
WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS – ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on the performance of Cardiff Libraries against the *Fifth Assessment Framework for Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS): Annual Report 2014/15*. The Committee has monitored the Council's progress against the Standards for a number of years and agreed to continue to do so as part the work programming confirmed in September 2015.

Background

2. The Welsh Government launched the first set of Public Library Standards (WPLS) for Welsh authorities in 2001, to be implemented over a three year period from 2002/03 to 2004/05. This was a set of national standards with a procedure for performance management that generated comparative performance information. It was intended as a support mechanism to effect improvements and greater efficiency in libraries, which local authorities have a statutory duty to provide under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. There is consensus within the library profession and across local authorities that the Standards have driven improvement in libraries across Wales.
3. The fifth quality framework of Welsh Public Standards 2014-2017 (attached at **Appendix A**) – '*Libraries Making a Difference*', has been developed to monitor how well library services deliver benefits such as literacy, digital inclusion, cohesive communities, and health and well-being for the people of Wales. This framework has moved away from the standards and performance indicators used in previous years and has instead introduced core entitlements and quality indicators to measure the impact of library services.

4. The desired outcome of the fifth framework is that libraries deliver all the services and facilities listed as core entitlements. The framework has been themed around four areas of core service, with each containing a number of core entitlements and quality indicators. The core services and related entitlements are as follows:

Customers and Communities

- **WPLSCE 1** – Libraries in Wales will ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help.
- **WPLSCE 2** – Libraries in Wales will stage a range of activities to support learning, enjoyment and enable users to obtain the maximum benefit from the available resources.
- **WPLSCE 3** – Libraries in Wales will provide access to a range of services and resources to support lifelong learning, personal well being and development, and community participation.

Access for All

- **WPLSCE 4** – Libraries in Wales will be open to all members of their communities.
- **WPLSCE 5** – Libraries in Wales will be free to join.
- **WPLSCE 6** – Libraries in Wales will provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable opening hours.
- **WPLSCE 7** – Libraries in Wales will provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special needs. Special needs can be caused by physical and health impairment, economic disadvantage (e.g. long term unemployment), cultural difference (e.g. language, new arrivals), educational background, or other circumstances that require special library services.

Learning for Life

- **WPLSCE 8** – Libraries in Wales will lend books for free.
- **WPLSCE 9** – Libraries in Wales will deliver free access to information.
- **WPLSCE 10** – Libraries in Wales will provide free use of the Internet and computers, including Wi-Fi.

- **WPLSCE 11** – Libraries in Wales will deliver free use of online information resources 24 hours a day.
- **WPLSCE 12** – Libraries in Wales will provide access to high quality resources in a range of formats, including those in the Welsh language, reflecting changing forms of publication.
- **WPLSCE 13** – Libraries in Wales will share their catalogues, to enable a single search of all Welsh library resources.

Leadership and Development

- **WPLSCE 14** – Libraries in Wales will promote libraries to attract more people to benefit from their services.
 - **WPLSCE 15** – Libraries in Wales will regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.
 - **WPLSCE 16** – Libraries in Wales will work in partnership to open up access to the resources of all Welsh libraries.
 - **WPLSCE 17** – Libraries in Wales will provide access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community.
 - **WPLSCE 18** – Libraries in Wales will provide a clear, timely and transparent complaints process if things go wrong.
5. The quality of these services and facilities, and the achievement of the core entitlements will be assessed against a broad range of performance indicators and outcome-based measures – these are referred to as Quality Indicators (WPLSQI) and can be found listed throughout **Appendix A**.

Annual Report 2014/15

6. It is a duty of the Welsh Ministers to superintend and promote the improvement of public library services in Wales. In accordance with this duty the Welsh Government undertakes an Annual Review of each local authority library service. CyMAL's¹ evaluation of Cardiff's performance was received in September 2015 and can be found attached at **Appendix B and C**. The

¹ CyMAL was the Welsh Government's Museums, Archives and Libraries Division. It has since changed its name to MALD (Museums, Archives and Libraries Division).

evaluation is based on self assessment data submitted by the authority against each Core Entitlement (WPLSCE) and Quality Indicator (WPLSQI).

7. The evaluation found that:
 - Cardiff met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full, and partially met one.
 - Of the seven quality performance indicators which have targets, Cardiff achieved four in full, two in part and failed to achieve one.
 - The Council's Library Service has key strengths in community engagement and its visitor levels.
 - The main areas of concern are the staffing and acquisitions budgets.

8. The Core Entitlement Cardiff is found to have only partially met is **WPLSCE 15 – Libraries in Wales will regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs**. The narrative provided within the Annual Assessment report states that "*Cardiff did not record outcomes from attendees at training sessions*" and, "*Cardiff has not carried out a standard user survey since 2008*". It is noted, however, that case studies do demonstrate the impact of library services on individual users and that in-house surveys show high levels of satisfaction.

9. The Annual Assessment report splits the Quality Indicators into three sections 1) Quality indicators with targets, 2) impact measures and 3) quality performance indicators and benchmarks. Below is the overview of Cardiff's performance against the quality indicator standards.

Quality Indicators with targets – Cardiff is achieving 4 in full, 2 in part and failing to achieve 1 – as shown in the following table:

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Individual development:		Fully met
a) ICT support	✓	
b) Skills training	✓	
c) Information literacy	✓	
d) E-government support	✓	
e) Reader development	✓	
QI 5 Location of service points	✓	Fully met
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:		Fully met
a) % of material budget on children	✓	
b) % of material budget spent on Welsh	✓	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	✗	
QI 10 Online access:		Partially met
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	✓	Fully met

* In this first year of the new framework, MALD agreed that authorities would not be penalised on this indicator if all static service points provide internet access but their mobiles did not.

Impact measures – Cardiff did not report any figures in this area as it did not conduct an impact survey during 2014-15, and did not collect feedback from attendees at training sessions.

Performance indicator	Cardiff	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	n/a		63%	93%	95%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a		73%	87%	92%
% of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a		43%	79%	90%
QI 4 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	n/a		80%	93%	100%

Quality performance indicators and benchmarks – these indicators do not have targets but allow performance to be compared across the 22 local authorities in Wales. As can be seen, in some areas Cardiff is ranked first in Wales, and in others is amongst the middle or lowest performing local authorities.

Performance indicator	Cardiff	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
a) new skills	n/a		55%	72%	93%
c) health and well-being	n/a		29%	58%	91%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a		84%	97%	98%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a		82%	89%	97%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a		93%	99%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	n/a		94%	96%	99%
d) child rating out of ten	n/a		8.0	9.2	9.4
QI 4 User training					
a) attendances per capita	39	5	2	26	278
c) informal training per capita	115	15 / 21	16	162	484
QI 6 Library use					
a) visits per capita	5,955	1	2,637	4,177	5,955
b) virtual visits per capita	2,449	1	212	923	2,449
c) active borrowers per capita	232	3	71	155	288
QI 7 attendances at events per capita	221	9	21	192	464
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public					
a) equipment	46%	5	23%	36%	70%
b) Wi-Fi services	n/k		4%	37%	79%
QI 12 Supply of requests					
a) % available within 7 days	72%	9	62%	69%	81%
b) % available within 15 days	82%	17	74%	84%	94%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications					
(v) a) total volunteers	31	4	0	14	74
b) total volunteer hours	927	6	0	527	2696
QI 14 Operational expenditure					
a) total expenditure per capita	£17,410	4	£8,966	£14,054	£20,796
b) % on staff,	49%	19	45%	57%	77%
% on information resources	10%	20	5%	13%	21%
% on equipment and buildings	20%	3	0%	4%	27%
% on other operational costs;	22%	12	4%	22%	37%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£481	10	£0	£266	£2,126
QI 15 Cost per visit	£2.07	22	£2.07	£2.87	£3.92
QI 16 Opening hours (see note)					
(ii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.17%	18	0.0%	0.02%	0.52%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	5.4%	19 / 19	0.0%	0.4%	5.4%

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

10. Highlights from the commentary of the CyMAL assessment report include:
- Attendance at formal training is above the median for Wales, but rates of informal training reported are below the median for Wales.
 - Both physical and virtual visits per capita have increased compared to last year, and are now the highest in Wales, partly as a result of co-location and the successful Hub strategy.
 - The number of active borrowers has fallen since last year, although it is still third highest in Wales.
 - Efficiency savings have impacted on the rate of acquisitions, which are low in both absolute and replenishment terms. This is the only area where Cardiff completely missed the target set in the standards. Only one authority reported lower acquisitions per capita, and only two had lower replenishment rates.
 - There has been a fall in the number of networked public access computers. The provision does not meet the target set and is below the median for Wales.
 - Cardiff used 31 volunteers during the year, each giving an average of 30 hours to the service.
11. The concluding remarks of the Annual Assessment report state that *“The authority is to be praised for its high visits per capita, probably as a result of shared co-location hubs, and for its community engagement, but should consider its staffing and acquisitions budgets, and its lack of a comprehensive customer review process.”*

Previous Scrutiny

12. The WPLS Annual Report for 2012/13 went before the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee on 28 November 2013. In their letter, Members:
- placed considerable focus on staffing and training issues, highlighting concerns that there is potential for dilution of skills of qualified Library Staff and a requirement for skills not traditionally associated with librarianship, such as project management;

- were concerned that budget savings would negatively impact on the ability of Cardiff to achieve the WPLS. Members recommended that any savings proposals that relate to Libraries detail the likely impact on the attainment of the WPLS Standards;
 - queried whether two wards in particular (Creigiau and Pontprennau) satisfied the requirements for distance to the nearest library branch, as set out in WPLS 1;
 - were pleased to be informed that Mobile Library Services would be re-visited, with a focus on making services accessible to those who would have no suitable access to other Library services;
 - were concerned that Cardiff narrowly missed out on satisfying the standard relating to WiFi (WPLS 4).
13. The WPLS Annual Report for 2013/14 was considered by the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee on 4 December 2014. In their letter, Members offered congratulations for the fact that Cardiff had achieved above the Welsh average for 2013/14, and that the Council had increased the number of Standards met for each year of the fourth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards.
14. Through the Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Public Libraries Standards fourth framework, the following issues have been recurrent in the attention of Members:
- staffing levels in libraries in Cardiff are a chronic issue with Cardiff being in the lowest quartile for the whole of Wales;
 - qualification levels of staff are below the WLPS standard;
 - the levels of new stock acquisitions have been an area of concern.

Way Forward

15. Councillor Peter Bradbury (Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-Operatives and Social Enterprise) will be in attendance, and may wish to make a statement. Sarah McGill (Director – Communities, Housing & Customer Services), Isabelle Bignall (Head of Service - Customer Services) and Nicola

Richards (Central Library Manager) will be in attendance and will provide a short presentation on Cardiff's performance against the WLPS for 2014/15. The will also be available to answer any questions that Members may have.

Legal Implications

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendation

18. The Committee is recommended:
 - a. to consider whether it wishes to pass on any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet;
 - b. to discuss whether it wish to schedule any further scrutiny of this issue.

MARIE ROSENTHAL

Director of Governance and Legal Services

30 October 2015

The following Appendices are attached:

Appendix A: Libraries making a difference: The fifth quality framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-2017

Appendix B: Directors Letter, Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17, City of Cardiff Council

Appendix C: Annual Assessment Report 2014-15, Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17, City of Cardiff Council