

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Vale of Glamorgan

Annual Assessment Report 2018/19

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

1 Executive summary

The Vale of Glamorgan met 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and did not meet 1.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, the Vale of Glamorgan achieved 7 in full, 2 in part and did not achieve 1.

The Vale of Glamorgan library service has broadly consolidated its performance in the second year of the sixth framework, with improvements in some areas and resource levels similar to 2017/18. Some indicators of use are higher, with continued development of the service's training and events offer, but with declines in book issues in particular. There remain areas where additional support is needed at the five Community Libraries, as arrangements here continue to bed in, and opening hours are also still notably low. The service is planning to extend access through its Open+ model, enabling evening use during unstaffed hours at more libraries in 2019/20. How these arrangements are impacting on customer satisfaction remains to be seen, with the service reporting on completion of its user surveys in 2019/20.

- Capacity to provide a full programme of skills sessions at the service's five Community Libraries remains problematic, but health and well-being support has been extended in 2018/19.
- Attendance at formal training sessions has risen, reflecting an extended training offer, with performance now comfortably above the median level.
- Attendance at events / activities has also continued to increase; usage otherwise is mixed, with increased visitor numbers, but reductions in physical loans.
- Authority investment in online resources contributes to continued achievement of the acquisitions target (QI 9), and the requirements for investment in Welsh language resources are also still met.
- Staffing levels have broadly been maintained at 2017/18 levels, with the overall staff target missed; the service continues to meet the target for qualified staff, but relies on a number of FTEs not employed in professional roles to do so.
- Total revenue expenditure is similar to 2017/18, with aggregate annual opening hours still among the lowest in Wales.

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

The Vale of Glamorgan continues to meet 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and does not meet CE12 without a library strategy currently in place; it is noted that there are plans to publish a Library Plan in 2019/20, at which point this entitlement will also be fully met. Free access is provided to a full range of services across council and community supported libraries, working closely with local partners. The service also continues to be an active partner on local, regional and national groups and initiatives which aim to extend access to the resources of all Welsh Libraries, hosting the all-Wales LMS project manager.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, the Vale of Glamorgan is achieving 7 in full, 2 in part and does not achieve 1.

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Support for individual development:		Partially met
a) ICT support	✓	
b) Information literacy and skills training	x	
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	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	x	Not met
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Performances here are broadly similar to 2017/18. While the service still achieves QI 10 a fall in investment levels means that only one of the target areas for Welsh language resources is now met.

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 2017/18 or 2018/19. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

The Vale of Glamorgan has yet to carry out its user surveys, which it is noted are planned to run during 2019/20.

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		60%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a		38%	88%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	90%	=18/20	80%	97%	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.

The Vale of Glamorgan provided two such case studies:

- Large Print Collections – the impact of access to large print collections and staff support for one retired lady with eyesight problems and Parkinson's. The assistance of staff is highly valued, and it means a huge amount to her, as an avid reader, to be able to continue to read for herself, helping her cope with her health issues.
- Crochet Club – a weekly group meeting at Barry Library, supported by a member of library staff, it now has over 20 members of all ages. The club supports members to learn new skills, but also has far reaching social and well-being benefits. Participants note how much they have learnt, how the group has helped them make new friends, become part of a community, and address feelings of depression and isolation.

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 the Vale's position for 2018/19. 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. Figures from the first year of the sixth framework or relevant previous surveys have also been included for comparison. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2017/18	
QI 1 Making a difference					[Framework 5]	
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	n/a	24%	82%	96%	24%	
c) health and well-being	n/a	33%	62%	94%	35%	
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a	90%	97%	100%	99%	
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					[Framework 5]	
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a	81%	91%	98%	85%	
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a	93%	99%	100%	97%	
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	n/a	65%	91%	95%		
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	n/a	93%	97%	99%	95%	
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a	8.5	9.3	9.5	9.1	
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	47	=5/22	13	30	208	33
c) informal training per capita	199	12/22	15	199	433	184
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	353	7/22	91	295	689	276
QI 8 Library use ¹						
a) visits per capita	4,293	5/22	2,596	3,969	7,170*	4,079
b) virtual visits per capita	345	22/22	345	885	2,205	868
c) active borrowers per capita	221	2/22	58	150	251	153
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita ²	783	8/22	95	602	1,424	847
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita ³	9	13/22	5	10	14	9
c) % of available time used by the public	33%	=4/22	14%	25%	63%	32%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	152	2/21	3	30	214	159
b) total volunteer hours	9,806	1/21	90	1,477	9,806	11,939
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£14,614	5/22	£7,181	£12,145	£19,449	£14,893
b) % on staff,	56%	16/22	47%	62%	78%	55%
% on information resources	11%	16/22	8%	13%	21%	11%
% on equipment and buildings	6%	7/22	0.4%	4%	25%	2%
% on other operational costs	27%	6/22	0.3%	16%	37%	32%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£146	15/22	£0	£467	£8,829	£150
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£1.90	8/22	£1.18	£1.82	£2.52	£1.82
QI 16 Opening hours ⁴						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	=1/22	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.75%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	n/a		0.00%	0.28%	7.99%	0.00%

¹ figures for co-located services are marked with an asterisk; performances for these services are likely to reflect higher footfall, and will not therefore be directly comparable with stand-alone library provision

² per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population; figures from 2017/18 reports corrected following a calculation error

³ per 10,000 resident population

⁴ 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 with the first year of the sixth framework (2017/18).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

The Vale of Glamorgan has yet to complete its user surveys which are planned to take place in 2019/20. Capacity to support a full programme of skills sessions across the service's five community libraries remains problematic, but it is noted that additional support will be provided in 2019/20, enabling information literacy and skills training to be put in place at all libraries. Support for health and well-being has however been extended in 2018/19, with more libraries hosting book clubs and health information partnerships. Attendance at formal training sessions has increased, with an extended offer and better recording systems in place, and performance here now comfortably above the median level. Numbers helped by informal training have also risen on 2017/18.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

The Vale of Glamorgan continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, and events / activities for users with special requirements are supported at all libraries. Attendance at events and activities has continued to increase in 2018/19 with performance now well above the median level. Usage otherwise is mixed, with increased visitor numbers, library membership and numbers of active borrowers, but some reduction in physical loans, although this is matched by an increase in electronic downloads. Virtual visits have fallen by a considerable margin, but it is noted that a reporting issue means that the figure does not include direct visits to the online catalogue; this issue is being addressed for to ensure more accurate reporting in 2019/20.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)ⁱ

Expenditure on materials has fallen slightly, but the service continues to meet the requirements for acquisitions (QI 9), with extended online resources provided directly by the authority. Expenditure on children's resources has been maintained, but investment in Welsh language materials has fallen, although the service still meets the proportionate spend target, enabling continued achievement of QI 10. PC provision has been maintained at 2017/18 levels, and usage has increased very slightly. The service continues to meet the requirements for supply of requests, and at a similar level.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staff numbers, and professional staffing levels have broadly been maintained in 2018/19, with a very small increase in reported FTEs. As a result the service continues to meet the target for qualified staff, although as noted last year, around a third of the numbers reported are not employed in posts requiring a library qualification. The overall staffing target level remains unmet. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service continues to meet the requirements for investment in staff development, although at a lower level now the all-Wales LMS is fully implemented. While volunteer contributions have fallen slightly, the Vale of Glamorgan still records the highest contribution by volunteers in Wales. As previously this figure includes the volunteers at the service's five

Community Libraries, which are part of the statutory service, where 124 volunteers contributed over 90% of the total volunteer hours.

Total revenue expenditure is broadly equivalent to 2017/18, with only minor fluctuations in staffing and materials budgets, and the Vale continues to invest in its library estate from its capital budget. Aggregate annual opening hours have increased slightly with an extension in community library hours, but remain well below the target level and among the lowest in Wales. The service continues to provide 16 'out of hours' unstaffed hours per week at one library using Open+ technology, and has noted plans to extend this provision to its other service points during 2019/20.

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. The Vale of Glamorgan again reports its contribution in terms of the Welsh Government's cross-cutting themes: *Prosperous and Secure*, through access to ICT facilities and support, and volunteering experience which has led to employment; *Healthy and Active*, providing resources and activities that support personal and social well-being; *Ambitious and Learning*, supporting literacy from an early age; and *United and Connected*, working with a wide range of sector and community partners to cooperate in the delivery of services.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, the Vale of Glamorgan notes plans to extend its successful Open+ model providing additional 'out of hours' unstaffed access across all its branches in 2019/20. The development of a Makerspace facility at Penarth Library will also now take place over the coming year, following delays in 2018/19. Other initiatives include plans to trial loaning tablets to older users who are otherwise digitally excluded, and the installation card readers enabling payments at library service points.

6 Conclusion

The Vale of Glamorgan library service has broadly consolidated its performance in the second year of the sixth framework, with improvements in some areas and resource levels similar to 2017/18. Some indicators of use are higher, with continued development of the service's training and events offer, but with declines in book issues in particular. There remain areas where additional support is needed at the five Community Libraries, as arrangements here continue to bed in, and opening hours are also still notably low. The service is planning to extend access through its Open+ model, enabling evening use during unstaffed hours at more libraries in 2019/20. How these arrangements are impacting on customer satisfaction remains to be seen, with the service reporting on completion of its user surveys in 2019/20.

ⁱ E-resources purchased through centrally-funded subscriptions have been excluded from acquisitions figures for Q1 9 in 2018/19 to ensure that the standard accurately reflects individual authority strategy, investment and performance. In some cases this has impacted on achievement against the standard in comparison with 2017/18. CIPFA Statistics Returns continue to include figures for centrally-procured resources.