

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Newport

## Annual Assessment Report 2018/19

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 did not achieve 2.

Newport library service has continued to see some improvements in its performance in the second year of the sixth framework, but generally from a low user base. Training provision remains an area of strength, with attendance at formal training among the highest per capita in Wales. The low level of resourcing of the service impacts on other aspects of service performance however, and must remain an area of concern, with Newport recording the lowest overall staffing levels and revenue expenditure per capita in Wales. Effective planning, and good management help mitigate resource constraints to some extent, but there is an inevitable impact on capacity in terms of opening hours, which effects performance against usage indicators, where visitor numbers are still the lowest in Wales, despite improvements. The implementation of the new Neighbourhood Hub model for service provision may impact positively here, as the authority looks to improve access across a range of services.

- All static libraries provide full support for individual development, and good support for health and well-being; the service is now an accredited Autism Aware organisation.
- Take-up of training (formal and informal) has improved further in 2018/19; 100% of those surveyed felt this training had helped them achieve their goals.
- Attendance at events / activities has improved significantly in 2018/19, and higher numbers of physical visitors and book issues are also reported. Usage generally remains below the median level, with visits per capita still the lowest in Wales.
- The materials budget was underspent in 2018/19, reflecting the transition to the all-Wales LMS. While overall acquisition targets are still not met, the service continues to achieve the requirements in relation to Welsh language resources.
- PC provision is unchanged, with performance here again the lowest in Wales, although it is noted that the service has invested in new equipment in 2018/19, and that usage levels do not point to a need for greater provision.
- Staffing, including numbers of professional staff, has been maintained at 2017/18 levels, however total staffing per capita is still the lowest in Wales, and neither of the staffing targets are met. Opening hours are also well below the median level, with only one other authority offering lower provision per capita.
- Total revenue expenditure has increased compared to 2017/18, but with spending per capita again 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 continues to meet all of the 12 core entitlements in full, with an effective approach to provision in all areas. The service makes good use of both local socio-economic data, and direct user feedback in planning for services, and continues to work closely with internal colleagues and external partners. The service joined the all-Wales LMS in February 2019 and is keen to support its use as a tool for greater collaborative working amongst Welsh library authorities.

### 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 does not 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	
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	x	Not met

There has been a small change in Newport's performance in 2018/19, with both the indicators for QI 10 now met.

## 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.

The authority completed its user surveys (adult and children) in March 2018.

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%	8/13	60%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	85%	12/15	38%	88%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	100%	=1/20	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. Newport provided three such case studies:

- Newport MIND – the benefits of Spoken Word poetry workshops for young people from a local mental health charity. Participants found this a powerful and inspiring opportunity to talk about mental health, and are now confident in making wider use of the library and its resources in their campaign work. Work created through the workshops has been published and performed at the Senedd and St Fagans.
- Combating Social Exclusion – the importance of the local library for one older lady, as a social destination, supporting her love of reading, and as a hub for village activities.
- Digital Skills and Self-Confidence – the impact of attending digital sessions at the library for one user with mental health issues. She is now able to use a computer with confidence, and attending the sessions has improved her self-reliance and positivity about what she can do and achieve.

## 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 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	65%	11/15	24%	82%	96%	61%
c) health and well-being	49%	13/15	33%	62%	94%	38%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	96%	=11/15	90%	97%	100%	95%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					[Framework 5]	
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	91%	=6/14	81%	91%	98%	89%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	97%	11/14	93%	99%	100%	95%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	79%	9/13	65%	91%	95%	76%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	95%	11/14	93%	97%	99%	92%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.2	8/13	8.5	9.3	9.5	9.4
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	106	3/22	13	30	208	82
c) informal training per capita	137	=14/22	15	199	433	113
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	291	12/22	91	295	689	211
QI 8 Library use <sup>1</sup>						
a) visits per capita	2,596	22/22	2,596	3,969	7,170*	2,501
b) virtual visits per capita	672	14/22	345	885	2,205	777
c) active borrowers per capita	119	16/22	58	150	251	128
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita <sup>2</sup>	337	18/22	95	602	1,424	330
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita <sup>3</sup>	5	22/22	5	10	14	5
c) % of available time used by the public	29%	9/22	14%	25%	63%	29%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	33	10/21	3	30	214	47
b) total volunteer hours	2,391	5/21	90	1,477	9,806	1,518
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£7,181	22/22	£7,181	£12,145	£19,449	£7,047
b) % on staff,	58%	14/22	47%	62%	78%	57%
% on information resources	19%	4/22	8%	13%	21%	21%
% on equipment and buildings	16%	2/22	0.4%	4%	25%	14%
% on other operational costs	7%	20/22	0.3%	16%	37%	7%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£1,646	8/22	£0	£467	£8,829	£0
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£1.60	13/22	£1.18	£1.82	£2.52	£1.59
QI 16 Opening hours <sup>4</sup>						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.05%	18/22	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.03%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	n/a		0.00%	0.28%	7.99%	n/a

<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.

<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)**

Newport carried out both its user surveys (adult and children) in March 2018, meeting the requirements of the sixth framework, and with evidence from the surveys being used to secure investment in new IT equipment across all sites in 2018/19. All static libraries continue to provide a full range of support for individual development, and good support for health and well-being, and the service has now been accredited as an Autism Aware organisation. Attendance at formal training has continued to increase and remains among the highest per capita in Wales; 100% of those surveyed in 2018/19 indicated that this training had helped them achieve their goals. Numbers helped by means of informal training have also continued to improve 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. The service has made a concerted effort to increase its programme of events and activities in 2018/19, and attendance levels have risen as a result, with performance now very close to the median level. Physical visits have also increased slightly on 2017/18, but remain the lowest per capita in Wales. Book issues for both adults and children have risen, as have numbers of electronic downloads (in common with most other library authorities). The changeover to the all-Wales LMS system has affected virtual visits however, and reported library membership has also fallen following a full cleanse of the membership database.

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

Expenditure on materials has continued to fall in 2018/19, but it is noted that this reflects the impact of the move to the all-Wales LMS, with acquisitions suspended for a 6 week period, leading to a budget underspend. Efficiencies were also implemented in spending on electronic resources, with the service joining the all-Wales Borrowbox scheme. Acquisition of physical items actually increased over the period, but overall acquisitions remain below the target levels for QI 9. Investment in Welsh language resources has also fallen, but proportionally the target here is still met, and a correction to the associated population figure, means that the service also meets the expenditure target for QI 10. The service continues to meet the requirements for supply of requests, and PC provision is unchanged. While provision here remains the lowest in Wales, the service believes it is sufficient for current usage, which has been maintained (at 29%) at 2017/18 levels.

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

Staffing has been maintained at 2017/18 levels, with numbers of professional staff unchanged, and overall staff numbers per capita still the lowest in Wales; in neither case are the target levels met. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service continues to meet the requirements in relation to staff training and development, and at an improved level. The number of volunteers working with the service has fallen in 2018/19, but hours contributed have risen, with some 33 volunteers each giving over 72 hours to the service.

Total revenue expenditure has increased again in 2018/19, although the average investment in library services per capita remains the lowest in Wales. Opening hours are unchanged with performance here also well below the median 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. Newport continues to report on the alignments between its Library Strategy 2017-2020 and wider Welsh Government priorities, referencing a range of continuing activities supporting reading and literacy, digital inclusion, and health and well-being. Particular developments in 2018/19 include the adoption and promotion of the bilingual 'Learn My Way' online training resource, accreditation as an Autism Aware organisation, and continued collaborative working with the local implementation of the all-Wales Library Management System.

## **5 Future direction**

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Newport notes that 2019/20 will be a year of significant change with the implementation of the Neighbourhood Hubs project. This will see the introduction of a new cross-sector management model, improving access for residents across a range of services. The new model will offer a range of opportunities for the library services to work more actively within its local communities, and to contribute to multi-agency teams. Professional oversight of the library service will be maintained, as the current operational manager retains responsibility for the strategic direction of the service, and there are no plans to reduce the number of library service points under the new arrangements.

## **6 Conclusion**

Newport library service has continued to see some improvements in its performance in the second year of the sixth framework, but generally from a low user base. Training provision remains an area of strength, with attendance at formal training among the highest per capita in Wales. The low level of resourcing of the service impacts on other aspects of service performance however, and must remain an area of concern, with Newport recording the lowest overall staffing levels and revenue expenditure per capita in Wales. Effective planning, and good management help mitigate resource constraints to some extent, but there is an inevitable impact on capacity in terms of opening hours, which effects performance against usage indicators, where visitor numbers are still the lowest in Wales, despite improvements. The implementation of the new Neighbourhood Hub model for service provision may impact positively here, as the authority looks to improve access across a range of services.

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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.