



**Loughborough  
University**

# **Libraries Making a Difference:**

**The fifth quality framework of Welsh Public  
Library Standards 2014-2017**

## **Summary of performance 2014-17**

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*All quotes used in this report have been taken from the impact case studies submitted by libraries across the framework period.*

## Executive Summary

The fifth framework of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS), covered the period 2014 to 2017, and saw a marked difference from previous frameworks, with an increased emphasis on the impact of the library service. The evidence of impact presented during this framework is encouraging, showing the real difference library services make to people's lives. Over the course of the framework, libraries have provided over 200 individual case studies showing the impact of the service in areas such as health and well-being, social inclusion, digital literacy, and employment.

*"While richer students could afford to study where they liked, I hiked the couple of miles to the [public] Library every day to use the facilities. ... Not only did it exercise my body, it expanded my mind. ... My life has changed forever because of a library. Your library."*

2014-2017 has been a very difficult period for Welsh public libraries, with widespread budget restrictions and a general decline in library performance, but libraries remain resilient. The picture across Wales as a whole for the three year period is very mixed. Whilst there are areas of improvement and strength, other elements of library provision have suffered. Libraries continue to make a valuable contribution towards local and national strategic priorities, and the impact of this is evident. It is possible to draw some general conclusions despite the varied situation, and this report seeks to highlight the strengths alongside the areas of concern.

The changes reported suggest that the day-to-day service for the public is likely to worsen as libraries are open for fewer hours, with less new stock, and fewer staff to help deliver services. Although one of the strengths of the fifth framework has been the resilience of staff in the face of significant budget restrictions, and customer satisfaction remains high, there must be some concern as to whether Welsh public libraries can continue to develop services relevant to the needs of Wales and its people at the current critically low staffing levels.

For the customer, generally the core entitlements have been achieved with improvements in several areas over the course of the framework, such as the free provision of the internet, computers and Wi-Fi (CE 10). Core entitlement 17 relating to access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision has proven the most difficult for authorities to meet in full throughout the fifth framework, owing to the organisational changes which have taken place.

Customer satisfaction with library services generally remains high, with the poorest ratings for satisfaction being for the choice of books. This is likely to be a consequence of reduced book budgets. As most services have tried to retain library branches, the materials budget has been affected by the financial restrictions. As a result, overall acquisitions per 1,000 population and materials expenditure per 1,000 population continue to fall and remain below the set targets in each of the three years of the framework. However, the replenishment rate for Wales as a whole has remained above the target of 11% in each of the three years of the framework.

In terms of the quality indicators with targets, on average, Wales as a whole fully meets three indicators, and partially meets the remaining four. ICT provision remains one of the

strengths of the Welsh public libraries with all authorities fully meeting the target for ICT support (QI 3) in both 2015-16 and 2016-17. The number of PCs per 10,000 population for Wales as a whole has remained relatively stable throughout the period – at a level slightly above the target of 9. Although public ICT usage has decreased, this is largely due to an increase in Wi-Fi provision and visitors bringing their own devices.

Traditional measures of usage have, across Wales as a whole, seen reductions. Both visits per 1,000 population and loans per 1,000 population have fallen over the course of the framework, while the overall number of audio-visual issues/electronic downloads per 1,000 population has remained relatively stable over the three-year period. However, the number of active borrowers per 1,000 population overall has stabilised somewhat in the two most recent years.

The overall proportion of materials expenditure accounted for by Welsh language resources has been above the target of 4% throughout the fifth framework. However, in contrast to this, expenditure on Welsh language materials per 1,000 Welsh speaking and reading population has been below the target of £750 in each of the three years for Wales as a whole.

Staffing levels continue to fall and are now critically low. Both the total staff per 1,000 population and qualified staff per 1,000 population for Wales overall have been below the set targets in the two most recent years of the framework. Despite this, 97% of adult users rate the standard of customer care as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Despite a reduction in staffing levels overall, attendances at events and activities per 1,000 population and at pre-arranged training sessions per 1,000 population have increased over the fifth framework for Wales as a whole.

A further encouraging sign with regards to staff is the proportion of staff time spent in training and development, which lies above the set target of 1% in each of the three years of the framework for Wales as a whole.

Average annual opening hours per 1,000 population have fallen throughout the course of the fifth framework for Wales as a whole, as a direct result of shrinking budgets; however, the level has remained above the target of 120 hours open per 1,000 population in each of the three years for Wales as a whole.

Considering the four areas in the framework (*Customers and communities; Access for all; Learning for life; and Leadership and development*) overall, Welsh libraries are performing well in the areas of customers and communities, and access for all, but are finding learning for life and leadership and development more challenging. Any future extended period of financial austerity risks further damaging these areas, with consequent impacts for the service as a whole.

# 1. Introduction

Library services contribute to the achievement of a range of Welsh Government outcomes such as literacy, skills and learning, digital inclusion, poverty, health and well-being. Library provision spans these outcomes, offering a range of services which often support two or more of the outcomes simultaneously.

Public library standards in Wales have been in operation since 2002, and enable the Welsh Ministers to show that they are fulfilling their statutory duties concerning library services, and enable library services to show that they are providing a comprehensive and efficient service, under the terms of the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964. The first framework ran from 2002 to 2005 with subsequent frameworks covering the periods 2005-08, 2008-11 and 2011-14.

The fifth framework of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS), covering the period 2014 to 2017, was developed by LISU, in conjunction with the Centre for Information Management at Loughborough University, the Welsh Government and local authorities to incorporate not only quantitative performance indicators, but also a number of more qualitative, outcomes-based measures to assist library authorities in demonstrating their value and impact. Each individual framework has evolved to reflect the changing needs and expectations of public library users. In addition to the fulfilment of statutory duties, the WPLS framework plays a valuable role in supporting the development of public library services.

The framework comprises 18 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators to monitor how well library services realise their potential benefits for the people of Wales. The mapping between benefits and indicators is not a simplistic one, as measuring outcomes and impacts at a service-wide level cannot be achieved directly, but must be inferred from broader indicators.

Introduced at a time of budgetary constraint, this framework provides opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and the flexibility to make best use of the resources available to them. The framework has been developed using a variety of quality performance models as a basis to create a unique framework for Wales, incorporating input and output measures, as well as qualitative and impact/outcome elements.

The process of monitoring and assessing library performance is led by MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government, and follows the pattern established in earlier frameworks. Each library authority submits an annual return each year, which is scrutinised for completeness by an independent reviewer and a peer reference group. An annual report is prepared for each authority, published via the MALD website, and a feedback seminar provides an overview of each year's results. This report considers the three years of the fifth framework as a whole, giving a summary of performance across Wales, and making comparisons with the previous framework where possible.

## 2. Welsh library context

There are 22 library authorities in Wales, which vary in size both geographically, and by population, their rural or urban nature, and in their demographic characteristics. Such factors all impact upon the nature of library services required and their delivery. During the course of the current framework, a climate of local authority budgetary restraint has operated, with inevitable impacts on library resources. Library authorities have developed a variety of mechanisms to maintain provision, including increasing use of volunteers, the introduction of community supported and managed libraries, engaging with a variety of partners to deliver programmes and services, and in some cases a transfer to a trust. In their returns to the Welsh Government, library authorities are required to provide a variety of contextual data.

### 2.1. Population characteristics

In 2016-17, the total population of Wales was 3,096,298, just 0.4% higher than at the start of the framework. 17.9% of the population were aged under 16 years, compared to 19.2% at the start of the framework. There is considerable variation between authorities in this proportion, from 9.4% aged under 16 years in Denbighshire to 20.9% in Gwynedd. The proportion of the population able to read Welsh varies between 5.9% in Blaenau Gwent to 65.4% in Gwynedd, and overall has increased from 16.1% to 16.6% over the course of the framework.

### 2.2. The library estate

Overall, the total number of service points open for 10 hours per week or more and on which the authority returns are based, has fallen from 236 in 2014-15 to 228 in 2016-17. Within this, there are some success stories, however, with three authorities increasing their number of such service points. Five authorities have maintained their numbers of service points with community support (see below), while four services have reduced the number. A further 13 service points are open for less than ten hours per week, unchanged during this framework, and library services operated 35 mobile libraries and home delivery vehicles in 2016-17, five fewer than in 2014-15. The report on the Fourth Framework in 2014<sup>1</sup> scrutinised the provision of the mobile library service and highlighted that three authorities had withdrawn or reduced their service between 2009 and March 2014. Over the duration of the fifth framework four authorities reduced the number of mobile libraries provided by their service and one authority reported that the mobile library service had been withdrawn.

The return also asks for details of community libraries, whether these are commissioned, community managed or community supported, and for the number of independent community libraries, if known. These models are defined and used by CIPFA as follows:

- *Commissioned* libraries are commissioned and fully funded by the council but delivered by a not-for-profit community, social enterprise or mutual organisation, either existing or newly created. Councils might commission i) individual libraries or ii) the whole library service.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Hywel E. Roberts, 2014, *Maintaining a Valued Service: The Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2011-14: An overall analysis of the performance of the Welsh public library authorities*, available on request from MALD, Welsh Government

- *Community managed* libraries are community-led and largely community delivered, rarely with paid staff, but often with some form of ongoing council support and often still part of the public library network.
- *Community supported* libraries are council-led and funded, usually with paid professional staff, but given significant support by volunteers.

These numbers have increased over the course of the framework, and details are shown in Table 1. Inclusion of the various types of community- libraries within the rest of the annual return is dependent on whether they meet the criteria as set out in *Guidance on Community Managed Libraries and the Statutory Provision of Public Library Services in Wales*<sup>2</sup>. In broad terms, community libraries which meet all of the core entitlements, have an agreed level of support from the local authority library service with stock, ICT and resource sharing activities, and paid staff for at least part of their opening hours, can be included. Five library authorities now include data from a total of 31 community libraries in their returns, compared to two authorities including eight such libraries in 2014-15. The majority of these are commissioned community libraries, where services are run by an independent trust.

**Table 1 Community libraries**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
<b>Community libraries open 10+ hours per week</b>			
Commissioned community libraries	8	18	19
Community supported	3	5	6
Community managed	9	8	14
<b>Total community libraries open 10+ hours per week</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Community libraries open for less than 10 hours per week</b>			
Commissioned community libraries	-	-	-
Community supported	2	-	3
Community managed	4	5	4
<b>Total community libraries open for less than 10 hours per week</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
No. of Independent Community Libraries	2	3	7
No of community libraries included in the returns	8	23	31

### 2.3. Resources and use

The fifth quality framework does not include indicators for stock, library membership or issues, but these data are collected to provide additional context. Total lending stock has fallen from 5,123,930 items in April 2014 to 4,950,973 items at the start of the final year of the framework. The number of library members has also fallen, from 1.49 million to 1.44 million, but is still high at 46% of the population. Annual book issues have fallen over the framework period in all authorities, from a total of 12.0 million to 10.3 million for Wales as a whole, equivalent to 3.34 issues per person per year. Audio-visual issues and electronic book downloads have remained stable for the country as a whole, with increases reported by 10 library services of up to 60%.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/150522community-managed-libraries-en.pdf>

### 3. Core entitlements

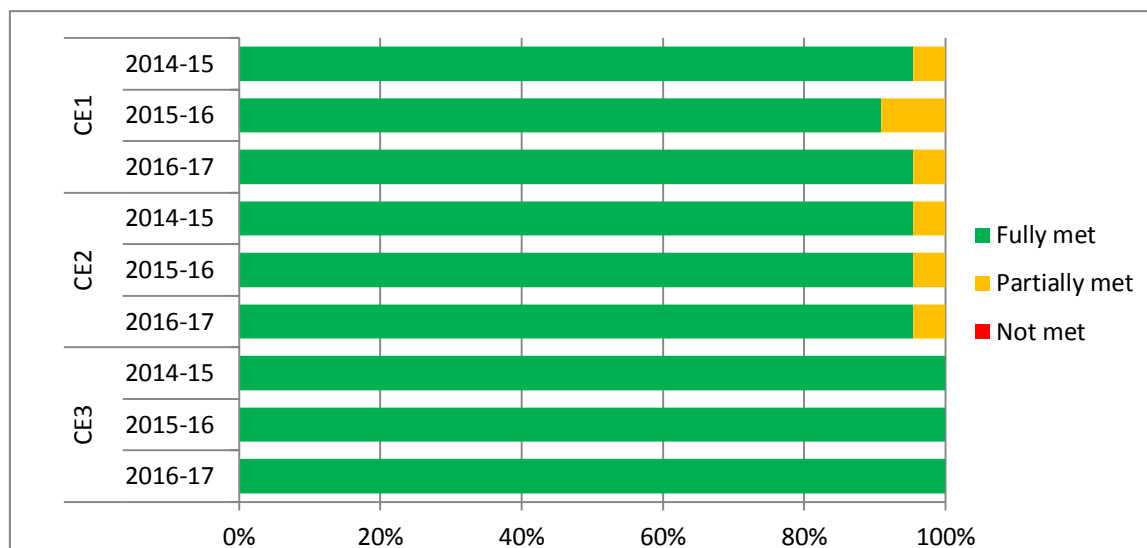
A set of core library entitlements for Welsh citizens was set out in *Libraries Inspire*<sup>3</sup>, the strategic development framework for Welsh libraries for 2012-16. These core entitlements were formally incorporated into the fifth quality framework, together with a small number of additional entitlements. Library authorities were asked to self-assess their compliance with each of these core entitlements, and guidance was provided as to what elements should be taken into account for the entitlements to be fully met, partially met or not met. It became clear from the first year of the framework that some authorities judged themselves more harshly than others, and the Reference Group adjusted a small number of the reported assessments.

#### 3.1. Customers and Communities

The three core entitlements included within Customers and Communities have all been relatively well achieved (*Figure 1*), with between 20 and 22 authorities fully meeting these entitlements in each year of the framework. In particular, all authorities have provided access to a range of services and resources to support lifelong learning, personal well-being and development, and community participation in the two most recent years of the framework.

Authorities partially meeting the staff entitlement (CE 1) generally gave low staffing levels, particularly qualified staffing levels, as the reason for not meeting this in full. Authorities not fully meeting CE 2 and CE 3 generally cited restricted availability of events, particularly in smaller branches, as the reason.

**Figure 1 Core entitlements met**



- CE 1. Ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help.
- CE 2. Stage a range of activities to support learning, enjoyment and enable users to obtain the maximum benefit from the available resources.
- CE 3. Provide access to a range of services and resources to support lifelong learning, personal well-being and development, and community participation.

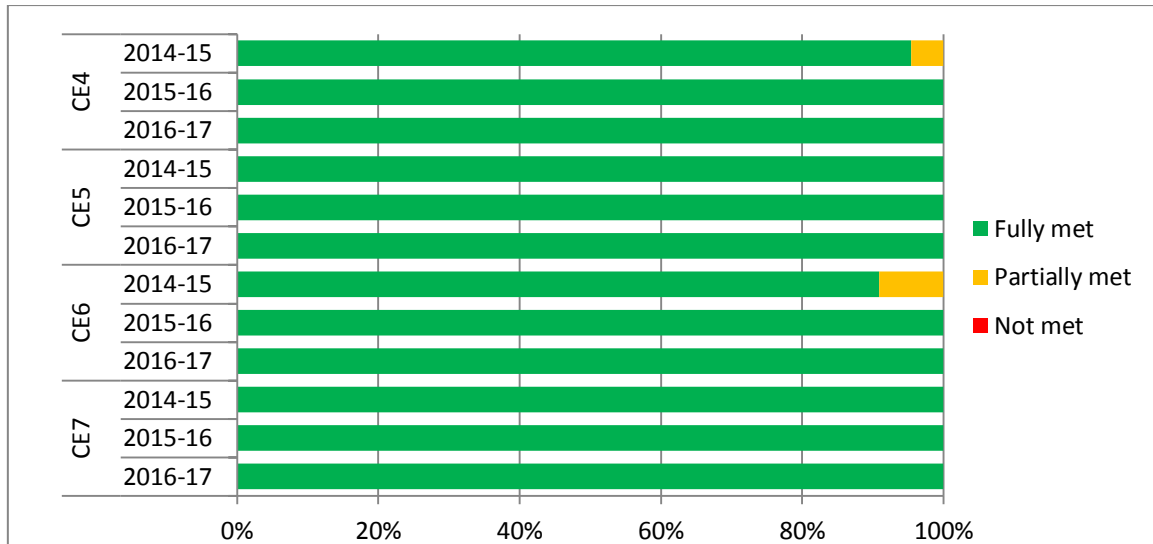
<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/111104librariesinspireen.pdf>



“Joining the group has been a fantastic opportunity ...Before, I was just stuck in the house ... it gives me routine to my life, which makes me feel better about myself... I can't believe how much I've changed”

### 3.2. Access for all

Figure 2 Core entitlements met



CE 4. Be open to all members of their communities.

CE 5. Be free to join.

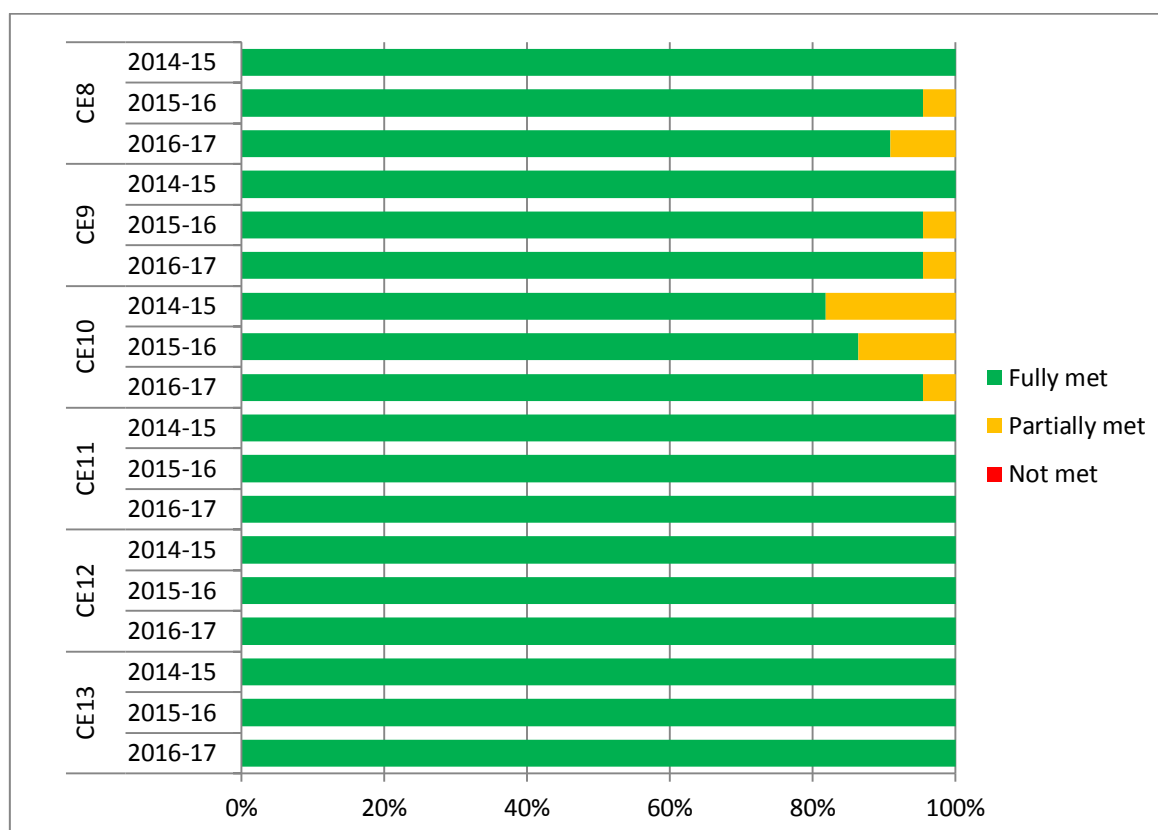
CE 6. Provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable opening hours.

CE 7. Provide information resources for individuals and groups with special needs

The four core entitlements within *Access for all* have also been consistently well achieved throughout the framework with none of the library authorities failing to meet these entitlements in any of the three years (*Figure 2*). Further to this, all authorities have provided appropriate services and facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special needs and free membership throughout the framework. The remaining two core entitlements (“open to all members of their communities” and “provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space with suitable opening hours”) have been fully achieved by all authorities in the two most recent years.

### 3.3. Learning for Life

Figure 3 Core entitlements met



CE 8. Lend books for free.

CE 9. Deliver free access to information.

CE 10. Provide free use of the Internet and computers, including Wi-Fi.

CE 11. Deliver free use of online information resources 24 hours a day.

CE 12. Provide access to high quality resources in a range of formats, including those in the Welsh language, reflecting changing forms of publication.

CE 13. Share their catalogues, to enable a single search of all Welsh library resources.

All authorities have delivered free use of online information resources 24 hours a day; provided access to high quality resources in a range of formats, including those in the Welsh language, reflecting changing forms of publication; and shared their catalogues, to enable a single search of all Welsh library resources throughout the framework (Figure 3).

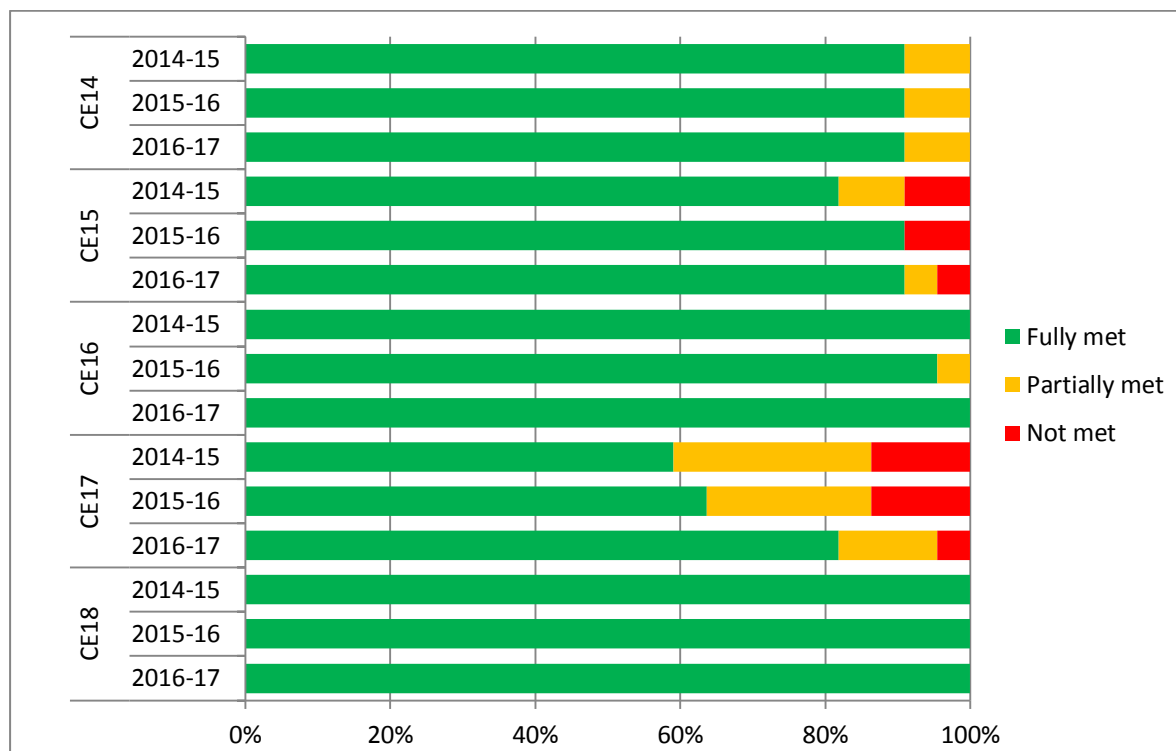
Although no library service charges for loans from within the authority, some have begun to charge customers for inter-library loans within Wales; these are deemed to meet the core entitlement for free access to information only partially.

Providing free use of the internet and computers, including Wi-Fi, has shown some improvement over the three years, with just one authority only partially meeting this core entitlement in the most recent year – compared to four authorities in 2014-15 and three in 2015-16. Those authorities partially meeting the entitlement relating to free use of the internet and computers including Wi-Fi generally did not offer Wi-Fi throughout their libraries – although all stated that they were working on this aspect of their provision, and in 2016-17

only one authority indicated that Wi-Fi was still not available throughout their static service points.

### 3.4. Leadership and Development

**Figure 4 Core entitlements met**



- CE 14. Promote libraries to attract more people to benefit from their services.
- CE 15. Regularly consult users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs.
- CE 16. Work in partnership to open up access to the resources of all Welsh libraries.
- CE 17. 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.
- CE 18. Provide a clear, timely and transparent complaints process if things go wrong.

All authorities have provided a clear, timely and transparent complaints process if things go wrong throughout the framework (*Figure 4*). In contrast to this, providing access to the library service’s strategy, policies, objectives and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community has been the most difficult core entitlement for the authorities to meet in full, although there has been some improvement over the course of the framework. Authorities partially or not meeting this entitlement generally indicated that the library strategy was currently being developed or had been developed but had not yet been made available online.

The only other core entitlement which some authorities did not meet over the framework concerns regularly consulting users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs. This was not met by one authority in the most recent year – compared to not being met by two authorities in both 2014-15 and 2015-16. All authorities report consulting customers, but in some instances this is on an ad-hoc basis, or restricted to specific issues.

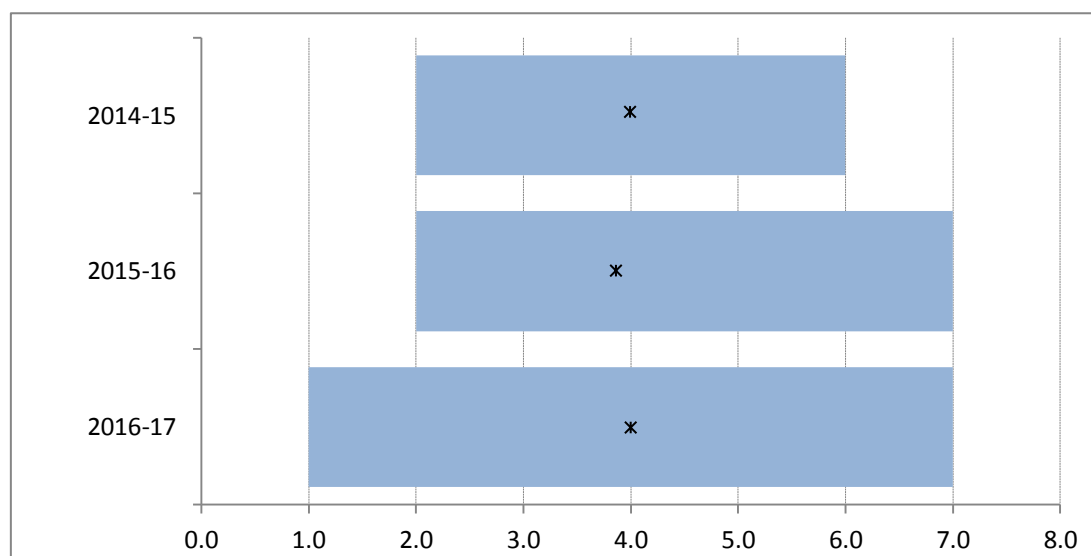
## 4. Quality indicators

Details of the 16 quality indicators and associated targets are given in Appendix 1.

Seven of the quality indicators included in the framework have formal targets that authorities are expected to achieve; in some cases the indicator includes several individual targets which authorities must reach in order to fully meet the overall quality indicator. If an authority meets some of the individual targets but does not meet one or more of the remaining individual targets, they are rated as having partially achieved the overall quality indicator. For these indicators, the charts in the following sections will show the extent to which library authorities have fully or partially achieved the quality indicator, as well as the extent to which any individual targets that contribute to the overall quality indicator have been achieved.

Overall, ten authorities have fully met more quality indicators in the most recent year than in 2014-15, seven authorities fully met fewer indicators in 2016-17 compared to 2014-15, and the remaining five authorities fully met the same number of quality indicators in the first and last years of the framework. Despite fluctuations over the duration of the framework, only one authority fully met all seven quality indicators in 2016-17, compared to no authorities in 2014-15 and two authorities in 2015-16.

**Figure 5 Quality Indicators with targets fully met**



\* indicates the average; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

Figure 5 displays the overall level of achievement of those quality indicators with targets over the duration of the framework and shows that there have been some small changes over the three years. Overall:

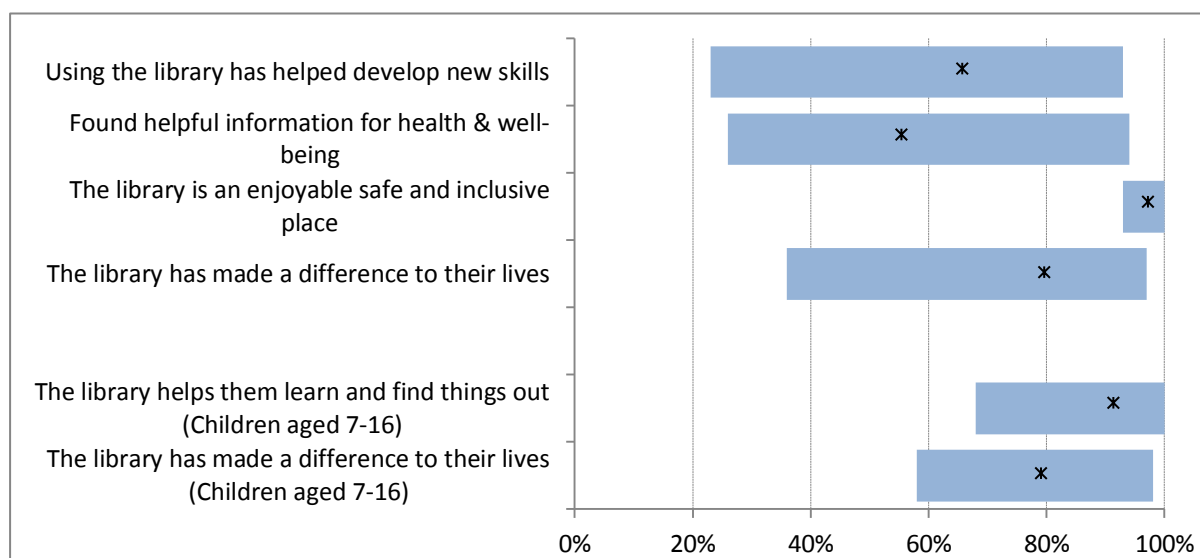
- the average number of quality indicators that have been fully met has remained relatively stable – at around 4 out of 7 in each of the three years
- the average number of quality indicators that have been partially met has fallen over the course of the framework, and stands at 2.1 in the most recent year - compared to 2.4 in 2014-15
- The average number of quality indicators not being met has increased slightly over the framework and currently stands at 0.8

Continuing on from the fourth framework, one of the main areas of strength concerns WPLSQI 5 and the location of services points with all authorities fully meeting the target in each of the three years of the fifth framework.

#### 4.1. WPLSQI 1 Making a difference

Data for this indicator were required to be reported once during the course of the framework. Two authorities did not carry out impact surveys, so the figures below are based on data from 20 library services.

**Figure 6 Percentage of users agreeing with impact statements**



\* indicates the percentage for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

Figure 6 illustrates the impact of library use on people’s lives and highlights the variation between authorities, with the blue bar representing the range over the framework. Authorities were required to report this information just once over the framework, and so the data provided in Figure 6 is as reported in 2016-17 but may have been collected in any of the three years. The proportion of adults indicating that the library had made a difference to their lives ranges from 36% to 97% for the individual authorities, with a figure of 80% for Wales as a whole; however, it is worth noting that only three authorities reported a proportion lower than 70%. It is reassuring that the proportion of adults indicating that the library is a safe and inclusive place ranged from 93% to 100% for individual authorities, with a figure of 97% for Wales as a whole.

*“Just walking in through the doors of the library helps me feel better, a haven and sanctuary”*

Figure 6 also illustrates that:

- across Wales as a whole, 79% of children aged 7 to 16 think that the library has made a difference to their lives, although this ranges from 58% to 98% within authorities
- for Wales as a whole 91% of children aged 7 to 16 think that the library has helped them learn and find things out.

*“My daughter has been coming to [the] Library since she was a baby. She now has a reading age of 8/9 and she is only 5. The librarians have been fantastic, helpful and patient! Thank you”*

## 4.2. WPLSQI 2 Customer Satisfaction

Data for this indicator were required to be reported once during the course of the framework. Two authorities did not carry out customer satisfaction surveys, so the figures below are based on data from 20 library services.

**Figure 7 Percentage of satisfied users**



\* indicates the percentage for Wales as a whole; The shaded area represents the range across authorities

Figure 7 displays the levels of customer satisfaction throughout the framework, and illustrates that:

- The proportion of adults indicating that the library is 'good' or 'very good' overall ranges from 92% to 100% across authorities with an encouraging figure of 97% for Wales as a whole
- Despite staff levels currently standing at worryingly low levels, the proportion of adults rating the standard of customer care as 'good' or 'very good' ranges from 90% to 100%, with a figure of 97% across Wales as a whole
- The proportion of adults finding the choice of books 'good' or 'very good' ranges more widely between authorities, which is perhaps not surprising given the current restrictions placed on book budgets, and the overall figure for Wales stands at 89%. However, this compares to a figure of 96% in framework 4, reflecting the reduction in investment in this area during the current framework

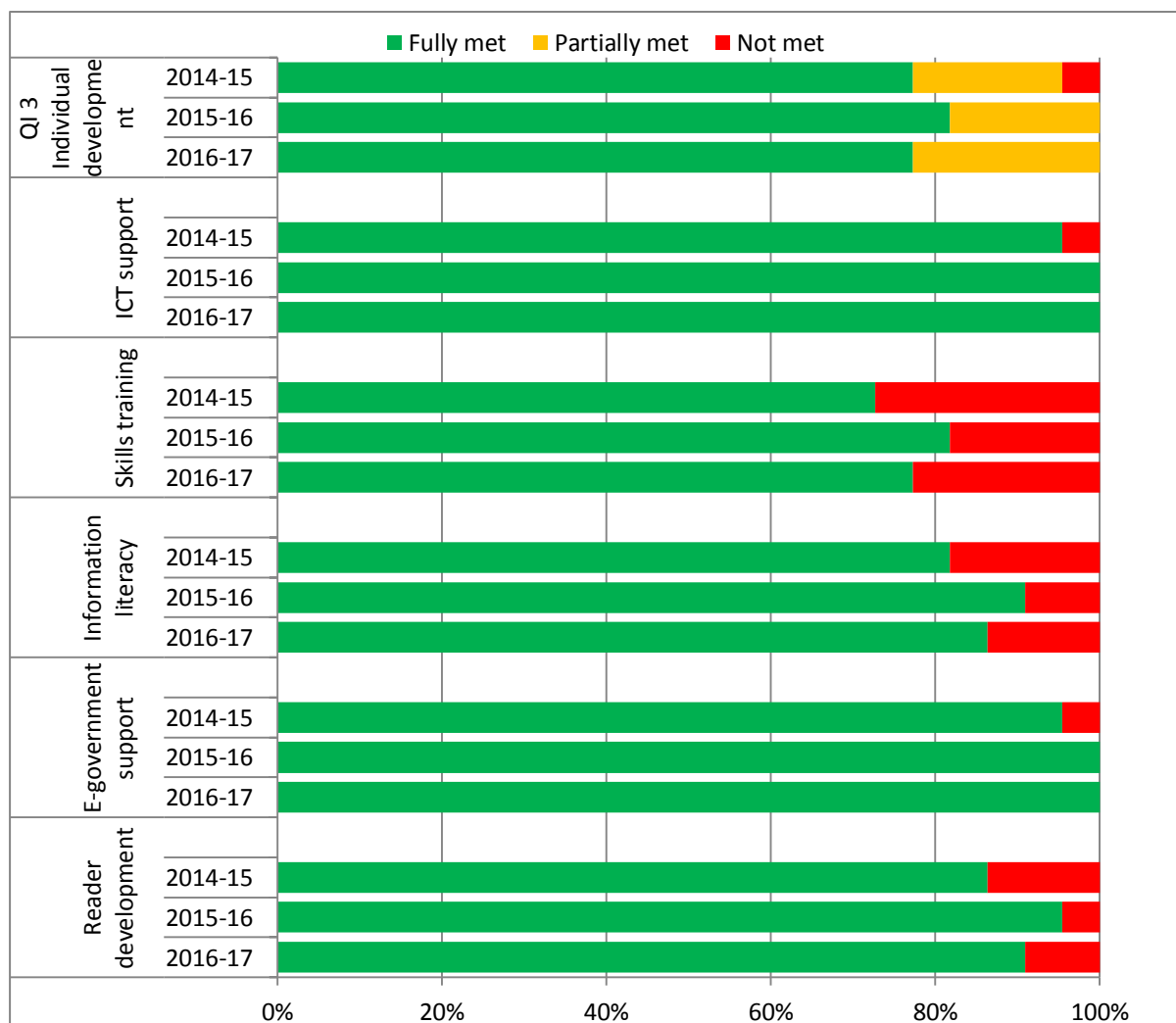
*“A small but important part of my life and a big place in a small town where ... the welcome [is] always warm”*

The average rating awarded by children aged 7 to 16 to the library they use over the course of the framework was 9.2 out of ten for Wales as a whole, ranging from 8.6 to 10 in individual authorities.

### 4.3. WPLSQI 3 Support for individual development

This indicator contains five targets. Figure 8 displays whether authorities have fully met, partially met or not met the overall quality indicator for supporting individual development, along with the supporting targets that contribute to the quality indicator.

**Figure 8 Support for individual development – targets met**



*“Learning how to surf the internet, has opened my life up, I can search for any information and last week I learnt how to change my gas and electricity suppliers and I couldn’t believe how much money I saved, the library saves me money all the time”*

- All authorities fully met the targets for ICT support (basic support in the use of ICT infrastructure provided (including Wi-Fi); accessing the range of electronic information resources available) and e-government support (support for users to access local and national e-government resources) in the two most recent years
- In 2014-15 only one authority failed to meet any of the targets corresponding to support for individual development owing to one of their service points open 10 or more hours per week being unable to offer the relevant support. However, it is important to note that

this was improved on and they have met all targets in the two most recent years of the framework

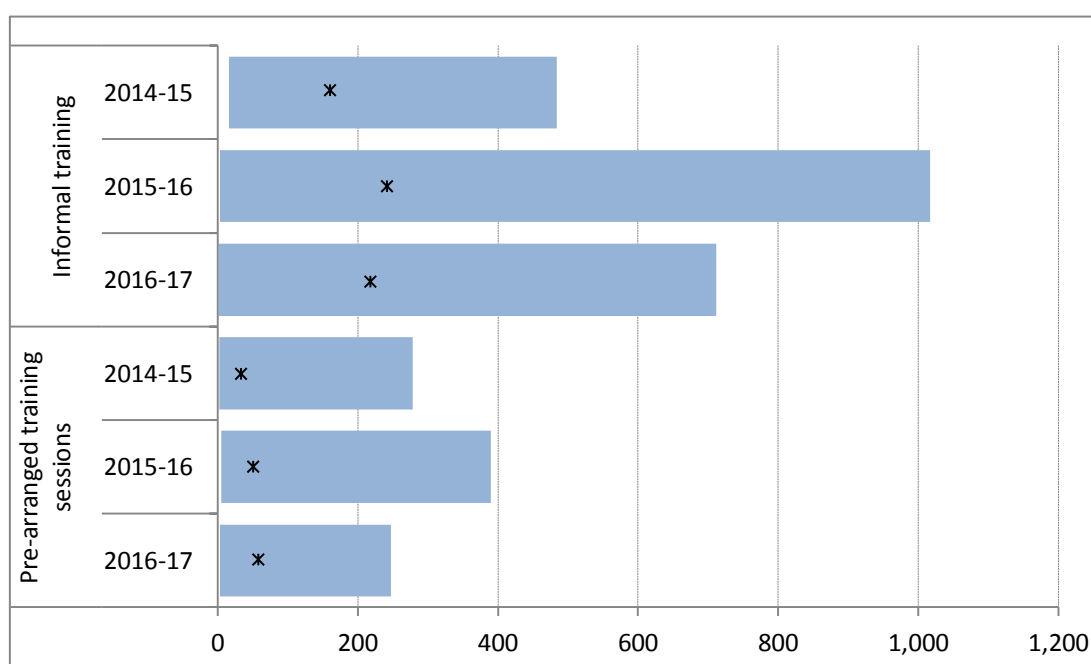
- In each year of the framework the targets for skills training (training to improve literacy, numeracy and digital skills), information literacy (information literacy sessions for users) and reader development (reader development programmes/activities for both adults and children) have not been met by at least one authority
- Training to improve literacy, numeracy and digital skills has proven the most difficult target to meet, with five authorities not meeting this target in 2016-17, compared to six authorities in 2014-15 and four authorities in 2015-16
- Two authorities have not provided information literacy sessions for users in all of their service points open for 10 or more hours a week in any of the three years of the framework

Lack of appropriate space within smaller branches, and staff availability are most often cited as reasons for missing these targets.

*“These sessions are great... they have given me the confidence to read a lot more to her than I would otherwise”*

#### 4.4. WPLSQI 4 User training

**Figure 9 Attendance at training sessions 1,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities 2014-15 based on 21 authorities; 2015-16 based on 19 authorities; 2016-17 based on 20 authorities

Over the three years of the framework authorities were asked to provide details of the number of users attending pre-arranged training sessions organised by the library and the number of customers helped by informal training, with Figure 9 illustrating the ranges and overall attendance per 1,000 population for each year. There is much variation between authorities in each year; however, attendance at pre-arranged training sessions has



increased steadily each year so that there were 59 attendances per 1,000 population in the most recent year compared to 51 in 2015-16 and 33 in 2014-15, across Wales as a whole.

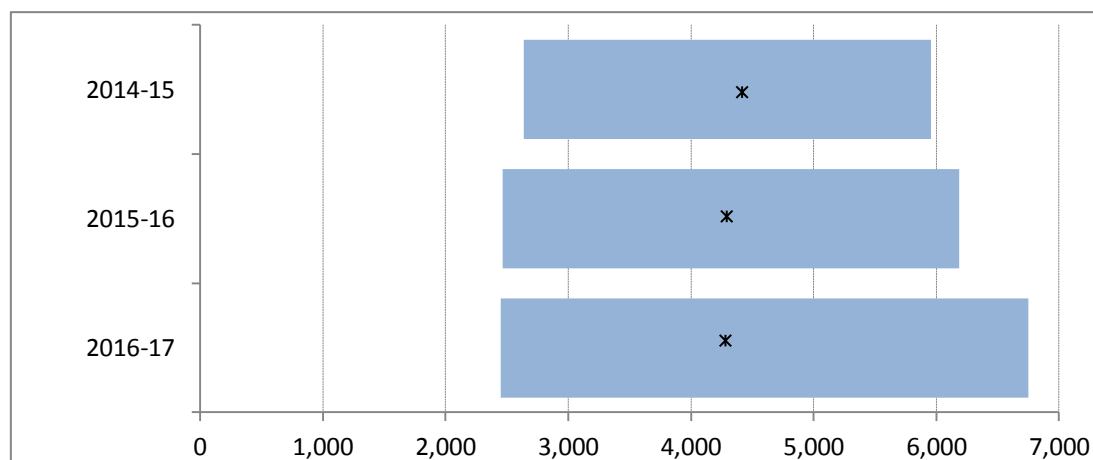
There has been some fluctuation in the number of customers helped by means of informal training, with a figure of 219 per 1,000 population in the most recent year, compared to 242 in 2015-16 and 161 in 2014-15 for Wales as a whole.

#### 4.5. WPLSQI 5 Location of service points

The quality indicator relating to the location of service points provides guidance on the proportion of the population that should live within the stated distance of a static service point or mobile library stop depending upon the population density. Where the population density is 20 or more persons per hectare, at least 95% should live within two miles of a static service point. For those authorities with a population density between 1.1 and 19.9 persons per hectare, at least 75% should live within 2.5 miles (or 10 minutes travelling time on public transport) of a static service point or within a quarter of a mile from a mobile library stop. For those authorities with a population density of 1.0 persons per hectare or fewer, at least 70% should live within 3 miles (or 15 minutes travelling time on public transport) of a static service point, or within quarter of a mile of a mobile library stop. All authorities have fully met the target in each year of the framework.

#### 4.6. WPLSQI 6 Library use

Figure 10 Visits per 1,000 population



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

This quality indicator covers all aspects of library usage, both physical and virtual, along with the levels of library membership and active borrowers. Figure 10 displays the overall number of physical visits per 1,000 population throughout the framework and shows that the figure has fallen slightly each year – although possibly not at as fast a rate as anticipated, given the growing availability of e-resources. Despite the fall in physical visits over the course of the framework, it is important to note that, in general, a large proportion of adults think that the choice of books is either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ - at 89% for Wales as a whole for the fifth framework (Figure 7).

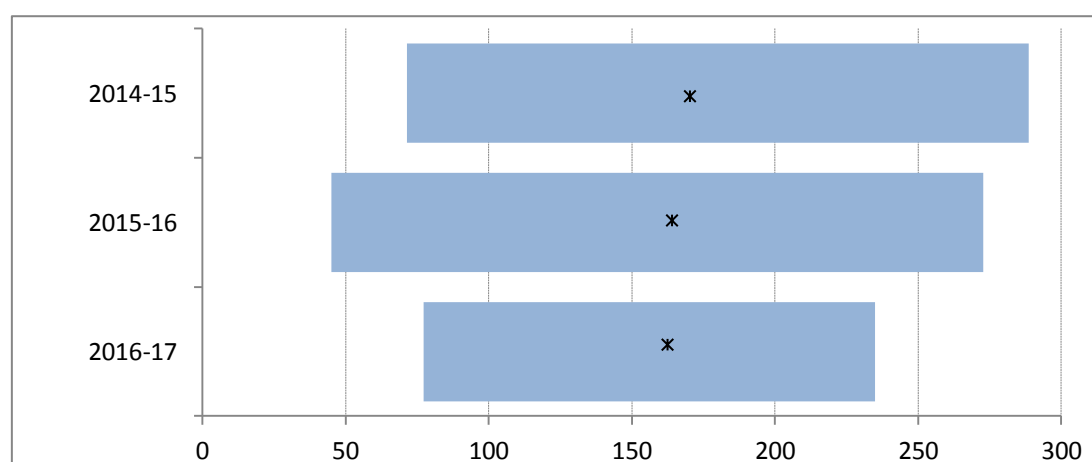
Data were also collected on the number of book loans along with audio-visual issues and electronic issues/downloads although no targets were set and these data do not form part of the formal quality indicator. Over the duration of the framework, the number of books issued

has fallen steadily, and currently stands 13.7% lower than at the start of the fifth framework. However, there is much variation between authorities:

- the number of book loans per 1,000 population ranged from 1,741 to 5,594, with an overall figure of 3,229 in 2016-17
- in 2014-15 the number of book loans per 1,000 population ranged from 2,332 to 5,778 with 3,887 for Wales overall
- in 2016-17 electronic issues/audio-visual downloads per 1,000 population was 301 for Wales as a whole – compared to 299 in 2014-15

Over the course of the fifth framework authorities were asked to provide details of the number of active borrowers over the year, and Figure 11 displays the ranges for the Welsh authorities and the figure for Wales as a whole in each of the three years. The number of active borrowers per 1,000 population across Wales decreased initially during the framework; however it has stabilised somewhat since then so that it stands at 163 in the most recent year – compared to 164 in 2015-16 and 170 in 2014-15. Figure 11 also highlights that the range has reduced in the most recent year. Note that the number of active borrowers does not include those members that only use the library for resources such as IT facilities or to attend library events and activities and is the definition used by CIPFA in their Public Library Statistics.

**Figure 11 Active borrowers per 1,000 population**

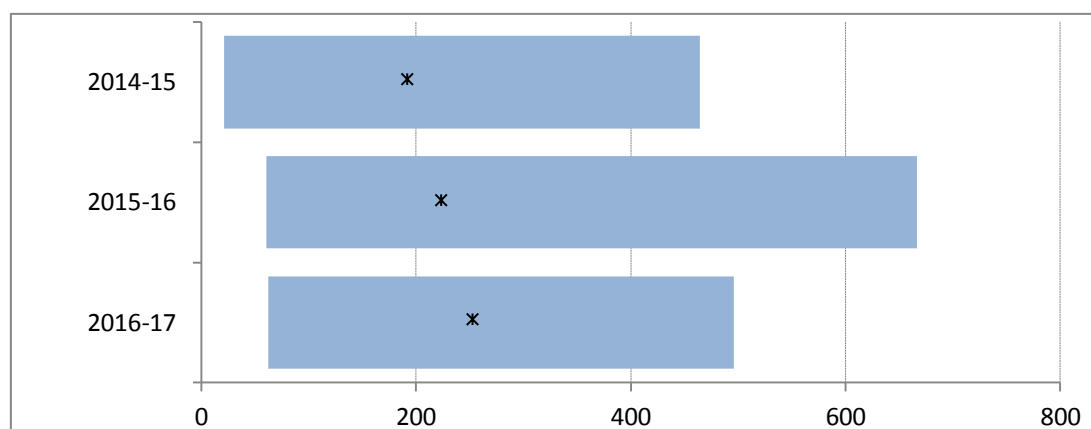


\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

It is also worth noting that usage figures, including the numbers of active borrowers, can often be negatively affected by factors such as the closure of service points, even when they are only temporary closures for refurbishments, or the introduction of a new Library Management System (LMS) which often involves a data cleanse. In contrast to this, the re-opening of a library following a refurbishment or the co-location of the library with another service can often have a positive impact on usage figures. Electronic issues/audio-visual downloads is one aspect of the library service that is expected to expand and it will be interesting to see the level of growth over the next framework.

#### 4.7. WPLSQI 7 Total number of attendances at events and activities organised by the library

Figure 12 Attendance at events per 1,000 population



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

Figure 12 illustrates the range and overall levels of user attendances at library events per 1,000 population in each year of the framework and highlights the wide range between authorities. This is influenced by the library’s capacity to stage events as well as by the popularity of those events. It is perhaps an encouraging sign that the general squeeze on library budgets does not appear to have impacted on library events with overall attendance per 1,000 population increasing slightly over the duration of the framework, so that it stands at 253 for Wales as a whole in the most recent year – compared to 192 in 2014-15. This is one area in which volunteer support and working in partnership with other agencies has an impact on what can be achieved.

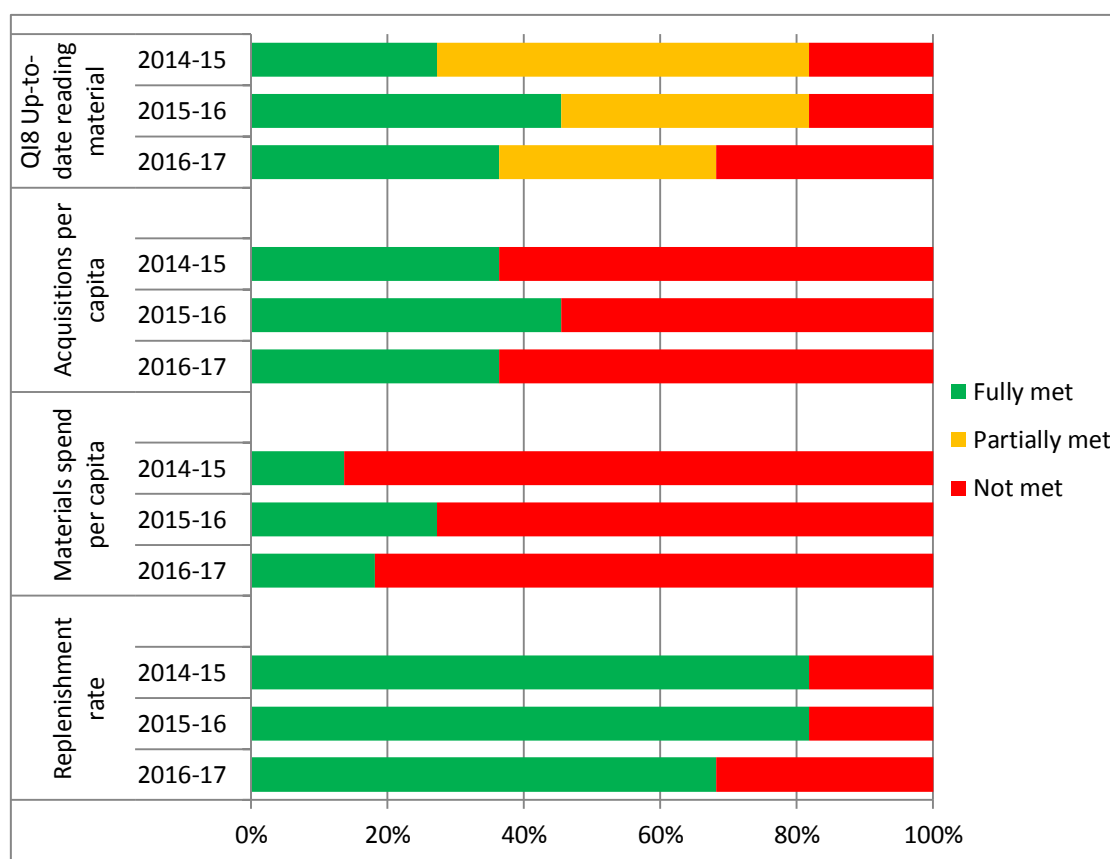
*“This “small group of story lovers” described as the “pleasantest hours” of her week”*

#### 4.8. WPLSQI 8 Up-to-date reading material

This indicator has two targets which must be achieved to meet QI8 in full – a minimum spend per capita on acquisitions OR a minimum number of acquisitions per capita; AND a target for replenishment rate.

Figure 13 provides an overall picture of whether authorities have fully met, partially met or not met the overall quality indicator relating to up-to-date reading material, as well as illustrating whether they have met the individual targets that contribute to the overall quality indicator.

**Figure 13 Up-to-date reading material – targets met**



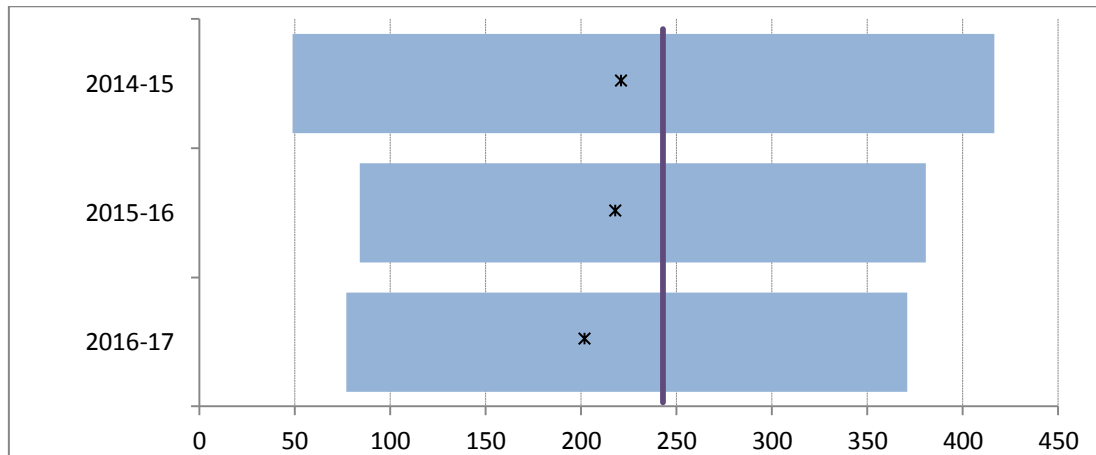
- Five authorities have fully achieved the overall quality indicator in all three years of the framework
- A further four authorities fully achieved the quality indicator in two out of the three years.
- One authority has failed to meet all targets relating to up-to-date reading material throughout the framework
- The most recent year has seen a decline, with seven authorities not meeting the quality indicator on up-to-date reading material – compared to four authorities in each of 2014-15 and 2015-16

Looking at each element in turn, Figure 14 displays the range and overall level of acquisitions per 1,000 population in each year for all Welsh public library authorities throughout the framework, with the solid line representing the target of 243 items per 1,000 population. Overall:

- Less than half of all authorities have met this target in each year of the framework-with ten authorities achieving this target in 2015-16, compared to eight in both 2014-15 and 2016-17
- Two authorities achieving this target in 2014-15, no longer meet the target in the most recent year
- Two authorities that did not meet the target in 2014-15 have achieved more than 243 acquisitions per 1,000 population in the two years since then
- Six authorities achieved the target in all three years of the framework

- The total number of acquisitions per 1,000 population for Wales is below the target level in each year of the framework, and stands at 202 in the most recent year – compared to 221 in 2014-15

**Figure 14 Acquisitions per 1,000 population**

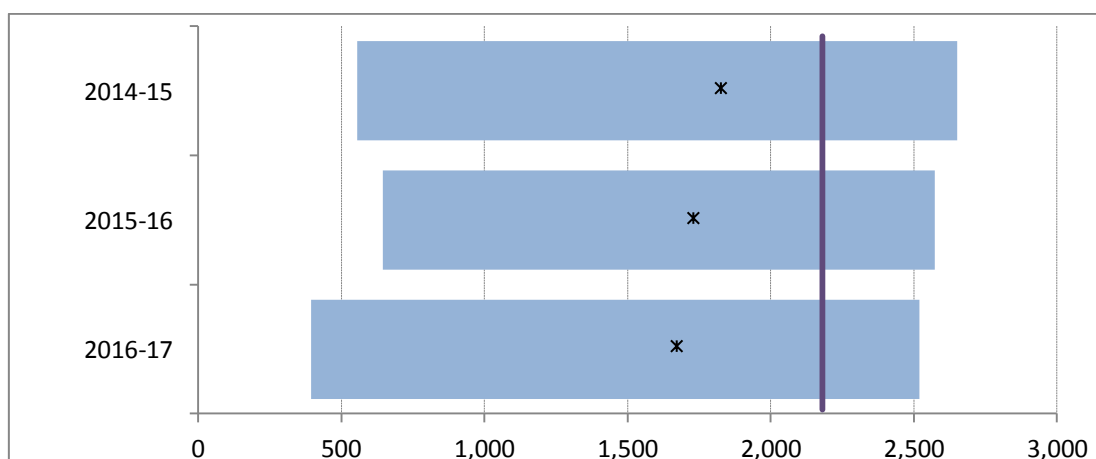


\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of 243 acquisitions 1,000 population

Figure 15 displays the range and total materials spend per 1,000 population in Wales over the duration of the framework. Overall:

- Authorities have found it more difficult to achieve the spending target of £2,180 per 1,000 population on materials than the acquisitions target, with just two authorities meeting this in all three years of the framework
- Sixteen authorities have failed to achieve this target in all three years of the framework
- One authority met the target in both 2014-15 and 2015-16 but has failed to do so in the most recent year
- Two authorities that did not meet the target in the first year of the framework have done so in the two years since then

**Figure 15 Materials expenditure per 1,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of £2,180 materials expenditure per 1,000 population

In addition to this, Figure 15 highlights the wide range between authorities throughout the framework, and emphasises that the total per capita spend of Welsh libraries has moved further away from the target in each year, so that in 2016-17 this stands at £1,673 compared to the target of £2,180. This compares to a total materials expenditure for Wales of £1,828 per 1,000 population in 2014-15.

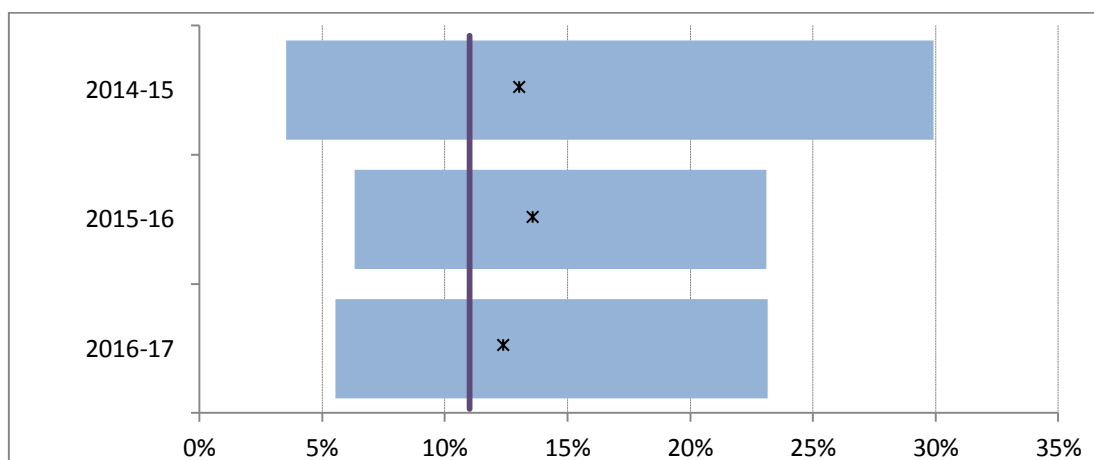
It is worth noting that:

- Just two authorities have achieved both targets regarding overall acquisitions and materials expenditure in all three years of the framework
- One additional authority has met both targets in the two most recent years
- One authority achieved both targets in the first two years of the framework but failed to do so in 2016-17
- Half of all authorities have failed to meet both targets throughout the framework

The final part of the quality indicator relating to up-to-date reading material corresponds to the replenishment rate – the percentage of stock which is newly acquired during the year, calculated as total gross additions to stock during the year divided by the total stock held at the start of the year, with the target set at 11%. Figure 16 displays the range and total replenishment rates for Welsh library authorities in each year of the framework. In general, the target for the replenishment rate is more easily achieved than the targets relating to both acquisitions and materials expenditure:

- Thirteen authorities achieved the target in all three years of the framework
- A further two authorities failed to meet the target in 2014-15, but have done so in the most recent year
- Three authorities met the target in the two earliest years of the framework but have not done so in 2016-17
- Just one authority has failed to meet the target in any year of the framework.

**Figure 16 Replenishment rate**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of a replenishment rate of 11%

Figure 16 highlights that, despite a decrease in the most recent year, the overall replenishment rate has been above the target rate throughout the framework, and stands at 12.4% in 2016-17 – compared to 13.0% in 2014-15 and 13.6% in 2015-16.

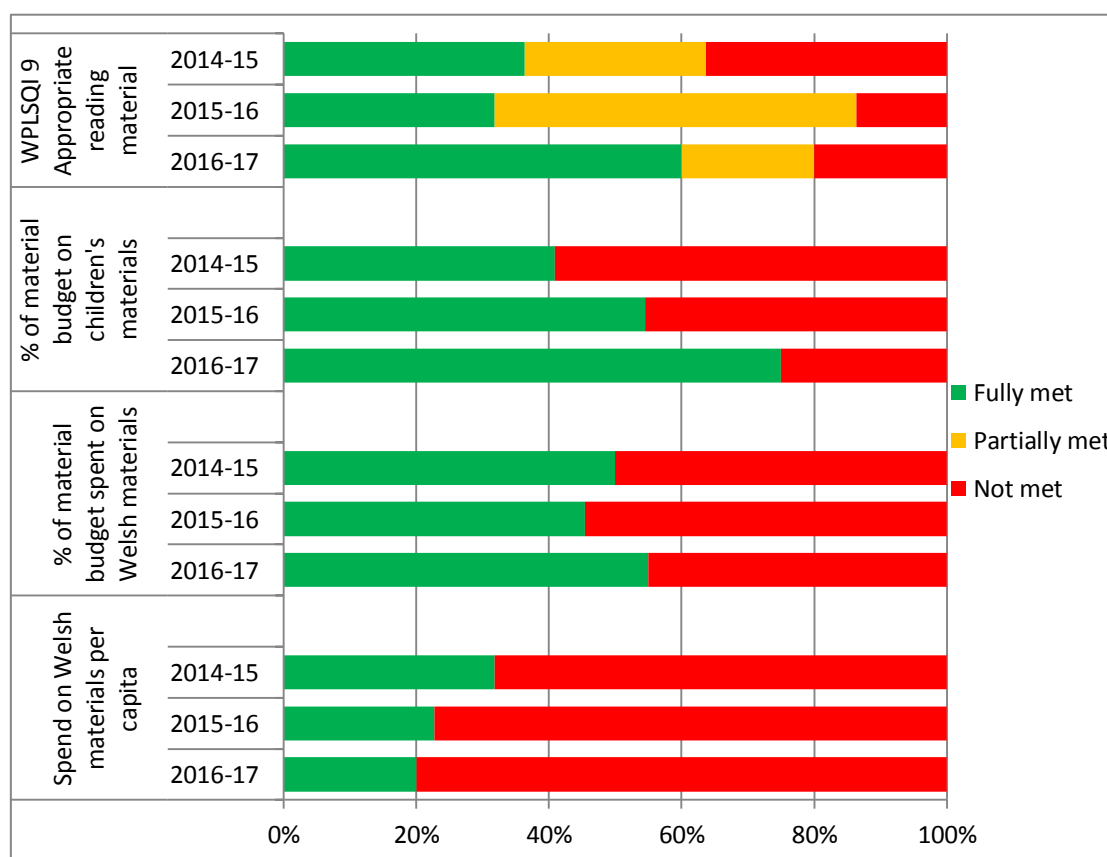
#### 4.9. WPLSQI 9 Appropriate reading material

This indicator also has two targets which must be achieved to meet QI9 in full – a minimum spend per capita on acquisitions of material in the Welsh language OR a minimum percentage of total acquisitions being in the Welsh language; AND a target for the percentage of the materials budget spent on materials for children.

Figure 17 displays the proportion of authorities that have fully met, partially met or not met the overall quality indicator relating to appropriate reading material, and illustrates the proportions of authorities meeting the individual targets that contribute to the quality indicator overall. It is important to note that in 2016-17, two authorities did not provide data for this quality indicator, with both partially meeting the targets overall in the two earliest years of the framework. There have been some signs of improvement over the course of the framework:

- Eight authorities fully met the overall reading material quality indicator in 2014-15 – compared to seven in 2015-16 and twelve in 2016-17
- Six authorities partially met the overall reading material quality indicator in 2014-15 – compared to twelve in 2015-16 and four in 2016-17. Eight authorities did not meet the quality indicator in 2014-15 – falling to three in 2015-16 and four in 2016-17.

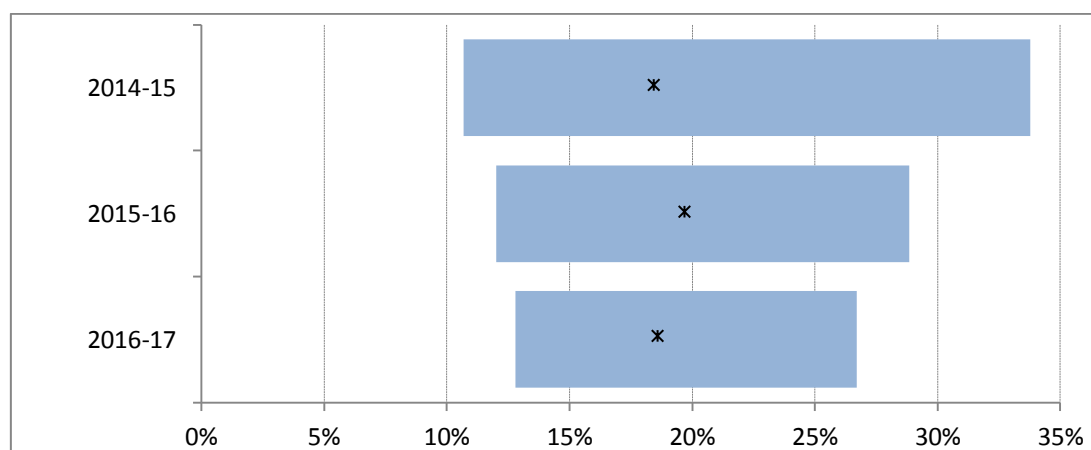
**Figure 17 Appropriate reading materials – targets met**



Once again, this overall quality indicator consists of individual targets; with Figure 18 illustrating the range and overall percentage of materials expenditure accounted for by children’s resources for library authorities overall in each year of the framework. In this instance, the target range for the percentage of materials expenditure on children’s resources should be within plus or minus two percentage points of the proportion of the population aged under 16 years. Therefore, authorities may fail to achieve the target by their proportion of materials expenditure for children exceeding the proportion of children in the population plus two percentage points, as well as by spending less than the proportion of children in the population minus two percentage points. In general, those authorities exceeding the target range have indicated that their service is prioritising materials for children and/or young adults when budgets are restricted, often in line with wider local authority strategic priorities.

Overall, fifteen authorities met this target in 2016-17 – compared to twelve in 2015-16 and nine in 2014-15 and the indicator therefore shows some signs of improvement. Despite an increase in 2015-16, the proportion of materials expenditure accounted for by children’s resources for Wales as a whole has decreased in the most recent year so that it is currently on a similar level to that recorded in 2014-15, and stands at 18.6% - compared to an average of 17.5% of the population accounted for by under 16s – within the target range.

**Figure 18 % of materials expenditure accounted for by children’s resources**

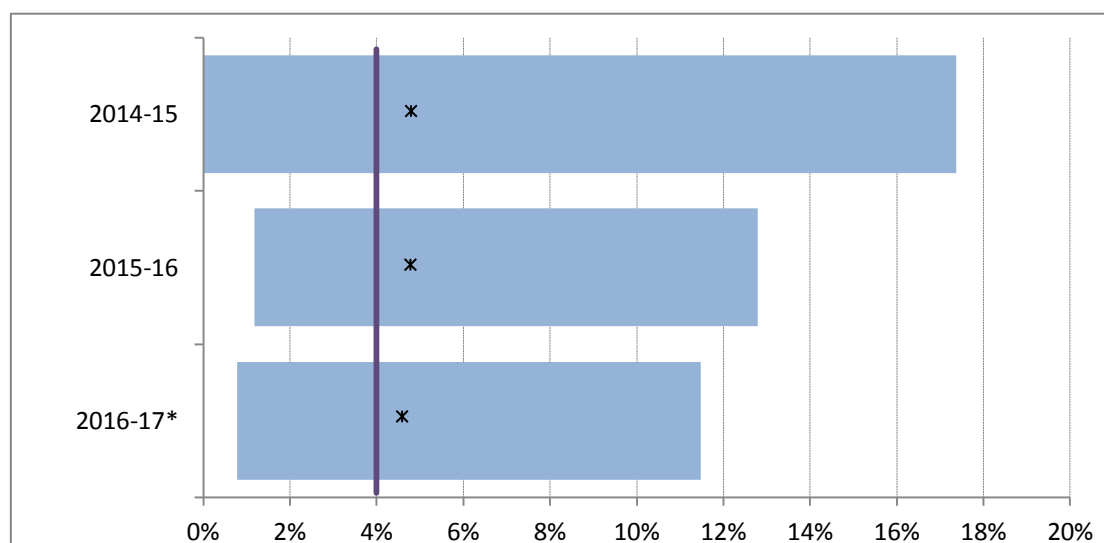


\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

The other aspect of this quality indicator relates to the purchase of Welsh language materials, with authorities achieving this target if either a minimum of 4% of the materials budget is accounted for by Welsh language materials or there is a minimum spend of £750 per 1,000 Welsh speaking population. Figure 19 shows the range and total proportion of materials expenditure accounted for by Welsh resources in each year of the framework, along with the overall target for this quality indicator (represented by the solid line). Overall, eleven of the twenty responding authorities have met this target in 2016-17 - compared to ten (out of 22) in 2015-16 and eleven (out of 22) in 2014-15. Despite a fall over the course of the framework, the total proportion of materials expenditure accounted for by Welsh language resources has been above the target in each of the three years and currently stands at 4.6% - compared to 4.8% in both 2014-15 and 2015-16.



**Figure 19 Percentage of materials expenditure accounted for by Welsh language resources**



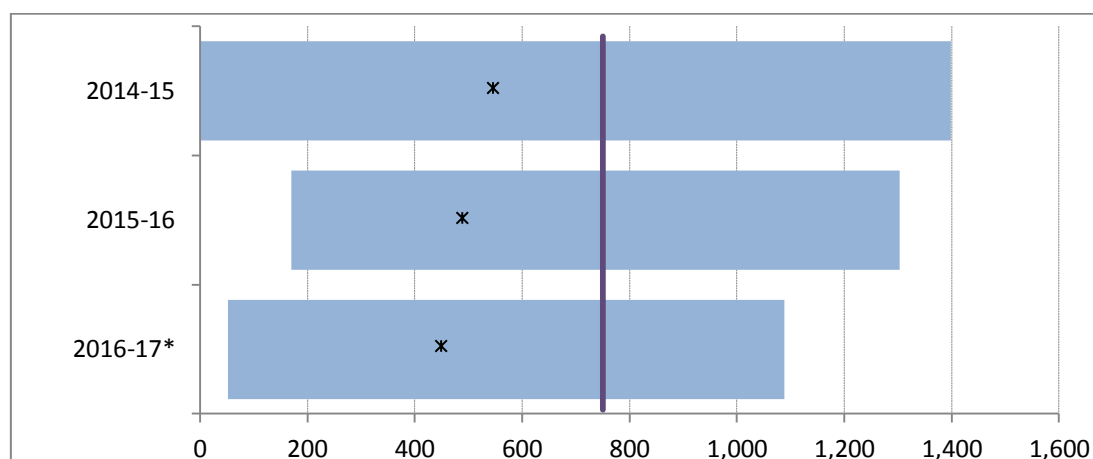
\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
 The solid line represents the target of 4% of materials expenditure spent on Welsh resources  
 \*2016-17 is based on 20 responding authorities

Figure 20 illustrates that authorities find it harder to achieve the target relating to expenditure per capita on Welsh language resources. Note that the proportions of the population who are able to read Welsh vary markedly across the country, and it is noticeable that those authorities with larger Welsh-reading populations generally spend more per person on Welsh language materials.

- Total expenditure on Welsh materials per 1,000 Welsh speaking and reading residents has fallen in each year of the framework
- In 2016-17 the figure stands at £450 per 1,000 Welsh reading population for Wales as a whole compared to the target of £750 – and compares to £489 in 2015-16 and £547 in 2014-15
- Four authorities spent more than £750 on resources in the Welsh language per 1,000 Welsh speaking and reading population in the most recent year – compared to five authorities achieving the target in 2015-16 and seven meeting the target in 2014-15
- One authority achieved both targets in all three years of the framework, with an additional four authorities meeting both targets in 2014-15 but failing to do so in the two years since then

It is worth noting that, in the most recent year, several authorities that have failed to meet this target have indicated that this is largely due to current restrictions on the overall materials budget.

**Figure 20 Welsh language materials expenditure per 1,000 Welsh reading population**



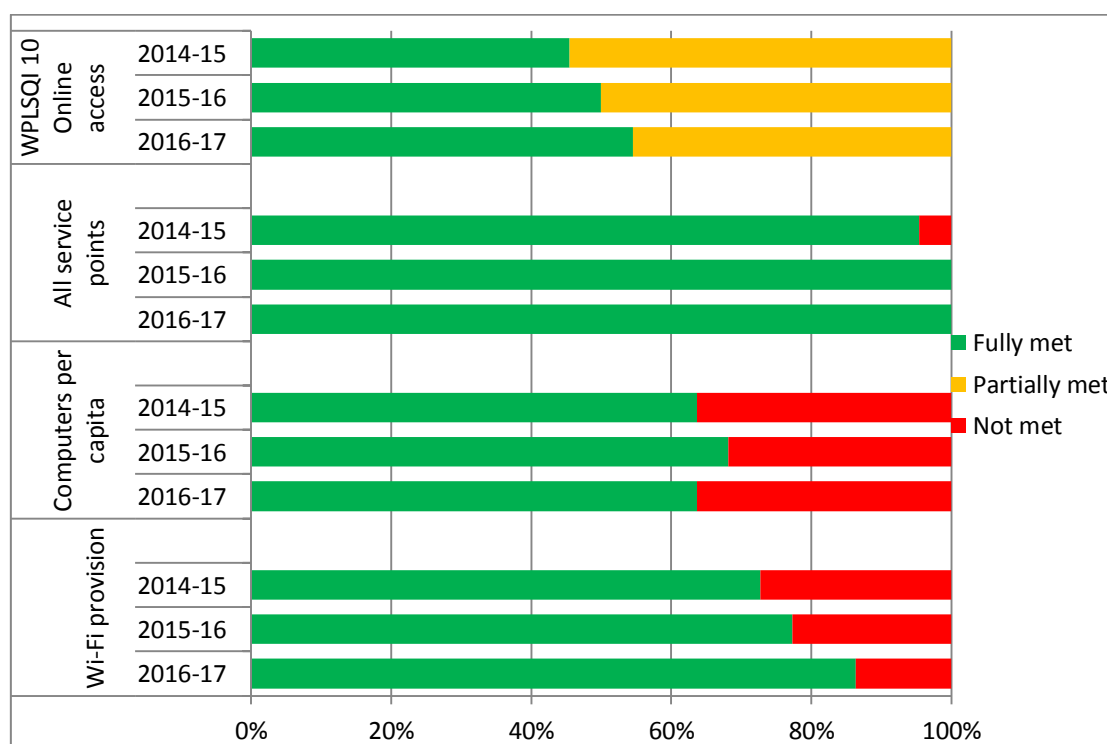
\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
 The solid line represents the target of materials expenditure of £750 per 1,000 Welsh speaking population  
 \* 2016-17 based on 20 responding authorities

#### 4.10. WPLSQI 10 Online access

WPLSQI 10 relates to the provision of internet access and is in three parts:

- firstly every static library (and mobile) library should provide a minimum of one device giving public access to the internet and networked digital content;
- authorities should achieve an aggregate total across the authority of no fewer than 9 such devices per 10,000 resident population;
- and finally all static service points should provide Wi-Fi access for users to bring their own laptops or mobile devices.

**Figure 21 Online access – targets met**



It is important to note that where an authority reports that all static libraries provide at least one device enabling access to the internet but that not all mobile libraries do so, MALD felt that this should not prevent them from achieving the indicator overall in this framework.

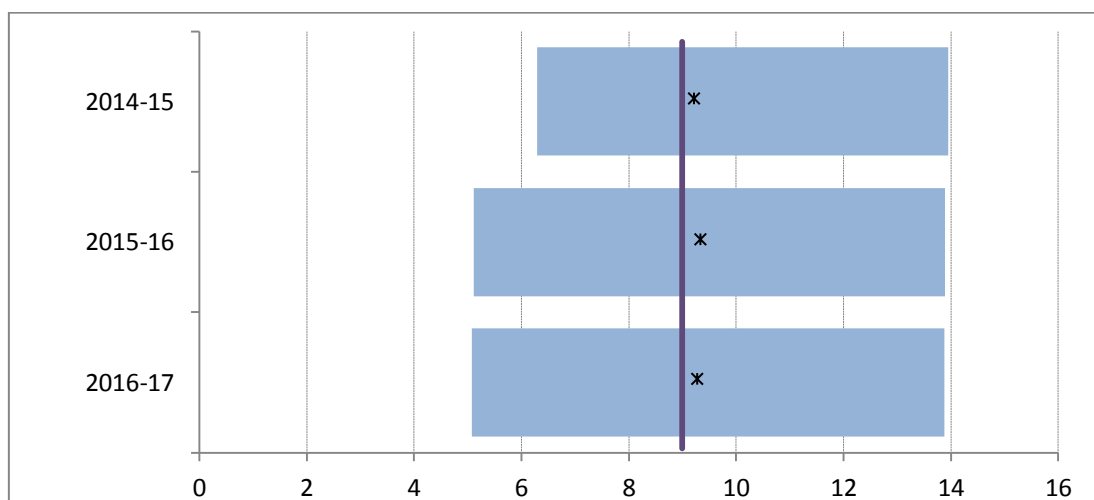
Figure 21 displays the proportions of authorities fully meeting, partially meeting and not meeting the overall target for online access, along with the levels of achievement of the corresponding individual targets that comprise this quality indicator.

- There have been signs of improvement over the course of the framework, with twelve authorities fully meeting the overall quality indicator in the most recent year - compared to ten in 2014-15 and eleven in 2015-16.
- Eight authorities failed to provide nine publicly accessible internet-connected devices per 10,000 population in the most recent year – compared to eight in 2014-15 and seven in 2015-16.
- Five authorities have failed to achieve the target of at least nine publicly accessible internet-connected devices per 10,000 population in all three years of the framework.

*“I have mainly used it for the computer facilities, ... having no home PC, this has led to my being able to further research into a history project”*

Figure 22 shows the range and total number of publicly available devices connected to the internet per 10,000 population throughout the framework, in comparison to the target. The total for Wales as a whole has remained relatively stable throughout and stands at a slightly higher level than the target in each of the three years. It is worth noting that several authorities have indicated that a lack of usable free space prevents them from increasing the number of devices available for public use and therefore the set target remains unattainable for them.

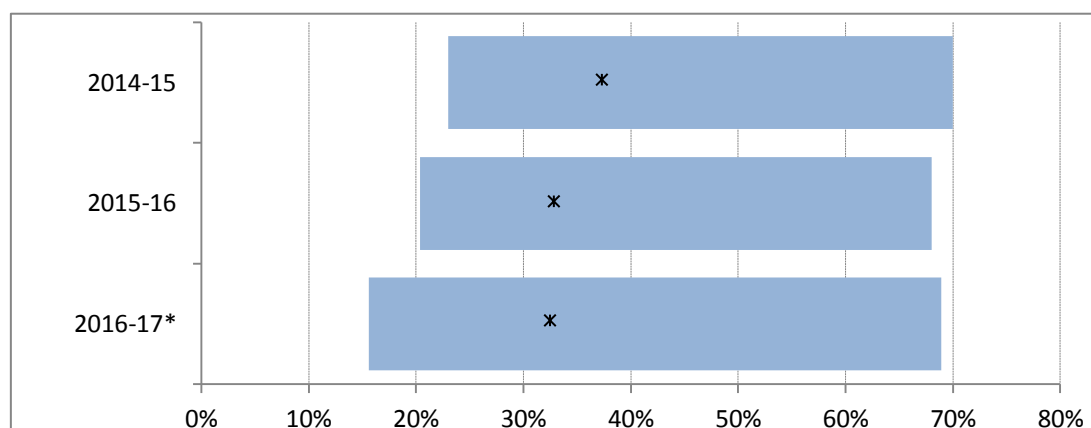
**Figure 22 Networked public access computers per 10,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of 9 devices per 1,000 population

#### 4.11. WPLSQI 11 Use of ICT

Figure 23 Proportion of public ICT usage



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
\* 2016-17 based on 21 authorities

Figure 23 displays the range and overall usage of public ICT facilities over the course of the framework and highlights that the range of values has increased each year, whilst the overall level for Wales as a whole has decreased, so that in 2016-17 ICT facilities were used 33% of the available time across Wales as a whole – compared to 37% in 2014-15 and 33% in 2015-16. It is important to note that the proportion of ICT usage will vary between authorities depending on the overall level of ICT provision, with those authorities providing fewer publicly available devices often reporting a higher proportion of usage compared to those authorities offering a higher level of provision. Several authorities have also commented that they are currently reducing the number of publicly available devices to increase the provision of workspaces available for bring your own devices (BYOD) and this may impact on this quality indicator in the next framework.

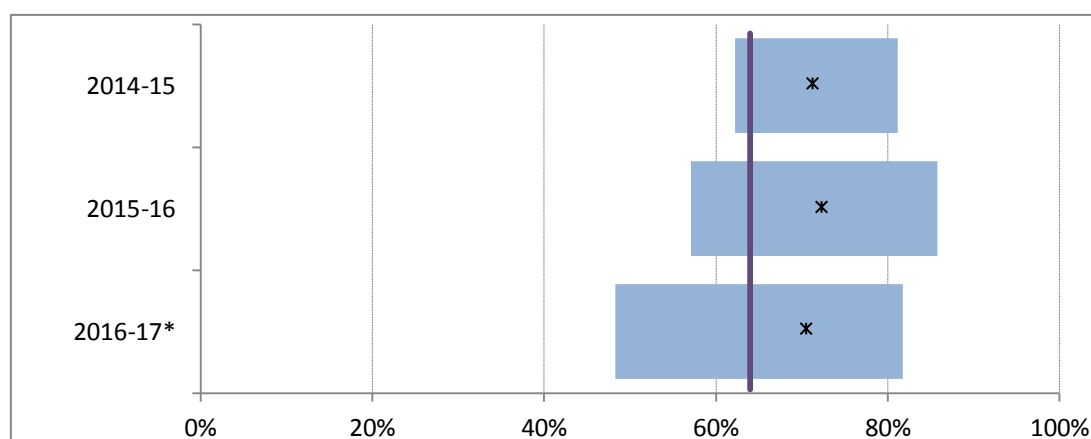
The second aspect of this quality indicator relates to the proportion of time that the Wi-Fi network was used by the public during the year, however, these data proved particularly challenging for authorities to collect on a consistent basis, and by 2016-17, only three authorities were able to provide this information. It is therefore not included here, and has been omitted from the sixth framework. It is worth noting, however, that several authorities have indicated that the overall trend appears to be one of a decrease in the usage of publicly available devices, whilst usage of the Wi-Fi network through the use of BYOD is increasing, which may become more evident over the course of the next framework.

#### 4.12. WPLSQI 12 Supply of requests

Although targets were not formally set in this framework for the speed of supply of requests, the data have been reported relative to the targets set in the fourth framework, which have been re-instated for the sixth framework, at the request of the library authorities.

The introduction of the new LMS in north Wales affected reporting for this indicator in a small number of authorities in 2016-17.

**Figure 24 Percentage of requests available within 7 days**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of 64% of requests satisfied within 7 days  
\* 2016-17 based on 21 authorities

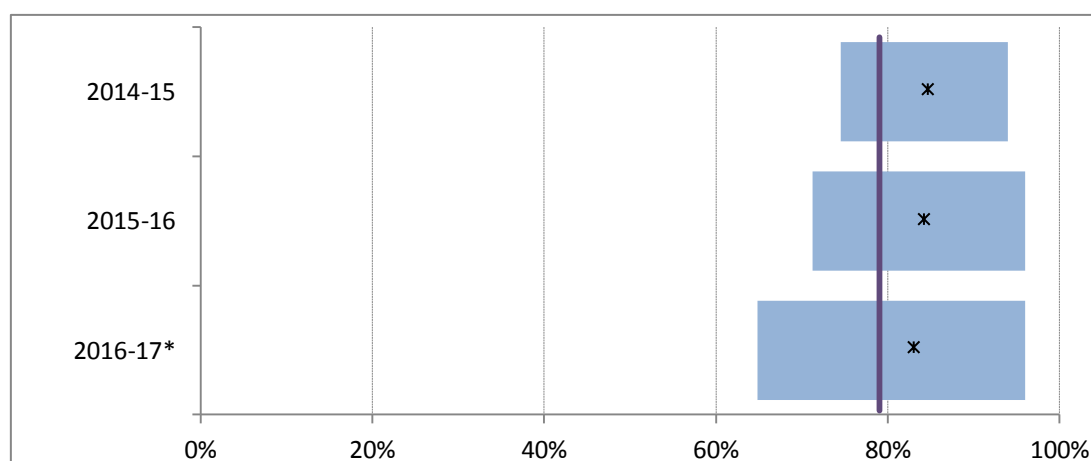
The overall proportion of requests satisfied within 7 days has fluctuated over the duration of the framework; however, it has been above the target of 64% in each year (*Figure 24*).

Overall:

- One authority fell below 64% in all three years of the framework
- In the most recent year, three out of the twenty-one responding authorities failed to meet the target of 64% of requests satisfied within 7 days – compared to just one authority (out of 22) in both 2014-15 and 2015-16
- Figure 24 highlights that the range has increased over the duration of the framework
- Ten authorities have recorded an overall decrease in the proportion of requests satisfied within 7 days since 2014-15 with several attributing this to the reduction in both the book budget and staffing levels

The overall proportion of requests satisfied within 15 days has remained relatively stable throughout the framework and remains above the target of 79% in each of the three years (*Figure 25*). As with the proportion of requests satisfied within 7 days, the range has increased over the course of the framework, with ten authorities currently recording fewer requests satisfied within 15 days than in 2014-15. It is important to note that several authorities indicated that the current restrictions on the materials and staffing budgets have impacted on the delivery time of requests, with lower budgets often leading to fewer copies of books being purchased, which in turn leads to increased waiting times for popular books. In addition to this, reduced staffing levels can impact on the requests process which can also result in delivery delays.

**Figure 25 Percentage of requests available within 15 days**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
 The solid line represents the target of 64% of requests satisfied within 15 days  
 \* 2016-17 based on 21 authorities

Overall in 2016-17 seventeen authorities (out of 21) supplied at least 64% of requests within seven days and at least 79% of requests within fifteen days – compared to nineteen authorities (out of 22) in 2014-15 and twenty authorities (out of 22) in 2015-16.

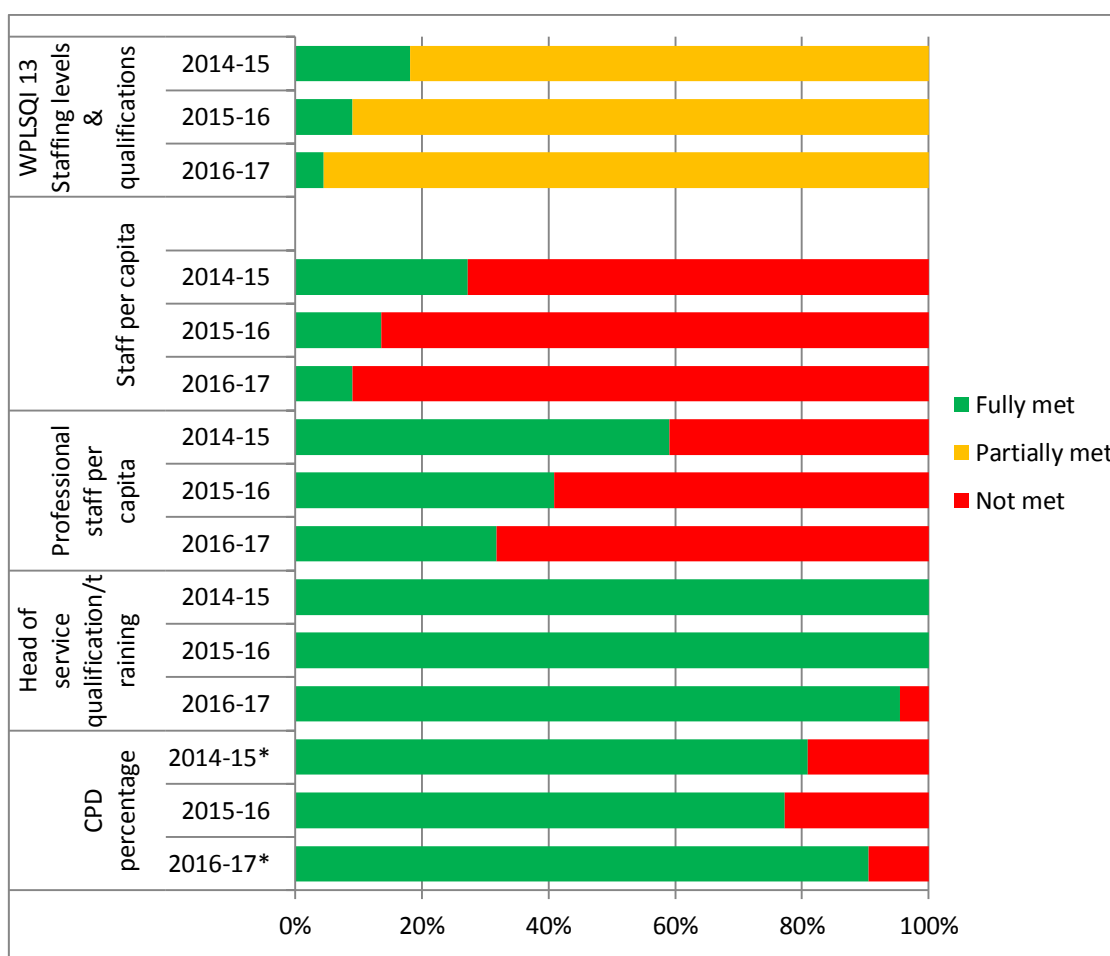
#### 4.13. WPLSQI 13 Staffing levels & qualifications

This indicator has four targets as well as a number of reporting elements.

*“Library staff aren’t just handing out books, they’ve given me my humanity back”*

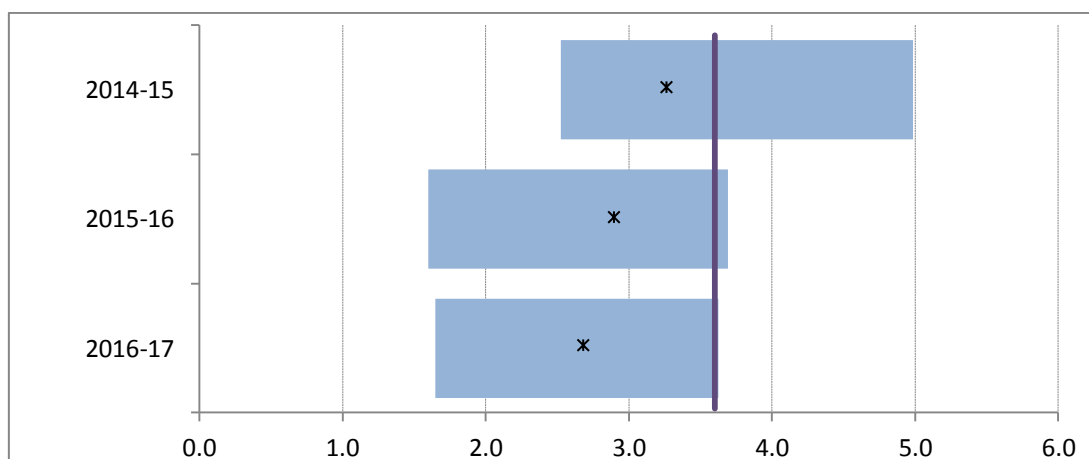
Overall, the number of authorities fully meeting the quality indicator for staffing levels and qualifications has worsened over the duration of the framework – from four authorities in 2014-15 to just one in the most recent year, and the decline is a cause for concern (Figure 26). It is, perhaps, important to emphasise that no authorities have failed to meet all of the individual targets in any single year of the framework.

**Figure 26 Staffing levels and qualifications – targets met**



Looking at each of the elements in turn, overall staffing levels have fallen over the duration of the fifth framework, and this appears to be the most difficult staffing target to meet, with just two authorities achieving at least 3.6 staff per 10,000 population in the most recent year– compared to three in 2015-16 and six in 2014-15. Figure 27 displays the range and overall levels of total staff per 10,000 population and highlights that the total for Wales has fallen over the course of the framework, standing below the target level in each year. The decrease in the staffing levels is a cause for concern, and it is particularly troubling that the maximum number of staff per 10,000 population in any authority only stands around the target level in 2016-17.

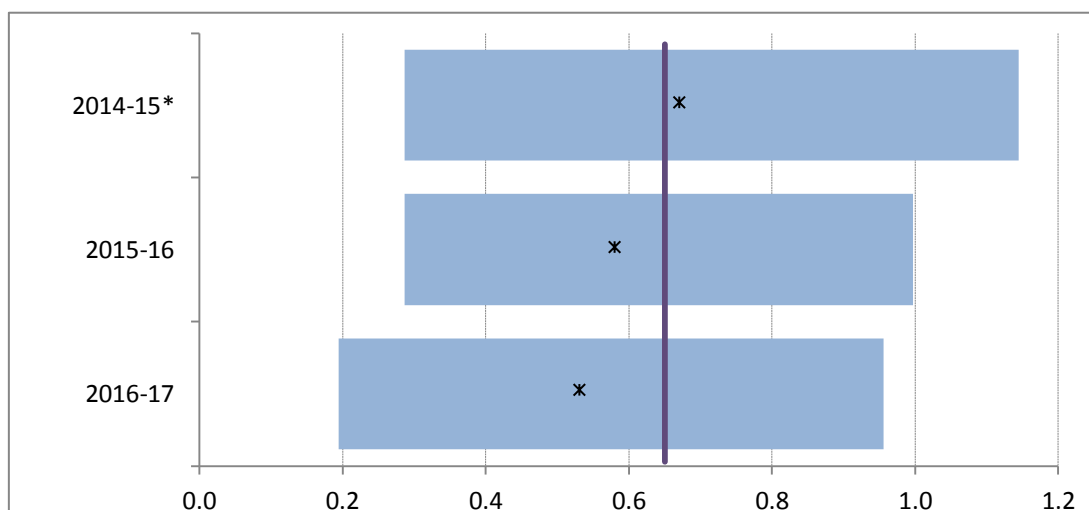
**Figure 27 Total staff per 10,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of 3.6 staff per 10,000 population

Qualified staffing levels have also worsened over the course of the framework – with thirteen authorities achieving the target of at least 0.65 qualified library staff members per 10,000 population in 2014-15, compared to nine in 2015-16 and seven in the most recent year. In addition to this, Figure 28 illustrates that the total number of qualified staff per 10,000 population for Wales as a whole has been below the target in the two most recent years of the framework. Just one authority met the targets for both overall staff and qualified staff in 2016-17.

**Figure 28 Qualified staff per 10,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of 0.65 qualified staff per 10,000 population  
\* 2014-15 based on 21 authorities

Despite falling staff levels, it is encouraging that the average proportion of staff time spent in training and development lies above the target of 1% in each year of the framework although there is a wide range between authorities (Figure 29). One authority reported that 24% of staff time was spent in training in 2015-16 noting that this was due to a restructure leading to staff being assigned to new roles and undertaking extensive training as a result. Excluding

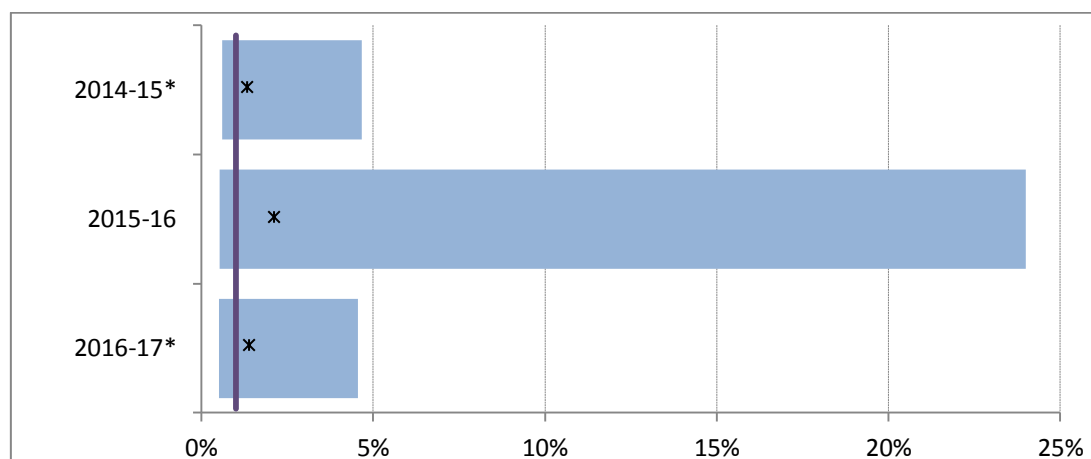


them from the calculations would have resulted in an overall level of 1.2% and a maximum of 2.3% of staff time spent in training and development in 2015-16.

Overall:

- Two authorities failed to meet the target in 2016-17 – compared to four in 2014-15 and five in 2015-16
- Each authority has achieved the target of 1.0% of staff time spent in training and development in at least one year of the framework
- Fourteen authorities have met the target in all three years of the framework

**Figure 29 Proportion of staff time spent in training and development**



\* indicates the overall percentage for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities

The solid line represents the target of 1% of staff time spent in training and development

\*2014-15 and 2016-17 based on 21 authorities

All authorities reported that the head of service holds a formal qualification in librarianship or information science/information management throughout the framework, except for one in the most recent year. This head of service has since applied to complete a qualification in librarianship.

Data were also collected on the number of volunteers, although there were no corresponding targets. The total number of volunteers has more than doubled over the course of the framework, while the average number of hours contributed by each individual has fallen (*Table 30*). None of the authorities reported having Investors in Volunteers accreditation in 2016-17, although three authorities indicated that this was in progress.

**Table 30 Volunteers**

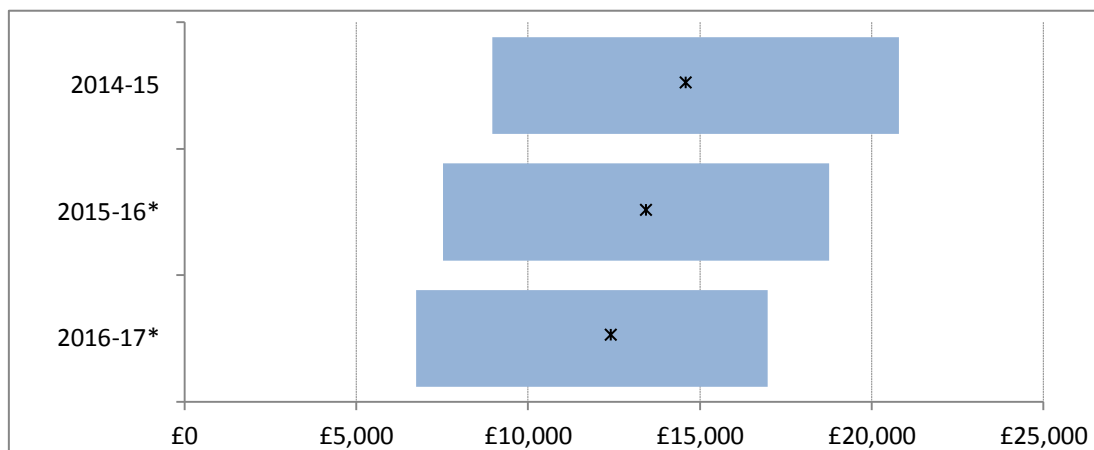
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Total volunteers	365	596	954
Average volunteer hours	43	37	29
No of authorities included	17	20	19
No of authorities with no volunteers	5	2	3

Some authorities provided details on activities carried out by the volunteers active in their libraries during 2016-17 and these included those on work experience placements, participants in the Duke of Edinburgh awards, volunteers working in community libraries and those that were volunteering for particular projects.

*“For me [voluntary work at the library] was certainly worth doing and ... is the main reason I am now in paid employment”*

#### 4.14. WPLSQI 14 Operational expenditure

**Figure 31 Total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole;  
 The shaded area represents the range across authorities  
 \* 2015-16 and 2016-17 each based on 21 authorities

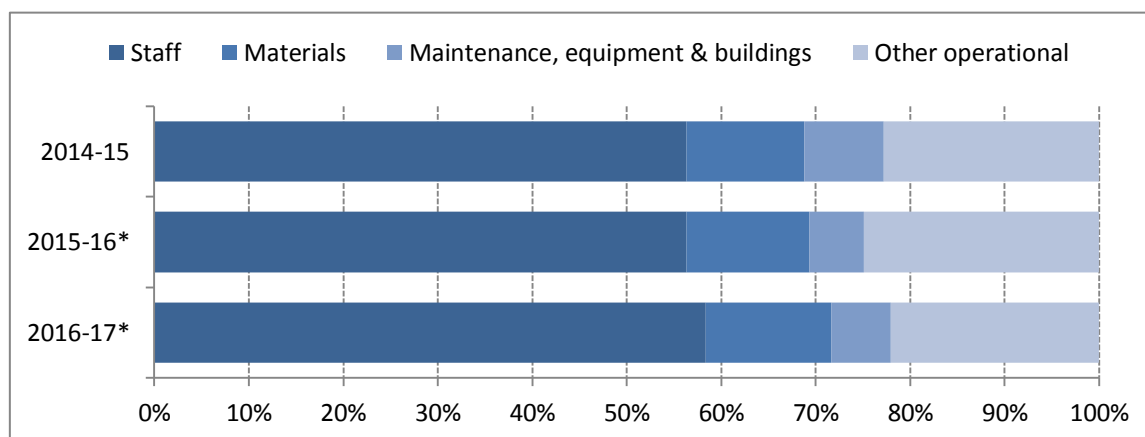
Figure 31 displays the range and total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population, and emphasises the wide range in expenditure between authorities. Perhaps not surprisingly given the current financial climate, total revenue expenditure per 1,000 population for Wales as a whole has decreased in each year of the framework so that it currently stands at £12,412 compared to £14,597 in 2014-15.

There appears to be little association between the number of overall quality indicators with targets that were fully achieved and the level of revenue expenditure per 1,000 population. In 2016-17, the authority reporting the highest revenue expenditure per 1,000 population fully met four of the overall quality indicators with targets, partially met two and did not meet one. By comparison, the authority recording the lowest revenue expenditure per 1,000 population in the most recent year, fully met three overall quality indicators with targets, partially met a further three and did not meet one of the indicators with targets. One authority met all seven quality indicators with targets in 2016-17 and they recorded the fourth highest revenue expenditure per capita.

Total revenue expenditure is split between expenditure on staff, materials, maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment and buildings and other operational expenditure. Figure 32 displays the proportions of expenditure in each year of the framework for Wales as a whole and illustrates that staff account for 58% of revenue expenditure in 2016-17 with materials expenditure accounting for 13.3% - compared to staff accounting for 56% of total

revenue expenditure in both 2014-15 and 2015-16. It is important to note that different practices regarding internal re-charges will have an impact on the proportions of expenditure reported by individual authorities, and in particular will impact on the proportion of expenditure accounted for by 'other operational costs'.

**Figure 32 Expenditure breakdown**

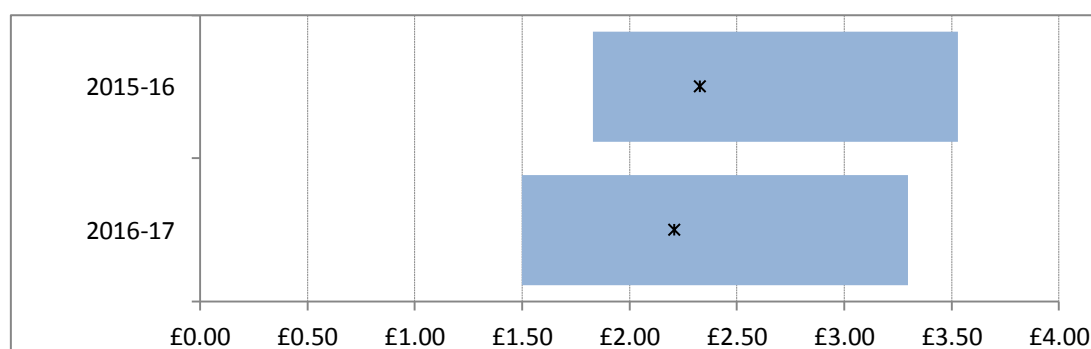


\* 2015-16 and 2016-17 based on 21 authorities

Data were also collected on capital expenditure and there was much variation between authorities. In 2016-17, total capital expenditure per 1,000 population ranged from £0 to £16,692 with a total of £1,149 per 1,000 population for Wales as a whole. Over the course of the three year framework, almost £8 million has been spent on capital projects, by 19 of the 22 Welsh library authorities - £1.5 million in 2014-15; £3.1 million in 2015-16 and £3.3 million in 2016-17.

#### 4.15. WPLSQI 15 Cost per visit

**Figure 33 Average cost per visit**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
2015-16 based on 21 respondents; 2016-17 based on 20 respondents

The fifth framework also collected information on income in the two most recent years which allows the calculation of net cost per visit. This is calculated as the difference between revenue expenditure and income divided by the total number of both physical and web site visits. Figure 33 displays the range and overall average cost per visit in the two available years – retrospective data for 2014-15 were incomplete and have not been included here. For Wales as a whole, the average cost per visit has fallen over the course of the framework and stands at £2.21 in 2016-17, compared to £2.33 in 2015-16. The decline in average cost per visit is not surprising given the budget restrictions imposed over recent years; however, it

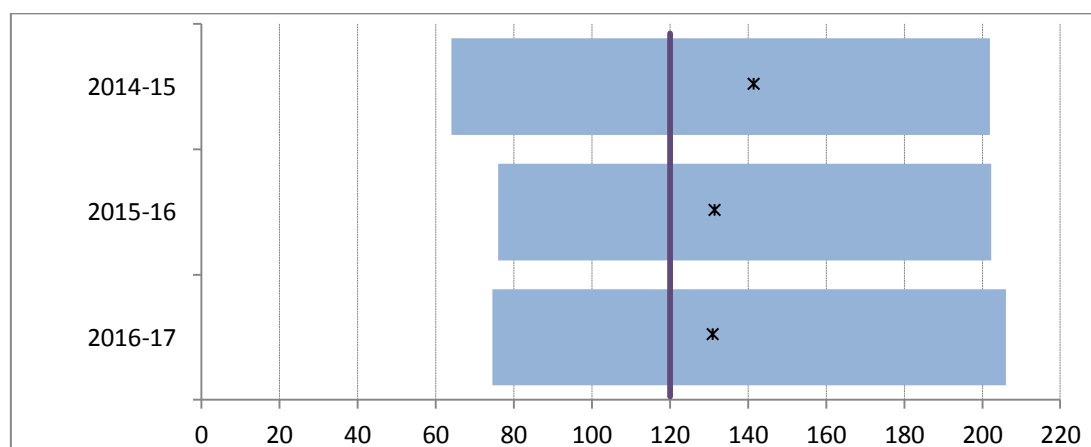
is important to note that an increase in visits could also result in a decrease in the average cost per visit for individual authorities.

#### 4.16. WPLSQI 16 Opening hours

The quality indicator relating to opening hours includes just one target recommending no fewer than 120 hours open per annum per 1,000 population. Figure 34 displays the range and overall number of opening hours per year per 1,000 population throughout the framework and illustrates that the situation has worsened overall since 2014-15, giving some cause for concern. Opening hours can be reduced by closing entire branches, or by reducing hours in those that remain, and both strategies have been used to implement budget cuts during the course of this framework. Overall, opening hours have fallen steadily since 2014-15 – from 142 per 1,000 population for Wales overall to 131 in the most recent year, although it is important to note that the figure has remained above the target in each year. Overall:

- Two authorities failed to meet the target of 120 opening hours per annum per 1,000 population in 2014-15, compared to six authorities in 2016-17
- Fourteen authorities achieved the target in all three years
- Just two authorities failed to meet the target in any year of the framework
- Fifteen authorities were open for longer in 2014-15 compared to the most recent year

**Figure 34 Annual opening hours per 1,000 population**



\* indicates the figure for Wales as a whole; the shaded area represents the range across authorities  
The solid line represents the target of 120 hours per 1,000 population

Library authorities also provided details on unplanned and emergency closures of static service points along with mobile library stops or home delivery services missed as a result of vehicle failure or staff unavailability, and there was much variation between the authorities:

- in 2016-17 unplanned and emergency closures of static service points as a proportion of total planned opening hours ranged from 0.00% to 0.48%
- thirteen authorities reported that there were no unplanned or emergency closures of static service points in 2016-17– compared to nine authorities in 2014-15 and twelve in 2015-16

- In 2016-17 missed mobile library stops/home deliveries as a proportion of all planned stops/home deliveries ranged from 0.00% to 8.33%
- Apart from unplanned closures due to adverse weather conditions or other reasons beyond the control of the library (which are not included in these calculations), the main reason given for unplanned closures related to staff shortages/unavailability
- Seven authorities reported that there were no missed mobile library stops or home deliveries in each of the three years of the framework
- Excluding those missed due to adverse weather conditions or other reasons beyond the control of the library, authorities indicated that mechanical issues and the age of their mobile library fleet along with staff sickness contributed to missed mobile library stops or home deliveries

## 5. Impact case studies

A key element of the reporting for the fifth framework was the inclusion of case studies of the impact library services have on people's lives. Over the course of the framework, all library services have provided at least two case studies, although in some cases the evidence of the actual impacts achieved was sparse. The best case studies included a description of the activity or service and of the difference participation made to one or more individuals, including quotes from those individuals on what difference the library made to their lives.

A total of 206 case studies have been supplied over the course of the framework. They describe a wide range of services and associated impacts, covering local and national government strategies and priorities. Several themes are common to the case studies across all years. Most prominent are outcomes relating to the health and well-being of library users, particularly those with mental or physical health issues, and social inclusion. Together these impacts can be found in around half of all the case studies. Around one quarter of the case studies deal with issues of digital inclusion and digital literacy, or with the skills needed to gain employment. Case studies involving children feature across these themes, as well as those relating to education and skills, and literacy. Some examples are outlined below.

- An autistic child who has begun to participate in library activity sessions which are helping him come out of his shell
- The Reading Dogs scheme, for children who might benefit from improving their reading and communication skills – by reading to dogs (and their companion adults) they have gained confidence and the ability to read aloud
- A participatory arts and heritage project on First World War history in two libraries which was clearly enjoyed by the quoted participants
- An individual with no home broadband who used library computers for job seeking and information
- A digital volunteers scheme providing the volunteers with accreditation for their Welsh Baccalaureate as well as increasing the skills of the library users they support
- A mature student enrolled in the Open University who obtained books, online information and study space at the library to complete her course
- A home educating family for whom the library is a source of inspiration as well as providing learning materials
- A user whose life has been changed with a new home, job and girlfriend abroad, after using the library to improve his IT skills and gain a teaching qualification
- A volunteer through Jobseekers who received support and encouragement at a difficult time, and gained paid employment as a consequence
- A homeless man who was helped to create a CV resulting in a successful job application which has allowed him to be self-supporting again

- A woman with poor mental health who had suffered a family tragedy, and has been helped by the resources and activities in her local library to make new friends, re-discover interests and learn new skills
- A young lady with physical and mental health problems who found peace and a feeling of safety at the library
- Testimony from an older user whose quality of life is enriched by using the library
- One child with autism and another with Downs syndrome who have both improved their communication skills by taking part in various library activities
- A homeless family living in separate hostels, who found the library a safe place to meet and were able to use the ICT facilities to find a home together and look for work
- A gentleman who estimated that using the library for newspapers and family history research saved him over £1,000 per year;
- A disabled woman, previously isolated, who now has a reason to socialise, and has become engaged to be married as a result.
- A user living in an isolated area who has become connected with her local community through activities in the library
- A new resident to Wales who was helped to settle in her new community and now volunteers as a Digital Champion
- The Knitting Nanas group which combats social isolation and supports local charities.
- A family who have used the library over a number of years and describe it as 'priceless';

## 6. Conclusion

The fifth framework has witnessed a very difficult period for Welsh public libraries as a whole, with widespread budget restrictions impacting all aspects of the public library, but in particular those which are resource-based, including staffing areas.

Overall, there has been a general decline in library performance over the course of this framework, with fewer authorities achieving two of the indicators (staffing and opening hours) at the end of the framework compared to the beginning, and more authorities failing the acquisitions (stock) targets. Further, for some indicators authorities have fallen further below the targets set than previously, with little hope of achieving them in the future. These changes suggest that the day-to-day service for the public is likely to worsen as libraries are open for fewer hours, with less new stock, and fewer staff to help deliver services.

Despite the declining levels reported here, customer satisfaction remains high with 97% of adult users, on average, rating the library as 'good' or 'very good' overall. However, in some cases the customer surveys would have taken place before the full impact of the budget restrictions had been experienced, and so it will be interesting to see if this is reflected over the course of the upcoming sixth framework.

Evidence provided in the impact case studies highlights the difference public library services make to the people of Wales, across all areas of national and local government agendas. Along with high levels of customer satisfaction, this demonstrates the value of public library services in contributing to strategic priorities and future development.

Without a doubt one of the strengths of the fifth framework has been the resilience of staff in the face of heavy budget restrictions; however, it is unlikely that public libraries can continue to develop services relevant to the needs of Wales and its people at the current critically low staffing levels.

A final element of the returns to MALD is a brief statement of the future direction each library service is anticipating. This gives MALD an early indication of proposed budget cuts, reorganisations, community involvement and new developments in each authority. These statements are individual to each authority, and the majority are written in upbeat tones, focussing on strategies designed to continue to deliver excellent library services to the people of Wales. Over the course of the framework, however, it has become clear that the challenges are increasing, and a few library services are in a precarious situation.

The sixth framework has been developed to build on the work undertaken during the course of the fifth framework and it is hoped that the next three years will see a more stable setting for public libraries in Wales.



## Appendix: Core entitlements and quality indicators

### Customers and communities

#### Core entitlements

*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.

#### Quality indicators

##### *WPLSQI 1 Making a difference*

Authorities will report, at least once in the three year period:

- a) the percentage of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills;
- b) the percentage of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out;
- c) the percentage of adults who have found helpful information for health and well-being at the library;
- d) the percentage of adults who experience the library as an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place;
- e) the percentage of adults and the percentage of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives.

##### *WPLSQI 2 Customer satisfaction*

Authorities will report:

- a) the percentage of adults who think that the choice of books available in the library they use is 'very good' or 'good';
- b) the percentage of adults who think that the standard of customer care in the library they use is 'very good' or 'good';
- c) the percentage of adults who think that the library they use is 'very good' or 'good' overall;
- d) the average overall rating out of ten awarded by users aged 16 or under for the library they use.

##### *WPLSQI 3 Support for individual development*

Libraries shall ensure that the following services are offered in all static service points open for 10 hours per week or more:

- a) basic support in the use of the ICT infrastructure provided (including Wi-Fi) and in accessing the range of electronic information resources available;
- b) training to improve literacy, numeracy, information and digital skills. Training programmes may be developed and delivered with appropriate partners outside the library service;
- c) information literacy sessions for users (i.e. assistance in developing or enhancing capabilities to: identify and access appropriate resources efficiently and effectively;

- critically evaluate information; and apply information appropriately to further objectives, such as educational, employment, health and well-being);
- d) support for users to access local and national e-government resources;
  - e) reader development programmes/activities for both adults and children.

#### **WPLSQI 4 User training**

Authorities will report:

- a) the total number of attendances at pre-arranged training sessions organised and/or hosted by the library service at its own service points or at other locations within the authority during the year, divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000;
- b) the percentage of attendees at such sessions who said that attendance helped them to achieve their goals;
- c) the number of customers helped by means of informal training during the year, divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000.

### **Access for all**

#### **Core entitlements**

*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.

#### **Quality indicators**

##### **WPLSQI 5 Location of service points**

Authorities shall ensure that they meet the following criteria for the location of service points and mobile library stops, according to their population density:

Population density	% of households	Distance from library
20 or more persons per hectare:	At least 95%	within 2 miles of a static service point
Between 1.1 and 19.9 persons per hectare:	At least 75%	within 2.5 miles (or 10 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static service point, or within ¼ mile of a mobile library stop
1.0 person or fewer per hectare:	At least 70%	within 3 miles (or 15 minutes travelling time by public transport) of a static service point, or within ¼ mile of a mobile library stop

##### **WPLSQI 6 Library use**

Authorities will report:

- a) the total number of visits to library premises during the year divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000;

- b) the total number of external visits to the library's website during the year divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000;
- c) the total number of active borrowers divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000.

### ***WPLSQI 7 User attendances at library events per 1,000 population***

Authorities will report:

- The total number of attendances at events and activities organised by the library service at its own service points or at other locations within the authority during the year, divided by the resident population, multiplied by 1,000.

## **Learning for life**

### **Core entitlements**

*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.

### **Quality indicators**

#### ***WPLSQI 8 Up-to-date reading material***

(i) Library authorities should achieve

**either** a minimum of 243 items acquired per 1,000 resident population

**or** a minimum spend of £2,180 per 1,000 resident population annually.

Books and e-books, periodicals, audio-visual material and electronic resources are all included.

(ii) Acquisitions during the year of materials for loan (including electronic materials for loan) should be equivalent to at least 11% of the lending stock at the start of the year.

#### ***WPLSQI 9 Appropriate reading material***

(i) The percentage of the material budget spent on resources for children should reflect the percentage of children in the resident population, within  $\pm 2$  percentage points.

(ii) **Either** a minimum of 4% of the material budget

**or** a minimum of £750 per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population

should be spent on the purchase of Welsh Language materials.

### **WPLSQI 10 Online access**

(i) Every static library and mobile library should provide a minimum of one device giving public access to the Internet and networked digital content. Authorities should achieve an aggregate total across the authority of no fewer than 9 such devices per 10,000 resident population. Computers, laptops, tablets, and other mobile devices are all included.

(ii) All static service points should provide Wi-Fi access for users to bring their own laptops or mobile devices.

### **WPLSQI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public**

Authorities will report:

- a) the percentage of available time allocated for use of public access ICT equipment (i.e. library-provided computers and other devices) actually taken up by users.
- b) the percentage of time during which Wi-Fi services are available that they are used by the public.

This should be aggregated across all libraries in the authority, including mobiles.

### **WPLSQI 12 Supply of requests**

Authorities will report:

- a) the percentage of requests for material which are notified to the user as being available within 7 calendar days of the request being made;
- b) the percentage of requests for material which are notified to the user as being available within 15 calendar days of the request being made.

## **Leadership and development**

### **Core entitlements**

*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.

### **Quality indicators**

#### **WPLSQI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications**

- (i) Library authorities shall achieve total establishment staffing levels for the service of 3.6 (full time equivalent) per 10,000 resident population. Staff who do not work directly in service provision, e.g. cleaners, are excluded.
- (ii) The total number of staff (full time equivalent) holding recognised qualifications in librarianship, information science or information management per 10,000 resident population should not fall below 0.65. Staff with qualifications in cognate areas, such as ICT, heritage or leisure management or education and learning may be included in the

calculations if they occupy posts on the library staff establishment which require those qualifications, and when the qualifications held are relevant to their current roles and functions within the library service.

(iii) The designated operational manager of the library service shall

**either** be the holder of recognised qualifications in librarianship, information science or information management

**or** have undertaken relevant library management training within the last 3 years.

Authorities will also report:

- a) where this post sits within the local authority management structure;
- b) the post held by the most senior qualified librarian (where different); and
- c) where that post sits within the local authority management structure.

(iv) A minimum of 1% of aggregate staff working hours should be spent in training and personal / professional development during the year. All library staff should be encouraged to undertake relevant training and development.

(v) Library authorities may offer members of the community the opportunity to volunteer to support additional library services. Such opportunities can, for example, enhance the life skills and employability of individuals, contributing to tackling poverty outcomes.

Where there is community involvement in delivering the library service at a branch level, we expect there to be paid staffing working alongside the volunteers in the libraries.

Library authorities that use volunteer staff to deliver additional services shall ensure:

- a designated volunteer coordinator from the library service's permanent qualified staff coordinates those parts of the service involving volunteer workers;
- each volunteer receives a written role description;
- legal requirements are met for each volunteer in relation to their role;
- both induction training and continuing training is provided for all volunteers;
- volunteers are appropriately supervised; and
- they have achieved, or are actively working towards, Investing in Volunteers accreditation.<sup>4</sup>

Authorities will report:

- a) the total number of volunteers
- b) the total number of volunteer hours during the year
- c) whether they have accreditation status relating to the NOS or are working towards this accreditation.

#### **WPLSQI 14 Operational expenditure**

In the current economic climate it is not thought appropriate to set a target for library expenditure, but spending on the public library service will continue to be scrutinised closely.

Authorities will report:

- a) the total revenue expenditure per 1,000 resident population;

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/inyourcountry/iiv-wales> for more information

- b) the percentages of this total spent on staff, materials and information resources, maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment and buildings, and other operational costs;
- c) total capital expenditure per 1,000 resident population.

#### ***WPLSQI 15 Cost per visit***

Authorities will report:

- The total revenue expenditure divided by the sum of the number of physical visits to library premises (including mobiles) plus the number of visits to the library web site during the year.

#### ***WPLSQI 16 Opening hours***

- (i) Welsh public libraries should achieve a level of aggregate opening hours across all service points administered by the authority (defined as those that provide access to materials, staff and a range of library services) of no less than 120 hours per annum per 1,000 resident population.
- (ii) This part of the indicator is concerned with the adequacy of the library service's maintenance programme and staffing strategy. Authorities will report:
  - a) the total number of hours of unplanned and emergency closure of static service points as a result of building failure or staff unavailability as a percentage of the total planned opening hours of all static service points during the year;
  - b) the number of mobile library stops and/or home delivery services missed as a result of vehicle failure or staff unavailability, as a percentage of the total number of planned mobile library stops and/or home delivery services during the year.