

Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

City of Cardiff Council

Annual Assessment Report 2014-15

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

Cardiff's return was approved by an Executive Member of the Cabinet, on 30 June 2015.

1) Executive summary

Cardiff met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full, and partially met one.

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Cardiff achieved 4 in full, 2 in part and failed to achieve 1.

The recent budget cuts have had a negative impact on key areas of staffing and the materials budget. 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.

- Cardiff did not record outcomes from attendees at training sessions. Four 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.
- Cardiff has not carried out a standard user survey since 2008, although in-house surveys conducted at individual hub libraries show high levels of satisfaction. Attendance at formal training sessions is above the median for Wales as a whole; informal training per capita is below the median.
- Physical and virtual visits have increased compared to 2013-14, and both are at the highest levels in Wales, although some other indicators of use have fallen. Cardiff is one of only two authorities to record increases in both types of visit. The service meets the targets for access to service points.
- The overall level of acquisitions is 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. Materials for children and resources in the Welsh language are being provided at appropriate levels. ICT provision also falls below the targets set, but targeting of provision has resulted in high levels of use.
- Overall staffing levels are low, although there has been some protection for the level of professional staffing following a restructure and budget cuts. Staff training is well developed, and is at the second highest level in Wales. More than 40% of the budget is spent on maintenance, repair and other operational costs. The introduction of a new mobile library vehicle is expected to bring further reductions in the proportion of unplanned missed stops in 2015-16.
- The figures suggest the service is operating efficiently, with total spending per capita above the median for Wales, but cost per visit the lowest in Wales, at £2.07.

- Compared to the rest of Wales, Cardiff is generally performing well in the broad area of *Access for all*. Performance in the area of *Learning for life* is rather poorer, for example in the level of acquisitions.
- Concern remains with the ongoing low staffing and low acquisition levels. The lack of comprehensive customer surveying mechanisms may also not be providing a full picture of customer views, and the authority may wish to consider more regular use of the customer questions suggested in the fifth framework.

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 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full, and partially meeting 1. The area where it is failing to meet the core entitlements fully is in *Leadership and Development*. The authority has not carried out a CIPFA PLUS survey since 2008; however detail was provided concerning a range of customer feedback exit surveys and consultation exercises which have been carried out.

b) Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QI) within the framework. Of the 7 which have targets, Cardiff is achieving 4 in full, 2 in part and is failing to achieve 1 of the indicators:

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

Quality Indicator	Met?
a) Staff per capita	X
b) Professional staff per capita	X
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.

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.

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%

Cardiff did not conduct an impact survey during 2014-15, and did not collect feedback from attendees at training sessions for QI4b.

Cardiff described 4 good impact case studies:

- a family who have used the library over a number of years and describe it as 'priceless';
- a recently retired customer who has benefited from IT literacy gained at the library;
- an older lady who has learned to use online resources to trace her family history; and
- an overseas student who has improved his spoken English skills through Cardiff Library's Conversation Club. This initiative is being rolled out across the city.

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 2014-15. 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.)

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 (<i>see note</i>)					
(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.

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.

a) Customers and communities

Cardiff reported that they have not carried out a CIPFA PLUS survey since 2008.

Consultation exercises detailed elsewhere in the return suggest high levels of satisfaction with co-located services in key areas of the city, however. All static service points are providing the full range of services in support of individual development, and an average of 50 sessions per week of user training events were offered. Attendance at formal training is above the median for Wales, but rates of informal training reported are below 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 compared to last year, and are now the highest in Wales, partly as a result of co-location and the successful Hub Strategy. Although the number of active borrowers has fallen since last year, is it still the third highest in Wales, as 23.2% of the population. Attendance at events per capita has also fallen.

c) Learning for life

Efficiency savings during the year 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 a lower rate of acquisitions per capita, and only two had lower replenishment rates. The service notes that it has prioritised spending strategies to focus on the achievement of the Authority Corporate priorities. The targets for appropriate reading material, both for children and in the Welsh Language have been met.

The mobile library currently does not have internet or Wi-Fi access, but a new vehicle has been purchased which will be able to offer these services in 2015-16. There has been a fall in the number of networked public access computers, which the authority notes are concentrated in areas of high deprivation. Provision does not meet the target set, and is below the median for Wales. ICT facilities remain well used, despite a slight fall over the previous year. Cardiff is unable currently to record usage by customers of the Wi-Fi network. There has been an improvement in the speed of delivery of requests, over both 7 and 15 days, compared to last year.

d) Leadership and development

A restructure as a result of wider council budget efficiencies has led to a fall in overall staffing although there has been a slight improvement in professional staffing levels. However, neither of these areas are meeting the targets set for these indicators. The operational manager of the service is a Chartered Librarian, and staff training is given a high priority, with the second highest proportion of staff time in Wales allocated to this activity. Cardiff used 31 volunteers during the year, each giving an average of 30 hours to the service.

The service has experienced a cut of some 13% in its revenue budget which has been applied across all aspects of the service. Spending per capita is above the median for Wales. More than 40% of the total is spent on maintenance, repair and other operational

costs. The budget cuts combined with the increase in visits noted above have resulted in a fall in the average cost per visit to £2.07, the lowest in Wales.

The service has reduced the proportion of unplanned closures and missed mobile library stops, and further improvements in the latter are expected when the new mobile vehicle is commissioned in 2015-16.

4) Strategic context

Cardiff library service has a clear vision of its strategic goals in support of Welsh Government priorities, and is a key partner in the City's Hub Strategy, co-delivering services through hubs and investing resources in buildings. The Central Library is expected to open as a 'super hub' in July 2015. The service is actively contributing to the priorities in the Libraries Inspire Strategy, through the further development of community hubs and in its service offer.

5) Conclusion

The recent budget cuts have had a negative impact on key areas of staffing and the materials budget. 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.