

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Cardiff Council

Annual Assessment Report 2019/20

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Cardiff's annual return, case studies and narrative report submitted to the Culture and Sport Division of the Welsh Government.

1 Executive summary

Cardiff met all of the 12 core entitlements in full.

Of the 9 quality indicators which have targets, Cardiff achieved 7 in full, 1 in part and did not achieve 1.

Cardiff library service has continued to perform well in this final year of the sixth framework. The creation of a new library strategy will support the service in achieving its vision of 'delivering high quality services and support in the heart of the community'. Performance is generally strong in all areas and the service has the highest number of active borrowers per capita and a high usage rate of the IT facilities. However, book issues have dropped significantly for both children and adults. The service shows a strong commitment to health and wellbeing. The low level of professional staffing remains a concern. Despite this the service delivers a wide range of activities and services to support its diverse communities.

- Cardiff is one of only four authorities regularly offering the full range of health and wellbeing services under QI 4 at all service points, and the service continues to take the lead on sector-side initiatives.
- Cardiff has continued to perform particularly strongly in relation to most indicators of use, although adult and children book issues have fallen again on 2018/19 levels.
- The materials budget has decreased in 2019/20 and the targets for up-to-date and appropriate reading materials have not been met, a trend seen across Wales.
- PC provision has again increased and there has been an increase in usage. Cardiff's provision remains among the highest per capita in Wales.
- Overall staffing levels have been maintained, with Cardiff now the only service in Wales to meet the per capita staffing target, although this does reflect the integrated staffing provision provided through Hub service points. Numbers of qualified staff have remained the same, and remain among the lowest in Wales.
- Total revenue expenditure has risen again in 2019/20 and increased by 20% since 2017/18

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. The assessment has been limited to some degree by the fact that local authorities were only asked to comment on any changes to the previous year's return, alongside additional commentary on of partially/not met core entitlements.

2.1 Core entitlements

Cardiff is now meeting 12 of the 12 core entitlements in full. Cardiff only met 11 of the 12 core entitlements in the first two years of the Framework. Cardiff did not meet the requirement to 'provide access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision'. The 2019-2023 Strategy has now been published and is available to the public. Priorities are focused on the area of Reading; Information and Digital; Culture and Creativity; and Health and Wellbeing.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Due to the impact of Covid-19, three quality indicators have been removed for the 2019/20 reporting year, five, six and fifteen, of which number six has a constituent target. Of the **nine** remaining targets for 2019-20, Cardiff achieved 7 in full, 1 in part and did not achieve 1 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 7 Location of service points	√	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Not met
Acquisitions per capita	x	
<u>or</u> Materials spend per capita	x	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	√	
<u>or</u> Spend on Welsh per capita	√	
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	√	

Quality Indicator	Met?
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:	Partially Met
i) Staff per capita	√
ii) Qualified staff per capita	x
iii) Head of service qualification/training	√
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	√ Met in full

Cardiff has maintained its performance in this third year of the sixth framework, with no significant change on 2018/19.

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. However, this measure has been affected by Covid-19 and some authority plans to undertake a survey in the first quarter of 2020 were cancelled. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during framework 6. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Cardiff completed its adult user survey and children's survey in March, 2020. The % of adults who think the library helped them learn new skills was only obtained from customers feedback at courses delivered within the hubs at Cardiff and as a result, this is not directly comparable with other services and QI 1a in the table below is amended

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:	95%	=5/19	60%	90%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	69%	18/19	41%	85%	99%

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. Cardiff provided four case studies:

- Social Inclusion – the impact of social Inclusion; enabling one young individual to gain new skills and confidence and positively affect his mental health and wellbeing through a volunteering role in the Library.
- Social isolation in the community – For those individuals affected by social isolation, this is an opportunity for members to come together in the Library; to socialise with others; to relax and make new friends. Feedback received demonstrates the positive impact on the quality of life for those individuals who regularly attend the sessions. Partnership with Public Health Wales has also resulted in LIFT (Low impact Functional Training), for some of those individuals with physical impairments. The project began with just one or two members each week and has now grown to 15-17 members
- Health & wellbeing – the mental health and wellbeing of a vulnerable resident in Cardiff has been positively impacted by the support received from the Library. Activities offered in the Hubs has resulted in one member joining a walking group and

a walking netball group. This has led to a renewed interest in reading. This has greatly improved her outlook on life, given her new hobbies, and something to look forward to each week.

- Hand on History play boxes and workshops at Cathays Library – a project to engage and encourage schools, community groups and the community to visit the library hubs. A 1960s workshop was delivered to 11 SHEP (a school based programme that aims to ensure that children in areas of social deprivation continue to access health meals, food, nutrition, physical activities and enrichment sessions throughout the School Holidays) groups in Cardiff during the summer of 2019. The workshop brought out the creative and descriptive abilities of the children whilst they were learning through play. This led to an increase in participation with the Summer Reading Challenge.

2.4 Quality indicators and benchmarks

Whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain challenging to all library services in Wales, staff resilience, professionalism and care for the community they serve has been outstanding. Although digital services have increased, we know from evidence provided that customers are missing their library services. They are missing the staff, browsing the shelves, IT provision, community spaces and groups such as knit and natter. The importance of the library as a physical place and the impact on the wellbeing of their customers through interaction with library staff cannot be underestimated.

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 Cardiff's position for 2019/20. 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 second 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	2018/19	
QI 1 Making a difference					[Framework 6]	
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	91%	=2/18	25%	75%	94%	n/a
c) health and well-being	95%	2/19	38%	69%	96%	n/a
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	94%	16/19	90%	96%	100%	n/a
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					[Framework 6]	
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	78%	18/18	78%	91%	99%	n/a
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	88%	18/18	88%	97%	100%	n/a
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	66%	16/17	65%	85%	99%	n/a
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	85%	18/18	85%	96%	100%	n/a
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	8.0	19/19	8.0	9.1	9.5	n/a
QI 8 Library use ¹						
a) visits per capita	6,874*	1/22	2429	3987	6874	7170*
b) virtual visits per capita	2,131	1/22	239	909	2131	2205
c) active borrowers per capita	244	1/22	78	145	244	251
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita ²	928	3/22	311	680	1468	1193
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per 10,000	12	3/22	4	9	14	11
c) % of available time used by the public	61%	3/22	14%	30%	64%	49%
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£19,948	2/22	£7,260	£12,448	£23,333	£17,153
b) % on staff,	68%	8/22	48%	61%	76%	76%
% on information resources	7%	21/22	5%	13%	22%	8.7%
% on equipment and buildings	21%	=2/22	0%	8%	28%	15%
% on other operational costs	3%	21/22	1%	18%	35%	0.3%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£1,695	4/22	£0	£3318	£30,258	£3,549
QI 16 Opening hours ³						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.02%	18/22	0.00%	0.23%	3.96%	0.02%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	1.16%	15/22	0.00%	1.07%	5.41%	0.73%

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 ²per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population

³ 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 and second year of the sixth framework (2017/18 and 2018/19).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)ⁱ

Cardiff completed its adult user survey in March 2020. The service notes that paper copies were withdrawn on 13th March due to health and safety concerns related to Covid-19. The last survey was undertaken in the final year of the fifth framework (2016-17) and although there has been a slight decrease in customer satisfaction, there has been a 55% increase in the number of adults who feel that the Library has made a difference to their health and wellbeing. Although usage of the IT facilities is high for Wales, the satisfaction rates are among the lowest for Welsh libraries. Cardiff has continued to work with the

Reading Agency and Welsh Government to further develop Reading Well including the introduction of a Mental Health reading list. Cardiff is one of only four authorities regularly offering the full range of services under QI 4 at all service points, and the service continues to take the lead on sector-side initiatives.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)ⁱⁱ

Library usage has also been impacted by the closure of all libraries on 20 March 2020 due to Covid-19. Cardiff continues to meet the target for easy access to service points. Cardiff is now one of only four authorities providing the full range of identified services and activities across all its service points (core and additional). Although the number of visits to library premises has declined since the first year of the framework, the service notes that this was impacted by the temporary closure of two key Hubs in January 2020 for refurbishment. Library membership has increased by 16% since 2017/18, alongside an increase of 7% in the number of active borrowers, indicating that the work to improve the health and wellbeing offer has made a difference. Whilst adult and children's book issues have fallen significantly, children's borrowing remains strong with the service recording the second highest number of children's loans per capita. In line with other authorities across Wales, the number of electronic downloads have risen by 33% since 2017/18.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)ⁱⁱⁱ

The materials budget has decreased in 2019/20 and the targets for up-to-date and appropriate reading materials have not been met, a trend seen across Wales. It is noted by the service that this target remains unachievable due to the population size in Cardiff. Cardiff is one of seventeen authorities who have not met the acquisitions target (QI 9) in 2019/20. The materials budget has decreased by just under 5% since 2017/18, but the expenditure per capita is just above the median in Wales. The service continues to invest strongly in children's resources, and in Welsh language materials (QI 10), where the standard continues to be met. PC provision has remained static. Cardiff's provision remains among the highest per capita in Wales. The target has continued to be met for the supply of requests with a slight improvement in the number of requests available within 7 calendar days.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)^{iv}

Overall staffing provision has been maintained at 2018/19 levels and Cardiff remains the only service in Wales to meet the total staff per capita target (QI 13), although Cardiff Hubs & libraries continue to operate as an integrated team. The number of qualified staff has been maintained because of this integration figures for qualified staff are the second lowest per capita in Wales. Qualified leadership has remained in place and Cardiff continues to invest in staff training and development.

Total revenue expenditure has risen again in 2019/20 and increased by 20% since 2017/18. Aggregate annual opening hours have increased slightly, and the target here continues to be met, with a small amount of unplanned closures/missed stops on the mobile due to mechanical issues.

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. During 2019 Cardiff Hubs & Library service has developed a local strategy which has been informed by the strategic direction and Programme of the Welsh Government. The continued focus on health and wellbeing is a key element of the Strategy, which ensures the continued delivery against the seven wellbeing goals set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Cardiff's vision is underpinned by 9 key aims. This includes supporting children and young people, digital inclusion, social inclusion and health and well-being.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, Cardiff Hubs & Libraries strategy sets out 'We Will' promises around 9 key aims. These include the development of Hubs, developing collections, encouraging reading, supporting children and young people, digital inclusion, tackling poverty, promoting health and wellbeing, bringing communities together and celebrating heritage and culture. This is an ambitious strategy which has the potential to inspire, inform and bring people together across Cardiff.

Cardiff also reports on the continued development of its Community Hubs, particularly the refurbished Hubs in Whitchurch and Rhydpennau.

6 Conclusion

Cardiff library service has continued to perform well in this final year of the sixth framework. The creation of a new library strategy will support the service in achieving its vision of 'delivering high quality services and support in the heart of the community'. Performance is generally strong in all areas and the service has the highest number of active borrowers per capita and a high usage rate of the IT facilities. However, book issues have dropped significantly for both children and adults. The service shows a strong commitment to health and wellbeing. The low level of professional staffing remains a concern, although despite this the service delivers a wide range of activities and services to support its diverse communities.

ⁱ Due to Covid-19, local authorities were only asked to report any change in provision since the last reporting year for Q1 3&4.

ⁱⁱ Due to Covid-19, Q1 5&6 were removed for the 2019/20 reporting year.

ⁱⁱⁱ E-resources purchased through centrally-funded subscriptions have been included in the acquisitions figures for Q1 9 in 2019/20. Each authority has added 201 to their total acquisitions from centrally funded subscriptions. CIPFA Statistics Returns continue to include figures for centrally-procured resources.

^{iv} Due to Covid-19, Q1 15 was removed for the 2019/20 reporting year, alongside training and volunteer hours.