

# Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-17

## Denbighshire County Council

### Annual Assessment Report 2014-15

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Denbighshire's annual return submitted to Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government. Denbighshire did not submit any case studies or narrative report with its statistical return.

The return was not approved by the authority prior to submission.

#### 1) Executive summary

Denbighshire met 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full, and partially met 1.

Of the 7 quality indicators which have targets, Denbighshire achieved 3 in full, and 4 in part.

The strong commitment to children's provision is praised, alongside excellent engagement with communities, evidenced by with the highest attendance at events per capita in Wales. The investment in ICT is also commended. The service is well used, but cuts to the book fund may impact on this in the future. It will be interesting to see the implications of the future restructuring.

The assessors note the difficulties the authority has had in fully completing the return, given conflicting pressures on resources this year, which has made it harder to complete the assessment. MALD officials will be seeking reassurance that this will be addressed in future years.

- Denbighshire did not conduct an impact survey during 2014-15, and did not provide any impact case studies. The lack of evidence in the return of the impact of the service is unfortunate.
- Attendance at pre-arranged training sessions is below the median for Wales, but informal training levels are above the median for Wales as a whole.
- Visits per capita are above the median for Wales, and attendance at events per capita is the highest in Wales. 17.9% of the population were active borrowers during the year. Children's services are a priority, and Denbighshire reported an increase in children's issues of 2.7% in 2014-15.
- Denbighshire fails to meet the targets for overall levels of acquisitions, but meets the targets for the replenishment rate and material in the Welsh Language. ICT provision meets the targets set, and is used for around one third of the available time. Denbighshire has the best performance in Wales for the supply of requests within 7 days.
- Denbighshire falls just short of the target level for staffing overall, but meets the target for professional staff. Figures for staff training are not recorded, and the authority does not use volunteers. Average cost per visit was £2.90, slightly above the median for Wales.
- Compared to the rest of Wales, Denbighshire generally performs well in the area of

*Access for all.* Performance is rather more mixed in the area of *Learning for life*, with some indicators showing relatively good performance, and others being relatively poor.

- The continued reduction in investment, highlighted in previous returns, remains a cause for concern, and is leading to declining usage. Unfortunately due to pressures on resources, Denbighshire was unable to provide supporting evidence and analysis with its return. This has not helped consider the context of the library service and makes a full assessment harder.

## 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

Denbighshire is meeting 17 of the 18 core entitlements in full, and partially meeting 1. The area in which it is not fully meeting all the core entitlements is *Leadership and development*, where committee reports are available, but other service-related policy documents are not, pending a restructure of the service.

### b) Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QI) within the framework. Of the 7 which have targets, Denbighshire is achieving 3 in full, and 4 in part:

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Individual development:		Met in full
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:		Partially met
a) Acquisitions per capita	✗	
<u>or</u> 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	✓	
<u>or</u> 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

Quality Indicator	Met?
a) Staff per capita	✗
b) Professional staff per capita	✓
c) Head of service qualification/training	✓
d) CPD percentage	n/k
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓ Met in full

### 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.

Denbighshire did not conduct an impact survey on 2014-15, and did not collect data on the numbers of attendees at training sessions who were helped to achieve their goals.

Performance indicator	Denbighshire	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of children who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	n/a		63%	93%	95%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a		73%	87%	92%
% of children who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a		43%	79%	90%
QI 4 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	n/k		80%	93%	100%

Denbighshire did not provide any impact case studies with their return, and the lack of evidence of impact in the return is regrettable.

### 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 Denbighshire's position for 2014-15. 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.)

Performance indicator	Denbighshire	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
a) new skills	n/a		55%	72%	93%
c) health and well-being	n/a		29%	58%	91%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a		84%	97%	98%

Performance indicator	Denbighshire	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a		82%	89%	97%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a		93%	99%	99%
c) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	n/a		94%	96%	99%
d) child rating out of ten	n/a		8.0	9.2	9.4
QI 4 User training					
a) attendances per capita	8	20	2	26	278
c) informal training per capita	206	7 / 21	16	162	484
QI 6 Library use					
a) visits per capita	5,082	5	2,637	4,177	5,955
b) virtual visits per capita	700	15	212	923	2,449
c) active borrowers per capita	179	7	71	155	288
QI 7 attendances at events per capita	464	1	21	192	464
QI 11 Use of ICT - % of available time used by the public					
a) equipment	34%	14	23%	36%	70%
b) Wi-Fi services	n/k		4%	37%	79%
QI 12 Supply of requests					
a) % available within 7 days	81%	1	62%	69%	81%
b) % available within 15 days	90%	3	74%	84%	94%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications					
(v) a) total volunteers	0	17	0	14	74
b) total volunteer hours	0	17	0	527	2696
QI 14 Operational expenditure					
a) total expenditure per capita	£16,749	5	£8,966	£14,054	£20,796
b) % on staff,	57%	11	45%	57%	77%
% on information resources	11%	17	5%	13%	21%
% on equipment and buildings	4%	11	0%	4%	27%
% on other operational costs;	28%	9	4%	22%	37%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£228	12	£0	£266	£2,126
QI 15 Cost per visit	£2.90	9	£2.07	£2.87	£3.92
QI 16 Opening hours ( <i>see note</i> )					
(ii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0%	1	0.0%	0.02%	0.52%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0%	1 / 19	0.0%	0.4%	5.4%

*Note: Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring 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.

#### a) Customers and communities

Denbighshire did not carry out a customer survey in 2014-15, but intends to do so in 2015-16. All service points provide the full range of services in support of individual development. Attendance at pre-arranged training sessions is low, while the numbers helped by means of informal training is above the median for Wales as a whole.

### ***b) Access for all***

Denbighshire meets the target for easy access to service points, and achieves a good level of visits, above the median for Wales as a whole. 17.9% of the population were active borrowers during the year, also above the median for Wales. Attendance at events is the highest in Wales, and includes school visits and 1-1 support sessions. Denbighshire reported an increase in children's issues of 2.7% in 2014-15.

### ***c) Learning for life***

Denbighshire's book fund was cut mid-year, and the authority fails to meet the targets for acquisitions overall. A further cut is expected next year. The lending stock replenishment rate target has been met. The authority prioritises materials for children, with 26% of the budget compared to 18% of children in the population, to meet strategic priorities, and spent 7.6% of the budget on material in the Welsh language in 2014-15. ICT provision per capita meets the target set, and all libraries provide facilities, which are used for around one-third of the available time. Wi-Fi is available in 6 of the 8 libraries, and there are plans to roll this out to the remainder during 2015-16. Availability and use of the Wi-Fi network was not recorded. Denbighshire supplies requested material in a timely manner, with 81% of requests being met within 7 days – the best performance in Wales on this measure.

### ***d) Leadership and development***

Denbighshire falls just short of the target for overall staffing, with 3.29 staff per capita against a target of 3.6. The target for professional staffing is met, and the head of service is a Chartered Librarian. The authority does not collect data on the amount of time spent in staff training. Denbighshire does not use any volunteers.

Comparable expenditure data for 2013-4 were not included in the return. Total expenditure per capita is above the median for Wales. The average cost per visit in 2014-15 was £2.90, slightly above the median for Wales as a whole. Opening hours meet the target set, and none were lost owing to unplanned closures.

## **4) Strategic context**

Denbighshire did not provide a statement demonstrating the service's contribution towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals.

## **5) Conclusion**

The strong commitment to children's provision is praised, alongside excellent engagement with communities, evidenced by the highest attendance at events per capita in Wales. The investment in ICT is also commended. The service is well used, but cuts to the book fund may impact on this in the future. It will be interesting to see the implications of the future restructuring.

The assessors note the difficulties the authority has had in fully completing the return, given conflicting pressures on resources this year, which has made it harder to complete the assessment. MALD officials will be seeking reassurance that this will be addressed in future years.