, with Gwynedd leading on national initiatives in this area.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Gwynedd is achieving 9 in full, and one in part.

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Support for individual development:		Met in full
a) ICT support	✓	
b) Information literacy and skills training	✓	
c) E-government support	✓	
d) Reader development	✓	
QI 4 (a) Support for health and well-being		Met in full
i) Book Prescription Wales scheme	✓	
ii) Better with Books scheme	✓	
iii) Designated health & well-being collection	✓	
iv) Information about healthy lifestyles and behaviours	✓	
v) Signposting to health & well-being services	✓	
QI 6 all static service points offer events/activities for users with special requirements	✓	Met in full
QI 7 Location of service points	✓	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Met in full
Acquisitions per capita	✓	
or Materials spend per capita	x	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	✓	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	x	
QI 11 Online access:		Met in full
a) i) Public access to Internet	✓	
ii) Wi-Fi provision	✓	
QI 12 Supply of requests		Met in full
a) % of requests satisfied within 7 days	✓	
b) % of requests satisfied within 15 days	✓	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
i) Staff per capita	x	

ii) Qualified staff per capita	x	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	✓	
iv) CPD percentage	✓	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓	Met in full

There has been some improvement over the last year of the fifth framework with QI 3 now met in full, and the target for acquisitions per capita (QI 9) now being achieved.

2.3 Impact measures

The framework includes three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of library use on people's lives. These indicators do not have targets, and authorities are only required to carry out user surveys for QI 1 once over the three-year period of the framework. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during this first year of the framework.

Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Gwynedd completed its user surveys during 2017, with the adult survey split across smaller themed survey exercises, covering IT and Learning, and Health and Welfare.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	92%	4/6	73%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	92%	3/7	38%	90%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	98%	4/17	75%	98%	100%

Authorities are also asked to provide up to four case studies describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year.

Gwynedd provided four such case studies:

- Library Link - a local newspaper shop hosts a 'click and collect' service, users order books remotely, and pick up / return them during shop opening hours. The new community-based service has been positively received with the location a convenient place to meet, shop and talk about books, improving awareness of library services.
- Go Online - weekly group sessions to improve confidence in using computers, and offer specific training to meet individual needs; the sessions have helped one mature couple to feel secure searching for information and shopping online, they now access online services which has saved them money and opened up new options for them.
- LINC Service - impact of the LINC collaboration service sharing resources between public, HE and FE libraries in North Wales, with free access to request items. One part-time student with health issues has benefitted greatly from the service, enabling her to complete her studies, and providing personal contact when she is housebound.
- Macmillan Service - impact of the Macmillan Information and Support Service; supporting people affected by illness and social isolation with a range of free activities in local libraries. For one user it has helped with her confidence, providing supportive social contact and interaction.

2.4 Quality indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets, but allow services to monitor and benchmark their performance over time, in comparison with other authorities. The following table summarises Gwynedd's position for 2017-18. Ranks are included out of 22, where 1 is the highest, and 22 the lowest scoring authority, unless stated otherwise. Indicators where fewer than 22 authorities supplied data are those where relevant data was not available to some authorities. Where possible, figures from the last year of the fifth framework have also been included for comparison; however, in some cases a change in definition or the introduction of additional measures makes comparisons impractical. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2016/17
QI 1 Making a difference						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills:	89%	3/7	24%	83%	94%	44%
c) health and well-being	65%	4/7	33%	65%	95%	37%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	98%	4/7	90%	98%	100%	100%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	89%	6/7	88%	91%	98%	89%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	100%	1/7	93%	99%	100%	100%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	80%	4/6	74%	86%	94%	
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	96%	5/7	93%	97%	99%	98%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.1	2/6	8.5	9.1	9.2	9.3
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	12	20/22	10	32	238	3
c) informal training per capita	295	6/22	15	199	473	1
QI 6 attendances at events per capita						
	419	4/22	82	228	684	148
QI 8 Library use						
a) visits per capita	2,810	19/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	3,076
b) virtual visits per capita	983	9/22	243	866	2,211	862
c) active borrowers per capita	154	11/22	100	154	229	145
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*						
	663	1/22	4	68	663	
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita [^]	8	18/22	5	9	14	9
c) % of available time used by the public	22%	17/22	14%	27%	67%	26%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	8	20/21	3	31	196	8
b) total volunteer hours	300	19/21	40	1,346	11,939	300
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£16,852	2/21	£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	£14,061
b) % on staff,	44%	21/21	44%	63%	75%	52%
% on information resources	11%	12/21	4%	13%	25%	13%
% on equipment and buildings	20%	1/21	0%	4%	20%	20%
% on other operational costs;	24%	7/21	0%	18%	37%	14%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£500	9/20	£0	£338	£17,432	£146

QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.10	6/21	£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	£3.30
QI 16 Opening hours [#]						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.84%	20/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.48%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	1.36%	13/20	0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	0.11%

* per Welsh speaking resident population

[^]per 10,000 resident population

[#] Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.

3 Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators can be divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance under these areas, and compares this performance (where applicable) with the final year of the fifth framework (2016-17).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Gwynedd carried out all its user surveys between May 2017 and February 2018, reporting some areas of improvement on surveys conducted under the fifth framework. Satisfaction levels with the service remain high, with 89% of adults (up from 44%) thinking that the library has helped them develop new skills. All static libraries provide a full range of support for individual development, and good support for health and well-being, although it is noted that the service finds some of the additional provision in terms of health and well-being challenging and difficult to meet satisfactorily due to low staffing levels. There has been a welcome increase in attendance at formal training sessions, although performance is still low in comparative terms. Reported numbers helped by informal training have also risen significantly, with performance here now above the median level.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Gwynedd continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with 13 branches serving what is a relatively sparsely populated county. The service provides events / activities for users with special requirements at all service points, and has improved its offer here more generally, with many more events being held in 2017-18. As a result attendances have improved dramatically, and the average attendance per capita is now the fourth highest in Wales. Usage otherwise has generally fallen on 2016-17, with reductions in numbers of physical visitors, library membership, and book issues. It is noted that visitor figures, which comparatively low, are based on sample surveys and as such are estimates only. Numbers of active borrowers have increased, and children's loans per capita are the third highest in Wales.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

An increase in the book fund in 2017-18 has enabled achievement of the acquisitions target, and QI 9 is now met. The service also continues to meet QI 10, with increased investment here reflecting its strong emphasis on Welsh language provision. Gwynedd records both the highest proportional investment in Welsh language resources, and the highest number of Welsh language issues per capita in Wales, showing how it is meeting the needs of the 65% of its population who speak and read Welsh. The service continues to meet the targets for supply of requests, although figures here only include requests satisfied within the authority, and not those met through arrangements to share stock across the six North Wales authorities. PC provision has fallen on 2016-17, as has ICT

usage, with performances here both below the median level for Wales. The service is continuing to experiment with Wi-Fi provision on its mobile vehicles, issues with connectivity are however affecting service reliability, and it is hoped to put more stable arrangements in place in 2018-19.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staffing levels have increased on 2016-17, and numbers of professional staff have been maintained, although in both areas Gwynedd falls below the target levels. The service notes that it may need to review professional staffing levels in the future, to protect frontline services. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service meets the requirements for staff training and development. The position regarding volunteer use is unchanged, with the service supporting a small number of work experience / placements. It is noted that there is no capacity to support a wider volunteer programme.

Total revenue expenditure has increased compared to 2016-17, with the authority recording the second highest spend per capita on library services in Wales. Aggregate annual opening hours have however fallen, following the closure of four libraries and a reduction in hours at others; the target here is nevertheless still met, and at a comparatively high level.

4 Strategic context

As part of the return authorities are asked to report on how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. Gwynedd outlines how the service is contributing to the Welsh Government cross-cutting themes: Prosperous and secure, Healthy and active, Ambitious and learning, and United and Connected. The service's role in promoting digital inclusion is also noted, and Gwynedd continues to support all-Wales collaborative library schemes, working in close partnership with the other five library services in North Wales.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, the service reports on development under its library strategy 2016-2020. A new staffing structure has been introduced, and there is a service focus on measuring user demand, and reviewing systems / process to improve efficiency. Ensuring staff have up-to-date skills has been identified as a key priority for enabling future service delivery. The end of some external grant-funded schemes is noted as impacting on capacity to provide a full range of services, although the service is exploring further opportunities for partnerships. A new strategy for the service is already being planned for, with potential opportunities including the development of libraries as community hubs.

6 Conclusion

Gwynedd library service has continued to perform well, with improvements in a number of areas. Attendance at training sessions and activities / events have all increased, reflecting well on the development of service programming, although there are already indications that the service will find it challenging to continue to perform at this level. Despite a decline in some usage indicators, customer satisfaction with the service also remains high. There has been a welcome increase in the materials budget in 2017-18, with the targets here met, and a continuing emphasis on Welsh language provision / resources where the

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