

Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020: Denbighshire

Annual Assessment Report 2017-18

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

1 Executive summary

Denbighshire met 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and is partially meeting 1.

Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Denbighshire achieved 8 in full, 1 in part and failed to achieve 1.

Denbighshire library service has broadly maintained its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, with improvements in some areas and reductions in others. There has been a notable increase in the numbers of events and activities on offer, with rising attendances here and in the take-up of training opportunities. The fall in usage figures elsewhere can be accounted for by temporary branch closures as the service pursues its refurbishment programme. Budget pressures have impacted on the materials fund in particular, but service staffing appears to have stabilised, and there is a welcome emphasis in the return on workforce development, with plans to develop a service strategy and a renewed focus on professional skills.

- All static service points provide a full range of support for individual development, and for health and well-being. Denbighshire submitted four case studies demonstrating the positive impact of the service.
- Attendance at pre-arranged user training sessions has continued to improve, and numbers helped by informal training are among the highest in Wales.
- The service has increased the number and range of activities / events on offer, with rising attendance levels, and performance above the median level per capita.
- Physical visits and books issues have declined in 2017-18, reflecting planned temporary branch closures as Denbighshire carries out its refurbishment programme.
- Investment in Welsh language resources remains high, with the service recording the fourth highest level of Welsh language issues per capita. Budget pressures have impacted on investment in materials more generally.
- Staff levels have stabilised, with overall numbers increasing in 2017-18, and only a slight fall in qualified staffing. While the targets here are not met, there is a renewed emphasis on workforce development and ensuring staff have appropriate skills.
- Total revenue expenditure has decreased slightly, but expenditure per capita remains above the median level.

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.

2.1 Core entitlements

Denbighshire is meeting 11 of the 12 core entitlements in full, and is partially meeting CE 12, where there is no service strategy available for public access online. The service website does include a vision statement for the service, and it is noted that detailed business planning forms part of wider divisional plans, however there does not appear to be a means by which the strategic direction and objectives for the service are communicated outside the authority. The service is evidently seen as a focal point for the delivery of a wide range of council and community services, with partnership working central to service delivery. A three-year marketing strategy has been developed for delivery from 2018-19, and a workforce development strategy is planned with the aim of professionalising the workforce at all levels.

2.2 Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which ten have constituent targets. Of these, Denbighshire is achieving 8 in full, 1 in part and is failing to 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 6 all static service points offer events/activities for users with special requirements	✓	Met in full
QI 7 Location of service points	✓	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Not met
Acquisitions per capita	x	
or Materials spend per capita	x	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	✓	
or 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	✓	
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	✓	
iv) CPD percentage	✓	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	✓	Met in full

There has been no change in Denbighshire's performance compared to the last year of the fifth framework for those quality indicators where direct comparisons are possible.

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. The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are therefore based on those authorities indicating they completed their user survey during this first year of the framework. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority.

Denbighshire did not conduct a user survey during 2017-18. The service was also unable to report figures for user evaluation of its training offer; the collection of relevant data has been requested for 2018-19.

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:	n/a	73%	94%	97%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	n/a	38%	90%	95%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	n/a	75%	98%	100%

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. Denbighshire provided four such case studies:

- **Employability Support** – impact of the library's role in supporting the Working Denbighshire programme, providing the space, resources and staff support for mentors to meet clients and develop their skills and confidence. For one individual this has improved his self-esteem, facilitated completion of IT courses, and strengthened his motivation to work; from being dependent on benefits he is now highly employable.
- **Safe Haven** – impact of the library as a safe place where people can engage with resources and facilities that support their life needs, and meet with advisors. For one bereaved mother it has been both a place of refuge and valued support.
- **Enriching Reading** – a reading group at one library participated in a project to create an online digital literary atlas connecting fiction set in Wales with local geography. This enriched their reading repertoire and insight and added to the group's social role.
- **Autism Support** – the library's role working with a regional school that supports pupils with autism; promoting a positive experience of being out in the community, developing their sense of responsibility, and providing successful work experience opportunities.

2.4 Quality indicators and benchmarks

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 Denbighshire's position for 2017-18. 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. Where possible, figures from the last year of the fifth framework have also been included for comparison; however, in some cases a change in definition or the introduction of additional measures makes comparisons impractical. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator	Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest	2016/17	
QI 1 Making a difference						
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills:	n/a	24%	83%	94%	58%	
c) health and well-being	n/a	33%	65%	95%	58%	
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	n/a	90%	98%	100%	93%	
QI 2 Customer satisfaction						
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	n/a	88%	91%	98%	90%	
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	n/a	93%	99%	100%	98%	
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	n/a	74%	86%	94%		
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall;	n/a	93%	97%	99%	98%	
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	n/a	8.5	9.1	9.2	8.7	
QI 5 User training						
a) attendances per capita	23	15/22	10	32	238	12
c) informal training per capita	385	2/22	15	199	473	n/a
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	335	6/22	82	228	684	298
QI 8 Library use						
a) visits per capita	4,321	6/22	2,501	4,047	7,014	4,805
b) virtual visits per capita	1,255	6/22	243	866	2,211	1,201
c) active borrowers per capita	202	4/22	100	154	229	183
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita*	304	4/22	4	68	663	
QI 11 Online access						
b) Computers per capita [^]	10	10/22	5	9	14	10
c) % of available time used by the public	25%	13/22	14%	27%	67%	n/a
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications						
(v) a) total volunteers	28	13/21	3	31	196	0
b) total volunteer hours	529	17/21	40	1,346	11,939	0
QI 14 Operational expenditure						
a) total expenditure per capita	£14,073	8/21	£7,047	£11,915	£17,771	£14,244
b) % on staff,	60%	13/21	44%	63%	75%	56%
% on information resources	9%	18/21	4%	13%	25%	10%
% on equipment and buildings	7%	6/21	0%	4%	20%	7%
% on other operational costs;	24%	6/21	0%	18%	37%	26%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£2,699	3/20	£0	£338	£17,432	£2,280

QI 15 Net cost per visit	£1.92	9/21	£1.24	£1.82	£2.41	£2.51
QI 16 Opening hours [#]						
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.00%	1/21	0.00%	0.02%	1.28%	0.00%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0.00%	1/20	0.00%	0.35%	11.24%	n/a

* per Welsh speaking resident population ^per 10,000 resident population

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 (where applicable) with the final year of the fifth framework (2016-17).

3.1 Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Denbighshire has yet to conduct its user surveys, which are due to be carried out at least once during the course of the framework. All static libraries provide the full range of support for individual development and health and well-being, and all staff have received dementia friends training. Attendance at pre-arranged user training sessions has continued to improve (although still below the median level per capita), and the service was able to report on the numbers helped by informal training, with performance here among the highest in Wales.

3.2 Access and use (QI 6-8)

Denbighshire continues to meet the target for easy access to service points, and provides events / activities for users with special requirements at all static libraries. There has also been a notable expansion in the number of activities and events on offer, with attendance levels rising as a result, and performance well above the median level per capita. Physical visits and books issues have however fallen, although average performance per capita in both areas also still remains above the median for Wales. It is noted that the reduced performance here probably reflects the planned closure (over a total of 7 months) of two service points during refurbishment. The service records the fourth highest level of Welsh language issues per capita in Wales, reflecting well on its investment in this area. Numbers of active borrowers have increased, with only a small drop in library membership. A decline in AV issues is noted, reflecting both an increase in digital downloads, and financial constraints on refreshment of the DVD stock.

3.3 Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

Budget pressures have impacted on investment in the book fund in 2017-18, with the number of acquisitions falling, and neither target under QI 9 met. Investment in Welsh language resources, at 11% of the overall materials budget, more than meets the requirements for QI 10 however, with performance here reflected in the high number of issues for Welsh language material. PC provision has fallen slightly on 2016-17, with usage levels below the median for Wales. It is noted that this reflects the numbers of customers using their own devices and Wi-Fi, although demand for printing facilities is increasing, and the service will be exploring Wi-Fi printing options in the coming year. Performance in relation to supply of requests is regarded as met; the service was unable to supply data for requests satisfied within the authority, rather than those met through arrangements to share stock across the six North Wales authorities. Indicators of

performance from the first part of 2018-19 have therefore been accepted to ensure consistency with other North Wales authorities and past reporting.

3.4 Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Overall staffing levels have increased following completion of a service restructure, but are still below the target level. Numbers of qualified staff have fallen slightly, with the target here also not met. It is noted that one professionally designated role is filled by someone with cognate experience, who intends to pursue a post-graduate qualification in the near future. Qualified leadership is in place, and the service is meeting the requirements in relation to time allocated for professional development. The service is now working with volunteers, following a hiatus in 2016-17, with some 28 individuals each contributing an average of over 18 hours. All volunteers are provided with appropriate training and supervision, and are in added-value roles that do not replace paid staff.

Total revenue expenditure has decreased slightly in 2017-18, but expenditure per capita remains above the median level. Aggregate annual opening hours have increased, with no disruption to the static or mobile service.

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. Denbighshire provided a clear narrative outlining its contribution to a range of relevant strategic priorities including: early years and literacy; housing; social care; mental health; skills and employability; Welsh language support; and community resilience.

5 Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, the service's contribution to delivering Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2018-2022, and its Customer Communication and Marketing Service Business Plan are noted. Specific activities and developments include the refurbishment of Denbigh Library, the creation of 'Library Lounges', piloting new Wi-Fi services, and extensions to the health and well-being offer. Implementation of the communications and marketing strategy will also encompass new branding, website development and social media training. The planned development of a Volunteering Strategy and Workforce Development Strategy will support the contribution of volunteers, and help ensure that the professional staffing needs of the service are met and are sustainable. There is also a continuing focus on exploring the options for collaborative working within the North Wales services.

6 Conclusion

Denbighshire library service has broadly maintained its performance in this first year of the sixth framework, with improvements in some areas and reductions in others. There has been a notable increase in the numbers of events and activities on offer, with rising attendances here and in the take-up of training opportunities. The fall in usage figures elsewhere can be accounted for by temporary branch closures as the service pursues its refurbishment programme. Budget pressures have impacted on the materials fund in particular, but service staffing appears to have stabilised, and there is a welcome emphasis in the return on workforce development, with plans to develop a service strategy and a renewed focus on professional skills.