Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

Flintshire

Annual Assessment Report 2015-16

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

Flintshire's return was approved by the Portfolio Member, on 23rd June 2016.

1) Executive summary

Flintshire met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially met 1

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Flintshire achieved 2 in full, 4 in part and failed to achieve 1.

There have been some encouraging improvements during the year, as well as some more disappointing results, which is to be expected during times of change. The restructuring to concentrate resources in 7 hub libraries is expected to improve performance against the standards in the final year of WPLS reporting against the current framework.

- Flintshire carried out an impact survey in November 2014. 92% of children thought that the library helped them to learn and find things out; 81% of adults and 69% of children felt that the library made a difference to their lives. One impact case study described provision and customer feedback from the new Deeside library.

- Flintshire carried out a customer survey in November 2014, and achieved high levels of overall satisfaction, with 99% of adults rating the service as 'good' or very good'. Ratings on individual elements of the service compare less favourably to other authorities, however. An increase in the provision of training across the service is welcomed, but this remains somewhat limited, reflected in low attendance figures.

- Flintshire meets the target for access to service points, but most usage indicators have fallen compared to last year. Virtual visits have increased, however.

- Flintshire meets the targets for levels of acquisitions. It continues to prioritise materials for children. ICT provision has improved, although this is not well used. Wi-Fi provision has also increased. The fall in the speed of supply of requests is disappointing.

- Staffing levels have been further reduced, and do not meet the targets set, although there is appropriate investment in staff training. Only 2 authorities reported having fewer professionally qualified staff per capita, and this remains an area of concern. Expenditure was reduced by 4.3% compared to last year and is below the median for Wales. The average net cost per visit was £2.43.

- Opening hours have been reduced, and were further affected by the restructuring programme which saw 3 small libraries replaced by a single co-located library. The authority expects to meet the opening hours target next year.

Considering the four areas in the framework (*Customers and communities; Access for all; Learning for life;* and *Leadership and development*) in comparison to the rest of Wales, Flintshire's performance is relatively poor, with some notable exceptions in customer

satisfaction, staff training and collection development.

Compared to the previous year, there have been notable improvements in support for individual development and ICT provision, but further falls in staffing, and the decline in speed of supply of inter library loans are a cause for concern.

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 the core entitlements, the quality indicators which have targets, the quality indicators showing performance against others, and impact measures. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is made in Section 3.

a) Core entitlements

Flintshire is meeting 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full and partially meeting 1. This is the same position as last year. The area in which it fails to fully meet the core entitlements is *Learning for Life*; at present Flintshire is only able to provide Wi-Fi in 7 service points.

b) Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QI) within the framework. Of the 7 which have targets, Flintshire is achieving 2 in full, 4 in part and is failing to achieve 1 of the indicators:

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Individual development:		Partially met
a) ICT support	✔	
b) Skills training	✘	
c) Information literacy	✔	
d) E-government support	✔	
e) Reader development	✔	
QI 5 Location of service points	✔	Met in full
QI 8 Up-to-date reading material:		Met in full
a) Acquisitions per capita	✔	
or Materials spend per capita	✔	
b) Replenishment rate	✔	
QI 9 Appropriate reading material:		Partially met
a) % of material budget on children	✘	
b) % of material budget spent on Welsh	✘	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	✔	
QI 10 Online access:		Partially met
a) All service points	✔	
Computers per capita	✔	
b) Wi-Fi provision	✘	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
a) Staff per capita	✘	
b) Professional staff per capita	✘	
c) Head of service qualification/training	✔	
d) CPD percentage	✔	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✘	Not met

There is an improvement since last year in QI 3, where only 1 target is now missed, and in QI 8. QI 16 was met last year.

c) Impact measures

The framework contains three indicators which seek to gather evidence of the impact that using the library service has on people's lives. Through these and other indicators it is possible to see how the library service is contributing towards educational, social, economic and health and wellbeing local and national agendas. These indicators do not have targets. Not all authorities collected data for the impact indicators, and ranks are included out of the numbers of respondents stated, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Flintshire carried out an impact survey in November 2014.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	92%	7/12	86%	93%	99%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	81%	9/13	36%	87%	97%
% of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	69%	8/11	57%	73%	93%
QI 4 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	n/a		85%	97%	100%

Flintshire provided a single impact case study, describing the new Deeside Library with comments from users demonstrating the real difference the library has made. Additional case studies would have strengthened this area of the return, particularly focusing on users.

d) Quality performance indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets, but allow performance to be compared between authorities. The following table summarises Flintshire's position for 2015-16. 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 obtained from customer surveys which only need to be carried out once during the three year framework period, or those where relevant data elements were not available to some authorities. Figures reported in respect of last year for QI 4 to QI 16 are repeated for convenience of comparison. Note that indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2014/15	Rank
QI 1 Making a difference							
a) new skills	64%	9/13	23%	72%	92%		
c) health and well-being	46%	8/13	26%	58%	93%		
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	94%	11/13	84%	97%	100%		
QI 2 Customer satisfaction							
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	89%	8/14	74%	89%	97%		
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	96%	8/14	90%	97%	99%		
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall	99%	1/14	92%	97%	99%		
d) child rating out of ten	9.5	2/13	8.0	9.2	9.5		
QI 4 User training							
a) attendances per capita	11	20	5	30	390	5	21

Performance indicator		*Rank*	Lowest	Median	Highest	*2014/15*	*Rank*
c) informal training per capita	n/k		3	201	1017	*n/k*	
QI 6 Library use							
a) visits per capita	3,963	*12*	2,467	3,967	6,185	*4,317*	*10*
b) virtual visits per capita	442	*18*	340	976	2,475	*403*	*20*
c) active borrowers per capita	105	*20*	45	157	273	*122*	*17*
QI 7 attendances at events per capita	131	*16*	60	223	666	*152*	*14*
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public							
a) equipment	20%	*22*	20%	31%	68%	*28%*	*19*
b) Wi-Fi services	n/k		20%	60%	90%	*n/k*	
QI 12 Supply of requests							
a) % available within 7 days	70%	*15*	57%	71%	86%	*75%*	*6*
b) % available within 15 days	82%	*16*	71%	86%	96%	*88%*	*5*
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications							
(v) a) total volunteers	9	*17*	0	18	103	*0*	*17*
b) total volunteer hours	116	*20*	0	582	3,699	*0*	*17*
QI 14 Operational expenditure							
a) total expenditure per capita	£11,188	*16/21*	£7,516	£12,749	£18,760	*£11,695*	*19*
b) % on staff	61%	*9/21*	40%	58%	79%	*60%*	*9*
% on information resources	22%	*2/21*	7%	13%	23%	*16%*	*5*
% on equipment and buildings	5%	*7/21*	1%	3%	20%	*16%*	*4*
% on other operational costs	13%	*16/21*	0%	20%	39%	*7%*	*20*
c) capital expenditure per capita	£564	*9/21*	£0	£272	£4,677	*£0*	*16*
QI 15 Net cost per visit	£2.43	*11/21*	£1.83	£2.43	£3.53	*£2.35*	*8 / 11*
QI 16 Opening hours *(see note)*							
(ii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	*12*	0.00%	0.00%	0.16%	*0.10%*	*16*
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.86%	*12/19*	0.00%	0.71%	23.44%	*0.42%*	*11 / 19*

Note: 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 are divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance against the quality indicators within these four areas, and compares results with those from the first year of the framework.

a) Customers and communities

Flintshire carried out a customer survey in November 2014, and detailed comment was included in last year's report. There has been an improvement in the number of libraries offering services in support of individual development - training sessions to improve literacy, numeracy, and digital skills are now available in 7 of the 10 libraries open for 10 hours or more per week, and information literacy sessions in all. This is reflected in the numbers of attendances at formal training sessions, which have doubled compared to last year, but remain low compared to the rest of Wales.

b) Access for all

Flintshire meets the target for easy access to service points, and although visits per capita have fallen slightly compared to 2014-15, they remain close to the median for Wales as a whole. The total number of external visits to the library's web site has increased, as has the

number of library members. The figure for active borrowers does not include those who use only electronic resources. The authority notes that almost 500 events were offered during the year for both adults and children; 9% were in the medium of Welsh.

c) Learning for life

Flintshire has met all the targets for overall levels of acquisitions this year. The authority again prioritised material for children during 2015-16, spending 27% of the budget compared to 18.5% of the population. The target for the percentage of spending on material in the Welsh language has been only narrowly missed, but spending per capita exceeds the target level, at £881 per person able to read Welsh. All libraries now provide ICT facilities, but these are not well used, with the lowest percentage take-up in Wales. The authority notes that the level of provision is greater than required, and proposes to reduce this with improved access to W-Fi, and tablet loans. Use of the Wi-Fi network is not recorded. There has been a fall in the speed of supply of requests, which is now below the median for Wales as whole for both measures. This was previously an area of strength.

d) Leadership and development

Staffing has been further reduced in 2015-16, and Flintshire fails to meet the targets for staffing levels overall and for professional staff. The head of the service is a Chartered Librarian. Flintshire meets the target for staff training. Volunteering policies were being developed during the year, and Flintshire used 9 volunteers each giving an average of 13 hours to the service. They were trained to support the Summer Reading Challenge, and voluntary work was provided under the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Training was also provided for community run library volunteers.

Flintshire had a budget cut of 4.3% to its budget in 2016-17, and total expenditure per capita is below the median for Wales. The average net cost per visit in 2014-15 was £2.43, compared to £2.35 last year. Capital expenditure for the new Deeside library came from MALD, match-funded from the library budget.

Opening hours were reduced by 18% at the start of the year, and three libraries closed in February. The effects of these changes can be seen in the decline in usage. The new Deeside library has increased opening hours for the most recent months, and the authority notes that the current weekly opening hours would have met the target if in place for the full year.

4) Strategic context

Flintshire provided a detailed statement concerning its contribution to wider government priorities and goals in the areas of equality, resilient communities, mitigating the effects of poverty, literacy, health and well-being, supporting learners into employment, and digital literacy.

5) Future direction

Flintshire is part way through a major re-structuring exercise, reducing the network of service points, reducing staffing costs, and deleting specialist posts. The library service is planned to become part of an employee-led mutual organisation providing leisure services from April 2017.

6) Conclusion

There have been some encouraging improvements during the year, as well as some more disappointing results which is to be expected during times of change. The restructuring to

concentrate resources in 7 hub libraries is expected to improve performance against the standards in the final year of WPLS reporting against the current framework.