

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Gwynedd

Annual Assessment Report 2018/19

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, and is one of only four authorities to achieve at this level.

Gwynedd has maintained strong performances in this second year of the sixth framework. It has continued to develop its training offer, and programming for events and activities, although a reduction in activity supported by key partnerships is apparent. Other indicators of library use have broadly been maintained, with improvements in most areas, but a continuing decline in book issues. There have been reductions to the book fund in 2018/19, but the service still achieves the acquisition targets, with a continued emphasis on its Welsh language provision. Gwynedd also leads on a number of all-Wales Welsh language initiatives. While staffing remains below the target levels, the service notes that it will continue to invest in the professional / personal development of staff, and to foster and develop its work with a range of partners. This work is supported by a strong focus on consulting with users and responding to identified needs, but adequate resourcing will be key to ensuring that the service can capitalise on its careful planning and progress made.

- User surveys (reissued annually) show continued high levels of customer satisfaction. Four case studies demonstrate the difference the service makes to people's lives.
- Take-up of formal and informal training has continued to improve, reflecting the positive impact of partnership working to deliver in this area. Numbers helped by informal training are now the fifth highest per capita in Wales.
- Provision for events and activities has been impacted by a reduction in support from key partner schemes, however on a like-for-like basis the service has increased footfall at library-led activity. Library use in most other areas has seen some improvement, although book issues continue to decline.
- The service continues to meet its overall and Welsh language acquisition targets, despite a reduction in the book fund in 2018/19.
- Staffing remains below the stipulated targets, with a small drop in overall staffing levels, and professional staff numbers maintained at 2017/18 levels.
- Total revenue expenditure has fallen by some margin in 2018/19, although the authority continues to invest in the service from its capital budget.

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 meets all of the 12 core entitlements in full. Regular user surveys, refreshed annually, are used with statistics and other feedback to ensure that the service meets the demands and needs of local people. Strong partnerships support the delivery and promotion of services, addressing areas such as employability, health, and education. Gwynedd also continues to provide access to high quality services, resources and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh, leading on national initiatives in this area. While CE 6 is fully awarded again in 2018/19 it is noted that there are published charges for items new to stock; it is understood that these charges are not routinely applied but some clarification of the published charging policy in this area would be appropriate for users.

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

Gwynedd has maintained its performance in this second year of the sixth framework, with no significant change on 2017/18.

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.

Gwynedd completes its surveys on an annual cycle, with activity split across three adult surveys, covering IT and Learning, Health and Welfare, and Customer Care, and a children's survey. Figures are therefore updated annually.

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:	97%	=1/13	60%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	91%	5/15	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.

Gwynedd provided four detailed case studies:

- Supporting LGBT Collections – work with local LGBT groups to establish dedicated collections in Caernarfon and Bangor Libraries. The resources have generally been positively received, and the service is better able to meet the diverse needs of its users, promote inclusion, and support initiatives such as LGBT history month.
- Clwb Darllen Difyr – working with a local bookshop to promote books and reading for children, by establishing a new Welsh-medium reading club. The club now meets monthly at the bookshop with ongoing support from library staff. Participants have been supported to read more in Welsh and try different books, to make new friends, and grow in confidence in sharing their views and opinions.
- Home Digital Support Service – an extension to the Mobile Home Delivery Service, providing digital support for older and vulnerable people who rely on technology as a means of engaging with the outside world. The service helped one older gentleman set up his new internet box, and connect devices, while providing him with information on the range of digital services provided by the library – this was critical for him in maintaining links with family and accessing media and services.
- Supporting Individuals with Learning Disabilities – working with a Day Centre for adults with profound needs to provide Sensory Story sessions, helping to improve attendee's engagement, well-being and happiness.

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 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						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	96%	1/15	24%	82%	96%	89%
c) health and well-being	57%	=11/15	33%	62%	94%	65%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	99%	=2/15	90%	97%	100%	98%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	90%	11/14	81%	91%	98%	89%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	100%	=1/14	93%	99%	100%	100%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	91%	=4/13	65%	91%	95%	80%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	98%	=4/14	93%	97%	99%	96%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.5	=1/13	8.5	9.3	9.5	9.1
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	31	11/22	13	30	208	12
c) informal training per capita	335	5/22	15	199	433	295
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	281	13/22	91	295	689	419
QI 8 Library use ¹						
a) visits per capita	2,900	20/22	2,596	3,969	7,170*	2,810
b) virtual visits per capita	1,083	8/22	345	885	2,205	983
c) active borrowers per capita	156	10/22	58	150	251	154
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita ²	1,159	3/22	95	602	1,424	1,118
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita ³	8	17/22	5	10	14	8
c) % of available time used by the public	20%	17/22	14%	25%	63%	22%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	5	20/21	3	30	214	8
b) total volunteer hours	676	18/21	90	1,477	9,806	300
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£14,440	6/22	£7,181	£12,145	£19,449	£16,852
b) % on staff,	48%	21/22	47%	62%	78%	44%
% on information resources	12%	13/22	8%	13%	21%	11%
% on equipment and buildings	5%	10/22	0.4%	4%	25%	20%
% on other operational costs	34%	2/22	0.3%	16%	37%	24%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£448	12/22	£0	£467	£8,829	£500
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£1.99	7/22	£1.18	£1.82	£2.52	£2.10

¹ 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 ² per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population; figures from 2017/18 reports corrected following a calculation error ³ per 10,000 resident population

QI 16 Opening hours ⁴						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.17%	20/22	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.84%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	=1/20	0.00%	0.28%	7.99%	1.36%

⁴ 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)

Gwynedd updated its surveys between May 2018 and February 2019, reporting a number of areas of improvement when compared with 2017/18. All static libraries continue to provide the full range of support for individual development, and good support for health and well-being, with a wider range of additional services provided in more service points. There has been a continuing increase in attendance at formal training sessions, with performance now at the median level, reflecting partnership working with Gwynedd Family History Society and Remploy. Numbers helped by informal training (primarily providing IT / digital support) have also risen further and are now fifth highest in Wales.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Gwynedd continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with mobile and home services critical to ensuring that access is available in the more rural parts of the county. The service provides events and activities for users with special requirements at all its main service points, but a reduction in activity under the Fusion scheme, and the cessation of the Macmillan Health and Well-being scheme, has impacted on overall event attendance. It is noted however, that on a like-for-like basis (discounting attendances under these schemes), the service actually reached more people through its library activities than it did in 2017/18. Library use in other areas has generally improved, except for book issues which have reduced further in 2018/19; children's loans per capita nevertheless remain the third highest in Wales.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)ⁱ

The service continues to meet the acquisitions target for QI 9, despite a reduction in the book fund (although this may be linked to the fall in book issues), and the requirements for Welsh language acquisitions (QI 10) are also met, if at a lower level. Gwynedd nevertheless continues to record one of the highest proportional spends on Welsh language resources, in meeting the needs of its population, with Welsh language issues also still among the highest in Wales. The service achieves the targets for supply of requests, reporting requests satisfied within the authority in common with other North Wales services. PC provision has been maintained at 2017/18 levels, although usage has fallen, with performances here both below the median level for Wales. All mobile vehicles now have Wi-Fi provision, but there remain issues with connectivity in some areas.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staffing levels have fallen slightly, and although numbers of professional staff have been maintained, Gwynedd does not meet the target levels in either area. Qualified

leadership is in place, and the service continues to meet the requirements for staff training and development. Volunteers contribute mostly through partnership arrangements, with the service directly supporting only 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 fallen by some margin in 2018/19, although the authority continues to invest in the service from its capital budget. Aggregate annual opening hours have been maintained at 2017/18 levels, with minimal disruption to planned services.

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 a wide range of library activities and initiatives which support the Welsh Government cross-cutting themes: Prosperous and secure, Healthy and active, Ambitious and learning, and United and connected. Work to promote and support digital inclusion is also noted, as is Gwynedd's role in coordinating all-Wales and regional collaborative library schemes, particularly in the area of Welsh language.

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. In 2018/19 this has involved embedding various initiatives, such as the introduction of self-service machines, and the 'Ffordd Gwynedd' approach to service delivery. Going forward the service notes that it will continue to invest in the professional / personal development of staff, alongside work to maintain and foster working partnerships, building on existing relationships with a range of groups and services. Health and Well-being and Adult Learning are identified as key priority areas for improvement and development, working with these partners. Plans to develop the role of the library service as a community hub for information that will drive local regeneration are also highlighted.

6 Conclusion

Gwynedd has maintained strong performances in this second year of the sixth framework. It has continued to develop its training offer, and programming for events and activities, although a reduction in activity supported by key partnerships is apparent. Other indicators of library use have broadly been maintained, with improvements in most areas, but a continuing decline in book issues. There have been reductions to the book fund in 2018/19, but the service still achieves the acquisition targets, with a continued emphasis on its Welsh language provision. Gwynedd also leads on a number of all-Wales Welsh language initiatives. While staffing remains below the target levels, the service notes that it will continue to invest in the professional / personal development of staff, and to foster and develop its work with a range of partners. This work is supported by a strong focus on consulting with users and responding to identified needs, but adequate resourcing will be key to ensuring that the service can capitalise on its careful planning and progress made.

ⁱ 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.