

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Conwy

## Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

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

### 1 Executive summary

Conwy met 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and partially met 1.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Conwy achieved 9 in full, and 1 in part.

Conwy has continued to perform strongly in the first year of the sixth framework, although the impact of financial pressures on the service is beginning to become evident. Overall staff numbers have fallen below the target level, and there are some areas of decline in usage figures. Careful consideration will need to be given to the strategic direction of the service within a more challenging financial environment; plans to review the staffing structure, and explore the potential for further partnership working and the development of community hubs are already noted. The service is however anticipating that budget cuts will impact further on its ability to meet the requirements of the framework, and hence the standard of services to its communities; this would be disappointing given the strong record of the authority and the excellence of its current services.

- All service points provide a full range of support for individual development and for health and well-being. Conwy provided four case studies demonstrating the positive impact of the service.
- Attendance at formal training sessions has more than doubled, although there has been a fall in numbers helped by means of informal training.
- Attendance at events / activities organised by the library has fallen by 25% on 2016-17 levels, and is now among the lowest in Wales.
- Usage otherwise has increased in some areas but declined in others, with numbers of physical visits per capita now well below the median level, and a continued fall in the number of book issues, although performance here still remains comparatively strong.
- Conwy continues to meet all the quality indicators for stock acquisition and spend on Welsh language materials, despite a small reduction in the materials spend.
- Overall staffing levels have fallen, in line with budget constraints, and are now below the target level, although comparatively still among the highest in Wales. The service is planning to review its staffing structure in light of reductions in funding.
- Total revenue expenditure has fallen slightly on 2016-17, although investment in the service remains above the median level.

### 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

Conwy is meeting 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and partially meeting CE 12. The service is currently in the final phase of implementing its Modernising Libraries Strategy (agreed in 2011), but consideration needs to be given to reviewing and updating information on the wider strategy for the service. The service is open to all, and closely analyses the profile of local citizens / customers to inform service development, and ensure that it is meeting the needs of all sections of the community. It works with partners across north Wales, as a pioneer of the LINC y Gogledd scheme, and is a member of the all-Wales LMS. A marketing budget and communications plan are in place, using social media to promote specific events / news; staff also engage with the community at outreach events to raise awareness of services.

## 2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Conwy is achieving 9 in full, and one 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	✓	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	✓	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	x	
QI 11 Online access:		Met in full
a) i) Public access to Internet	✓	
ii) Wi-Fi provision	✓	
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	✓	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	✓	
iv) CPD percentage	✓	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓	Met in full

This represents only a slight change on the last year of the fifth framework, where QI 13 was met in full.

## 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.

Conwy has yet to complete its user surveys which are planned for autumn 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:	n/a	38%	90%	95%	
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	77%	16/17	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. Conwy provided four such case studies:

- Digital Literacy – the role of the library in supporting one older lady to use her iPad, boosting her confidence in using technology, and enabling her to communicate with family overseas, and access entertainment apps. She is reassured that she can return to the library for help if necessary.
- Summer Holiday Programmes – the library partnered with a local school to support a target group of children to participate in the Summer Reading Challenge. The children were engaged through weekly visits to the library, and their enthusiasm extended participation to the School Holiday Club. All 33 children completed the Challenge, were encouraged to develop a love of reading, and improved their literacy skills.
- Modern Apprenticeships – the experience of two apprentices working with the library service and undertaking LAIS qualifications; improving their confidence, social and customer care skills, and understanding and knowledge of library work. Both apprentices gained permanent employment with the library service.
- Art Exhibition – an adult with additional learning requirements who attends literacy classes at the library, used his paintings for a speaking / listening exercise, and was invited to hold an exhibition at the library. The exhibition has helped with his confidence and literacy skills, and the library collections provide inspiration for his art.

## 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 Conwy'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	
<b>QI 1 Making a difference</b>						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills:	n/a	24%	83%	94%	83%	
c) health and well-being	n/a	33%	65%	95%	76%	
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a	90%	98%	100%	98%	
<b>QI 2 Customer satisfaction</b>						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a	88%	91%	98%	89%	
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a	93%	99%	100%	98%	
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	n/a	74%	86%	94%		
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	n/a	93%	97%	99%	97%	
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a	8.5	9.1	9.2	8.7	
<b>QI 5 User training</b>						
a) attendances per capita	31	13/22	10	32	238	15
c) informal training per capita	278	8/22	15	199	473	305
<b>QI 6 attendances at events per capita</b>						
	177	18/22	82	228	684	235
<b>QI 8 Library use</b>						
a) visits per capita	3,270	17/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	3,596
b) virtual visits per capita	1,270	5/22	243	866	2,211	1,173
c) active borrowers per capita	165	8/22	100	154	229	151
<b>QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*</b>						
	185	6/22	4	68	663	
<b>QI 11 Online access</b>						
b) Computers per capita <sup>^</sup>	11	6/22	5	9	14	
c) % of available time used by the public	35%	6/22	14%	27%	67%	43%
<b>QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications</b>						
(v) a) total volunteers	68	5/21	3	31	196	58
b) total volunteer hours	1,806	8/21	40	1,346	11,939	1,313
<b>QI 14 Operational expenditure</b>						
a) total expenditure per capita	£14,128	7/21	£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	£14,958
b) % on staff,	68%	6/21	44%	63%	75%	66%
% on information resources	15%	6/21	4%	13%	25%	15%
% on equipment and buildings	2%	20/21	0%	4%	20%	1%
% on other operational costs;	15%	12/21	0%	18%	37%	17%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£1,168	6/20	£0	£338	£17,432	£1,284

QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.41	1/21	£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	£3.00
QI 16 Opening hours <sup>#</sup>						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.48%	17/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.05%	9/20	0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	0.03%

\* per Welsh speaking resident population

<sup>^</sup>per 10,000 resident population

<sup>#</sup> 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)

Conwy has yet to complete its user surveys, which are planned for autumn 2018. All static libraries provide the full range of support for individual development, with health and well-being also well-supported and all staff trained as dementia friends. Attendance at pre-arranged user training has more than doubled in 2017-18, with per capita performance now just below the median for Wales, although the percentage of attendees who feel they were helped to achieve their goals has fallen from 94% in 2016-17 to 77%. The numbers helped by means of informal training has also fallen, although performance here remains above the median level.

#### 3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Conwy continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with 10 branches (five of which are supported by the community) all open for 10 or more hours per week. Attendance at events / activities organised by the library has however fallen by 25% on 2016-17 levels, although the service continues to provide activities for users with special requirements at all its service points. Usage in other areas has also declined, including physical visits and library membership, which are both below the median level, and book issues, where comparatively performance is still relatively strong. Numbers of active borrowers and electronic downloads have in contrast increased, as have visits to the service website, where the general trend has seen usage fall. Work to develop the library catalogue and increase its functionality may have helped influence higher levels of online visits.

#### 3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

The service continues to meet all the quality indicators for stock acquisition / expenditure, and for the proportional spend on Welsh language resources. There has been a small reduction in the materials spend, but investment in children's resources and Welsh language materials remains high. Performance in relation to supply of requests is above the target levels, although figures here only include requests satisfied within the authority, and not those met through arrangements to share stock across the six North Wales authorities. PC provision has been maintained at 2016-17 levels, however with usage levels falling – a trend seen across most other services as customers increasingly use their own devices and available Wi-Fi facilities – the service will be adapting its replacement strategy in future years.

### **3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)**

Overall staffing levels have fallen, and are now below the per capita target level, although comparatively still among the highest in Wales. This drop in performance reflects the impact of financial efficiencies on the service, and there are plans to review the staffing structure in light of reductions in funding. Professional staffing levels have been maintained however, and the target here is still met. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service continues to invest in staff training / professional development at an appropriate level. Volunteer numbers have increased, with 68 individuals each contributing around 26 hours to the service. A volunteer co-ordinator oversees and actively supports the service's community libraries. The service also supports work experience and Duke of Edinburgh scheme placements.

Total revenue expenditure has fallen slightly on 2016-17, although investment in the service remains above the median level. Aggregate annual opening hours have been maintained, with the target here still met.

## **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. Conwy notes its contributions under the Well-being of Future Generation Act, and Prosperity for All strategy, and in relation to local well-being plans and corporate priorities. The role of the library in supporting health and well-being, digital inclusion and poverty agendas, literacy and skills development are all highlighted.

## **5 Future direction**

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Conwy outlined the ongoing delivery of its Modernising Conwy's Library Service strategy, with the final element, the Conwy Culture Centre, due to open in autumn 2019. Work is also due to commence on delivery of the corporate commitment to develop libraries into community hubs. Other plans include partnership working with the third sector to provide an enhanced range of outreach services. The challenges of financial pressures on the service are however noted.

## **6 Conclusion**

Conwy has continued to perform strongly in the first year of the sixth framework, although the impact of financial pressures on the service is beginning to become evident. Overall staff numbers have fallen below the target level, and there are some areas of decline in usage figures. Careful consideration will need to be given to the strategic direction of the service within a more challenging financial environment; plans to review the staffing structure, and explore the potential for further partnership working and the development of community hubs are already noted. The service is however anticipating that budget cuts will impact further on its ability to meet the requirements of the framework, and hence the standard of services to its communities; this would be disappointing given the strong record of the authority and the excellence of its current services.