



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Paul Orders
Chief Executive
City and County of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

29 September 2016

Dear Paul,

Fifth Assessment Framework for Welsh Public Library Standards: Annual Return 2015-16

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out the statutory duties of public library authorities to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service" and makes it a duty of the Welsh Ministers "to superintend and promote the improvement" of public library services in Wales. In accordance with these statutory requirements the Welsh Government has completed its assessment of your authority's library service Annual Return for 2015-16, and the full report is attached to this letter.

This is the second year of assessment under the fifth framework. The independent assessor, in consultation with a Reference Group comprising Welsh Government officials and three heads of library services, found that:

- Cardiff is now meeting of the 18 core entitlements in full.
- Of the seven quality indicators which have targets, Cardiff achieved three in full, two in part and failed to achieve two.
- The return showed good evidence of the impact of the service on its users.
- The library service has key strengths in community engagement and its visitor levels.
- The main areas of concern are the staffing and acquisitions budgets.

I am grateful for the support from your library service in submitting this year's return and liaising with the independent assessor and MALD officials on this important piece of work.

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Should you have any queries concerning the report or the assessment process, please contact Alyson Tyler, Senior Libraries Development Adviser, tel: 0300 062 2103, email: alyson.tyler@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Jason Thomas

PP Kate Clarke

Museums, Archives and Libraries Department

CC: Library Service Manager
Scrutiny Officer

Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

Cardiff

Annual Assessment Report 2015-16

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

1) Executive summary

Cardiff is now meeting all of the 18 core entitlements in full, an improvement over last year.

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Cardiff achieved 3 in full, 2 in part and failed to achieve 2.

Cardiff library service reports a mixed performance, but is continuing to develop, with strategies designed to deliver improved performance next year. Concern remains with the ongoing low staffing and low acquisition levels, however.

- Four excellent impact case studies were provided which demonstrated a range of impacts on individual users in the areas of well-being, community cohesion and skills development.
- User surveys show high levels of satisfaction amongst children, although adult levels are below the median for Wales. Attendance at formal training sessions is the second highest in Wales, and rates of informal training per capita have increased.
- Physical and virtual visits have increased for the second consecutive year, and both are at the highest levels in Wales, although some other indicators of use have fallen. The service meets the targets for access to service points.
- The overall level of acquisitions remains disappointing, being amongst the lowest in Wales, and this is the only area where Cardiff entirely fails to meet the targets set in the framework, for the second year. Materials for children are prioritised, and resources in the Welsh language are being provided at appropriate levels. ICT provision has improved, and now meets all targets set.
- Staffing levels are among the lowest in Wales, both overall and for professionally qualified staff. More than half of the budget is spent on maintenance, repair and other operational costs. Library closures for refurbishment reduced opening hours below the target set, but the proportion of unplanned closures has been further reduced.
- The figures suggest the service is operating efficiently, with total spending per capita above the median for Wales, but net cost per visit the lowest in Wales, at £1.83

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, Cardiff is generally performing well in the broad area of *Access for all*. Performance in the remaining areas is mixed.

Compared to the previous year, Cardiff has improved its performance in the areas of user training, online access, and unplanned closures. The speed of supply of requests has declined, and more volunteers have been used to supplement the service.

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

Cardiff is meeting all of the 18 core entitlements in full. This is an improvement over the previous year, following a consultation exercise in February 2016 with library users.

b) Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QI) within the framework. Of the 7 which have targets, Cardiff is achieving 3 in full, 2 in part and is failing to achieve 2 of the indicators:

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Individual development:		Met in full
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:		Not met
a) Acquisitions per capita	✗	
or Materials spend per capita	✗	
b) Replenishment rate	✗	
QI 9 Appropriate reading material:		Partially met
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	✓	
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	✗	Not met

In 2014-15, Cardiff achieved 4 indicators in full, 2 in part and failed to achieve 1. Performance has improved on QI 10, which is now achieved in full, but declined on QI 9, and QI 16. Note that the target for spending on children's materials is set to be within two percentage points of the proportion of children in the population, and the missed target is due to exceeding the range proportionally, rather than a shortfall, as the service has prioritised materials for children.

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.

Cardiff undertook a customer survey of both adults and children in February 2016. Note that the percentage of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals is based on a very small sample of just 44 responses.

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:	91%	9/12	86%	93%	99%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	87%	6/13	36%	87%	97%
% of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	85%	3/11	57%	73%	93%
QI 4 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	100%	1/17	85%	97%	100%

Cardiff provided 4 outstanding impact case studies which showed the real difference the library service makes:

- A work experience volunteer who gained paid employment as a consequence
- A young woman with mental health issues who has gained in confidence and seen a real improvement in her mental health from participating in weekly Goldies sessions
- A poetry competition for year 5 children which boosted the confidence of the participants, some of whom had been previously reluctant to engage in literacy. A creative writing club has been formed as a result
- A disabled woman, previously isolated, who now has a reason to socialise, and has become engaged to be married as a result.

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 Cardiff's position for 2015-16. 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 obtained from customer surveys which only need to be carried out once during the three year framework period, or those where relevant data elements were not available to some authorities. Figures reported in respect of last year 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	2014/15	Rank
QI 1 Making a difference							
a) new skills	71%	8/13	23%	72%	92%		
c) health and well-being	43%	10/13	26%	58%	93%		
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	95%	9/13	84%	97%	100%		
QI 2 Customer satisfaction							

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2014/15	Rank
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	84%	11/14	74%	89%	97%		
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	93%	12/14	90%	97%	99%		
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall	95%	10/14	92%	97%	99%		
d) child rating out of ten	9.5	1/13	8.0	9.2	9.5		
QI 4 User training							
a) attendances per capita	134	2	5	30	390	39	5
c) informal training per capita	278	6/19	3	195	1017	115	15 / 21
QI 6 Library use							
a) visits per capita	6,185	1	2,467	3,967	6,185	5,955	1
b) virtual visits per capita	2,475	1	340	976	2,475	2,449	1
c) active borrowers per capita	217	3	45	157	273	232	3
QI 7 Attendances at events per capita							
	293	6	60	223	666	221	9
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public							
a) equipment	35%	8	20%	31%	68%	46%	5
b) Wi-Fi services	n/a		20%	60%	90%	n/k	
QI 12 Supply of requests							
a) % available within 7 days	68%	18	57%	71%	86%	72%	9
b) % available within 15 days	77%	20	71%	86%	96%	82%	17
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications							
(v) a) total volunteers	103	1	0	18	103	31	4
b) total volunteer hours	3,699	1	0	582	3,699	927	6
QI 14 Operational expenditure							
a) total expenditure per capita	£16,536	6/21	£7,516	£12,749	£18,760	£17,410	4
b) % on staff	40%	21/21	40%	58%	79%	49%	19
% on information resources	9%	19/21	7%	13%	23%	10%	20
% on equipment and buildings	16%	2/21	1%	3%	20%	20%	3
% on other operational costs	34%	3/21	0%	20%	39%	22%	12
c) capital expenditure per capita	£4,677	1/21	£0	£272	£4,677	£481	10
QI 15 Net cost per visit							
	£1.83	21/21	£1.83	£2.43	£3.53	*	
QI 16 Opening hours (see note)							
(ii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.04%	15	0.00%	0.00%	0.16%	0.17%	18
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	3.49%	17/19	0.00%	0.71%	23.44%	5.4%	19 / 19

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

* Income data for 2014-15 not available to calculate this figure.

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 year of the framework.

a) Customers and communities

Cardiff carried out customer surveys in February 2016. Adult satisfaction levels are below the median for Wales as a whole, but the results from the children's survey are better, with the highest rating of those authorities which have carried out a survey in the current framework. All static service points are providing the full range of services in support of individual development. Attendance at formal training has increased compared to last year, and is the second highest in Wales. Rates of informal training reported have more than doubled, and

are now above the median for Wales.

b) Access for all

Cardiff meets the target for access to service points, with 97% of the population within easy reach. Both physical and virtual visits per capita have increased for the second consecutive year, and remain the highest in Wales. The high level of visits to library premises is likely to be a consequence of shared services being rolled out as Hubs, with visitor counting not distinguishing between library visitors and those coming only to use other services. Although the number of library members has increased, the number of active borrowers has fallen since last year, but it remains the third highest in Wales, at 21.7% of the population. Attendance at events per capita has increased, by almost one third. Book and audio-visual issues have both fallen; audio visual issues per capita are now the second lowest in Wales and this is an area of concern which the service may wish to investigate.

c) Learning for life

The rate of acquisitions remains low in both absolute and replenishment terms, and the targets in this area have not been met for the second year. There has been a small increase in the number of acquisitions per capita, and the authority notes that a stock review has not taken place for a number of years. Cardiff has prioritised spending on children, with 24% of the budget compared to 18% of children in the population; however they note that 31% of customers are children accounting for 32% of issues.

Cardiff now meets the targets for online access, following an increase in the number of PCs available and improvements to the Wi-Fi network. As a result, percentage usage has fallen, but an improvement is anticipated next year following promotion of the service. Cardiff is unable to measure the hours of Wi-Fi network usage, but notes a significant increase in customers using their own devices, and reported a usage figure in Gigabytes of data accessed.

There has been a fall in the speed of delivery of requests, over both 7 and 15 days, compared to last year, following a remapping of stock alignment processes; an improvement is anticipated next year.

d) Leadership and development

There have been further falls in staffing levels, and the targets are not met. The service is working with CILIP to provide staff with information regarding qualifications and routes to Chartership. The level of staff training has fallen compared to last year, but the target continues to be met in this area. The operational manager of the service is a Chartered Librarian. Cardiff has trebled its use of volunteers during the year, to 103, each giving an average of 36 hours to the service. Half were Young Volunteers recruited to support the Summer Reading Challenge.

The service has experienced a further 5% cut in its revenue budget although spending per capita remains above the median for Wales. More than half of the total is now spent on maintenance, repair and other operational costs. The average gross cost per visit has fallen to £1.91, compared to £2.07 last year, and remains the lowest in Wales. This is a result of the increase in visits due to shared Hub facilities.

The temporary closure of several locations for refurbishment during the year has resulted in reduced opening hours so that this target has not been met this year, but improvement is expected next year. Cardiff had the highest level of capital expenditure per capita in Wales

this year. The service has further reduced the proportion of unplanned closures and missed mobile library stops.

4) Strategic context

Cardiff provided an extensive statement outlining its contribution to wider Welsh Government and local authority priorities. Considerable investment has been made in rolling out the hub strategy to deliver services with an emphasis on digital literacy. Health and well-being is also prioritised.

5) Future direction

The continued roll-out of the hub strategy and a focus on the digital literacy agenda are priorities, in a climate of continuing financial challenge. The service is also aligning activity with the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

6) Conclusion

Cardiff library service reports a mixed performance, but is continuing to develop, with strategies designed to deliver improved performance next year. Concern remains with the ongoing low staffing and low acquisition levels, however.