

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Vale of Glamorgan

## Annual Assessment Report 2019/20

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

### 1 Executive summary

The Vale of Glamorgan met 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full, 1 in part and did not meet 1.

Of the 9 quality indicators which have targets, the Vale of Glamorgan achieved 6 in full, 1 in part and did not achieve 2.

Service levels in the Vale of Glamorgan have broadly remained the same throughout the sixth framework. Maintenance of staffing levels, increases in usage and an increased revenue budget in 2019/20 are all positive developments. Opening hours remains comparably low, although the service provides additional unstaffed out-of-hours opening at its central library via Open+ which is valued by a group of users, and the extension of this service to other branches will bring benefits to those communities. The lack of completion of an adult user survey in 2019/20 is disappointing and customer feedback will be essential in order to continue to improve the service. Plans to publish a library strategy in 2018/19 have not materialised due to timings with a wider Council strategy that the library service hoped to align to. A framework for the future development of the service is essential as libraries experience a time of change as a result of the impact of Covid-19.

- Usage has increased in all areas apart from external visits to the library website. Visits to library premises have increased by 27% since 2018/19, mainly due to additional council services delivered via libraries.
- Electronic downloads have increased by 165% since 2017/18 in common with all services in Wales.
- The target for acquisitions per capita (QI 9) has not been met by the service for the first time during the sixth framework, mainly due to a standards reporting change in the calculation for the addition of electronic resources for the 2019/20 reporting year.
- There has been a decrease in the expenditure on Welsh language materials, although the service still meets the proportionate spend target, enabling continued achievement of QI 10.
- Overall staff numbers and professional staffing levels have broadly been maintained in 2019/20, with a very slight decrease in the total number of staff. Staffing levels are above the median level in Wales and the Vale of Glamorgan is one of only four services in Wales to meet the professional staffing target.

### 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

The Vale of Glamorgan continues to meet 10 of the 12 core entitlements in full, one in part and does not meet CE12 without a library strategy currently in place. The service partially meets CE 11 as it did not complete its adult user survey during the framework.

## 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 had a constituent target. Of the **nine** remaining targets for 2019-20 the Vale of Glamorgan achieved 6 in full, 1 in part and did not 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 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	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	√

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially Met
i) Staff per capita	x	
ii) Qualified staff per capita	√	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	√	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	x	Not met

The Vale of Glamorgan has improved its performance in 2019/20 with QI 3 (Support for individual development) now fully met. Training to improve literacy, numeracy, information literacy and digital skills is now offered at all service points.

## 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.

The Vale of Glamorgan did not undertake its adult user survey during the current framework. The last adult survey was undertaken during framework 5. The service is one of only five not to have run an adult survey in this framework. A children's survey was undertaken in February 2020.

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:	89%	15/19	60%	90%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a	n/a	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. The Vale of Glamorgan provided two such case studies:

- Collaboration with Llamau – a volunteering opportunity for an individual. An individual contributed to a digital project in the library, which involved scanning and uploading photos to the People's Collection Wales website. This experience had a very positive impact on the individual involved; an improvement in confidence and mental health.
- Digital partnership – a tablet loan scheme. A scheme to lend Wi-Fi enabled tablets to members to reduce digital exclusion. This project has removed barriers for those individuals without access to the internet and those without digital skills. For one retired lady, the loaned iPad has been a lifeline, enabling her to keep in contact with her family, alongside shopping online, finding information and entertainment.

## 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 Vale of Glamorgan'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					[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	9.0	=15/19	8.0	9.1	9.5	n/a
QI 8 Library use <sup>1</sup>						
a) visits per capita	5,333	3/22	2429	3987	6874	4,293
b) virtual visits per capita	240	21/22	239	909	2131	345
c) active borrowers per capita	226	2/22	78	145	244	221
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita <sup>2</sup>	829	9/22	311	680	1468	783
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per 10,000	9	12/22	4	9	14	9
c) % of available time used by the public	30%	=8/22	14%	30%	64%	33%
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£14,811	6/22	£7,260	£12,448	£23,333	£14,614
b) % on staff,	58%	=13/22	48%	61%	76%	56%
% on information resources	11%	=13/22	5%	13%	22%	11%
% on equipment and buildings	4%	=13/22	0%	8%	28%	6%
% on other operational costs	28%	6/22	1%	18%	35%	27%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£138	13/22	£0	£1,567	£13,027	£146
QI 16 Opening hours <sup>3</sup>						
(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%

<sup>1</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup>per 1,000 Welsh speaking resident population

<sup>3</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 with the first and second year of the sixth framework (2017/18 and 2018/19).

#### 3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)<sup>i</sup>

The Vale of Glamorgan has yet to complete its adult user surveys which were planned to take place in 2019/20. A children's survey was undertaken in February 2020. There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out, but the average overall rating out of ten has remained the same. The Vale of Glamorgan has improved its performance in 2019/20, with QI 3 (Support for individual development) now fully met. Good support is provided for health and well-being

at all libraries, with targets (QI 4) in this area fully met. Furthermore, all libraries undertook at least one mental health awareness activity during the year.

### **3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)<sup>ii</sup>**

The Vale of Glamorgan continues to meet the target for easy access to service points. Usage has increased in all areas apart from external visits to the library website, as more people go direct to the e-resource apps instead. Visits to library premises have increased by 27% since 2018/19. This can partially be attributed to libraries becoming the main distribution point for new recycling bags, and many people coming to the library for help with the online renewal of bus passes. The Vale of Glamorgan are now in the top quartile in Wales in relation to physical visits per capita, and the service capitalised on these new visitors as it saw a rise in its active borrowers. Active borrowers per capita are above median levels in Wales. Despite an increase in adult and children's book issues, figures per capita are below median levels in Wales. Electronic downloads have increased by 165% since 2017/18 in common with all services in Wales.

### **3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)<sup>iii</sup>**

Total materials expenditure, along with expenditure on materials purchased for children have both increased slightly during 2019/20. The target for acquisitions per capita (QI 9) has not been met by the service for the first time during the sixth framework due to a central agreed change in the allocation of centrally-purchased electronic resources for the 2019/20 reporting year. The Vale of Glamorgan is one of seventeen authorities who have not met the acquisitions target (QI 9) in 2019/20. The materials spend per capita also continues to be unmet this year. There has been a decrease in the expenditure on Welsh language materials, although the service still meets the proportionate spend target, enabling continued achievement of QI 10. PC provision and usage have broadly been maintained with a slight decrease in usage, in common with other services as members increasingly use their own devices and the free library Wi-Fi. The service continues to meet the requirements for supply of requests (QI 12), with a very slight change.

### **3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)<sup>iv</sup>**

Overall staff numbers and professional staffing levels have broadly been maintained in 2019/20, with a very slight decrease in the total number of staff in post. Staffing levels are above the median level in Wales. However, the target for staff per capita (QI 13) has not been met. The number of qualified staff has slightly decreased, but the Vale of Glamorgan is one of only four services to achieve the stipulated target in this area. Qualified leadership remains in place.

Total revenue expenditure has increased marginally since 2018/19. Expenditure per capita remains above the median level. The Vale has invested in new IT equipment in preparation for an upgrade to Windows 10 and has continued to invest in its library estate. Aggregate annual opening hours have broadly been maintained and remain well below the target level and in the bottom quartile in Wales. The service continues to provide 16 'out of hours' unstaffed hours per week at one library using Open+ technology and these hours are not included in the return. It is noted that they are valued by the users who visit the library during these hours.

## 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's narrative demonstrates how the service contributes to Welsh Government's programme, Taking Wales Forward 2016 – 2021. This includes a variety of health and wellbeing events at libraries along with several patient groups (*Healthy and Active*). The service also offered basic skills training, job clubs and drop in help sessions (*Prosperous and Secure*). Other areas noted, included that of *Ambitious and learning* (supporting the literacy of young children) and *United and connected* (volunteer digital champions are available to help with digital inclusion at all libraries).

## 5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, the Vale of Glamorgan highlights the importance of realigning library provision in light of the impact of Covid-19. The service intends to build on the promotion of its online services and develop new ways of working to meet changes to customer expectations. The service will continue to extend its successful Open+ model providing additional 'out of hours' unstaffed access across further branches. The development of Penarth Library will continue with the refurbishment of the first floor in 2021.

## 6 Conclusion

Service levels in the Vale of Glamorgan have broadly remained the same throughout the sixth framework. Maintenance of staffing levels, increases in usage and an increased revenue budget in 2019/20 are all positive developments. Opening hours remains comparably low, although the service provides additional unstaffed out-of-hours opening at its central library via Open+ which is valued by a group of users, and the extension of this service to other branches will bring benefits to those communities. The lack of completion of an adult user survey in 2019/20 is disappointing and customer feedback will be essential in order to continue to improve the service. Plans to publish a library strategy in 2018/19 have not materialised due to timings with a wider Council strategy that the library service hoped to align to. A framework for the future development of the service is essential as libraries experience a time of change as a result of the impact of Covid-19.

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

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

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

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