

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Newport

Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

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

1 Executive summary

Newport met all of the 12 core entitlements in full.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Newport achieved 7 in full, 1 in part and failed to achieve 2.

Newport library service has generally improved its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, despite continuing low levels of investment. There have been improvements in usage in a number of areas, with attendance at formal training now among the highest per capita in Wales, although comparatively usage levels remain low overall. Customer satisfaction is generally good, with survey results showing improvement in all areas; satisfaction with IT services is however notably lower, a reflection of the limitations on PC provision. Staffing levels remain an area of concern, limiting service capacity, with opening hours among the lowest in Wales. The implementation of the new Neighbourhood Hub model for service provision will see changes to the operation and delivery of services; the impact of these on performance will be seen in future years.

- User surveys for adults and children were completed in March 2018, showing high levels of satisfaction in some areas and scope for development in others. 92% of young people think the library helps them to learn (up from 89% in March 2016), and 85% of adults believe that it has made a difference to their lives (up from 77%).
- All static libraries provide a full range of support for individual development, and good support for health and well-being. Attendance at formal training is now among the highest per capita in Wales; numbers helped by informal training have also improved.
- There has been some improvement in usage levels, with increased attendance at events / activities, and higher numbers of physical visitors, library members and active borrowers. Usage levels are however generally below the median level, and visits per capita remain the lowest in Wales.
- The materials budget has returned to pre 2016-17 levels, while there is a commitment to maintain current levels of investment, the targets here are still not met.
- PC provision is unchanged, with performance here still the lowest in Wales; customer satisfaction with this element of the service is notably lower than in other areas.
- Staffing levels have been maintained, with numbers of professional staff unchanged; total staffing per capita remains the lowest in Wales. Opening hours are also below the stipulated levels.
- Total revenue expenditure has increased compared to 2016-17, although spending per capita remains the lowest 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

Newport is meeting all of the 12 core entitlements in full. The service has community profiles for each of its libraries, which are used to inform planning. Strong links are in place with council colleagues and third-sector organisation to ensure that they are aware of the services on offer, and there is a small marketing budget used to support focused promotional activity during National Libraries Week. Extensive use is also made of the council social media accounts to promote library events and activities. The service is a longstanding member of the Books4U regional scheme and will join the all-Wales LMS in 2018-19. User Surveys are conducted every two years with the results used to inform service development.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Newport is achieving 7 in full, one in part and is failing to achieve 2 of the indicators.

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	Not met
Acquisitions per capita	x
<u>or</u> Materials spend per capita	x
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources	Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	✓
<u>or</u> 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	x	Not met

There has been no change in Newport's performance compared to the last year of the fifth framework for those quality indicators where direct comparisons are possible.

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.

The authority completed its most recent customer survey in March 2018, in line with the framework guidance and CIPFA survey methodology; a total of 1,687 responses were received from adults surveyed, and 565 from young people.

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:	85%	5/7	38%	90%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	97%	11/17	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. Newport provided three such case studies:

- Rainbow Newport – work with the local LGBT+ group on the introduction and branding of a Rainbow collection; the group felt included and represented within the service offer, and the collection has been positively welcomed by the LGBT+ community, providing access and support, and a resource for educating people more widely.
- Newport People First – work with a self-advocacy organisation for people with learning disabilities to support them to use the technology in the library. Staff provided guidance during a series of visits, and the group produced a photo instruction booklet and video to help others. Members of the group are now able to use the library independently, and through the project gained confidence in using the technology.

- Community Focus – one individual’s experience of using the library, demonstrating its impact on local people and the community, through the resources, groups and activities on offer, and as a source of local information and a place to meet friends.

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 Newport’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:	65%	5/7	24%	83%	94%	61%
c) health and well-being	49%	6/7	33%	65%	95%	38%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	96%	5/7	90%	98%	100%	95%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) ‘very good’ or ‘good’ choice of books	91%	4/7	88%	91%	98%	89%
b) ‘very good’ or ‘good’ customer care	97%	6/7	93%	99%	100%	95%
c) ‘very good’ or ‘good’ IT facilities	79%	5/6	74%	86%	94%	76%
d) ‘very good’ or ‘good’ overall;	95%	6/7	93%	97%	99%	92%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.2	1/6	8.5	9.1	9.2	9.4
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	82	4/22	10	32	238	59
c) informal training per capita	113	17/22	15	199	473	148
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	211	12/22	82	228	684	160
QI 8 Library use						
a) visits per capita	2,501	22/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	2,453
b) virtual visits per capita	777	13/22	243	866	2,211	856
c) active borrowers per capita	128	18/22	100	154	229	117
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*	22	20/22	4	68	663	
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita^	5	22/22	5	9	14	5
c) % of available time used by the public	29%	10/22	14%	27%	67%	32%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	47	9/21	3	31	196	41
b) total volunteer hours	1,518	10/21	40	1,346	11,939	1,795
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£7,047	21/21	£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	£6,745

b) % on staff,	57%	16/21	44%	63%	75%	60%
% on information resources	21%	2/21	4%	13%	25%	25%
% on equipment and buildings	14%	3/21	0%	4%	20%	4%
% on other operational costs;	7%	19/21	0%	18%	37%	11%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£0	14/20	£0	£338	£17,432	£0
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£1.59	14/21	£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	£1.93
QI 16 Opening hours [#]						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.03%	12/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.04%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	n/a		0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	n/a

* 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)

Newport carried out both its user surveys (adult and children) in March 2018, reporting improvement on the surveys undertaken in March 2016 under the fifth framework. Satisfaction levels with the service are generally high, although with a notable dip in relation to IT facilities. All static libraries provide a full range of support for individual development, and good support for health and well-being, with the library service awarded Dementia Friendly status. Attendance at formal training has increased by over 40% on 2016-17, and is now among the highest in Wales; 97% of those surveyed indicated that this training had helped them achieve their goals. Numbers helped by means of informal training have also improved over the period.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Newport continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, and activities / events for users with special requirements are provided at all static libraries. Attendance levels for events and activities organised by the library have continue to increase in 2017-18 and are now close to the median level. Physical visits, library membership and numbers of active borrowers have also increased, although visitor numbers remain the lowest per capita in Wales. Performance in relation to use of materials is mixed, with increases in children's borrowing and electronic downloads, but a decrease in the number of adult book issues – usage here is also generally below the median level.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

The materials budget has fallen, as expected following a one-off investment in 2016-17, but there is a commitment from the council to maintain the budget at current levels. While the service was able to sustain acquisition levels, these still fall below the stipulated requirements and QI 9 is not met as result. Proportionally, investment in children's resources and materials in the Welsh language has been maintained, and QI 10 is still met. Performance in relation to supply of requests (QI 12) also meets the target levels,

with some evidence of improvement. PC provision is unchanged, with the number of PCs per capita still the lowest in Wales, and satisfaction with this element of the service notably lower than in other areas. There has been a slight drop in ICT usage, a trend also observed in most other library services.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Staffing has broadly been maintained at 2016-17 levels, with numbers of professional staff unchanged. Overall staff numbers per capita are still the lowest in Wales, and this remains an area of concern for service development and capacity. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service is meeting the requirements in relation to staff training and development. While the number of volunteers working with the service has increased, their total contribution has fallen, with some 47 volunteers each contributing around 32 hours. All volunteers are given an induction in to the service and receive appropriate training for their role.

Total revenue expenditure has increased compared to 2016-17, although the average investment in library services per capita remains the lowest in Wales. Opening hours have also increased slightly, reflecting a review of the hours at two branch libraries, although performance is still some way below the stipulated levels.

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. Newport reported on the alignments between its Library Strategy 2017-2020, the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, and 'Taking Wales Forward', identifying six key priorities for the service. The narrative shows how the service is delivering against these strategic aims: supporting literacy; digital inclusion; health and well-being; access to information; and service improvement and efficiency.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Newport notes its continuing focus on developing partnerships both within the council and more widely. The need to innovate and work efficiently, making use of technology to meet changing customer demand, is also noted. Developments for the coming year are focused around the implementation of a Neighbourhood Hub model, of which library services will form an integral part.

6 Conclusion

Newport library service has generally improved its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, despite continuing low levels of investment. There have been improvements in usage in a number of areas, with attendance at formal training now among the highest per capita in Wales, although comparatively usage levels remain low overall. Customer satisfaction is generally good, with survey results showing improvement in all areas; satisfaction with IT services is however notably lower, a reflection of the limitations on PC provision. Staffing levels remain an area of concern, limiting service capacity, with opening hours among the lowest in Wales. The implementation of the new Neighbourhood Hub model for service provision will see changes to the operation and delivery of services; the impact of these on performance will be seen in future years.