

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Denbighshire

## Annual Assessment Report 2018/19

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

### 1 Executive summary

Denbighshire is now meeting all of the 12 core entitlements in full.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Denbighshire achieved 8 in full, 1 in part and did not achieve 1.

Denbighshire library service has continued to build on its strengths in the second year of the sixth framework, providing a detailed and thorough return with evidence of careful planning. Performance in relation to training provision and attendance at events and activities remains high, with an increased emphasis on partnership working reflecting the strategic aim for libraries to become focal points for accessing a wide range of community services. Library closures for refurbishment remain a factor influencing physical usage levels, but numbers accessing digital services have improved. Budget pressures have seen expenditure on the service fall again in 2018/19, but the service has planned carefully to target savings on areas that do not affect direct customer service. The impact of a refreshed strategic focus on workforce development and volunteering can also be seen, with a new Library Strategy 2019-22 under consultation. Adequate resourcing will however be key to ensuring that the service can maintain and build on its achievements and continue to deliver effectively for its communities.

- All static service points continue to provide a full range of support for individual development, and for health and well-being.
- Attendance at pre-arranged user training sessions has continued to improve, and the numbers helped by informal training have also increased, with performance here now the highest per capita in Wales.
- Attendance at library events has also improved further in 2018/19, reflecting an increase in partnership working as part of an enhanced community service offer.
- Other usage figures have fallen slightly, attributed to the planned closure of one library as part of Denbighshire's library refurbishment programme, although e-downloads have increased significantly.
- Investment in Welsh language resources remains high, with the service recording the highest level of Welsh language issues per capita.
- Overall staffing levels have fallen slightly in 2018/19, although numbers of professional staff have increased with all professional / managerial roles now filled by appropriately qualified staff. While the targets here are not met, a Workforce Strategy is now in place with a renewed emphasis on staff development and professional training.
- Total revenue expenditure has fallen further on 2017/18, but expenditure per capita remains just above the median level.

## 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

Denbighshire now meets all of the 12 core entitlements in full, with the publication of its draft Library Strategy 2019-22, although it is noted that the final version is subject to stakeholder and public consultation. The service has a refreshed commitment to professionalise its workforce, ensuring that it has access to the skills and knowledge necessary to support library use. Links with health and well-being partners have also been prioritised to widen the range of services, activities and resources available in this area.

### 2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Denbighshire is achieving 8 in full, 1 in part and does not achieve 1 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	
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	✓	
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 a slight improvement to Denbighshire's performance in 2018/19 with the service meeting both the acquisition targets for QI 10.

## 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 2017/18 or 2018/19. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Denbighshire completed its adult user survey in November 2018; it is noted that the methodology utilised online forms, and that as such the results may not be directly comparable with those from the fifth framework. The authority has still to undertake a children's survey within the current framework.

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:	n/a		60%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	78%	14/15	38%	88%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	94%	=13/20	80%	97%	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. Denbighshire provided three such case studies:

- Removing Barriers – the value of the library space to one disabled user, as a place which offers her independence, social contact, and access to information and reading for enjoyment. Her feedback places particular importance on the support she receives from library staff, and their flexibility in removing potential barriers to access for her.
- Autism Support – library spaces providing a familiar and safe community environment for delivery of the North Wales Integrated Autism Service, including drop-in sessions, individual appointments, and wider well-being and community events.
- Supporting Older People – working with local Community Navigators to support older people to access the Home Library Service. For one older lady with limiting health conditions the introduction to the service has opened up a new world of audio resources; other feedback refers to the vital service provided, the importance of audiobooks, and the valuable contribution of service staff.

## 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 Denbighshire's position for 2018/19. 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. Figures from the first year of the sixth framework or relevant previous surveys have also been included for comparison. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2017/18
QI 1 Making a difference						[Framework 5]
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	55%	14/15	24%	82%	96%	58%
c) health and well-being	44%	14/15	33%	62%	94%	58%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	93%	14/15	90%	97%	100%	93%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						[Framework 5]
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	82%	13/14	81%	91%	98%	90%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	96%	12/14	93%	99%	100%	98%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	65%	13/13	65%	91%	95%	
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	94%	=12/14	93%	97%	99%	98%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a		8.5	9.3	9.5	8.7
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	28	=13/22	13	30	208	23
c) informal training per capita	433	1/22	15	199	433	385
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	370	6/22	91	295	689	335
QI 8 Library use <sup>1</sup>						
a) visits per capita	4,216*	8/22	2,596	3,969	7,170*	4,321
b) virtual visits per capita	1,318	6/22	345	885	2,205	1,255
c) active borrowers per capita	192	5/22	58	150	251	202
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita <sup>2</sup>	1,424	1/22	95	602	1,424	1,462
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita <sup>3</sup>	10	10/22	5	10	14	10
c) % of available time used by the public	23%	13/22	14%	25%	63%	25%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	44	8/21	3	30	214	28
b) total volunteer hours	1,326	14/21	90	1,477	9,806	529
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£12,361	10/22	£7,181	£12,145	£19,449	£14,073
b) % on staff,	61%	12/22	47%	62%	78%	60%
% on information resources	11%	15/22	8%	13%	21%	9%
% on equipment and buildings	5%	9/22	0.4%	4%	25%	7%
% on other operational costs	23%	9/22	0.3%	16%	37%	24%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£5,740	3/22	£0	£467	£8,829	£2,699
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£1.80	12/22	£1.18	£1.82	£2.52	£1.92

<sup>1</sup> figures for co-located services are marked with an asterisk; performances for these services are likely to reflect higher footfall, and will not therefore be directly comparable with stand-alone library provision <sup>2</sup> per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population; figures from 2017/18 reports corrected following a calculation error <sup>3</sup> per 10,000 resident population

QI 16 Opening hours <sup>4</sup>						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	=1/22	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	=1/20	0.00%	0.28%	7.99%	0.00%

<sup>4</sup> 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 with the first year of the sixth framework (2017/18).

#### 3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Denbighshire completed its adult user survey in November 2018, although it is noted that the methodology employed used online forms and targeted a wider response base, and that the findings may not therefore be directly comparable to those obtained under the fifth framework. Figures for customer satisfaction are still at a high level, although noticeably lower for IT provision, with the authority still to undertake a children's survey within the current framework. All static libraries continued to provide the full range of support for individual development and health and well-being, although the survey methodology produced lower results here than might have been expected. Attendance at pre-arranged user training sessions has continued to improve, and the numbers helped by informal training have also increased (a reflection of the growth in demand for staff help with IT), with performance here now the highest per capita in Wales.

#### 3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Denbighshire continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, and provides events / activities for users with special requirements at all static libraries. Overall attendance levels at library events have also improved further in 2018/19, reflecting an increase in partnership working as part of an enhanced community service offer. Although figures for many other areas of library use have fallen on 2017/18 this can in part be attributed to the temporary closure of one service point (over a 3 month period). In common with most other authorities in Wales virtual visits have risen, as have electronic downloads, where the service has seen a 61% increase in usage.

#### 3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)<sup>i</sup>

Expenditure on resources has increased in 2018/19, with the resources budget fully spent, although neither acquisitions target under QI 9 is met. Investment in Welsh language resources has also increased, with all requirements for QI 10 met, and performance here reflected in the number of issues for Welsh language material, which are now the highest per capita in Wales. PC provision has increased slightly on 2017/18, but with usage falling by a small margin, however it is noted that usage levels are substantially higher in branches serving more densely populated areas. Requirements in relation to supply of requests, now reported within the authority rather than across North Wales, are fully met.

#### 3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staffing levels have fallen slightly in 2018/19 with budget pressures seeing the deletion of some posts and some voluntary reductions in working hours. Professional staffing has however increased, with all relevant posts now filled by qualified staff; in neither case are the targets here met. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service is

meeting the requirements in relation to time allocated for professional development, and at a higher level, with the implementation of its Workforce Strategy and a renewed emphasis on professional training. The service has also seen an increase in volunteer contributions over 2018/19, in line with its Volunteering Strategy, with 44 individuals each contributing an average of over 30 hours to the service.

Total revenue expenditure has fallen further on 2017/18, reflecting budget pressures, although expenditure per capita remains just above the median level. It is noted that the service has planned carefully to target savings on areas that do not impact on direct customer service. Aggregate annual opening hours have continued to increase, with no disruption to the static or home service.

## **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. Denbighshire's narrative reiterates its contribution to a range of relevant strategic priorities including: early years and literacy; housing; social care; mental health; skills and employability; Welsh language support; and community resilience. New developments in relation to the role of the service in supporting the authority's Dementia Action Plan are referenced.

## **5 Future direction**

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, the service's contribution to delivering Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 is again noted. Associated activities and developments from the Customer Communication and Marketing Service Business Plan are referenced, including: further development of the health and well-being offer, the implementation of a communications and marketing strategy, and delivery of volunteering and workforce development strategies. Plans to review the Home Library Service, to maximise support for vulnerable adults, and to further develop library facilities through the Library Lounge concept are also outlined, alongside a commitment to the delivery of the new Library Strategy 2019-22.

## **6 Conclusion**

Denbighshire library service has continued to build on its strengths in the second year of the sixth framework, providing a detailed and thorough return with evidence of careful planning. Performance in relation to training provision and attendance at events and activities remains high, with an increased emphasis on partnership working reflecting the strategic aim for libraries to become focal points for accessing a wide range of community services. Library closures for refurbishment remain a factor influencing physical usage levels, but numbers accessing digital services have improved. Budget pressures have seen expenditure on the service fall again in 2018/19, but the service has planned carefully to target savings on areas that do not affect direct customer service. The impact of a refreshed strategic focus on workforce development and volunteering can also be seen, with a new Library Strategy 2019-22 under consultation. Adequate resourcing will however be key to ensuring that the service can maintain and build on its achievements and continue to deliver effectively for its communities.

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<sup>i</sup> E-resources purchased through centrally-funded subscriptions have been excluded from acquisitions figures for Q1 9 in 2018/19 to ensure that the standard accurately reflects individual authority strategy, investment and performance. In some cases this has impacted on achievement against the standard in comparison with 2017/18. CIPFA Statistics Returns continue to include figures for centrally-procured resources.