

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Isle of Anglesey County Council

Annual Assessment Report 2019/20

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

1 Executive summary

Anglesey now meets 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full, partially meets 1 and did not meet 1.

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

The Isle of Anglesey library service has seen further changes to performance levels in 2019/20, particularly in relation to usage levels which have improved and which can partly be attributed to the opening of the new Holyhead library. Further improvements in this area are anticipated if services can be re-established following Covid-19 restrictions. Anglesey has retained a strong focus on children's services and support for the Welsh language throughout the framework and evidenced the importance of partnership working to its strategic goals. The service has noted the importance of filling vacant posts in the staffing structure and this will be essential for the resilience of the service in the long term.

- Anglesey now meets 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full, partially meets 1 and does not meet 1
- Anglesey has yet to conduct its user surveys, which were due to take place in February 2020. This was impacted by Covid-19 and the last survey was undertaken in Framework 5 (2017).
- Usage levels have increased, against the Wales trend, with a rise in visitor numbers; active borrowers; library members, adult and children's book issues, and electronic downloads.
- There has been an increase in Anglesey's material budget in 2019/20, but the acquisitions per capita target (QI 9) remains unmet due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions affecting book purchasing in February and March.
- The service continues to support the digital agenda and recorded an increase in usage of its computers. It now has the highest usage rate across Wales.
- A new staffing structure was implemented in 2018/19 and vacant posts remain. Anglesey records a further small drop in overall staff levels, with neither staffing target met.

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

Anglesey now meets 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full, partially meets 1 and does not meet 1. A user survey was scheduled to take place in February 2020, the last survey having been undertaken in February 2017. However, due to Covid-19, this was postponed. The Isle of Anglesey is one of only two authorities unable to complete both adult and children user surveys throughout the framework and this is disappointing as consultation with members is essential to inform the future direction of the service. As a result CE11 is not met. As in 2018/19, whilst a library Service Strategy 2017-2022 is in place, it is still not easily available online for public access and as a result, CE12 remains partially met. The service continues to perform well in other areas covered by the entitlements.

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 indicators, Anglesey 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	√	
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	√	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	√	Met in full

Anglesey 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.

Anglesey did not conduct a user survey during 2019/20 or during the course of the framework, one of only 2 authorities not to do so. The planned survey in February was postponed due to Covid-19. It previously completed a full survey in February 2017.

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:	96%	=3/19	60%	90%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	94%	=4/19	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.

Anglesey provided three such case studies:

- Holyhead Library – the new library’s impact on teenagers in the community. This is an individual testimony about the importance of the new library in Holyhead on a teenager’s ability to study for her A-levels in a quiet environment. The library is described as an excellent environment to study and has resulted in other members of her family borrowing resources.
- Breast feeding support group – a group which meets once a fortnight in Holyhead library. An outline of the importance of the library to the community; emphasizing the support network the group provides and the resources that are available in the library on topics such as parenting, cooking and health and well-being, which are useful to the group during their fortnightly meetings.
- Social Inclusion – Impact statements demonstrating the value and importance of the library service on sectors of the community in need; a carer for her husband who has dementia describes how the books she borrowed helped her to engage with her husband, whilst a student describes the importance of the library as a sanctuary throughout her childhood and her studies.

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 Anglesey’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	n/a	25%	75%	94%	n/a	
c) health and well-being	n/a	38%	69%	96%	n/a	
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a	90%	96%	100%	n/a	
QI 2 Customer satisfaction	n/a				[Framework 6]	
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a	78%	91%	99%	n/a	
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a	88%	97%	100%	n/a	
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	n/a	65%	85%	99%	n/a	
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	n/a	85%	96%	100%	n/a	
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a	8.0	9.1	9.5		
QI 8 Library use ¹						
a) visits per capita	4,094	8/22	2429	3987	6874	3,946
b) virtual visits per capita	1,796	2/22	239	909	2131	1,708
c) active borrowers per capita	114	17/22	78	145	244	107
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita ²	853	7/22	311	680	1468	976
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per 10,000	9	10/22	4	9	14	10
c) % of available time used by the public	64%	1/22	14%	30%	64%	57%
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£12,064	10/22	£7,260	£12,448	£23,333	£12,779
b) % on staff,	55%	16/22	48%	61%	76%	54%
% on information resources	11%	=13/22	5%	13%	22%	13%
% on equipment and buildings	3%	=15/22	0%	8%	28%	3%
% on other operational costs	30%	4/22	1%	18%	35%	31%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£1,627	5/22	£0	£1,567	£13,027	£1,734
QI 16 Opening hours ³						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	=1/22	0.00%	0.23%	3.96%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	=1/22	0.00%	1.07%	5.41%	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 ²per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population

³Rankings 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

Anglesey was unable to conduct its user surveys, which were due to take place early in 2020. This was impacted by Covid-19 and the last survey was undertaken in Framework 5 (2017). Individual development continues to be well supported with all service points providing activities in this area. Performance has remained strong in the provision of health and wellbeing. The service is committed to the new 'Books on Prescription' scheme (Reading Well) and the new library in Holyhead has a dedicated health and wellbeing area. The closure of Cemaes library has affected the provision of book clubs. However,

the service continues to support numerous local book clubs and all service points providing health information.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)ⁱⁱ

Library usage has also been impacted by the closure of all Libraries on March 20th 2020 due to Covid-19. Further changes to services has resulted in a small reduction in the percentage of households within an accessible distance of a library service point. However, Anglesey continues to meet the target for easy access to service points. Usage levels have increased, with a rise in visitor numbers; active borrowers; library members and adult and children's book issues. This is against the general trend in Wales. The increase in visitor figures can partly be attributed to the opening of the new library in Holyhead. However, borrower and member figures per capita remain below the median in Wales. Electronic downloads have increased further, a trend seen across Wales. The number of electronic downloads has increased by 136% since 2017/18.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)ⁱⁱⁱ

There has been an increase in Anglesey's material budget in 2019/20, but the acquisitions per capita target (QI 9) remains unmet. Anglesey is one of seventeen authorities who have not met the acquisitions target (QI 9) in 2019/20. The service notes that Covid-19 affected the purchasing of resources and the target would have been met if plans had been maintained. Expenditure on resources for children has slightly decreased, but remains a strong priority for the service. There has been a 18.5% decrease in expenditure on Welsh language material since the first year of the framework, alongside a reduction in Welsh issues per capita. However, expenditure in this area still remains above the median in Wales and Welsh issues per 1000 Welsh speaking population are above the median. Computer provision remains high and usage levels have increased (57% to 64%). This reflects the improved IT facilities in Holyhead library. Usage is the highest in Wales. The service continues to meet the targets for supply of requests.

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

A new staffing structure was implemented in 2018/19 and unfortunately vacant posts remain. Anglesey records a further small drop in overall staff levels, with neither staffing target met. The service notes that staff retirement has also impacted both targets, however the target for professional staffing levels should be met in 2021 if recruitment is successful to the vacant post. Performance for both total and qualified staffing is above the median level for Wales. Qualified leadership remains in place.

Total revenue expenditure has decreased since 2018/19 and by 4.8% since 2017/18. Expenditure per capita remains above the median level however. There has been a 19% decrease in aggregate annual opening hours since 2017/18. This can partly be attributed to the closure of service points throughout the sixth framework. However, two community managed libraries are being supported by the service and are included in this return. The opening hours target is met, but aggregate opening hours per capita are now below the median in Wales. There were no unplanned interruptions to service delivery.

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 Isle of Anglesey reports on a number of themes, including literacy; community regeneration; workforce development; digital inclusion; Welsh language and health and well-being. The opening of Holyhead library in the refurbished Market Hall building has been a key contributor to the overall economic regeneration of Holyhead Town. Working with adult education partners also ensures that the library service contributes effectively to skills development in the community, particularly in the areas of digital literacy. A further successful partnership is the School library service which supports primary children and teachers and impacts positively on reading and literacy. The extensive local history collection in Anglesey library also contributes to the important theme of cultural identity in Wales.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, it is noted that the priority for the service is to fill the vacant posts in the staffing structure. This is essential to improving the resilience of the service. As with all services in Wales, immediate priorities relate to recovery following Covid-19.

A new library was opened in Holyhead in September 2019. Due to its town centre location, it is noted by the service that it has been very quiet as a result of the impact of Covid-19. The service notes that customer confidence will need to be regained and activities re-introduced to encourage people to visit the library once again. The service also notes its intentions to introduce a volunteer model for Beaumaris and Rhosneigr community libraries. The service intends to continue to work to the 2019-22 library strategy, whilst adapting to new Covid-19 priorities and practices.

6 Conclusion

The Isle of Anglesey library service has seen further changes to performance levels in 2019/20, particularly in relation to usage levels which have improved and which can partly be attributed to the opening of the new Holyhead library. Further improvements in this area are anticipated if services can be re-established following Covid-19 restrictions. Anglesey has retained a strong focus on children's services and support for the Welsh language throughout the framework and evidenced the importance of partnership working to its strategic goals. The service has noted the importance of filling vacant posts in the staffing structure and this will be essential for the resilience of the service in the long term.

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

ⁱⁱ Due to Covid-19, QI 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 QI 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, QI 15 was removed for the 2019/20 reporting year, alongside training and volunteer hours.