

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

## Gwynedd County Council

### Annual Assessment Report 2016-17

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Gwynedd's annual return, case studies and narrative report submitted to Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government. Gwynedd's return was approved by the Portfolio Holder and Head of department on 6 July 2017.

#### 1) Executive summary

Gwynedd met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially met 1.

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Gwynedd achieved 4 in full and 3 in part.

Gwynedd is a large, sparsely populated authority, with the challenge of delivering an equitable service to all under financial and staffing constraints, and has done well to maintain its performance in the final year of the framework, particularly given the level of work involved in future planning. Falling levels of use are disappointing, given the excellent customer feedback which is achieved, and clear evidence of the impact of the service, and perhaps reflect the recent substantial cut to the bookfund. The low staffing level remains an area of concern and it is hoped the longer term plans for the service will ensure a successful future.

- All attendees at training sessions said that they had been helped to achieve their goals. 99% of children think that the library helps them learn and find things out. Four case studies give evidence of the impact of the service for a variety of users.
- Due to their small size and staffing level, several service points do not provide the full range of support for individual development, and this impacts on the numbers of people attending training, which are among the lowest in Wales. All adult users find the library an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place.
- Indicators of use have generally fallen. Most are below the median for Wales; book issues remain the third highest in Wales, however. Audio-visual issues have increased but remain amongst the lowest in Wales.
- Following cuts to the materials budget, Gwynedd has failed to meet the targets for overall acquisitions this year. The percentage spent on Welsh language material is the second highest in Wales, and the target for purchasing materials for children has been met. ICT provision has met the targets, although internet access is not yet available for the public on the mobile fleet.
- The staffing situation remains a matter of concern, with long term sickness a contributory factor, and Gwynedd fails to meet the targets for staffing per capita. Expenditure per capita is above the median for Wales, and at £3.30 the average cost per visit is the highest in Wales.

Considering the four areas in the framework (*Customers and communities; Access for all;*

*Learning for life; and Leadership and development*) in comparison to the rest of Wales, Gwynedd shows mixed results in all areas, with individual indicators showing some relatively good, and some poorer, areas of performance.

Compared to the previous year, there have been some improvements, e.g. in the supply of requests, and unplanned closures of service points. The perennial problem of low staffing levels is noted again. It is disappointing to see the service continue in a fragile situation, after many years of high achievement and careful planning, and it is hoped that the proposed restructuring will provide opportunities for development.

## 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 the core entitlements, the quality indicators which have targets, the quality indicators showing performance against others, and impact measures. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is made in Section 3.

### a) Core entitlements

Gwynedd is meeting 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially meeting 1. This is an improvement from last year, as staff are well trained and well-liked by customers. The area in which the entitlement is recorded as only partially met is *Customers and communities*, where staffing levels restrict the range of activities which can be offered, although national campaigns are supported in all libraries.

### b) Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QI) within the framework. Of the 7 which have targets, Gwynedd is achieving 4 in full and 3 in part:

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Individual development:		Partially met
a) ICT support	✓	
b) Skills training	✗	
c) Information literacy	✗	
d) E-government support	✓	
e) Reader development	✗	
QI 5 Location of service points	✓	Met in full
QI 8 Up-to-date reading material:		Partially met
a) Acquisitions per capita	✗	
or Materials spend per capita	✗	
b) Replenishment rate	✓	
QI 9 Appropriate reading material:		Met in full
a) % of material budget on children	✓	
b) % of material budget spent on Welsh	✓	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	✗	
QI 10 Online access:		Met in full
a) All service points	*	

Quality Indicator	Met?
Computers per capita	✓
b) Wi-Fi provision	✓
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:	Partially met
a) Staff per capita	✗
b) Professional staff per capita	✗
c) Head of service qualification/training	✓
d) CPD percentage	✓
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓ Met in full

\* Authorities are not penalised on this indicator if all static service points provide internet access but their mobiles do not.

This a variation in performance compared to last year, in that cuts to the materials fund have resulted in QI 8 being missed, but QI 9 has been met in full this year

### c) Impact measures

The framework contains three indicators which seek to gather evidence of the impact that using the library service has on people's lives. Through these and other indicators it is possible to see how the library service is contributing towards educational, social, economic and health and wellbeing local and national agendas. These indicators do not have targets. Not all authorities collected data for the impact indicators, and ranks are included out of the numbers of respondents stated, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Gwynedd carried out a customer survey for adults in October 2016 and for children in March 2017. The figure for the percentage of attendees at training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goal is based on a small sample of just 12 responses. MALD will be looking for a substantially larger sample in future.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	99%	3/19	68%	93%	100%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	70%	16/19	36%	86%	97%
% of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	98%	1/17	58%	82%	98%
QI 4 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	100%	1/19	80%	97%	100%

Gwynedd provided 4 impact case studies which showed the difference the library service makes:

- Praise for the staff and appreciation of the request service, making users feel better.
- An immigrant from Africa who has gained language and digital skills to search for work.
- A retired man who has gained basic digital literacy skills and the confidence to take his study further.
- The Family Learning Scheme, designed to increase families' reading with children.

The scheme and its take-up were well described, and evidence of impact collected, suggesting that books were used in the home although no quotes or comments were included in the report.

#### d) Quality performance indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets, but allow performance to be compared between authorities. The following table summarises Gwynedd's position for 2016-17. 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 elements were not available to some authorities. Figures reported in respect of the first two years of the framework for QI 4 to QI 16 are repeated for convenience of comparison. Note that indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2015/16 Rank	2014/15 Rank		
QI 1 Making a difference									
a) new skills	44%	16/19	23%	71%	93%				
c) health and well-being	37%	16/20	26%	56%	94%				
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	100%	1 /19	93%	98%	100%				
QI 2 Customer satisfaction									
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	89%	12/20	74%	90%	98%				
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	100%	1 /20	90%	99%	100%				
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	98%	5 /20	92%	97%	100%				
d) child rating out of ten	9.3	6 /20	8.6	9.1	10.0				
QI 4 User training									
a) attendances per capita	3	22	3	34	248	7	21	8	19
c) informal training per capita	1	20/20	1	156	712	n/a		88	18 / 21
QI 6 Library use									
a) visits per capita	3,076	18	2,453	4,033	6,751	3,156	19	3,090	20
b) virtual visits per capita	862	12/21	341	922	2,299	944	12	839	13
c) active borrowers per capita	145	14	77	153	235	146	13	203	5
QI 7 attendances at events per capita	148	18	62	214	496	222	12	218	10
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public									
a) equipment	26%	15/21	16%	32%	69%	31%	12	35%	12
QI 12 Supply of requests									
a) % available within 7 days	76%*	6 /21	48%	70%	82%	70%	14	69%	11
b) % available within 15 days	91%*	3 /21	65%	85%	96%	86%	9	86%	8
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications									
(v) a) total volunteers	8	17	0	24	209	7	19	3	15
b) total volunteer hours	300	18	0	798	5,156	250	16	150	16
QI 14 Operational expenditure									
a) total expenditure per capita	£13,88	9 /21	£6,745	£11,979	£16,968	£13,530	9 / 21	£15,421	8

Performance indicator	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2015/16	Rank	2014/15	Rank	
b) % on staff	52%	15/21	46%	58%	75%	53%	16/21	46%	20
% on information resources	13%	9/21	4%	13%	25%	16%	6/21	14%	9
% on equipment and buildings	20%	1/21	0%	4%	20%	20%	1/21	15%	2
% on other operational costs	14%	14/21	9%	22%	37%	11%	18/21	24%	15
c) capital expenditure per capita	£146	13/21	£0	£341	£16,692	£1,633	5/21	£893	8
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£3.30	1/20	£1.50	£2.33	£3.30	£3.00	3/21	£3.68	1/11
QI 16 Opening hours ( <i>see note</i> )									
(ii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.48%	9	0.00%	0.00%	0.48%	0.13%	20	0.29%	21
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.11%	3/19	0.00%	0.13%	8.33%	0.00%	1/19	1.6%	14/19

*Note: Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.*

*\* By agreement with MALD, figures are based on the first three months of the year only due to the mid-year implementation of a new library management system.*

Data on Wi-Fi usage has only been provided by three authorities for 2016-17 and so is not included in the table above.

### 3) Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators are divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance against the quality indicators within these four areas, and compares results with those from the first two years of the framework.

#### a) Customers and communities

Gwynedd carried out customer surveys in October 2016 for adults and March 2017 for children, with good results. All respondents to the adult survey found the library to be enjoyable, safe and inclusive, and all felt the standard of customer care was good or very good – the best performance in Wales in these measures. The full range of support for individual development is not available in all service points, with training sessions and information literacy only available in 6 of the 15 libraries open for 10 hours or more per week, and reader development activities in 9. With low staffing levels, the authority places emphasis on ensuring access to core services and basic support. This necessarily impacts on attendance rates at training, which have fallen year on year, and are now the lowest in Wales.

#### b) Access for all

Gwynedd meets the target for access to service points. All indicators of use have fallen compared to last year, with the exception of AV and electronic issues, which have risen by 22%, for which it should be praised. This figure remains among the lowest per capita in Wales, however. The authority notes transferring to a new LMS in August 2016, with the associated data cleansing has reduced membership numbers substantially.

#### c) Learning for life

A substantial 25% cut to the book fund has resulted in acquisitions targets being missed this year, despite using other funds to alleviate the worst effects. Targets for spending on

material for children and materials in the Welsh language have been met this year. Gwynedd's percentage of the materials budget spent on materials in the Welsh language is the second highest in Wales this year, reflecting its population make-up.

ICT access is provided in all static libraries, but not on mobiles, although ways to achieve this are being investigated. The Wi-Fi network is available in all static libraries, and recorded usage increased by 49% over last year. There has been a marked improvement in the speed of supply of requests compared to last year, although the authority notes this was based on a sample period owing to the change in LMS part-way through the year.

#### **d) Leadership and development**

The vulnerable staffing situation in Gwynedd has been exacerbated by long term illness, and remains an ongoing cause for concern. Overall staffing levels have been held similar to last year's levels and are 25% below the target set. The head of service is a Chartered Librarian. Staff training is well supported, as part of regular staff meetings. Gwynedd used 8 volunteers during the year, giving an average of 37.5 hours each to the service.

There has been a 3.9% increase in total expenditure per capita compared to last year, and the level is above the median for Wales. Cost per visit, at £3.30, has also increased compared to £3.00 last year, and is again the highest in Wales. Opening hours meet the target, and are the second highest per capita in Wales.

#### **4) Strategic context**

Gwynedd detailed its contribution towards a range of wider local and national Government priorities, including prosperity for all; improving health and wellbeing; literacy; Welsh language and culture; digital inclusion and sustainable public services.

#### **5) Future direction**

A detailed plan for delivering the authority's "More than Books" strategy sets out a streamlined service based on 9 area libraries and 4 community libraries under council management, a mobile service and community links where library buildings are closed. The service has engaged with local community councils and other third sector parties to discuss the new model, and is not anticipating a detrimental effect on performance as a result.

#### **6) Conclusion**

Gwynedd is a large, sparsely populated authority, with the challenge of delivering an equitable service to all under financial and staffing constraints, and has done well to maintain its performance in the final year of the framework, particularly given the level of work involved in future planning. Falling levels of use are disappointing, given the excellent customer feedback which is achieved, and clear evidence of the impact of the service, and perhaps reflect the recent substantial cut to the bookfund. The low staffing level remains an area of concern and it is hoped the longer term plans for the service will ensure a successful future.