

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Pembrokeshire

Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

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

1 Executive summary

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

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Pembrokeshire achieved 7 in full, 1 in part and failed to achieve 2.

Pembrokeshire library service continues to deliver well for its local communities, demonstrating through its case studies and user surveys the beneficial impact of the service on people's lives. Customer satisfaction remains high, and opening hours have increased on the last year of the fifth framework. There is some evidence of declining performance, with further reductions in staff numbers, and decreasing usage figures in all areas, where comparatively the service now finds itself among the lowest performing in Wales. The re-opening of the County Library at Haverfordwest, following a major redevelopment, should however impact positively on future usage levels. Investment in the service has largely been maintained in 2017-18, and the service has clear plans for the future.

- Pembrokeshire submitted four case studies demonstrating the positive impact of the service, and continues to achieve high satisfaction ratings from its user surveys. 95% of adults surveyed think the library has made a difference to their lives.
- Attendance at formal training sessions has decreased by over 70% in 2017-18; some of the reasons for this are understood, but work is needed to address this decline.
- Attendance at events and activities has fallen, with performance now the lowest per capita in Wales. The service notes this as an area where it needs to focus its efforts.
- There has been an overall decline in usage generally, with comparative performance now among the lowest in Wales in a number of areas. The opening of the new County Library in Haverfordwest should impact positively on figures in future years.
- Overall targets for acquisitions are not met, although levels of investment in the book fund have been maintained, and the target for spending on Welsh language resources continues to be achieved.
- Staffing levels have fallen further in 2017-18, and the service no longer meets the target for numbers of qualified staff per capita. The authority has increased its use of volunteers, and continues its support for three community libraries, all of which are included in the return.

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

Pembrokeshire is meeting 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and partially meeting CE6, where the service policy includes a reservation charge to cover the process of locating and transporting a title to the reader's choice of library. While this is noted as an administrative fee, rather than a charge for borrowing the item, the policy is still contrary to the principle of free access embodied by the entitlement, and penalises those who access the service through its smaller branches. It is noted that Pembrokeshire, in common with a minority of other authorities, does not have access to a regional Inter-Library Loan scheme to reduce associated costs.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Pembrokeshire is achieving 7 in full, one in part and is failing to achieve 2 of the indicators.

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	x	Not met
QI 7 Location of service points	✓	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Not met
Acquisitions per capita	x	
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	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	x	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	✓	
iv) CPD percentage	✓	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓	Met in full

There is a slight change on the last year of the framework, with the target for qualified staff per capita no longer achieved.

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.

Pembrokeshire carried out both its user surveys in March 2018. The proportion of young people who think the library helps them learn has risen slightly to 97%, with 95% of adults (up from 91% in 2016-17) indicating that the library has made a difference to their lives.

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:	97%	1/6	73%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	95%	1/7	38%	90%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	96%	13/17	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.

Pembrokeshire provided four such case studies:

- Carer's Reading Group – impact of a weekly Read Aloud group aimed at carers; providing a place to relax and socialise, encouragement to read more, and respite from the caring role.
- Family History Sessions – impact of family sessions offered in two libraries, with one user encouraged to learn how to use a computer, and discover the wider benefits of the library service.
- Volunteering – providing a route into employment; a Volunteer Digital Champion with the service developed his interest in digital inclusion, and went on to secure a relief library assistant role with the service.
- Family Users – the impact of the library service for one young family, attending Baby Rhyme Time, then Flying Start, nurturing a love of books, and helping their son become a confident and happy reader. Now aged 5 he is a regular library user, who also enjoys participating in craft activities at the library.

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 Pembrokeshire'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:	90%	2/7	24%	83%	94%	87%
c) health and well-being	95%	1/7	33%	65%	95%	93%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	99%	2/7	90%	98%	100%	98%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	88%	7/7	88%	91%	98%	86%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	99%	3/7	93%	99%	100%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	91%	3/6	74%	86%	94%	n/a
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	97%	4/7	93%	97%	99%	96%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	8.9	5/6	8.5	9.1	9.2	9.1
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	12	19/22	10	32	238	43
c) informal training per capita	167	13/22	15	199	473	191
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	82	22/22	82	228	684	107
QI 8 Library use						
a) visits per capita	2,597	21/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	2,911
b) virtual visits per capita	1,052	7/22	243	866	2,211	1,065
c) active borrowers per capita	126	19/22	100	154	229	145
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*	44	17/22	4	68	663	
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita [^]	12	4/22	5	9	14	12
c) % of available time used by the public	24%	14/22	14%	27%	67%	28%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	75	4/21	3	31	196	69
b) total volunteer hours	3,024	3/21	40	1,346	11,939	2,654
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£11,034	14/21	£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	£11,060
b) % on staff,	49%	19/21	44%	63%	75%	50%
% on information resources	13%	11/21	4%	13%	25%	13%
% on equipment and buildings	4%	12/21	0%	4%	20%	3%
% on other operational costs;	34%	2/21	0%	18%	37%	34%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£17,432	1/20	£0	£338	£17,432	£6,121

QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.00	8/21	£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	£2.94
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	0.36%	11/20	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)

Pembrokeshire conducted both its user surveys in March 2018, and aims to complete these annually as part of its regular consultation with users. Overall there are a number of areas of improvement compared with the survey results from the last framework, with 97% of adults rating the library as 'good' or 'very good'. Satisfaction levels among young people have fallen slightly, but are still high overall. All static libraries provide the required range of support for individual development, and health and well-being is also effectively supported. Attendance at formal training sessions has however decreased by over 70% in 2017-18, with performance now among the lowest in Wales. This is partly attributed to the loss of Job Centre Plus sessions which accounted for over 25% of attendances in 2016-17, although the training programme offer and anecdotal experience of take-up is otherwise broadly similar. Numbers helped by informal training have also fallen slightly, and are now below the median level.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Pembrokeshire continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, with 12 branches (three of which are managed or supported by the community) serving what is a relatively sparsely populated county. Attendance at activities and events has however fallen, with performance now the lowest per capita in Wales; provision for users with special requirements is also limited to six of the branches open 10 or more hours per week. The service acknowledges the issues here, and notes that this is an area where it needs to focus its efforts. Lower performances are also recorded against all other areas of library use, with physical visits, book issues, library membership and numbers of active borrowers all now well below the median level. It is noted that the library at Haverfordwest is currently housed in temporary accommodation and this will undoubtedly have had an impact on all areas of usage.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

Although the materials budget has increased slightly in 2017-18, numbers of acquisitions have fallen, reflecting the higher number of e-resources acquired in 2016-17. Neither of the overall acquisitions targets here is met, although the service is achieving the target for the percentage of the budget spent on Welsh language materials. This reflects a proportionate increase in investment here and on children's resources, with the purchase of new stock in preparation for the re-opening of the new County Library in 2018-19.

PC provision has been maintained at 2016-17 levels, and remains amongst the highest in Wales, although usage levels have fallen slightly, in line with the general trend across most services. Performance in relation to supply of requests has also fallen, but the targets here are still met.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staffing levels have fallen further in 2017-18, and professional staff levels are now below the target level, following the retirement of a small number of senior staff who were then not replaced after a staff restructure. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service continues to meet the requirements for the proportion of staff time spent on professional development. Pembrokeshire has further increased its use of volunteers, with 75 individuals each giving an average of 40 hours, one of the highest contributions in Wales; this include figures for the three services managed or supported by the community.

Total revenue expenditure has increased slightly on 2016-17, with a marked increase in capital investment, with the development of the new County Library in Haverfordwest. Pembrokeshire also continues to meet the target for aggregate staffed opening hours per capita, with hours slightly up on the previous year. Figures here, and for staffing, include an attribution for the local studies service, which is situated in the County Archive.

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. Pembrokeshire is continuing to deliver under its Library Strategy 2015-2020, which is itself aligned with the Welsh Government's strategy 'Prosperity for All' and with council priorities. Contributions are reported under three headings: Creating stronger and healthier communities, focusing on health and well-being outcomes, and reducing social isolation; Reducing poverty, supporting volunteering, improving IT and life skills; and Delivering excellence efficiently, with the creation of community hubs, and the flagship County Library project.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Pembrokeshire highlighted the delivery of the new County Library and Gallery in Haverfordwest, and plans for the development of two new community hubs. The service is continuing to engage with Pembroke Town Council over the future of Pembroke Library, and work is also planned to prepare for the transfer to the all-Wales LMS.

6 Conclusion

Pembrokeshire library service continues to deliver well for its local communities, demonstrating through its case studies and user surveys the beneficial impact of the service on people's lives. Customer satisfaction remains high, and opening hours have increased on the last year of the fifth framework. There is some evidence of declining performance, with further reductions in staff numbers, and decreasing usage figures in all areas, where comparatively the service now finds itself among the lowest performing in Wales. The re-opening of the County Library at Haverfordwest, following a major redevelopment, should however impact positively on future usage levels. Investment in the service has largely been maintained in 2017-18, and the service has clear plans for the future.