

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Caerphilly

Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

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

1 Executive summary

Caerphilly met 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and partially met 2.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Caerphilly achieved 8 in full, and 2 in part.

Caerphilly has generally maintained its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, investing strongly in key areas including resources for children and young people, and in Welsh language provision. Customer satisfaction is generally high, and where performances have declined the service offers a good analysis of the underlying issues, with staff capacity a limiting factor in a number of areas. The return does however note the challenging financial position which it will face over the coming years, and this may well impact on the resourcing of the service and future staffing levels. With capacity already stretched, careful planning will be needed to ensure that the service can continue to sustain its current level of performance. Proposals to develop new models for service delivery, aligning with other public-facing services as part of community located 'Hubs', are noted as central to the authority's planning for the future of the service.

- An adult user survey was completed in May 2017, showing continuing high levels of satisfaction, with 99% of those surveyed rating the Library 'good' or 'very good' overall.
- All static service points provide a good range of support for skills development and health and well-being, although the impact indicators here are less positive. The challenges of supporting service delivery in single staffed libraries are noted.
- Staffing pressures have also impacted on attendance at library events / activities, which have fallen, despite an overall increase in the number of events on offer.
- A fall in the number of physical visits, active borrowers, and adult book loans, is matched by increases in library membership and children's loans, both of which are now the highest per capita in Wales.
- The service continues to meet the targets for acquisitions per capita, materials in the Welsh language, and supply of requests, with a strong commitment to its investment in stock for children and young adults.
- Traditional PC provision remains the highest in Wales, although usage is declining; financial constraints mean that Wi-Fi is not available at six service points.
- Staffing levels have been maintained at 2016-17 levels, with neither target met. The service does not anticipate that it will be in a position to increase staff numbers in the future, with the possibility that budgets here may come under further pressure.
- Caerphilly was again unable to provide financial information, other than in respect of spending on materials, as was the case under the fifth framework.

2 Performance against the standards

The standards framework comprises of core entitlements, quality indicators with targets, quality indicators with benchmarks and impact measures. Section 2 summarises achievements against these areas. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is provided in Section 3.

2.1 Core entitlements

Caerphilly is meeting 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full and partially meeting 2. CE 7 is partially met as the service is only able to provide Wi-Fi facilities in 12 of its 18 service points; it is noted that the potential to fund increased Wi-Fi provision is being actively explored. A Library Service Strategic Action Plan for 2017-2020 is in place, however this has not yet been made available online due to delays in updating the website; as a result the entitlement is only partially met for 2017-18.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Caerphilly is achieving 8 in full, and 2 in part.

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Support for individual development:		Met in full
a) ICT support	✓	
b) Information literacy and skills training	✓	
c) E-government support	✓	
d) Reader development	✓	
QI 4 (a) Support for health and well-being		Met in full
i) Book Prescription Wales scheme	✓	
ii) Better with Books scheme	✓	
iii) Designated health & well-being collection	✓	
iv) Information about healthy lifestyles and behaviours	✓	
v) Signposting to health & well-being services	✓	
QI 6 all static service points offer events/activities for users with special requirements	✓	Met in full
QI 7 Location of service points	✓	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Met in full
Acquisitions per capita	✓	
or Materials spend per capita	x	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	✓	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	✓	
QI 11 Online access:		Partially met
a) i) Public access to Internet	✓	
ii) Wi-Fi provision	x	
QI 12 Supply of requests		Met in full
a) % of requests satisfied within 7 days	✓	
b) % of requests satisfied within 15 days	✓	

QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
i) Staff per capita	x	
ii) Qualified staff per capita	x	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	✓	
iv) CPD percentage	✓	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓	Met in full

There has been no change in Caerphilly's performance compared to the last year of the fifth framework for those quality indicators where direct comparisons are possible.

2.3 Impact measures

The framework includes three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of library use on people's lives. These indicators do not have targets, and authorities are only required to carry out user surveys for QI 1 once over the three-year period of the framework. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during this first year of the framework.

Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Caerphilly carried out its adult user survey in May 2017; the children's survey is scheduled for May 2018.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	n/a		73%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	38%	7/7	38%	90%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	98%	4/17	75%	98%	100%

Authorities are also asked to provide up to four case studies describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year.

Caerphilly provided four such case studies:

- Scrabble Club – the impact of the library Scrabble Club, which has fostered lasting friendships among the group, and for the mostly retired participants, keeps them active and engaged, with the library providing a safe space to meet.
- Family Support – a disabled child with complex needs has been a regular library visitor with her family; the library has supported her learning and communication within a welcoming community environment, where her mother is also able to meet friends.
- Supporting Employability – how the library's IT facilities and the support provided by staff have enabled one user to complete an online qualification and gain employment.
- Coding Club – the impact of the child and adult Coding Club offer; participants have improved their skills, gained in confidence and made new friends. They have also been encouraged to visit the Library more often and borrow more books as a result.

2.4 Quality indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets, but allow services to monitor and benchmark their performance over time, in comparison with other authorities. The following table

summarises Caerphilly's position for 2017-18. Ranks are included out of 22, where 1 is the highest, and 22 the lowest scoring authority, unless stated otherwise. Indicators where fewer than 22 authorities supplied data are those where relevant data was not available to some authorities. Where possible, figures from the last year of the fifth framework have also been included for comparison; however, in some cases a change in definition or the introduction of additional measures makes comparisons impractical. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2016/17	
QI 1 Making a difference						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills:	24%	7/7	24%	83%	94%	24%
c) health and well-being	33%	7/7	33%	65%	95%	26%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	99%	2/7	90%	98%	100%	98%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	94%	3/7	88%	91%	98%	94%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	3/7	93%	99%	100%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	92%	2/6	74%	86%	94%	93%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	99%	1/7	93%	97%	99%	98%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a		8.5	9.1	9.2	9.3
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	51	8/22	10	32	238	56
c) informal training per capita	69	21/22	15	199	473	118
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	330	7/22	82	228	684	339
QI 8 Library use						
a) visits per capita	4,291	7/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	4,431
b) virtual visits per capita	473	17/22	243	866	2,211	450
c) active borrowers per capita	220	2/22	100	154	229	227
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*	64	12/22	4	68	663	
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita^	14	1/22	5	9	14	14
c) % of available time used by the public	20%	19/22	14%	27%	67%	21%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	16	17/21	3	31	196	10
b) total volunteer hours	497	18/21	40	1,346	11,939	321
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	n/a		£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	n/a
b) % on staff,	n/a		44%	63%	75%	n/a
% on information resources	n/a		4%	13%	25%	n/a
% on equipment and buildings	n/a		0%	4%	20%	n/a
% on other operational costs;	n/a		0%	18%	37%	n/a
c) capital expenditure per capita	n/a		£0	£338	£17,432	n/a
QI 15 Net cost per visit	n/a		£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	n/a
QI 16 Opening hours#						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	1/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	1/20	0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	0.00%

** per Welsh speaking resident population*

^per 10,000 resident population

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

3 Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators can be divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance under these areas, and compares this performance (where applicable) with the final year of the fifth framework (2016-17).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Caerphilly carried out its adult user survey in May 2017, with generally high customer satisfaction ratings, although the impact indicators (skills development / health and well-being) remain low. It is noted that further work will be targeted to increase user confidence in the support the Library can provide in these areas. All static libraries continue to provide the full range of support for individual development, although the service notes that this has become more challenging, particularly for single staffed Libraries. Good support is also provided for health and well-being with designated collections at all service points, and a range of health information partnerships in place. Attendance at pre-arranged user training sessions has fallen slightly in 2017-18, but with a larger drop in the numbers helped by informal training, which are now among the lowest per capita in Wales. The service attributes this to the impact of single staffing at its smaller branches, and increased customer confidence and use of their own IT devices.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Caerphilly continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with 18 branches serving its local communities. The service notes that events / activities for users with special requirements are provided at all these branches, although some further detail on the nature of this work could have been given. Overall attendance at library events and activities has fallen slightly, although the number of events on offer has increased when compared to 2016-17. The service attributes this to the decline in school class attendance resulting from increasing time pressures on a smaller professional staff cohort. Other usage indicators show a mixed picture, with a fall in the number of physical visits and active borrowers, but increases in library membership and children's book issues, where performances are now the highest per capita in Wales. The relative decline in adult book loans and active borrower rates is noted as a priority area for targeted action in 2018-19.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

The service continues to meet the requirements in relations to acquisitions per capita, and provision of Welsh language resources, with a strong commitment to maintaining Welsh language collections at the highest possible level. Engagement with children and young people, supporting schools and family reading, is also a key strategic theme within the 2017- 2020 Library Action Plan; this is reflected in the investment made in children's and young adult stock, and in the resulting high numbers of children's book issues. The service meets the stipulated requirements for supply of requests, with increasing numbers of requests placed via the Books4U scheme. Caerphilly continues to maintain a high level of PC provision although it is noted that this will be reviewed during 2018-19 to ensure value for money, as usage levels continue to fall. While financial constraints limit Wi-Fi

coverage, and users remain dependent on traditional IT facilities, provision in this area will remain important.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall and professional staff numbers have been maintained at 2016-17 levels, although in neither case is the stipulated target met. The service does not anticipate that it will be in a position to increase staffing levels in the future, and authority-wide financial planning for 2018-2022 suggests that budgets here may come under further pressure. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service has increased its investment in staff training and professional development in 2017-18. Volunteer numbers / hours have risen, with increased take-up of opportunities offered for work experience to schools, and to adults undertaking supported placements to enter employment or return to the workplace.

Caerphilly was again unable to provide financial information, other than in respect of spending on materials, as was the case under the fifth framework. Opening hours continue to meet the target set, and there were no unplanned closures or interruptions to service in 2017-18.

4 Strategic context

As part of the return authorities are asked to report on how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. Caerphilly provides a detailed note of its contribution to the Council's Well-being Objectives, and the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. There is a clear focus on improving education outcomes, enabling employment, supporting healthy lifestyles, and improving well-being.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Caerphilly notes that it faces a further period of significant change, due to the continuing financial pressures on the authority. Funding reductions are anticipated over the next three year period, with planning focused on aligning public facing areas of provision, and developing new delivery models. Proposals centre on the development of new community located 'Hubs', bringing together library services, community centres and customer service teams. It is noted that the local authority remains committed to delivering the best public library provision possible during this period of financial constraint.

6 Conclusion

Caerphilly has generally maintained its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, investing strongly in key areas including resources for children and young people, and in Welsh language provision. Customer satisfaction is generally high, and where performances have declined the service offers a good analysis of the underlying issues, with staff capacity a limiting factor in a number of areas. The return does however note the challenging financial position which it will face over the coming years, and this may well impact on the resourcing of the service and future staffing levels. With capacity already stretched, careful planning will be needed to ensure that the service can continue to sustain its current level of performance. Proposals to develop new models for service delivery, aligning with other public-facing services as part of community located 'Hubs', are noted as central to the authority's planning for the future of the service.