

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Pembrokeshire County Council

Annual Assessment Report 2019/20

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Pembrokeshire's annual return, case studies and narrative report submitted to the Culture and Sport Division of the Welsh Government.

1 Executive summary

Pembrokeshire met 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and one in part.

Of the 9 quality indicators which have targets, Pembrokeshire achieved 7 in full, 1 in part and did not achieve 1.

Pembrokeshire has continued to perform well during 2019/20. Continuing high levels of satisfaction, shown through survey results demonstrate that the services provided by Pembrokeshire libraries are appreciated by people in the community. Pembrokeshire, in contrast to a number of other services has seen increases in visitor figures, adult and children's book issues and opening hours. However, comparatively usage remains below the median level. There is a strong commitment to health and wellbeing, and overall the broad range of activities has been sustained, and there is a continued focus on improving and developing services in the future. The continuing success of Pembrokeshire's partnership with the National Library of Wales should also be noted and continues to be a significant achievement for the authority.

- Customer satisfaction and user impact figures continue to be high, among children and adults
- Physical visits have increased by 40% since 2017/18 and are now well above the median levels in Wales. Much of this is due to the new Riverside library in Haverfordwest.
- There have been increases in adult and children's book issues, against the trend, but usage is still below the median level.
- There has been a decrease in the materials budget of 29% since 2017/18, due to the need to make savings (and following the temporary additional investment for the Riverside library), and the acquisitions targets (QI 9) continue to be unmet.
- Although there has been a small temporary increase in overall staffing hours, along with most other library services in Wales, neither the total staffing nor professional staffing levels meet the target in 2019/20.
- Opening hours have increased due to an increase in opening hours in Haverfordwest Riverside library and there has been a 4.6% increase since 2017/18.

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. The assessment has been limited to some degree by the fact that

local authorities were only asked to comment on any changes to the previous year's return, alongside additional commentary on of partially/not met core entitlements.

2.1 Core entitlements

Pembrokeshire continues to meet 11 of the 12 Core Entitlements in full and partially meets 1. An administrative fee for reservations is charged to users, to cover the costs of transferring requested titles to the reader's choice of library. This is counter to the principle of free access as outlined in CE 6, which is therefore awarded as partial achievement. It is noted that Pembrokeshire, in common with a small number of other authorities, does not have access to a regional Inter-Library Loan scheme to otherwise reduce costs in this area.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Due to the impact of Covid-19, three quality indicators have been removed for the 2019/20 reporting year, five, six and fifteen, of which number six had a constituent target. Of the **nine** remaining targets for 2019-20 Pembrokeshire achieved 7 in full, 1 in part and did 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 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	√	

Quality Indicator	Met?	
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	√	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	√	Met in full

Pembrokeshire has maintained its performance in this third year of the sixth framework, with no significant change on 2018/19.

Pembrokeshire oversees three community managed libraries which are included within their annual return, according to the guidance issued.

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. However, this measure has been affected by Covid-19 and some authority plans to undertake a survey in the first quarter of 2020 were cancelled. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during framework 6. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Pembrokeshire completed its adult and children's user survey in March 2020 and have provided figures for this, the most recent survey undertaken during the three year framework. Pembrokeshire undertakes surveys of both adults and children once each year.

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%	=1/19	60%	90%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	95%	=2/19	41%	85%	99%

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. Pembrokeshire provided two such case studies:

- Sensory toy library – an opportunity for local children with additional needs to borrow toys and sensory equipment. Feedback from customers demonstrates the impact of the creation of this library on users through improving the wellbeing of children to enabling parents to try before they buy. Although usage has been fairly small, there are plans for further promotion in the near future.
- Programme of talks – an annual programme of talks at Pembroke Dock library. This initiative is a series of talks by local authors, experts and local historians. This has had a number of benefits including the promotion of library stock, an opportunity for the local community to learn about the local area and feedback has been very positive, with a total of 119 people attending the evening talks.

2.4 Quality indicators and benchmarks

Whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain challenging to all library services in Wales, staff resilience, professionalism and care for the community they serve has been outstanding. Although digital services have increased, we know from evidence provided that customers are missing their library services. They are missing the staff, browsing the shelves, IT provision, community spaces and groups such as knit and natter. The importance of the library as a physical place and the impact on the wellbeing of their customers through interaction with library staff cannot be underestimated.

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 Pembrokeshire's position for 2019/20. 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 second 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	2018/19
QI 1 Making a difference						[Framework 6]
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	90%	=4/18	25%	75%	94%	88%
c) health and well-being	96%	1/19	38%	69%	96%	94%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	98%	=5/19	90%	96%	100%	98%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						[Framework 6]
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	90%	=14/18	78%	91%	99%	89%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	=3/18	88%	97%	100%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	90%	9/17	65%	85%	99%	91%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	98%	=5/18	85%	96%	100%	97%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.3	=7/19	8.0	9.1	9.5	9.1
QI 8 Library use ¹						
a) visits per capita	4,328	6/22	2429	3987	6874	3,096
b) virtual visits per capita	1,042	10/22	239	909	2131	1,059
c) active borrowers per capita	137	12/22	78	145	244	142
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita ²	361	18/22	311	680	1468	321
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per 10,000	12	2/22	4	9	14	12
c) % of available time used by the public	24%	=12/22	14%	30%	64%	22%
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£10,518	14/22	£7,260	£12,448	£23,333	£11,378
b) % on staff,	58%	=13/22	48%	61%	76%	49%
% on information resources	10%	=15/22	5%	13%	22%	13%
% on equipment and buildings	7%	=8/22	0%	8%	28%	4%
% on other operational costs	25%	=8/22	1%	18%	35%	33%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£1,102	8/22	£0	£1,567	13,027	£8,829
QI 16 Opening hours ³						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	=1/22	0.00%	0.23%	3.96%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.98%	14/22	0.00%	1.07%	5.41%	0.00%

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 ²per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population

³ 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 and second year of the sixth framework (2017/18 and 2018/19).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)ⁱ

Pembrokeshire completed its adult and children's user survey in March 2020 and undertakes surveys of both adults and children annually. The number of returns is slightly lower than normal due to Covid-19. Overall there are minor improvements compared with the survey results from March 2019. The percentage of young people who think the library helps them learn and find things out has increased by 2%, alongside an increase in the average overall rating out of ten awarded by young people. All static libraries (authority and community facilitated) continue to provide the required range of support for individual

development and health and wellbeing is also effectively supported, with a 2% increase in the percentage of adults who have found helpful information for health and wellbeing at the library. A number of health partnerships (25 in total) exist across the services. Pembrokeshire noted that borrowing figures for their health and wellbeing collection has increased compared with the previous year.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)ⁱⁱ

Pembrokeshire continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with no changes since 2017/18. Physical visits have continued to increase in 2019/20 reflecting the success of the new Haverfordwest library. Physical visits have increased by 68% since 2017/18 and are now well above the median levels in Wales. Although there has been a decrease in library membership and numbers of active borrowers, the service notes that data cleanses have been undertaken, which have affected these figures. There have been increases in adult and children's book issues, but usage is still below the median level. Electronic downloads have witnessed an increase of 121% since 2017/18, which is reflective of changing customer habits across Wales and the impact of the pandemic.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)ⁱⁱⁱ

There has been a decrease in the materials budget of 29% since 2017/18, due to the need to make savings (and following the temporary additional investment for the Riverside library), and the acquisitions targets (QI 9) continue to be unmet. Pembrokeshire is one of seventeen authorities who have not met the acquisitions target (QI 9) in 2019/20. The service also notes that items ordered were not received when expected due to the closure of libraries in March 2020. Investment in children's materials has broadly remained the same and the target for Welsh language materials (QI 10) has been achieved. However, expenditure with regard to Welsh language materials is 45% less than 2018/19 and remains comparatively low. There have been no changes to PC provision and a small increase in usage, which is now at a median level. Performance in relation to supply of requests has fallen, but the targets here are still met.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)^{iv}

Overall staffing levels have increased in 2019/20 and professional staff levels have been maintained. Pembrokeshire is one of the few services to see an increase in staffing in 2019/20 – however, this was from a temporary secondment leading to slightly more staffing hours. Staffing targets (QI 13) have not been met but total and professional staffing levels are above the median in Wales. Qualified leadership remains in place.

Total revenue expenditure has decreased on 2018/19. Expenditure per capita is below the median level. Opening hours have increased due to an increase in opening hours in Haverfordwest Riverside library and there has been a 4.6% increase since 2017/18, with performance well above the median level and the target (QI 16) continuing to be met. The number of mobile library stops missed has risen further in 2019/20, with the service noting unavoidable causes impacting this area, although it remains a low figure.

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. Pembrokeshire's goals are outlined in its library Strategy 2015-2020. Austerity and technological change continue to be the external factors that drive change. Priority areas link to Welsh Government strategies such as: *prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected*. The service noted collaborative working with a number of different organisations to improve the skills and employability of individuals in the community. The service contributes to the areas of health and wellbeing through partnerships with organisations such as the Alzheimer's Society, enabling a broader range of the community to use library spaces. Pembrokeshire successfully aligns with a wide variety of strategic goals.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Pembrokeshire highlights the development of a new library strategy and the importance of realigning library provision in light of the impact of Covid-19. The service will be working with a variety of partners in Pembrokeshire to create a combined library, visitor information and Henry VII interpretation Centre. This will be a key development in Pembrokeshire. Other plans include the delivery of a 24/7 pilot library using new technology that be trialled and the future relocation and improvement of Narberth library. The current partnership with the National Library of Wales will be developed further, with Glan-yr-afon Riverside library in Haverfordwest being one of three locations in the UK to benefit from the National Gallery [London] Masterpiece Tour 2020 (*note: due to Covid-19 the Masterpiece Tour 2020 was postponed and is now scheduled for 2021*).

6 Conclusion

Pembrokeshire has continued to perform well during 2019/20. Continuing high levels of satisfaction, shown through survey results demonstrate that the services provided by Pembrokeshire libraries are appreciated by people in the community. Pembrokeshire, in contrast to a number of other services has seen increases in visitor figures, adult and children's book issues and opening hours. However, comparatively usage remains below the median level. There is a strong commitment to health and wellbeing, and overall the broad range of activities has been sustained, and there is a continued focus on improving and developing services in the future. The continuing success of Pembrokeshire's partnership with the National Library of Wales should also be noted and continues to be a significant achievement for the authority.

ⁱ Due to Covid-19, local authorities were only asked to report any change in provision since the last reporting year for QI 3&4.

ⁱⁱ Due to Covid-19, QI 5&6 were removed for the 2019/20 reporting year.

ⁱⁱⁱ E-resources purchased through centrally-funded subscriptions have been included in the acquisitions figures for QI 9 in 2019/20. Each authority has added 201 to their total acquisitions from centrally funded subscriptions. CIPFA Statistics Returns continue to include figures for centrally-procured resources.

^{iv} Due to Covid-19, QI 15 was removed for the 2019/20 reporting year, alongside training and volunteer hours.